



‘Resettlement’ - Adding New Languages in the Life of the Bhils and the Pawras of the West Central India

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Abstract

The paper examines the verbal repertoire of the residents (Pawra, Bhil, Bhoi and Tapti-Adivasi) of some of the resettled villages of the Internally Displaced Populations (IDPs) of the Narmada Valley and tries to investigate how the multilingual setting around these new villages is adding new language(s) in their life. The extensive field work in these new villages (and also in their original villages) shows that the youths (chiefly male youths) are using Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and the other (non-tribal) languages in the Public Domains, like market-place, college, bus stop elsewhere, they interact with the Non-Tribals / the original residents / unknown persons around the new villages. But the linguistic environment inside their homes (Home Domain) proves to be the safest precinct for their mother tongues in this new multilingual environment. Even the bilingual and multilingual tribals use only their mother tongues for communication in family. This is true with the residents of Majority Group (Pawra and Bhil) as well as the Minority Group (Bhoi and Tapti-Adivasi). The paper further investigates the phenomenon of Language Shift through the study of language use in the Home Domain and in some Public Domains. The overall result shows that the tribals of these resettled villages are gradually moving from monolingualism to multilingualism and thus, enjoying their linguistic growth. It would be interesting to see the extent to which the other languages have occupied the different domains. The research site is at the border areas of three Indian states – Maharashtra (‘Marathi’ - the dominant language), Gujarat (‘Gujarati’ - the dominant language) and Madhya Pradesh (‘Hindi’ - the dominant language). The resettled villages are in Taloda, Shahada and Akkalkuwa talukas of Nandurbar district of Maharashtra state of India.

Key Words: Verbal Repertoire, Language Shift, Domains of Language Use, IDPs, Narmada Valley.

1. The Background:

The paper focuses on the change and enrichment of the verbal repertoire of the internally displaced populations who are residing in the multilingual surrounding of the resettled villages of the Narmada valley. This research work is a part of the sociolinguistic study of the displaced tribals who were displaced from Satpura mountain range to different talukas of Nandurbar district of Maharashtra state of India. This district is on the border areas of three Indian states - Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. This particular place is associated with one of the prominent movements of India the '*Narmada Bachao Andolan*' led by the Indian social activists. These resettled villages are in Taloda, Shahada and Akkalkuwa talukas (*tahsil*) of this district.

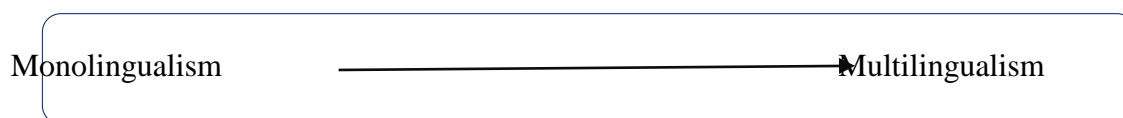


Figure 1: The Layers of Language Use

2. The Literary Position:

Joshua A Fishman (an American linguist) is the well known name associated with this term, the 'Domains of Language Use' who did the sociolinguistic study of 'Language Choice'. Valentino et al (2013) interviewed the students of Sanata Dharma University of English Language Education Program through random sampling in relation to the five domains which were family, friendship, education, relationship and transition. These ten students were from different speech communities and socio-cultural backgrounds. These researchers had studied the Joshua Fishman's Domains of Language Use in relation to multicultural life in English Language Education Study Program in this university. The way of speaking based on the selected five domains were recorded and studied further.

Gerhard Schmidt-Rohr 1932 (a German linguist) was the first scholar who gave the concept of 'the Domains of Language Use'. He took the nine domains of language use. These domains of language use were family, playground, school, church, literature, press, army, court room and administration. According to Haberland (2005), the goal of Schmidt-Rohr was to find the different areas of language use in multilingual societies which are relevant for

language choice. Schmidt-Rohr's work was *Die Sprache als Bildnerin der Völker* (1932) which was republished in 1933 (after a year) with the new title '*Mutter Sprache*' which means 'Mother Language'.

3. The Methodology:

A questionnaire from the sociolinguistic point of view was designed to gather the information regarding the use of language in the specified domains: Home, Neighbourhood, *Sarpanch / Police Patil*, Market-Place, Activists, Government Officials and Unknown Persons. The data were collected largely through interaction with the villagers of all the age groups, education level and sex which were analysed using quantitative methods. The informants were taken from: a) The three villages – Narmadanagar, Rewanagar and Rozwa village b) Senior College, Taloda - where students of Pawra and Bhil communities study and c) Adiwasi Hostel, Taloda - where students of both the communities live. The villages (resettled villages) were chosen for collecting data in a well planned manner in such a way that one village from Pawra community (Rewanagar village), one from Bhil community (Narmadanagar village) and Rozwa village (where people of both the communities live together). The data from uneducated / illiterate respondents were mostly collected from the three villages whereas the data from educated respondents were collected from the college and the hostel. The language use in the home domain was examined in the following situation types: interaction with family members of the same, older and younger generations. Language use in the public domain was taken into consideration for the following situation types: interaction with neighbours, with shop-keepers in the marketplace, with government officials, social activists, with unknown person etc.

4. Presentation of the Data:

1. What is the linguistic impact of resettlement on the language use in the home domain?

Age Group: 3 groups of age (15 years to 25 years, 26 years to 44 years and 45 years and above)

Use of different languages in home domain (Age Group - 1)

Total Number of Informants = 24

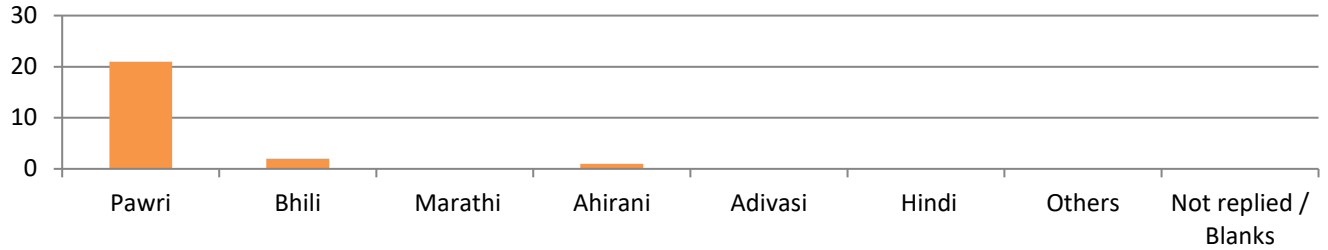


Chart 1 (Rewanagar Village)

Use of different languages in home domain (Age Group - 1)

Total Number of Informants = 20

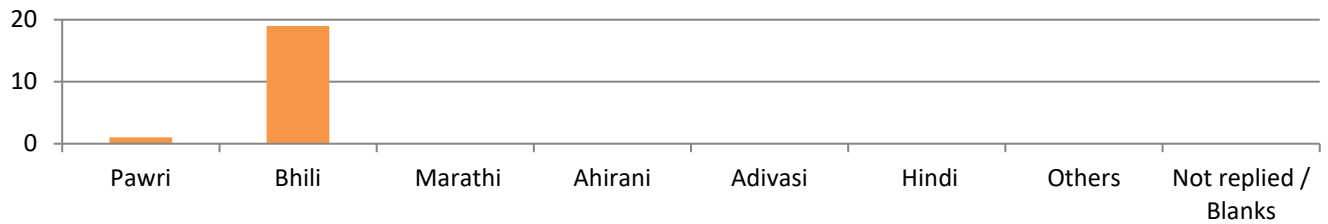


Chart 1a (Narmadanagar Village)

Use of different languages in home domain (Age Group - 2)

Total Number of Informants = 10

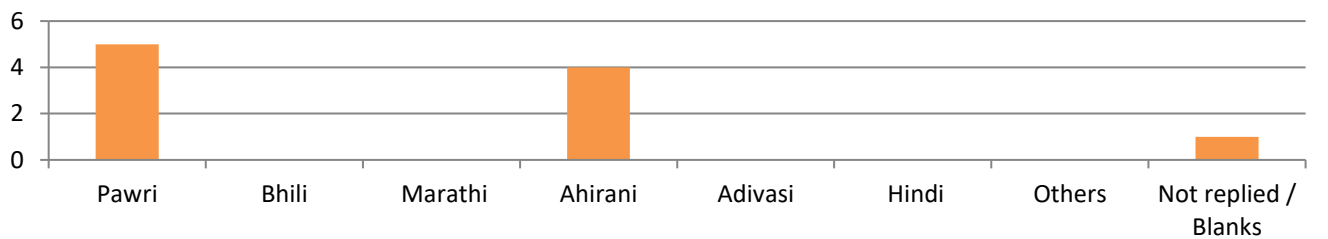


Chart 2 (Rewanagar Village)

Use of different languages in home domain (Age Group - 2)

Total Number of Informants = 13

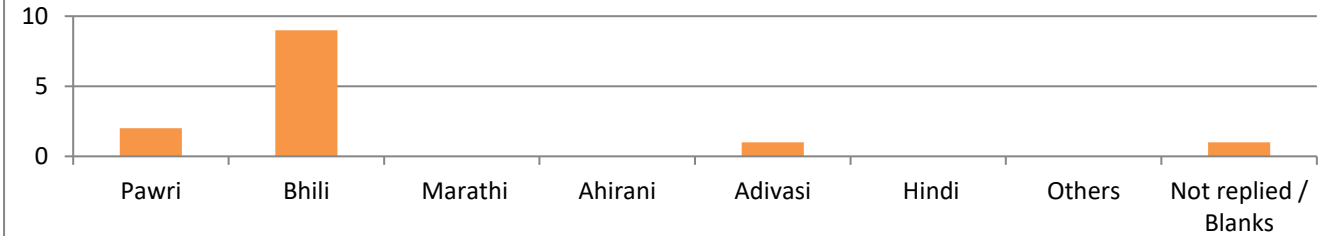


Chart 2a (Narmadanagar Village)

In Home Domain (Age Group - 3)

Total Number of Informants = 13

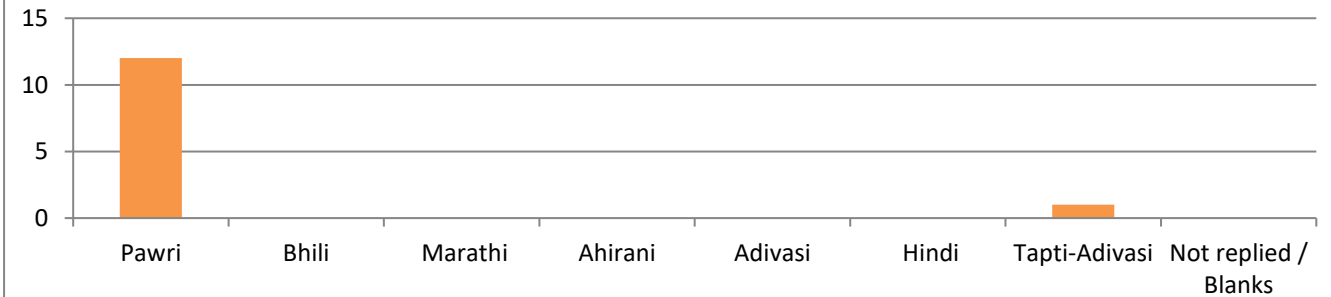


Chart 3 (Rewanagar Village)

In Home Domain (Age Group - 3)

Total Number of Informants = 10

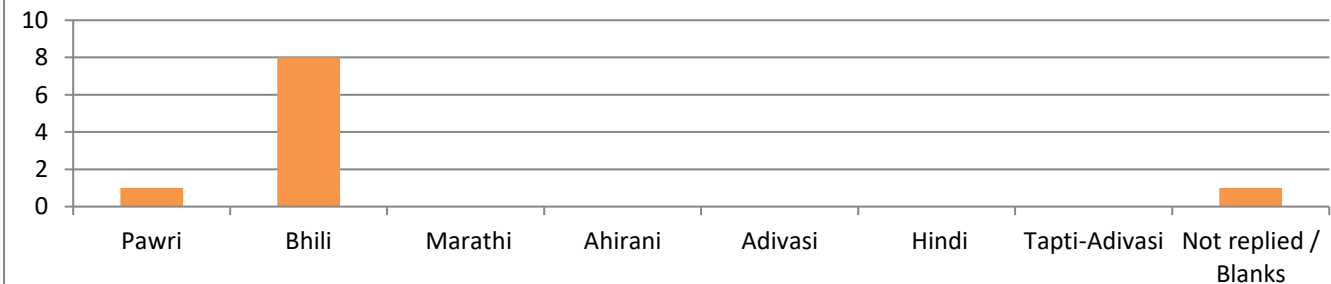


Chart 3a (Narmadanagar Village)

2. What is the linguistic impact of resettlement on the language use in the market place?
 Age Group: 3 groups of age (15 years to 25 years, 26 years to 44 years and 45 years and above)

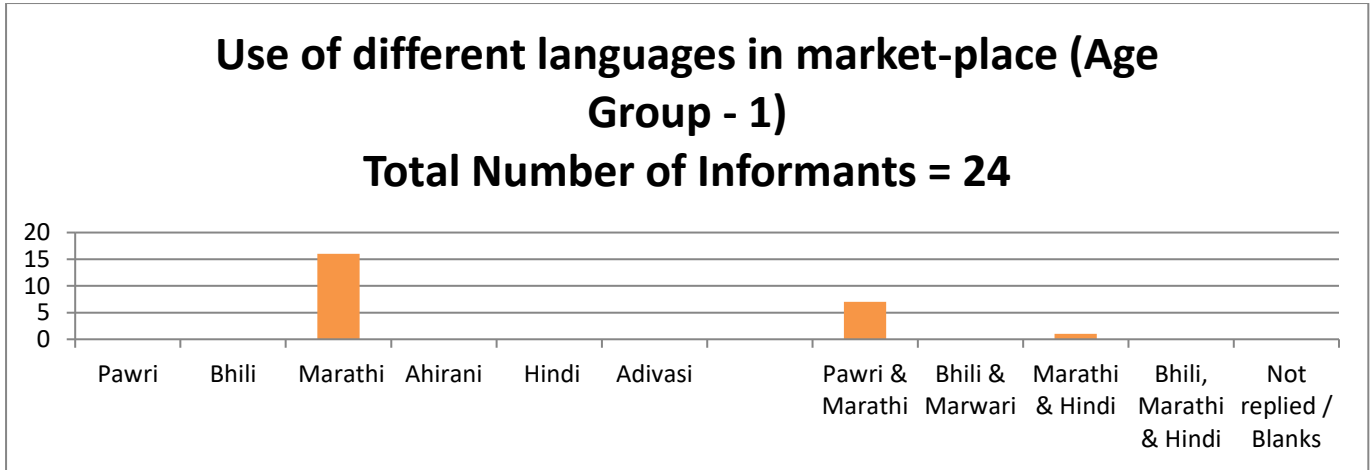


Chart 4 (Rewanagar Village)

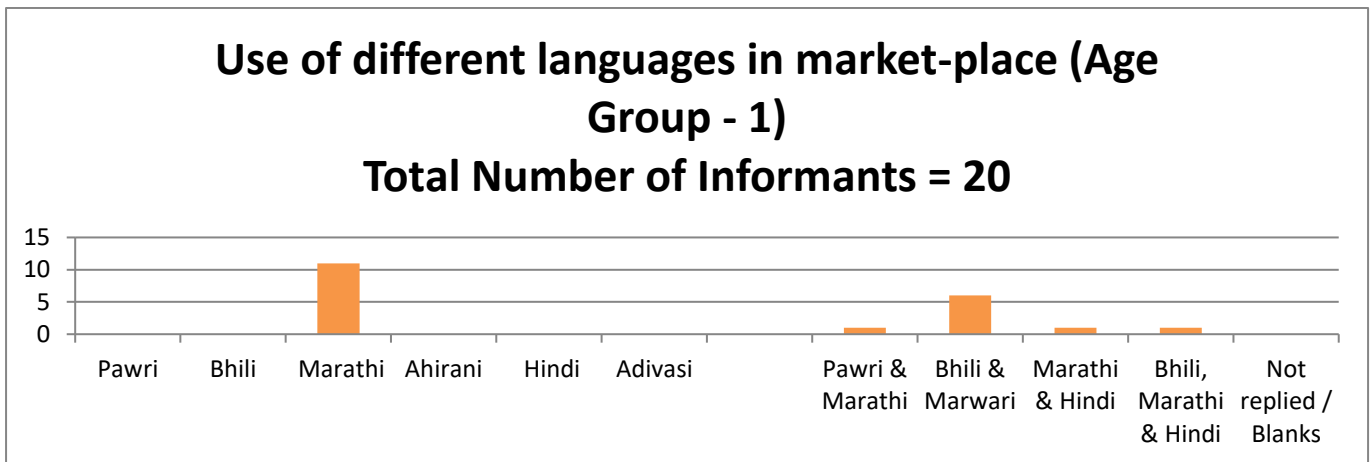


Chart 4a (Narmadanagar Village)

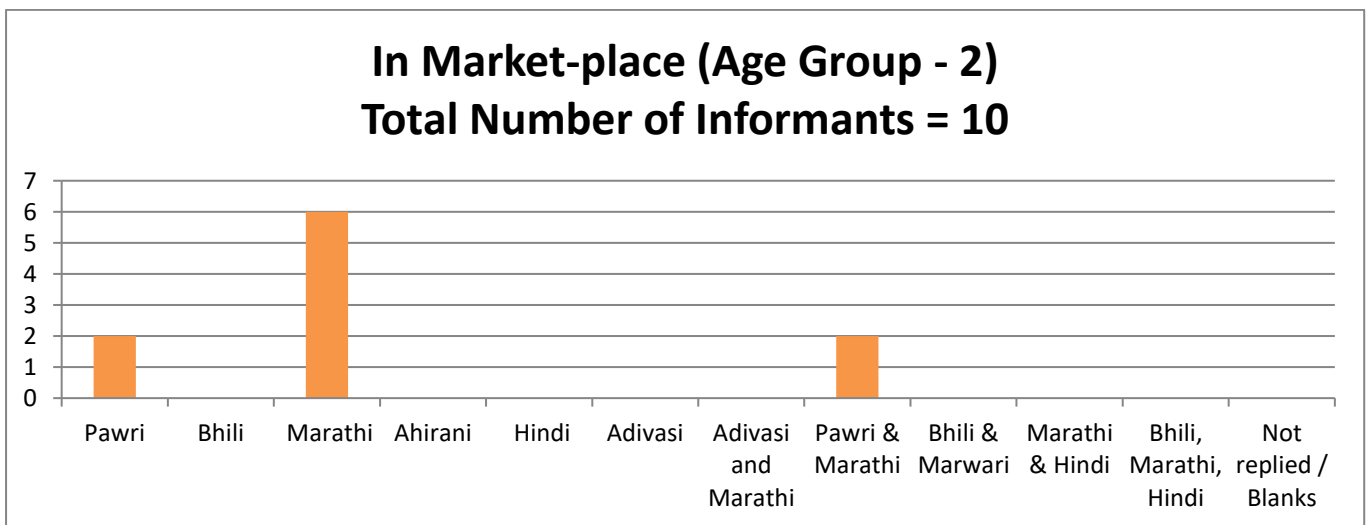


Chart 5 (Rewanagar Village)

In Market-place (Age Group - 2)
Total Number of Informants = 13

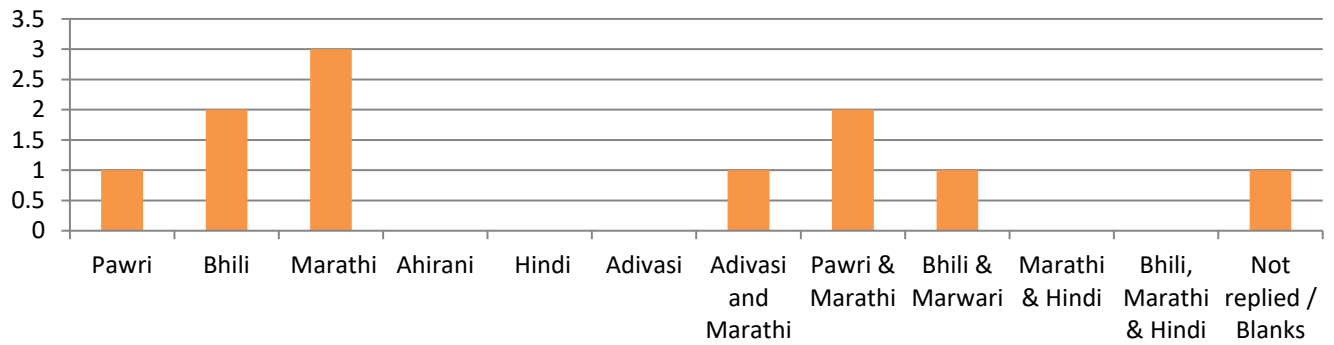


Chart 5a (Narmadanagar Village)

In Market-place (Age Group - 3)
Total Number of Informants = 13

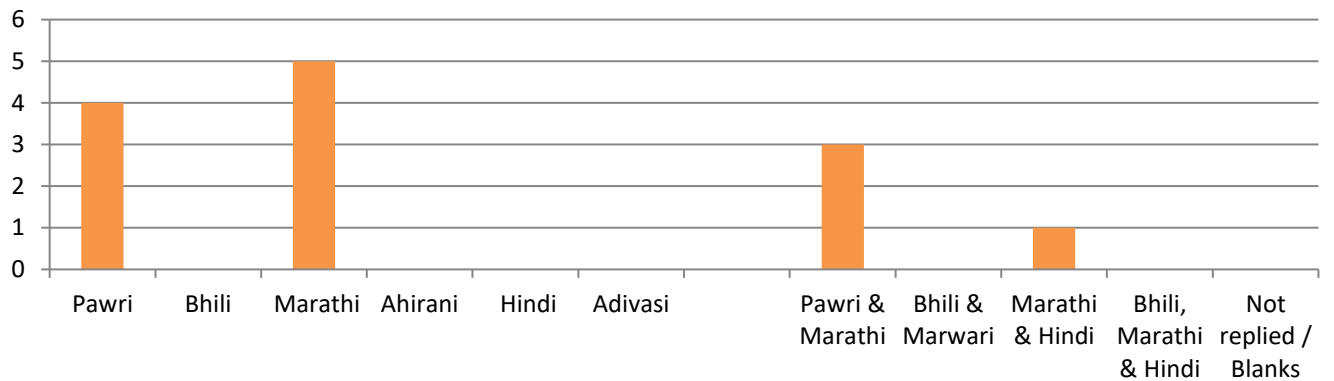


Chart 6 (Rewanagar Village)

In Market-place (Age Group - 3)
Total Number of Informants = 10

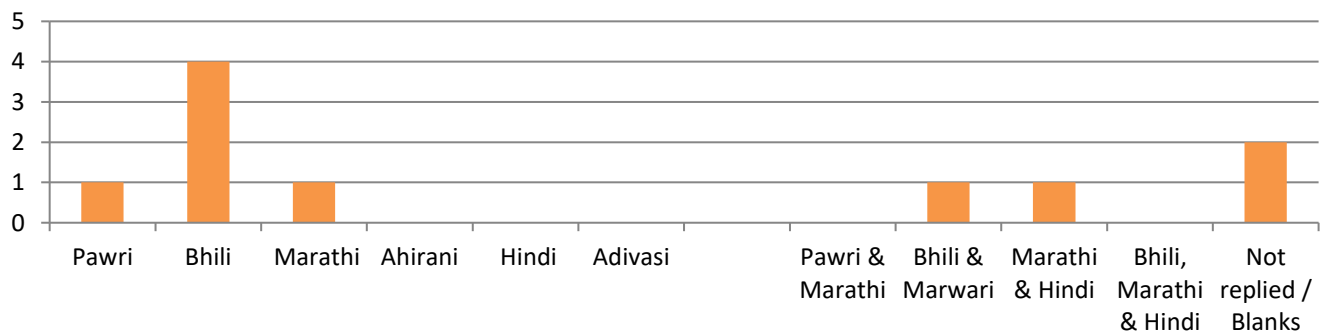


Chart 6a (Narmadanagar Village)

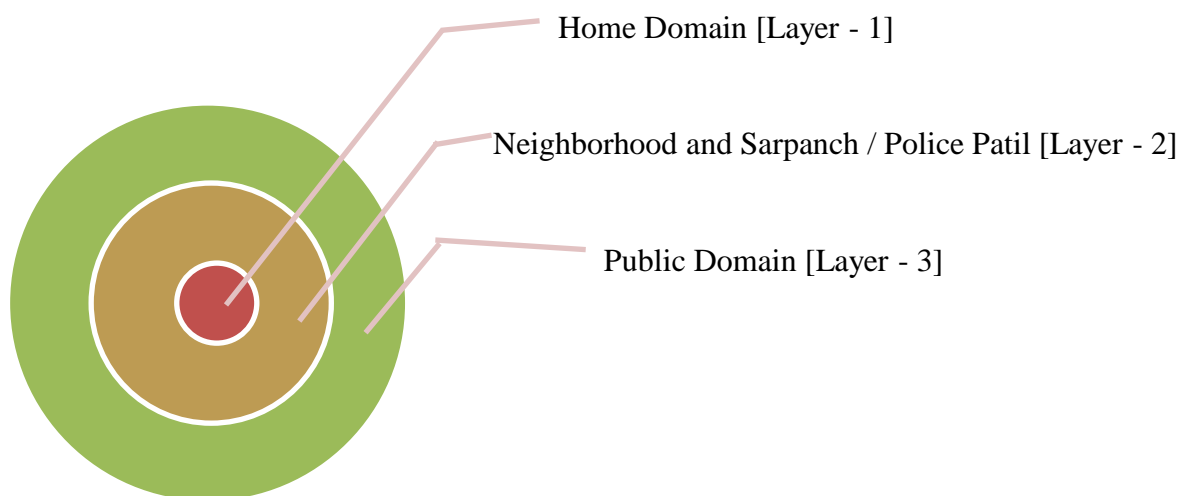


Figure 1: The Layers of Language Use

5. The Discussion:

As already discussed, this study takes the seven domains of language use (Home, Neighborhood, *Sarpanch / Police Patil*, Market-Place, Activists, Government Officials and Unknown Persons) for the sociolinguistic exploration. These domains of language use can be classified into three groups on the basis of the selection and use of specific language for the specific domains of language use and also the psychological motivation of a language user behind this choice (Figure 1). The home domain is completely a private domain where the selection of a language is fully governed by the emotional motivation of the family members of a particular family. The findings on account of the linguistic data as well as the ethnographic study show that the Home, Neighborhood and *Sarpanch / Police patil* domains / interlocutors are fully subjugated by the subjects' mother tongues (Pawri, Bhili or its dialects) and are thus unaffected from the dominated languages (Marathi / Gujarati / Hindi) of the multilingual environment around the resettled villages. The field work observation also proves that the languages (Marathi, Gujarati or Hindi) are completely missing in these domains / interlocutors. The use of language in these domains / interlocutors is more or less the same as used to be in their original villages. The linguistic impact of resettlement on the language use in the home domain and some of the public domains / interlocutors (Neighborhood and *Sarpanch / Police Patil*) is nil. This is true with the speakers of all age groups, educational levels and sex. This is true with the residents of the majority group (Pawra and Bhil) as well as of the minority group (Bhoi and Tapti-Adivasi).

Population	Communities	The Languages Spoken in Home Domain
Majority Group	Pawra	Pawri
	Bhil	Bhili
Minority Group	Bhois	Ahirani
	Tapti Adivasis	Tapti-Adivasi

Table 1

The languages spoken by the Pawras, Bhils, Bhois and the Tapti Adivasis in their family are Pawri, Bhili, Ahirani and Tapti-Adivasi respectively (Table 1). However the minority groups (Bhoi and Tapti-Adivasi) fail to retain their mother tongues (Ahirani and Tapti-Adivasi) in any public domains including neighborhood and Sarpanch / Police Patil domain. They use Pawri or the dialects of Bhili in the public domains. These two communities (Bhoi and Tapti-Adivasi) know all the dialects spoken in this area. The market-place (Taloda Market, Nandurbar) is a multilingual domain where Marathi, Ahirani, Pawri, Marwari, the different dialects of Bhili and even Hindi languages spoken (Chart 4 to 6a).

6. The Conclusion:

The selection of a language by a language user for a specific domain of language use is governed by the nature of the domain and the socio-psychological capability of a language. The emotional motivation of a language user makes significant impact in home domain in the selection of a language for communication among the family members. On the other hand, the instrumental motivation energies to learn dominant / standard language like Marathi and Hindi to fulfill the instrumental goals. Hence, resettlement always provides the opportunity to the resettled population to learn new language(s) and thus enrich the verbal repertoire.

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