

UPSC Syllabus Topic: GS Paper 1 Indian Society – Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

What Hindi purists don't understand about Hindi

Bhartrihari, a renowned philosopher, offered insights into the nature of language as follows:

Dynamic and Ever-Changing: Bhartrihari believed that language is dynamic and ever-changing. It constantly evolves with time and usage.

Arbitrary Assignment of Meaning: He introduced the concept of "Dhwani," where the sounds in language arbitrarily assign meanings to words. This arbitrariness leads to the fluidity of language, as words do not have fixed, inherent meanings.

Uniqueness of Words: Bhartrihari emphasized that each word is unique, and there are no exact synonyms. Words may share similarities, but they carry distinct nuances and connotations.

In summary, Bhartrihari viewed language as a living entity, subject to constant redefinition by its users, with the capacity to evolve and adapt.

Evolution of the Hindi Language in India:

- 1. Impact of Historical Forces:** Hindi's evolution was significantly influenced by colonial encounters and the Indian national awakening. Intellectuals from the Hindi region were inspired by reform movements in Bengal, which led to efforts to modernize the language.
- 2. Fusion with Other Dialects and Languages:** Modern Hindi, based on Khari Boli Hindi, incorporated elements from dialects like Braj Bhasha, Awadhi, and Bhojpuri. It also integrated words from Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian, reflecting its adaptive nature.
- 3. The Hindi-Urdu Division:** A political campaign to replace Urdu with Hindi in certain regions sparked a divide, presenting Hindi and Urdu as separate languages for Hindus and Muslims. This led to movements to 'Sanskritize' Hindi.
- 4. Enduring Eclecticism:** Despite attempts to standardize and 'purify' Hindi, it retained its eclectic character. Influential literary figures from various linguistic backgrounds, including Urdu and Punjabi, continued to enrich Hindi literature.

Hindi's Role in Social Protest:

- 1. Foundation in Protest:** Hindi emerged from a background of resistance and has maintained this role, becoming a means to challenge colonial power and advocate for national awakening.
- 2. Literature as Dissent:** Writers like Premchand and Rahi Masoom Raza have used Hindi to express themes of social justice and unity, participating in the larger narrative of protest through their works.
- 3. Reflecting Plurality and Protest:** Hindi has allowed writers from diverse backgrounds to use their writing to challenge social injustice, reflecting the plurality of voices in India. Writers like Krishna Sobti from Punjab have contributed to this cause.
- 4. Hindi's Emancipatory Role:** Throughout its evolution, Hindi has maintained its core purpose of challenging injustice and promoting the welfare of various groups, making it a powerful tool for social protest and change.