

National University of Educational Planning and Administration
New Delhi

The Ninth Foundation Day Lecture

Education as an Instrument of Social Transformation The Role of Mother Tongue

by

T. K. Oommen

Professor Emeritus

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi



August 11, 2015

National University of Educational Planning and Administration

The National University of Educational Planning and Administration which was originally established in 1962 by UNESCO as Asian Centre for Educational Planners and Administrators and was later taken over by the Government of India, underwent several incarnations, before it was conferred with the status of a University in the year 2006 by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. Over the last several decades, through its research, teaching, capacity building, and consultancy activities, the institute emerged as a major think-tank and as an apex institution actively engaged in the area of educational policy, planning and administration at sub-national, national and global levels.

Specialising in the area of educational planning and administration, through its various activities, NUEPA shaped the contours of educational policy, planning and administration as a discipline and as a field of practice. With a multi-disciplinary faculty, the University contributes to broadening of the interdisciplinary social science perspective relating to educational issues.

In addition to its multifarious activities, the University offers Post-Graduate Diploma, M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes in educational policy, planning and development.

Education as an Instrument of Social Transformation

The Role of Mother Tongue

T. K. Oommen

Professor Emeritus

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Ninth Foundation Day Lecture



**National University of
Educational Planning and Administration**

August 11, 2015

© *National University of Educational Planning and Administration, 2015*
(Declared by the Government of India under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)

Published by the Registrar, National University of Educational Planning and Administration,
17-B, Sri Aurobindo Marg, New Delhi and printed at M/s. Anil Offset & Packaging, New Delhi.

Education as an Instrument of Social Transformation

The Role of Mother Tongue

T. K. Oommen

I propose to interrogate the widely accepted view that education is always and necessarily an instrument of social transformation. I argue that whether or not education can be a tool of social transformation depends as much on the values imparted through education as on the nature of society. In a society wherein material disparity is limited and inequality is not legally or morally sanctioned education can and does play a positive role in social transformation. That is to say that education is not necessarily a social leveller but it can and often it does engender social inequality. This proposition is pursued by invoking the crucial importance of medium of instruction. Ideally the medium of instruction at the initial stage, which is in the school, ought to be in the language of the social milieu in which the child grows up. This language is the child's mother tongue. But the marginalisation and eventual demise of mother tongues is so stupendous in the contemporary world that it may be designated as *culturocide*¹, that is, the systematic destruction of culture, language being a crucial dimension.

It is estimated that 6,170 mother tongues are spoken in the world to-day and 96 per cent of the currently live languages are spoken by only four per cent of the world's population and 80 per cent of these languages are confined to single countries. And, one language disappears every year somewhere in the world. On the other end of the continuum 50 per cent of the world population uses one of the eight spatially dispersed languages. The biggest of these eight languages is Chinese with 1.2 billion speakers followed by English (478 million) and Hindi (437 million). And the smallest in the big language league is French (125 million) and Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Portuguese coming in between. The point of interest in the present discourse is that an overwhelming majority of the over 6,000 mother tongues are sentenced to death, one every year; indeed mother tongues are an endangered species today. And all the available evidence suggests that for the proper development of child's intellectual ability the medium of instruction at the initial stage of education ought to be its mother tongue. In this lecture I propose to examine the situation with special reference to India, although the issue is not confined to India. But before I dwell upon India, a brief journey in to the world situation.

Those who hold diametrically opposite ideological positions hold identical views on the importance of language in characterizing nation. As is well known, both Mazzini and Herder thought that

language constitutes the inner core of the nation. According to Herder: ‘Language expresses the collective experience of the group’, and ‘every nation has its own inner centre of happiness as every sphere had its own centre of gravity’.² Stalin was equally unequivocal: ‘a national community is inconceivable without a common language’³ paradoxically, in spite of the crucial role he assigned to language, it was language that had to be liquidated because nationalism and socialism were incompatible. Hence this utopian vision of the role of language:

*After the victory of socialism on a world scale...we will have...hundreds of national languages from which at first the most enriched zonal languages will emerge as a result of lengthy, economic, political, and cultural co-operation of nations, and subsequently the zonal languages will fuse into one common international language, which will of course be neither German, nor Russian nor English, but a new language which has absorbed the best elements of the national and zonal languages.*⁴

That is to say, it is one thing to recognize the primacy of a dimension (here language) and quite another to retain it. For the nationalist, a nation without language is inconceivable: for a socialist, language is an unwanted entity to be exorcized from the body politic for the cause of socialism.

The fundamental flaw widely shared both by nationalists and socialists is that linguistic homogeneity fosters an ideal polity. Both try to liquidate linguistic heterogeneity although they traverse different routes. The assumption that linguistic homogeneity fosters an ideal polity attained considerable acceptability thanks to the ideology of the nation-state. After reviewing the two 'cross polity' surveys regarding the linguistic situation based on the Yale Human Relations Area Files, Joshua Fishman made a tall claim for linguistically homogeneous states which deserves to be quoted at length:

Linguistically homogeneous polities are usually economically more developed, educationally more advanced, politically more modernized and ideologically-politically more tranquil and stable.... All in all, linguistic homogeneity characterizes the state in which primordial ties and passions are more likely to be under control, cultural religious homogeneity and enlightenment are advanced, more modern forms of heterogeneity via associational, institutional and political groups are fostered, and in which the good life is economically within the reach of a greater proportion of the populace.⁵

Thus viewed, linguistic homogenization becomes not only an ideal worth pursuing, but also a self-fulfilling prophecy. But what are the facts on the ground? Of the 114 polities analysed in the two

studies, 52 are linguistically homogeneous and 62 are heterogeneous. The linguistically homogeneous category in fact includes a few linguistically heterogeneous states, such as the United Kingdom and the United States. That is, a polity is viewed as linguistically homogeneous if it has one predominant language which is the official language of the state. This is not a correct characterization. However, a more important point that Fishman ignores is that, of the 52 linguistically homogeneous polities, only 27 have achieved very high or medium levels of gross national products (GNP). Conversely, of the 62 linguistically heterogeneous polities, 15 do have very high or medium levels of GNP. Admittedly, the lack of fit between linguistic homogeneity/heterogeneity and GNP is vivid. Further, some of the polities that are homogeneous and with very high or medium levels of GNP were not democracies (e.g., Argentina, Chile, Hungary, Poland, Cuba) at the time of data collection and analysis. Conversely, some of the linguistically heterogeneous polities with low or very low GNP were democracies (e.g., Ceylon, India).

This being so the doctrine of homogeneity and its institutional vehicle, namely, the nation-state, should be given a decent burial. And yet, the central tendency in Europe even today is to believe that cultural homogeneity is a prerequisite for the building of viable societies, and that the current trend of East European nationalism is the equivalent of democratization.⁶

In ancient India, particularly North India, the production and dissemination of knowledge was done through Sanskrit and this privilege was assigned to Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras above the ritual pollution line could imbibe knowledge with special reference to their assigned occupations. But women, irrespective of their caste status, Dalits and Adivasis did not have had any access to knowledge. This meant knowledge production and dissemination was the privilege of the Brahmin male and those who wanted to internalise knowledge should learn Sanskrit. Classical Europe too privileged Latin and Greek and although the caste system was absent there the three fold division of people as in Ancient Greece — Patricians, Plebeians and Slaves — privileged the first and stigmatized the last.

What was applicable in Ancient India, continued in Medieval India, although Persian replaced Sanskrit. Persian like Sanskrit, was also the language of the elite. Although Urdu gradually evolved as an amalgam of Persian and Hindi, it had two disadvantages. First, it was not widely used as a medium of instruction and second, it came to be identified, unfortunately and incorrectly, with Islam in the Indian subcontinent. Incidentally, the phenomenon of linking religion and language is common in South Asia: Sanskrit with Aryan Hinduism, Tamil with Dravidian Hinduism, Pali with Buddhism, Punjabi written in Gurumukhi with Sikhism and Urdu with Islam. This linkage initiates and fosters prejudices

against these languages which is detrimental to their development and acceptance by all of the religious communities.

When colonial regimes were implanted in India they had brought in their languages: English by Britain, French by France, and Portuguese by Portugal in their specific enclaves and with the subsequent takeover by Britain a dual system came into vogue. Education imparted in the 550 princely states was through their respective local languages (mother tongues) but a chain of schools in which instruction imparted through English also surfaced. This dual system substantially undermined the importance of mother tongues in Indian education system. The attributed superiority of English medium schools and the stigmatization of schools which imparted education through the vernaculars, the pejorative term the British used to refer to Indian languages, became a persisting curse of the Indian education system.

The English medium schools posed three problems: availability, accessibility and affordability. English medium schools in India were/are far too few viewed in terms of the number of children to be educated. By and large they are inaccessible to the people inhabiting India's vast rural hinterland. These schools are situated in urban India and in hill stations, charge very high fees and hence unaffordable to the vast majority of Indians. William Digby, the colonial administrator wrote in 1901:

*There are two Indias: the India of the Presidency and the chief provincial cities, of the railway systems, of the hill stations.... There are two countries: Anglostan, the land especially ruled by the English, in which English investments have been made and Hindoostan, practically all of India fifty miles from each side of the railway lines.*⁷

English medium schools accentuated the divide between Bharat and India, to recall the current phraseology. Small wonder Jawaharlal Nehru in his *Autobiography* observed that mass education cannot be tackled in India through English. And, the Indian Constitution mandates that compulsory universal education should be provided to all children till the age of 14 through their mother tongues. This robust policy is observed in India more in breach like several other policies. And the foundational flaw here lies in following the model of nation-building followed in West European nation-states.

Nations and states existed since antiquity but they came to be linked only in 1648, with the conclusion of the Treaty of Westphalia, which endorsed the Napoleonic dictum ‘for each nation its own state’. This was a devastating error which resulted in what may be called *culturocide*, as noted above. Let me illustrate it with a few examples.⁸ When the Republic of France was constituted in 1789 there were several nations that are linguistic groups, in its territory

other than the French, such as Alsations, Basques, Bretons, Catalans, Corsicans, Flemings and Occitanians. But none of them exist today; all of them have been Frenchified. They lost their mother tongues. Similarly the Lombardians, the Venetians, the Sardinians and Sicilians have lost their mother tongues when Italian language was made the official language in 1861. In the United Kingdom, which is not united even to-day – remember the persisting movement for a separate Scotland – Scottish, Irish and Welsh languages were subordinated to English. Similarly, multi-national Spain had marginalised several mother tongues in its mission of creating a nation-state. The point to be underlined here is that the institution of nation-state has been the graveyard of mother tongues.

It is necessary to identify the specificities of language as a social phenomenon at this juncture so that the rationale of nurturing several languages in a polity can be understood. One, there is no feature of society which is as crucial as language. Even religion is not because one can be an atheist, agnostic or rationalist and abjure religion. That is there are alternatives to religion. But nobody can live in society without a language; there is no alternative to language. Two, while alternatives exist for religion they are mutually exclusive, even repulsive. Nobody can be an atheist and a believer at the same time, similarly a believing Hindu cannot also be a believing Muslim. In contrast, one can learn and nurture several languages

without diminishing the importance of one's language, that is, mother tongue.

What I am suggesting is that linguistic chauvinism can be moderated substantially if not completely avoided. If so, why is it that linguistic chauvinism surfaces. This brings in the third specificity of language which is that language has symbolic and instrumental functions. The symbolic function of language is to bestow a common identity to those who share a common mother tongue. It is also possible to acquire a common identity by learning a language. The English speakers of India are drawn from the speakers of a large number of mother tongues; but they learnt it for instrumental reasons, be it better employment prospects or marriage prospects. But mother tongues are not learnt, they are imbibed by the child, like and along with, mother's milk as Rabindranath Tagore opined. Even an illiterate person has a mother tongue and s/he uses it without formally learning it.

The fourth feature of language is that it is a group or community phenomenon. This is also true of religion, but one can establish a personal relationship with one's God or practice transcendental meditation alone. In contrast, one cannot meaningfully talk of a language which is exclusive to one person. Language pre-supposes the existence of a group the members of which have shared competence of it, be it a mother tongue or a learnt language.

Finally, even the least developed language is adequate for conducting the basic functions of life such as economic transactions in the local markets, religious worship, local communication, making love and instructions for elementary education. How about those languages without a script if they too are to be used as medium of instruction? Please note that the number of scripts is far too few as compared with the over 6,000 languages in the world and several languages can and they do share a common script.

The real issue to be tackled in a polyglot country like India is to identify the number and specify the features of mother tongues which should be used for school education. Let me illustrate the problem with the help of Census of India data.⁹ The 1931 Census of India, the last census conducted by the British identified 2000 mother tongues in undivided India. The count of mother tongues in Independent India varied and wavered: In 1951, 782; in 1971, 1,019 and 1,576 in 1991. This increase is astounding and there are two sources of this mindboggling multiplication of mother tongues. One, the procedure followed. The census enumerator simply lists what is claimed to be mother tongues by those who answer the question: what is your mother tongue? The mother tongues listed include: Dravidian, Madrasi, Reddy Bhasa, Muslim Pahari, Ahiri Hindi, Rajputi, Ad Dharmi, Islami, Christian and the like. That is, for many people mother tongue simply connotes their cultural identity. While mother tongue is a source of

identity, as noted earlier, there are also other sources of cultural identity. That is, a wide variety of cultural identities are simply taken to be mother tongues. This inflates the number of mother tongues.

On the other hand in quiet a few cases the number of persons who claim a particular identity as their mother tongue is suspiciously low. Thus in 1951 73 mother tongues had only one speaker each, 137 had 2-10 speakers. Out of the 782 mother tongues recorded in 1951 only 132 of them had 10,000 or more speakers. In 1991 only 216 mother tongues out of 1,576 listed had 10,000 or more speakers. Even the study conducted in 1973 by the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, counted 1,598 mother tongues in India; of these only 263 had 10,000 or more speakers. Thus the first necessary step to be taken to ascertain the number of mother tongues in India is to have a reliable listing of mother tongues. Because if we are to meaningfully pursue the constitutional mandate of providing compulsory universal education through the mother tongue of the child we must have a clear picture of the phenomenon referred to as mother tongue. I believe that the National University of Educational Planning and Administration has a key role to play in this context because school education falls within its purview.

The issue of arriving at a clear understanding of mother tongues is only the first step. The NUEPA should clearly opt for one of the two possible

perspectives; either following the model followed by West European nation-states namely cultural monism or celebrate cultural pluralism in tune with India's social reality and accommodative genius. The position that the Official Language Commission took in its report submitted in 1956 should be the guiding principle. It observed:

*The variety of Indian linguistic media is not a national skeleton to be ashamed of and to be somehow hidden away. It is a wealth of inheritance in keeping with the continental size, ancient history and tradition of assimilating and harmonising diverse cultural and racial elements of which this country can be justly proud.*¹⁰

The State Reorganisation Commission (SRC) also submitted its report on linguistic re-organization of Indian states in 1956. This was a bold step but it remains an unfinished task and many groups remain dissatisfied. Since that time 20 Provincial States, Union Territories or Autonomous Regions have been created and a dozen demands are pending. But there is a basic contradiction between the constitutional position and the SRC report on the one hand and the Official Language Commission, on the other. Article 351 of the Indian Constitution prescribes:

It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for

all elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expression used in Hindustani and in other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

Article 351 bristles with contradictions: for example, Hindustani is not listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution which listed 14 languages. (Now the scheduled languages are 22.) And, if Hindustani is to be nurtured one has to draw as much from Persian as from Sanskrit. But above all article 351 smacks of the form and substance of the West European pattern of nation-state antagonistic to the letter and spirit of India's socio-cultural reality.

The Constitution of India conceives Indian polity as a union states but article 351 and State Reorganisation Commission created a hierarchy of Indian languages. At the apex of this hierarchy is Hindi, which is designated as the link, official and national language based on the argument that it is numerically the most important language. But the less than 40 percent speakers of Hindi is drawn from 50 mother tongues of which 18 have one million or more and four — Bhojpuri, Chattisgarhi, Magadhi and Rajasthani — have 10 million or more speakers. The resolve to create a national language, the crucial

feature of nation-states, administered a deadly blow to the flowering of mother tongues in India.

The second layer in the hierarchy of Indian languages is constituted by the so-called 'regional' languages, those speech communities having their own states. The regional languages complain that they are subjected to Hindi imperialism forgetting that they invariably establish their hegemony over the mother tongues spoken in the territory of their respective provincial states by subaltern communities. But the subaltern communities of the Hindi region are the worst affected in the context of designating Hindi as the national language. For example, the mother tongues of peasantry such as Maithili, Bhojpuri, Brij Bhasha and Awadhi and Adivasi mother tongues such as Bhili, Gondi, Santali and numerous others are victims of culturocide. That is most mother tongues in India are an endangered species. To reverse this trend mother tongue ought to be nurtured. Let me recall a quote for you:

Hindi does not enjoy in India such natural ascendancy over provincial languages as to incline the inhabitants to accept a secondary position for their own language. Hindi is the language of the minority, although large minority. Unfortunately it does not possess any advantages, literary or historical, over other modern (Indian) languages.¹¹

This is not a quote from an anti-Hindi Tamil or Bengali chauvinist but a quote from Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan who was India's Vice-president as well as President.

I want to suggest with all the force at my disposal that unless this language hierarchy with Hindi at the apex, regional languages in the middle (which incidentally are only eleven) and the languages of the subaltern peoples (Peasants and Adivasis) at the bottom is dismantled, a just regime for the numerous mother tongues of India will not ever crystallize. Also, the dream to achieve universal literacy will elude India in so far as the mother tongues are not used for school education. I hope and wish NUEPA will pick up this advocacy. According to the latest data available through Socio-Economic Caste Census more than a third of rural India is still illiterate. A quarter of households have no literate adults above 25 years. Less than 20% households have one family member with primary education. Viewed against the constitutional mandate this situation is nothing but dismal.

How can we rectify the present predicament? The linguistic re-organization of Indian states was intended to remedy injustice to smaller and weaker languages in addition to creating viable politico-administrative units of governance. But the SRC committed two fatal flaws. One, it did not consider mother tongues as the basis of creating provincial

states but lumped together several mother tongues to create administrative units as illustrated by the case of Hindi, as I noted already. Two, it did not consider recommending structures below the provincial states such as Autonomous Regions, Zilla Parishads or even Panchayat Samitis based on mother tongues.

If we are to deliver justice to mother tongues I suggest that where ever a specified number drawn from speech communities are territorially anchored they should be granted one of the four structures – Provincial States, Autonomous Regions, Zilla Parishads, Panchayat Samitis. For example, if 10,000 persons who have a common mother tongue live in an area a Panchayat Samiti should be given to them. Similarly, a population of one million can have their Zilla Parishads. However, it is not always possible to prescribe a fixed number but based on demographic density, geographic coverage, financial viability and the like, politico-administrative structures can be established. But common mother tongue a pre-requisite for easy communication between people who reside in a locality should be the basic criterion in constituting these units. The moment we do this a sea change in the social transformation of India will come about. Also, people at the grass roots can experience their participatory potential in governance through this device.

A few years ago I came across a press report regarding massive failure of school children in Hindi,

in Uttar Pradesh. On enquiry I discovered that it happened in the case of children of those districts in which the mother tongues of the pupils were Awadhi, Magadhi or Bhojpuri. I hope the message is clear. If we do not impart school education in the mother tongue of the child, the dream of achieving universal literacy will elude us. It may also be noted in passing here that those states which have achieved universal literacy such as Kerala are linguistically homogeneous; 94% of the residents of Kerala have Malayalam as their mother tongue. If children are not taught in their mother tongues, particularly in primary schools, they live in a socio-culturally divided world – that of home where they speak their mother tongues and the school wherein another language is to be used. This results in limited retention capacity and development of intellect.

In order to facilitate mother tongue as the medium of instruction it is often necessary to keep those who share the same mother tongue in the same politico-administrative units. But we do not follow this practice. For example, the Bhojpuri speaking people are divided between Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Much worse is the situation with regard to Adivasis. The Bhils, whose language is Bhillodi, are vivisected between Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and the Bhil children study through Gujarati medium in Gujarat, Marathi medium in Maharashtra and their medium of instruction is Hindi in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Examples can be multiplied but it is not necessary.

A legitimate question which can be posed at this juncture is: Can mother be the sole medium of instruction? The answer is certainly not in the affirmative. Gradually a second language in addition to mother tongue needs to be introduced, which would vary from region to region. Still later, competence in a third language, be it Hindi or English, would be necessary. To impart knowledge in theoretical physics or econometrics none of the Indian language would be functional. But that does not mean that we should ignore mother tongues in those contexts where they are functional. As I suggested at the very outset, appropriate languages should be adopted and nurtured for instrumental purposes without sacrificing the symbolic and instrumental importance of mother tongues.

It is necessary to underline here that linguistic homogeneity may not obtain in several territorial units and appropriate measures will have to be taken to attend to the voices of linguistic minorities in such contexts. That is, when linguistic groups are territorially dispersed it is extremely difficult to nurture their language through constitutional provisions. Thus in spite of the fact that Sindhi is included in the VIII Schedule of the Indian Constitution, Sindhi as a mother tongue is fast disappearing. Here the distinction between national minorities and ethnic minorities is useful. National linguistic minorities live in their homeland, ancestral or adopted, and interact constantly with members of

the same speech community. In contrast, ethnic linguistic minorities live as immigrants in the midst of other speech communities with limited possibility of interacting with members of their speech community. Different measures need to be taken to nurture linguistic competence of national and ethnic minorities.

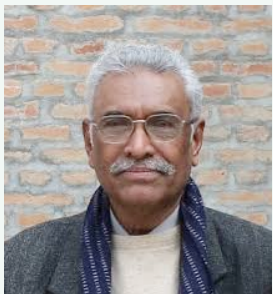
Let me conclude by noting that my advocacy of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in schools is a pragmatic ideal for the following reasons. First, clear and adequate communication at the grassroots level is possible through local languages that are usually mother tongues. Second, administrative units to be effective and viable ought to be co-terminus with communication units that is areas in which mother tongue is used for communication. Third, languages are generally speaking, linked to specific territories and territorially anchored linguistic communities have a shared culture and life style. Fourth, most mother tongues, irrespective of their level of development, are capable of effective communication in the context of everyday life. Finally, the concept of neighbourhood school and the child's mother tongue as the medium of instruction works in tandem and such an arrangement is bound to foster social transformation through education.

Notes

1. I have introduced the notion of culturocide in social science. See, T. K Oommen, 'Insiders and Outsiders in India: Primordial collectivism and cultural pluralism in Nation-Building', *International Sociology*, 1(1), 1986, pp. 53-74.
2. See, A.D Smith: *Theories of Nationalism*, Duckworth, London, 1971, p. 45
3. Stalin J.: *Marxism and Linguistics*, International Publishers, New York, n.d
4. *Ibid*, p. 46
5. Fishman, J.A.: 'Some contrasts between linguistically homogeneous and linguistically heterogeneous polities', in J.A Fishman, Ferguson C.A and J Dasgupta (eds) *Language Problems in Developing Nations*, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1968, p. 60
6. Blommaert, J and J. Verschueren: 'The role of Language in European National Ideologies', *Pragmatics*, 2(3), 1992, p. 372.
7. Digby, W.: '*Prosperous*' *British India*, London, p. 72
8. See, for details, T.K Oommen, *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity: Reconciling Competing Identities*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1997.
9. See, T.K Oommen: *Nation, Civil Society and Social Movements*, Sage Publications, New Delhi; 2004, Chapter 4, for an elaboration
10. Government of India: *Report of the Official Language Commission*, New Delhi, 1956.
11. S. Radhakrishnan: *Report on University Education*, Government of India, New Delhi, 1950.

Foundation Day Lectures

- **Alternative Perspectives on Higher Education in the Context of Globalization**
– Prabhat Patnaik (2007)
- **Designing Architecture for a Learning Revolution Based on a Life Cycle Approach**
– M. S. Swaminathan (2008)
- **Universities in the Twenty-First Century**
– Andre Beteille (2009)
- **Education, Autonomy and Accountability**
– Mrinal Miri (2010)
- **Twenty Years After: The Countryside and Two Decades of 'Reforms'**
– P. Sainath (2011)
- **Children's Right to Education in Areas of Civil Unrest**
– Shantha Sinha (2012)
- **Education and Modernity in Rural India**
– Krishna Kumar (2013)
- **Imagining Knowledge: Dreaming Democracy**
– Shiv Visvanathan (2014)



T.K. Oommen is at present Professor Emeritus at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, from where he retired after being a professor for 26 years. He was president of International Sociological Association as well as Indian Sociological Society. Professor Oommen was a Visiting Professor/ Research Fellow at several universities including University of California, Australian National University, Institute of Advanced Studies, Budapest and Uppsala. He has authored twenty books and edited ten books including *Alien Concepts and South Asian Reality* (Sage, 1995), *Citizenship, Nationality and Ethnicity* (Polity 1997), *Pluralism, Equity and Identity* (OUP 2002), *Classes, Citizenship and Inequality* (ed) (Pearson 2010). His latest book is *Social Inclusion in Independent India: Dimensions and Approaches* (Orient BlakSwan 2014).

He is a recipient the V.K.R.V Rao prize in Sociology (1981), G.S Ghurye prize in Sociology and Social Anthropology (1985) and the Swami Pranavananda Saraswati Award in Sociology (1997). He was a National Fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research. Professor Oommen was a member of Prime Minister's High Level Committee (the Sacher Committee) on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community in India (2004 to 2006). Professor Oommen was conferred the *Padma Bhushan* in 2008 in recognition of his contribution to higher education.