

LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

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This study aims to identify the way in which language has become the deciding factor in the formation of one's identity within the given community making the mechanism of dominance and subordination stronger. Identity is the common feature that can be seen in both the context of dominance and subjugation. These identities that come out in the way of subjugation and domination appears not in any other form but in the form of language. Therefore, language is not just something that one can use to express one's ideas, it is also the way this power and subordination put into practice. This can be understood in terms of cast differences. "Cast" is a kind of stratificational "term" through which people are categorized, identified, arranged and confined to their identities. Each moment of speaking or interacting with others, he ensures his existence in his "given" identity. However, the "identity" concerned by all kind of practice of power is highly questionable, as the word "identity" brings the idea of "completeness". Here, the "completeness" in many sense – completeness in the sense of "body", "relation", "meaning and understanding" and, finally, in the sense of "knowledge". Therefore, one can think of to owe any kind of identity only if the inevitable questions mentioned bellow related to "identity" can be solved. They are; is it possible for a person to have complete understanding about himself or herself, then about the other with whom he or she is going to interact? Can one predict with whom he is going to interact or what kind of situation he is to be encountered? Can one remain always in the given community with the given language? Can anyone be reduced to have any kind of identity? Therefore, can one reduce language to own any identity? These unavoidable questions related to "identity" will be analyzed, in this paper, through Sinhala and Tamil cast system in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Language, Identity, Community, Dominance, Subjugation, Relation