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Provision for Linguistic Diversity and Linguistic Minorities in India

Vanishree V.M., MAPL and ELT, M.A., PGDHRM.

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India is one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world. Most languages in India belong to one of the four language families: Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burmese and Austro-Asiatic. According to the 2001 Indian Census there are a total of 122 languages and 234 mother tongues. However, these figures cannot be accepted as final as the Census does not report languages spoken by fewer than 10,000 speakers (for instance, in 1961 around 1652 mother tongues were returned in the Census but only 193 languages were classified).

When India gained its Independence in 1947, the framers of the Constitution had a tremendous task to do. They had to put together a Constitution that not only preserved political unity, but also acknowledged and promoted cultural and linguistic diversity. Constitutional safeguards were put in place in order to protect and nurture linguistic diversity, such as the "Eighth Schedule" (ES); this was included in the Constitution in order to provide official status to many Indian languages. The initial proposal to adopt Hindi as National Language was dropped, as it provoked conflict in a country in which language differences often reinforced ethnic or religious divisions. The Education Policy was devised to provide for link languages that would aid in the assimilation of minority language groups. In addition, the states were re-organised on the basis of dominant regional languages in order to protect the interests of linguistically diverse communities. However all this has led to a complex situation in which the 22 languages listed under the Eighth Schedule have a special status, which allows them dominance over *other* minority languages. Furthermore, some languages are the majority in one state and a minority in another, leading to two different types of minority languages: a) minorities that are a majority in some other state and b) minor minorities that are not dominant in any state. In addition, the Constitutional safeguards prescribed are also only declarative in nature and therefore cast no burden on the State to implement them.

Then how has India managed to sustain as a unified country despite this? It is only because of its willingness to adapt and recognise the considerable variation that exists.

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Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

Here is Mark Twain's rather "fabulous" description of India:

> The land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and fabulous poverty, of splendour and rags, of palaces and hovels, of famine and pestilence, of genii and giants and Aladdin lamps, of tigers and elephants, the cobra and the jungle, the country of hundred nations and a hundred tongues, of a thousand religions and two million gods, cradle of the human race, birthplace of human speech, mother of history, grandmother of legend, great-grandmother of traditions, whose yesterday's (sic) bear date with the modering (sic) antiquities for the rest of nations-the one sole country under the sun that is endowed with an imperishable interest for alien prince and alien peasant, for lettered and ignorant, wise and fool, rich and poor, bond and free, the one land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for the shows of all the rest of the world combined (Pratheep, 2006-2008).

Almost everything is exaggerated except the number of languages, which is seriously under-estimated. The 2001 Census shows that there are in total 122 languages in India out of which 22 languages are spoken by over one million people, while a remaining 100 languages are spoken by more than 10,000 people. Then again, there are languages that are not even recorded because they are spoken by less than 10,000. However, this is a serious under-reporting of the actual number of languages as well because the Census also recorded over 1,500 "mother tongues" used in India (*Census India*, 2010-2011). This discrepancy can be explained by the criteria used that only languages with more than 10,000 speakers (officially) are given official recognition.

This dissertation examines the provision for linguistic diversity and linguistic minorities in India by presenting an overview of the existing linguistic diversity in India and the historical

background that has contributed to the present diversity. It also examines the National Language Policy and the States Re-organisation which have contributed to the political identification of majority-minority linguistic groups. In addition to this it also outlines the Constitutional rights and safeguards guaranteed by the Constitution. Furthermore, it also evaluates the difficulty in defining "a minority" in India and also the misrepresentation of the minority languages in the censuses. It also assesses the effectiveness of the Three Language Formula in education adopted by the Government in order to help people communicate through link languages. Finally, it looks at the representation of the linguistic minorities in the domains of Public Administration, Media and Information Technology.

MAP ONE
INDIA AND ITS STATES

(Baldridge, 2002)

* Three new states were formed in November 2000, Chattisgarh was carved out of the Madhya Pradesh state, Uttranchal out of the Uttar Pradesh state and Jarkhand out of the Bihar state.

Mahajan (2010:112), who writes extensively on politics states that "Unity in Diversity" is what India stands for. The underlying sentiment of its people is that ''India can be a strong and unified country while simultaneously affirming its cultural diversity'' (Mahajan, 2010: 112). Hence, cultural homogeneity is not considered to be prerequisite for a country such as India to forge a political identity as a nation state (Mahajan, 2010: 112). However, linguistic diversity is an ever-present challenge to the desired unity. She also points out, "The route India embarked upon at the time of independence has been a difficult and arduous journey" (Mahajan, 2010: 112). When India gained its Independence in 1947, the Government and the framers of the Constitution had a tremendous task to do, keeping in mind the existing diversity and formulating a desirable framework that would help build "a unified but culturally diverse nation state" (Mahajan, 2010: 111). Therefore, what we have today is a framework of democracy that tries to accommodate culturally and linguistically diverse people.

What lies at the core of Indian Constitution is that all communities should co-exist as equals despite cultural backgrounds. But, just by granting equality to people would by no means solve the problem. The minority communities needed special Constitutional rights to lead a life of liberty in order to follow and to protect their own cultural identity (Mahajan, 2010: 112). For instance, the minority religious communities and linguistic minority communities needed liberty and protection to follow their own religious practices and beliefs and to promote their identity through their respective languages. Therefore the Constitution linked "equality for the individual with equality for diverse communities" (Mahajan, 2010: 112).

However, a major cause of concern is even though the Indian Constitution provides many safeguards for linguistic minorities, a recent UNESCO report identifies 196 languages that are endangered in India. The list includes 84 languages that are "unsafe", 62 languages that are "definitely endangered", 6 languages that are "severely endangered", 33 languages that are "critically endangered" respectively, and 9 languages have become "extinct" in India since the 1950's (*UNESCO*,1995-2010). This concludes that India officially has the highest number of

endangered languages in the world, closely followed by the Unites States (192) and Brazil (190) respectively.

Table-1

Countries with the Most Endangered Languages

(Sengupta, 2009: 17)

Country	Degree Of Vitality					
	Unsafe	**Definitely Endangered**	**Severely Endangered**	**Critically Endangered**	**Extinct**	**Total Endangered**
India	84	62	6	35	9	196
United States	11	25	32	71	53	192
Brazil	97	17	19	45	12	190
Indonesia	56	30	19	32	10	147
China	41	49	22	23	9	144
Mexico	52	38	33	21	-	144
Russian Federation	21	47	29	20	19	136
Australia	17	13	30	42	6	108
Papua New Guinea	24	15	29	20	10	98
Canada	24	14	16	32	2	88

From the two categories with the least degree of vitality, "critically" and "severely" endangered, 28 out of 37 languages (75%) have fewer than 5,000 speakers. Within the same two categories 92% of the languages have fewer than 20,000 speakers. On the other hand, in the category which has the highest vitality within the endangerment schema, the "unsafe", about 85% of these languages have more than 20,000 speakers (Sengupta, 2009: 18).

The Indian languages can be broadly categorised under five major groups 1) Indo–Aryan 2) Dravidian 3) Austro–Asiatic 4) Tibeto–Burmese and 5) Semito–Hamitic.

TABLE-2

GROUPING BY FAMILY OF THE 122 SCHEDULED AND NON-SCHEDULED LANGUAGES –2001

Language Families	Number of Languages	Persons who returned the languages as their mother tongue	Per centage to total population
1	**2**	**3**	**4**
1. Indo-European (a) Indo-Aryan	21	790,627,060	76.86
(b) Iranian	2	22,774	0.00
(c) Germanic	1	226,449	0.02
2. Dravidian	17	214,172,874	20.82
3. Austro-Asiatic	14	11,442,029	1.11
4. Tibeto-Burmese	66	10,305,026	1.00
5. Semito-Hamitic	1	51,728	0.01
Total	**122**	**1,026,847,940***	**99.82***

(*Census India*, 2010-11)

* These languages are further grouped as **Scheduled Languages (22)** or the Official Language of the States that are considered as major languages of India and **Non-Scheduled (100)** the other languages used for administrative purposes (Sarangi, 2009: 18).

* The remainder of 1,762,388 (0.17%) population, out of total Indian population, is composed of speakers of those languages and mother tongues that were not identifiable or were less than 10000 speakers at all Indian level and the population (127,108 persons) of Manipur, which was not included in the language data since the Census results were cancelled in 3 sub-divisions of Senapati district of the Manipur state in 2001 (*Census India*, 2010-11).

TABLE-3

Names of 122 Scheduled (S) and Non-Scheduled Languages -2001

INDO-ARYAN			DRAVIDIAN	AUSTRO-ASIATIC	TIBETO-BURMESE		SEMITO-HAMITIC
INDO-ARYAN	**IRANIAN**	**GERMANIC**	1.Coorgi/ Kodagu,	1.Bhumij,	1.Adi,	35. Manipuri(S),	1. Arabic/ Arbi
1. Assamese (S),	1. Afghani/ Kabuli/ Pashto,	1.English	2. Gondi,	2. Gadaba,	2. Anal,	36. Maram,	
2. Bengali(S),	2. Persian		3. Jatapu,	3. Ho,	3. Angami,	37. Maring,	
3.Bhili/Bhilodi,			4. Kannada(S),	4. Juang,	4. Ao,	38.Miri/ Mishing,	
4.Bishnupuriya,			5.Khond/Kondh,	5. Kharia,	5. Balti,	39. Mishmi,	
5. Dogri(S)			6. Kisan,	6. Khasi,	6. Bhotia,	40. Mogh,	
6. Gujarati(S),			7. Kolami,	7. Koda/Kora,	7. Bodo (S),	41. Monpa,	
7. Halabi,			8. Konda,	8. Korku,	8. Chakesang,	42. Nissi/Dafla,	
8. Hindi(S),			9.Koya,	9. Korwa,	9. Chakru/Chokri,	43. Nocte,	
9. Kashmiri(S),			10. Kui,	10. Munda,	10. Chang,	44. Paite,	
10. Khandeshi,			11. Kurukh/Oraon,	11.Mundari,	11. Deori,	45. Pawi,	
11. Konkani(S),			12. Malayalam(S),	12. Nicobarese,	12. Dimasa,	46. Phom,	
12. Lahnda,			13. Malto,	13. Santali(S)	13. Gangte,	47. Pochury,	
13. Maithili(S),			14. Parji,	14.Savara.	14. Garo,	48. Rabha,	
14. Marathi(S),			15 Tamil(S),		15. Halam,	49. Rai	
15. Nepali(S),			16. Telugu(S),		16. Hmar,	50.Rengma,	
16. Oriya(S),			17.Tulu.		17. Kabui,	51. Sangtam,	
17. Punjabi(S),					18. Karbi/Mikir,	52. Sema,	
18. Sanskrit(S),					19. Khezha,	53. Sherpa,	
19. Shina,					20. Khiemnungan,	54. Simte,	
20. Sindhi(S),					21.Kinnauri,	55. Tamang	
21. Urdu(S),					22. Koch,	56. Tangkhul,	
					23. Kom,	57. Tangsa,	
					24. Konyak,	58. Thado,	
					25. Kuki,	59. Tibetan,	
					26. Ladakhi,	60. Tripuri,	
					27. Lahauli,	61. Vaiphei,	
					28. Lakher,	62. Wancho,	
					29. Lalung,	63.Yimchungr,	
					30. Lepcha,	64.Zeliang,	
					31. Liangmei,	65. Zemi,	
					32. Limbu,	66. Zou.	
					33.Lotha,		
					34. Lushai/Mizo,		

(*Census India*, 2010-11)

Chapter 2 reviews the historical background and development of the Indian languages. Chapter 3 focuses on issues such as the National Language Policy, the Linguistic Re-organisation of the Indian states and the formulation of Constitution with respect to the language provisions made to

safeguard the interests of linguistic minorities in India. Furthermore, it touches on the issues relating to the definition of a minority in Indian context and also presents an alternative means of approaching the definition of a minority. Chapter 4 looks at practical implementation of the Constitution, further changes to the Constitution, and the introduction of language policies designed to preserve unity and linguistic diversity.

CHAPTER 2

Ancient and Colonial History

Ancient History

Indo-Aryan Family

Before the arrival of Aryans in 1500 BC, India was linguistically diverse, with other linguistic community inhabitants such as Sino-Mongoloids, Austroloids, Negritos and languages of other settlers who came to India from time to time (Daniel, 1999-2005). But, much of the information about the exact origins of languages prior to Aryan era still remains quite unclear. The arrival of the Aryans also marked the arrival of Vedic Sanskrit in India in 1500 BC or even earlier, much before the writing was introduced in India. Vedic Sanskrit continued to be in use up until 200 BC and was then followed by the Classical Sanskrit (Baldridge, 2002). Classical Sanskrit was developed from the Vedic Sanskrit by Panini, a great grammarian of his time in 400 BC and was used as a standard court language. Classical Sanskrit then gave rise to a range of dialects known as Prakrit which literally means "common" or "unpolished" as opposed to Sanskrit which means "refined" or "purified" (Nayar in Baldridge, 2002) and is commonly described as the regional or vernacular dialects of Classical Sanskrit during the Middle Indo-Aryan period (600 BC to 1000 AD). Prakrits were popular forms of speech but some developed into literary languages such as Sauraseni Prakrit, which was the chief language of northern Medieval India. Magadi Prakrit was spoken in the eastern Indian sub-continent; and Maharashtri was written in the Devanagari script and was the most popular amongst all Prakrit languages and was spoken in north and south of India (*Answers Corporation,* 2010). These Middle Indo-Aryan languages were gradually transformed into Apabhramasas which before the end of the 1300 AD had began to evolve into the Modern Indo-Aryan languages such as Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi and so on (Baldridge, 2002). At present around 77 per cent of the Indian population, approximately 800 million people based on the 2001 Census report, speak one of the Indo-Aryan groups of languages (*Census India*, 2010-11).

Dravidian Family

Unlike the Indo-Aryan languages, the exact origin of Dravidian languages is under a great deal of speculation and much less is known about the ancient history of the Dravidian family, though some connections with Uralic and Altic have been posited (Baldridge, 2002). Based on the available written evidence, many Indian linguists believe that the oldest Dravidian language is Tamil which can be traced back to the 1st century AD. It is believed that two other languages like Kannada and Telugu seemed to have developed only after the 6th century. Malayalam spilt from Tamil as a literary language and was developed as an independent language by around the 12th century (Baldridge, 2002). Presently, around 20 per cent of the Indian population, about 215 million people speak Dravidian languages (*Census India*, 2010-11). This language does not have any relationship with other languages outside the Indian sub-continent. The majority of the Dravidian speakers are from the southern part of India, mainly from the states of Tamil Nadu (Tamil), Andhra Pradesh (Telugu), Karnataka (Kannada) and Kerala (Malayalam). However, a few speakers are scattered in the north as well, for instance the Gonds in Madhya Pradesh, the Orissa, and the Kurukhs in Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

Tibeto-Burmese and Austro-Asiatic Family

Languages that belong to these two language families are considered to be much older than the Indo-Aryan languages by linguists. Like in the case of Dravidian languages, the exact time of origin of these languages too remains unclear. There is a reference to these languages in ancient Sanskrit literature, therefore it could indicate that these languages are either much older than the Indo-Aryan language family or may have existed at around the same time. In the Sanskrit literature, the Tibeto-Burmese languages were referred to as "Kiratas" and the Austro-Asiatic languages were referred to as "Nisadas" (*Culturopedia*, 2010). The Tibeto-Burmese languages can be divided into four groups namely Tibetan, Himalayan, North-Assam and Assam-Burmese and can be found along the Himalayan fringe from the states of Jammu and Kashmir to eastern Assam. These langauages make up for 1 per cent, around 10.3 million of the population (*Census India*, 2010-11). The Austro-Asiatic languages composed of the Munda tongues and others thought to be related to them, are spoken by groups of tribal people spread across the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh (Heitzman & Worden, 1995). These groups

make up approximately 1.11 per cent, about 11.4 million people of the population (*Census India*, 2010-11). The most important language of this language group is Santhali, which is spoken by over 5 million people (refer table 3 for other important Tibeto-Burmese and Austro-Asiatic languages).

Colonial History

After the downfall of the Mughal Empire (the last Muslim Empire in India), when the British inherited India from the previous rulers, they had a "daunting task of administering a huge and ethnically diverse territory" (Page, 2003: 331). Therefore, in order to understand the "linguisitic-cultural composition of India" (Sarangi, 2009: 13), the British used a number of enumerative methods such as censuses, gazetters, lingustic survey reports such as the Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India in 1896, and ethnographical accounts in order to classify and categorise the lingusitic demography of the country. This was done mainly to gain an insight into the diversity, that could, in turn, help them "control over the vast and heterogeneous Indian social structure" (Sarangi, 2009: 13).

English replaced Persian as the language of administration in 1835. Persian and Hindi were retained only at the lower administrative levels thereafter, whereas English became the language of the elite and the intellectual due to the Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education in 1835. After this Minute, the oriental education was slowly replaced by western education and was also crucial in placing English as a medium of instruction within the realm of higher education. The following quote from Macaulay's speech best summarises how English gained a strong foot hold in India.

> It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population (Thirumalai, 2003).

Even to this day, English enjoys a special status in India and those who are educated in English are considered superior to those who are not. At present, English is spoken by 3-4 per cent of the Indian population as first, second or third language (Baldridge, 2002).

CHAPTER 3

Post-Independence and the Constitution

"How shall we promote the unity of India and yet preserve the rich diversity of our inheritance?"

(Jawaharlal Nehru the first Prime Minister of India in Austin, 2009:41)

What was most pressing at the time of Independence was the task of keeping a diverse country like India intact and at the same time making sure that the diversity was promoted and even upheld (Austin, 2009: 41).

3 (a) National vs. Official Language

After gaining Independence from the British in 1947, the leaders of the new nation saw an opportunity to unite India under a common language. Mahatma Gandhi felt that this was essential for India to emerge as a "bona fide nation" (Baldridge, 2002). Furthermore, there was an immediate need to replace English which was seen as "a symbol of slavery" (Nayar in Baldridge, 2002) by the leaders. Gandhi pointed out five requirements for any language to be accepted as the national language:

1. It should be easy to learn for government officials
2. It should be capable of serving as a medium of religious, economic, and political intercourse throughout India
3. It should be the speech of the majority of the inhabitants of India.
4. It should be easy to learn for the whole country.
5. In choosing this language, considerations of temporary or passing interests should not count (Gupta in Baldridge, 2002).

But, choosing a national language was not such an easy task for the Government due to the following reasons:

1. There were several Indian languages and their dialects with a rich historical and literary background.

2. None of the languages had a clear cut majority status. This meant that the government would have to choose from one of the Indian languages and accord it special status.
3. It would be difficult to get the public to accept any particular language because they had pride in their own languages (Austin, 2009: 42).

Several years before independence, Gandhi had tirelessly supported Hindustani, which was a combination of Hindi and Urdu and could be written in either Devanagri (a Sanskrit) script or Perso-Arabic script as the best choice for a national language. However, after partition of India Muslims emigrated to Pakistan while Hindus continued to live in India (Baldridge, 2002). As a result, according to Baldridge (2002) "Hindu leaders in Congress saw little need for Gandhi's concession to the Muslims". So, the focus there after shifted from Hindustani to Hindi, which was spoken only by Hindus.

Even though, Hindi was not a majority language at the time of Independence, it was mainly favoured and supported by Congress leaders from the northern and central India where it was most widely spoken. This support grew even stronger when the draft of constitution was being framed and resulted in a split within the Congress (Austin, 2009: 45). Consequently, two groups emerged, a group who supported Hindi as a national language because they believed "that the use of English was incompatible with India's independence" (Austin, 2009: 45) and were referred to at that time as "Hindi wallas", and another group who believed that Hindi should not be imposed on people as a National Language, although they agreed that English should be replaced, but slowly with a great deal of planning, and in a way that allowed the other languages of India to be considered equally important (Austin, 2009: 45). This latter group included Nehru and other Assembly members who came from southern India, Bombay, and Bengal regions where the link language (a language that is most convenient and suitable and enables different states in a federation to communicate) was English and not 'Hindi' (Austin, 2009: 45).

Why did the language issue become so important and controversial? Austin (2009) points out that the language issue was controversial because it was felt to be an important fundamental right.

> Federalism was a question for politicians. But in a nation composed of linguistic minorities, where even provinces were not linguistically homogeneous and there were, for example, Tamil enclaves existing in Oriya-speaking areas, problems of language were an everyday affair. Language meant the issue of mother tongue

> instruction in primary schools-an issue well known in every country where there are substantial minority groups-as well as the medium of instruction in universities. The language of the union and provincial civil services meant money and social status to the middle and upper classes, for the services were their primary source of prestigious employment. Politicians and administrators would be no less affected by the language provisions. The language provision was also made real because it involved the cultural and historical pride of the linguistic groups and in the case of Muslims and Sikhs particularly religious sentiments (Austin, 2009: 45).

After six weeks of intense debate between the two groups, there was a vote. If the Hindi wallas won, it would have meant that Hindi would have to become the National Language. In the event, the vote was tied 77-77 (Austin, 2009: 84), and the Constituent Assembly finally decided that Hindi would be an Official Language of the Union and not the National Language of India because it was seen as an imposition that attempted to erase the cultures of other language speakers (Daniel, 1999-2000). The following quote by Austin (2009: 92) best summarises why the Assembly eventually believed that the notion of National Language was impossible, at least in the near future and thereby had to be replaced with an Official Language.

> Assembly members believed that India should, ideally, have an indigenous national language; Hindi (or Hindustani) was the most suitable, so it was named for the role. Yet for Hindi to be in practice the national language was impossible, for the only language in national use was English. Moreover, the other sub-nations feared the introduction of Hindi and had pride in their own languages. Hence the Constitution makes clear what the national ideal is, and then, realistically compromises, lying down how the nation is to function, linguistically speaking, until the ideal is achieved (2009: 92).

In addition, it was also decided that English would continue as an Associate Official Language for a period of 15 years or until the parliament would decide otherwise (Austin, 2009: 42). Article 351 of the Constitution was also included to promote Hindi. The Assembly also decided that the State Governments were permitted to choose one of their regional languages plus Hindi or English for inter-state communication; thereby, making space for all the other important state/regional languages.

3 (b) Linguistic Re-organisation of the States

The next issue of paramount importance was the re-organisation of India into linguistic states. Congress had always been in favour of establishing linguistic provinces since the 1920's (Schwartzberg, 2009: 143) because "Gandhi placed the language issue at the heart of independence movement" (Sarangi, 2009: 47). He said in 1918 "that unless we give Hindi its national status and the provincial languages their due place in the life of the people, all the talk of Swaraj [literally means home-rule] is useless" (Sarangi, 2009: 47). Two years after this, in 1920, the Congress Party went to people in their own languages (Sarangi, 2009: 48). A new Congress Party Constitution that was adopted in the same year formed the party into Provincial Congress Committees based on linguistic areas instead of the existing provinces based on the administrative boundaries. The new Provincial Congress Committees were then encouraged to use the local languages in their affairs (Sarangi, 2009: 48). Soon after India gained its Independence, demands for new political map which was based on the linguistic principles began. Congress, which had endorsed the establishing of linguistic provinces, was now overwhelmed by other responsibilities such as putting the new nation into a working order, dealing with millions of refugees who were displaced during the partition of India, integrating and consolidating the country into new governable units, and on top of all framing the Constitution (Schwartzberg, 2009: 154). All of these became a priority for the new government. Nevertheless, the demands for re-organisation had to be acknowledged. So, Nehru appointed a Linguistic Provinces Commission in 1948 to look into the matter of re-organisation. The following extract is taken from paragraph 125 of the report submitted by the commission.

> Linguistic homogeneity in the formation of new provinces is certainly attainable within certain limits but only at the cost of creating a fresh minority problem. More than half the Malayalam and Kannada speaking people are living in Indian States, and only a little less than half of Telugu and Marathi speaking people are living either in Indian States or in Union Provinces from which they cannot be transferred to new linguistic provinces either for want of geographical contiguity or want of their consent to be so transferred. These must remain, at least for many years to come, outside the sphere of linguistic province. Even in the limited areas of Union, which can be made homogeneous linguistically, broader districts on each side and the capital cities of Bombay and Madras will remain bilingual or multilingual. And, nowhere will it be possible to form a linguistic province of more than 70 to 80 per cent of the people speaking the same language, thus

> leaving in each province a minority of at least 20 per cent of people speaking other languages (Ram Gopal in Schwartzberg, 2009: 154-55).

The Commission pointed out that complete homogeneity was not possible. Every state would have only 70 to 80 per cent of the population speaking a majority while the remaining 20 to 30 per cent of the population would still consist of linguistic minority groups even after a linguistic re-organisation (Schwartzberg, 2009: 155). However, in spite of these negative findings by the Linguistic Provinces Commission of 1948, the government went ahead and carved the state of Andhra as a Telugu speaking state from the province of Madras in October, 1953. Since the pressure for additional demands for re-organisation was ever increasing, a States Re-organisation Commission was established in December of same year to re-examine the whole issue. The feelings towards the linguistic re-organisation were so strong among people that in 1955, the New Commission received around 152,250 documents in support of or in opposition to specific changes (Schwartzberg, 2009: 159). The commission in some cases did consider the recommendations and the Seventh Amendment to the Indian Constitution and the Nation's political map was re-ordered (Schwartzberg, 2009: 160).

Even though linguistic considerations were not the sole basis for the changes made, it was however a very important aspect in the decision making (Schwartzberg, 2009: 160). Apart from attaining linguistic homogeneity the other factors that were taken into consideration was that the proposed linguistic state had to have a population and economic base large enough to make it viable (Schwartzberg, 2009: 170). In culturally diverse country like India factors like ethnic and religious composition and geographical factors like distance from the capital and economic and social backwardness of the regions played a major part in carving out states (Benedikter, 2010: 43).

The main outcomes of the 1956 re-organisation was the elimination of the categories of states as A, B and C. The small class C states either became 'Union Territories' or were merged with larger units speaking the same language. The class B states, former large princely states or state unions (territories under British control with a local ruler or King), were considered in same terms as Class A states which were formed from the old major British provinces (territories that were completely under British control) (Schwartzberg, 2009: 160). Following the States Reorganisation "for the first time in India's modern history there was not a single state or

province in the country in which all linguistic minorities combined comprised more than half of the total population" (Schwartzberg, 2009: 161). In the first place the claim is doubtful because it was based on the 1951 Census data. But as already mentioned earlier, the numbers of languages spoken are generally misrepresented in the Census. In addition, the Census does not report the languages spoken by fewer than 10,000 speakers. Also, manipulation of data for political reasons cannot be overlooked. Furthermore, "the process of making a minority community into a majority community on the basis of regional distribution can never resolve the problems of linguistic minorities" (Dua, 1986: 4). For example, the state of Punjab in 1961, had a population that consisted of 56.6% of Hindi speakers and 41.1% Punjabi speakers but after the linguistic re-organisation the per centage of Punjabi speakers went up to 79.49%, while the per centage of Hindi speakers reduced drastically to 20.01%. Therefore, this left the Hindi speakers a minority community in Punjab (Dua, 1986: 4). Dua reasons why linguistic re-organisation of the states fails to bring out the desired homogeneity.

> First, as the language diversity shows, there are so many distinct language groups in India that the principle of language territoriality and linguistic homogeneity can never be fully operational. Second, as the Punjab situation shows, even after the reorganization there remains a significant minority of Hindi speakers in Punjab. Finally, the free inter-state migration due to industrialization, urbanization or other factors has been attested in earlier periods and seems to be further reinforced by mobility due to social and professional reasons. Thus, the existence of linguistic minorities of different types and nature form an integral part of the multilingual situation in India (Dua, 1986: 4).

All types of linguistic minorities can be found in all States and Union territories: Scheduled, Non-Scheduled, Tribal and Non-Tribal speech communities (Dua, 1986: 4). The 1971 Census enumerated about 19 million people residing in states that they were not born in; these were the inter-state immigrants who formed one of the linguistic minority groups. A second group of minorities, about 12.4 million, were people who had settled in particular regions for generations. A third group of linguistic minorities belonged to the Scheduled Tribes (indigenous or aboriginal groups) (Schwartzberg, 2009: 176-77).

With such large number of minorities scattered throughout India, the demand for linguistic states and their regional specification did not end in 1956 and ever since then the re-organisation process has continued (Schwartzberg, 2009: 182). The latest adjustment was in 2000, when three

new states Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand were added (Sarangi, 2009: 19). Since independence, language questions have time and again put both the Central and State governments into difficult situations. Making territorial changes in favour of some linguistic groups aspiring to have their own land (or more land); at the same time protecting the rights of the minorities speaking other languages can be difficult for any government. In India most of these changes regarding the re-organisation have had to be made under tremendous pressure, often when linguistic groups are agitated and have the potential for mass violence (Schwartzberg, 2009: 182).

3 (c) "Scheduled" Languages and the Constitution

The Constitution was first drafted in 1948 and finally came into force in January 1950. All the provisions related to language can be found in Part Seventeen in 243-51 of the Indian Constitution. Article 343 declares that the official language of the Union would be Hindi in the Devanagari script. Article 345 permits the states and Union Territories to have their own official language that could be used for all official purposes of the states. However, the language in use in the state should be the one that at least 15 per cent of the population speaks (Sarangi, 2009: 24). This article also guarantees that "provided that until the Legislature of the State otherwise provides by law, the English language shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the State for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of this Constitution" (Sarangi, 2009:25). Article 346 on the other hand states that "if two or more states agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such States, that language may be used for such communication" (Sarangi, 2009:25). Furthermore, according to Article 347, special provisions can be made by the President, if he is satisfied that substantial proportion of the population of a State desire the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised by the State, direct that such language shall be officially recognised throughout the State or any part thereof for such purposes as the president chooses to specify. This rule thereby, allows other minority languages for official use in any province. In addition, it declares that a state should be recognised as "unilingual" if only when any one language group constitutes 70 per cent or more of the total population and should be recognised bilingual if any minority group is over 30 per cent for administrative purposes (Sarangi, 2009: 25-6). Finally, Article 351 states that "it shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the 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" (*Government National Portal of India*, 2010).

Eighth Schedule (ES) [Articles 344 (1) and 351]

The Eighth Schedule was included in the Constitution in 1950 and provides formal and Constitutional recognition to dominant regional languages in the spheres of administration, education, economy and social status (Sarangi, 2009: 27). In the beginning the ES listed 14 languages as the official languages of Indian states.

TABLE - 4

ES Languages at the time of formation of the Constitution

1. Assamese	6. Kashmiri	11. Sanskrit
2. Bengali	7. Malayalam	12. Tamil
3. Gujarati	8. Marathi	13. Telugu
4. Hindi	9. Oriya	14. Urdu
5. Kannada	10. Punjabi	

(Groff, 2003: 5)

One important thing to note here is that even though English was given an Associate Official Language status, it was not included in the ES. The move to include English in the ES was resisted by many Constituent Assembly Members on the grounds that English was not an Indian language and therefore they believed it would be inappropriate to include it in the ES (Sarangi, 2009: 27).

At present there are 22 languages listed under the ES. The number of languages listed under the ES has increased due to the increasing demands from various language groups to be included in the ES as it offers special status. Three languages, namely Manipuri, Konkani, and Nepali, were included in ES in 1992 through the Seventy-First Amendment. Later, in 2004 another three languages Dogri, Maithili and Santhali were included. What is interesting is that all these languages were included in the ES after several years of cultural and social movements by

leaders and people belonging to the various language groups (Sarangi, 2009: 28). The following table shows the present list of languages under ES.

TABLE - 5

Present ES Languages

1. Assamese	7. Kannada	. 13. Marathi.	19. Sindhi.
2. Bengali	8. Kashmiri.	14. Nepali.	20. Tamil.
3. Bodo	9. Konkani.	15. Oriya.	21. Telugu.
4. Dogri	10. Maithili.	16. Punjabi.	22. Urdu
5. Gujarati	11. Malayalam.	17. Sanskrit.	
6. Hindi	12. Manipuri.	18. Santhali	

(*Government National Portal of India*, 2010)

3 (d) Linguistic Minorities and the Constitution

Article 29

Article 29 promises protection of interests of minorities by declaring that the minorities have a right to conserve their culture, language and script. It also prohibits any kind of discrimination on the basis of religion, race, caste and language.

Protection of interests of minorities

1. Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.
2. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them (Benedikter, 2009: 65).

Article 30

Article 30 provides protection against discrimination in receiving government grants for the purpose of education. It also guarantees religious and linguistic groups the right to set up and provide education in their own languages. This article also enables the linguistic minorities to claim state aid in order to set up and run educational institutions effectively.

***Right of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions*.**

(1) All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

1 (a) In making any law providing for the compulsory acquisition of any property of any educational institution established and administered by a minority, referred to in clause 1, the State shall ensure that the amount fixed by or determined under such law for the acquisition of such property is such as would not restrict or abrogate the right guaranteed under that clause.

> The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions, discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority, whether based on religion or language (Benedikter, 2009: 66).

Owing to the ambiguity of this article, The Supreme Court of India on October 31, 2002 decided that 'minority' within the meaning of Article 30 is as follows, "for the purpose of determining the minority, the unit will be the State and not the whole of India. Thus, religious and linguistic minorities, who have been put at par in Article 30, have to be considered State-wise" (Mallikarjun, 2004)

> Article 30 is a special right conferred on the religious and linguistic minorities because of their numerical handicap and to instill in them a sense of security and confidence, even though the minorities cannot be per se regarded as weaker sections or underprivileged segments of the society (Mallikarjun, 2004).

However, unfortunately both these articles provide linguistic minorities with minimal protection. Furthermore, the articles are only declarative in nature therefore it does not mean that states must recognise that language. Hence, there is no official pressure whatsoever on the states to either establish educational institutions or provide education to linguistic minorities through their mother tongue (Benedikter, 2009:66).

Article 347

Article 347 specifies that if there is a demand from a linguistic minority community, then the President can invite the respective State to recognise their language as a co-official language, but does not clearly explain what is meant by a "substantial proportion". This article also declares that minority languages can also be used for official purposes (Benedikter, 2009: 67).

Special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a State

On a demand being made in that behalf the President may, if he is satisfied that a substantial proportion of the population of a State desires the use of any language spoken by them to be

recognised by that State, such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that State or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify (Benedikter, 2009: 67).

Article 350

Language to be used in representations for redress of grievances

This article guarantees the linguistic minorities the right to use a language they understand for redress of grievances.

> Every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the State, as the case may be (*Government National Portal of India*, 2010).

In addition to this right, in 1956, through the 7th Amendment, two articles addressing the linguistic minority issues were further added.

Article 350 (A)

Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage

It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities (Benedikter, 2009: 68).

Article 350 (B)

Special Officer for linguistic minorities

1. There shall be a Special Officer for linguistic minorities to be appointed by the President.

2. It shall be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct, and the President shall cause all such reports to be laid before each House of Parliament, and sent to the Governments of the States concerned (Benedikter, 2009: 68).

CHAPTER 4

Practical Implementation of the Constitution

Dua (2007: 95) points out that "mere recognition of language rights is not enough." He is of the opinion that the present state of affairs of the language rights in the world shows that the countries can be differentiated a) in terms of whether the language rights are explicitly or implicitly recognised b) whether they are prohibition or promotion oriented. In India, even though the language rights are explicitly recognised and are promotion oriented; they have failed to fulfill the purpose because these rights have not been implemented well by the Government. According to Dua (2007), in the case of minor languages it would be pointless to guarantee them language rights without providing the facilities to satisfy their own social, cultural, administrative or political needs or interests on par with those used by the majority language communities (2007: 95). He also emphasises that language rights "need to be supplemented by the principles of equality as well as differential treatment which provide a sound ground for the maintenance of minor/majority languages as well as enrichment of multilingualism" (Dua 2007: 95).

Mahajan also points out that in India diversity is acknowledged in the Constitution and in the legal structure; however, the policy measures needed to back them up "have often fallen short of expectation" (2010: 117). For example, according to the Constitution, in areas where the population of a minority community is more than 30 per cent, then education should be provided in the language of the minority (Mahajan, 2010: 118). But, this provision has not always been implemented. One major reason for this is numbers such as 30 per cent can be easily manipulated by the State Governments. In short, it is just not enough to make provisions in the Constitution but sufficient policies need to back these provisions and make sure that these policies are also implemented well.

The Eighth Schedule (ES) as mentioned earlier (refer pg. 22) has been criticised by many like Abbi, (2000), Sarangi (2009), and Pattanayak (1995). In her criticism against ES Abbi (2000: 14)

argues that "ES was never based on the ideology of fundamental rights or on the principle of equality of opportunity nor was it based on the ideology of national integration or invasive assimilation." Furthermore she points out that, the very creation of ES was an act of discrimination by itself as a list of 14 languages (now 22) were given official status, special recognition and power from a host of over 1600 languages that were listed in the 1961 Census (Abbi, 2000:14). Therefore, in her opinion such a catergorisation "impoverishes and marginalises the other languages" (Abbi, 2000: 14). On the other hand, Sarnagi (2009) and Pattanayak (1995) question the criteria used to list the languages under ES, which is not always consistent. At times the inclusion of languages in ES seems to be based on sheer numerical majority of a language group and other times it is not considered at all, as in the case of Sanskrit and Sindhi where the number of speakers was not taken into consideration at all.

TABLE-6

An example of disparity between numbers of speakers of Major and Minor languages:

Major Indian Languages		**Minor Indian Languages**	
Name of the Lang.	Number of Speakers	Name of the Lang.	Number of Speakers
Sindhi	2,535,485	Bhili	9,582,957
Sanskrit	14,135	Gondi	2,713,790

(*Census India*, 2010-11)

This table once again emphasises that the categorisation of languages as Scheduled Languages (SL are the major official languages listed under Eighth Schedule) and Non-Scheduled Languages (NSL are the other languages used only for administration purposes in states) is not based on the numerical strength of a language as there can be some minor linguistic communities whose numbers exceed the numbers of some major languages. However, they are minor in terms of socio-economic power and social prestige. Pattanayak (1995) in his work on Eighth Schedule goes a step further than the others and thinks that ES should be abolished completely from the Constitution.

As in the case of ES, when the State endorses one language community over several others that exist side by side, then the other language communities within the polity become disadvantaged (Mahajan, 2010: 118). For instance, in a multilingual country like India, administration, education, judiciary, main stream trade and commerce, and national communication networks use the languages mentioned in the ES and "only marginally employ certain other languages on the periphery and totally ignore the vast majority of Indian mother-tongues" (Abbi, 2000: 14). This kind of discrimination has often become a source of ethnic conflict at the national and state/regional level. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the State to explore ways of "accommodating all communities as equals" and "according formal recognition to the language of minorities can be an important way of opening opportunities and giving access to valued social and economic positions in society" (Mahajan, 2010: 118).

Abbi (2000: 20) evaluating the ES points out that

> Hierarchical ordering, deliberately created by the policy makers has brought about a situation in which the demand by a language for inclusion in the ES subsumes the socio-cultural, economic and political aspirations of people belonging to different groups and regions (Gupta in Abbi, 2000: 20).

Elangiyan (2007: 104) gives a good description of the kind of hierarchy that the ES has led to in India in the following table:

TABLE-7

Hierarchical ordering of Languages

First Tier (Official Languages of the Union)	Hindi and English	English enjoys a special status even though it is an associate official language. In spite of consistent efforts by the union to replace Hindi as the pan India official language. Even after 6 3 years of Independence English is still used in all public domains.
Second Tier	State official languages listed under ES e.g. Bengali, Tamil, Kannada etc. and Hindi due to its role as an official language in some Northern States of India e.g. Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar etc.	These languages are powerful in their respective states/regions. These languages in due course are the ones that enforce absolute compliance from all the other speech communities in their region. These are the languages that actually threaten the survival of the languages that are mentioned in the fourth tier
Third Tier	Other language communities in a state but not the official state languages because they have fewer speakers than the dominant state/regional languages. E.g. Tulu, Coorgi speakers in Karnataka state	Even though these languages only come second to the dominant state/regional language they still enjoy a special status and recognition from the State Governments because the members of these speech communities have better socioeconomic conditions and in some case a considerable literary history.
Fourth Tier	Indigenous Languages spoken by the aboriginal communities in India E.g Naga, Ho etc.	These speech communities are generally influenced by the dominant languages and cultures leading to bilingualism and multilingualism. The use of the mother tongue is generally restricted to fewer domains decreasing the opportunities for speakers to use their own mother tongue and gradually get assimilated into dominant languages if enough care is not taken by the state.

(Source Elangiyan, 2007: 104)

4 (a) Difficulty in Defining a Minority

> The division of languages into 'major' and 'minor' is arbitrary and relative in nature; yet it has become a stark reality in the country that advertently or inadvertently adopted a language policy that is discriminatory (Abbi, 2000: 13).

As mentioned earlier, the hierarchical ordering of languages due to the ES led to the creation of majority-minority languages. Furthermore, the re-organisation of the states according to the concentration of languages in different parts of India was done in order to reduce the number of linguistic minorities and hence the obligations on the Indian Government. Even though, to some extent this did work, it also created new minorities because in spite of the linguistic re-organisation the states failed to be unilingual. In a diverse country like India minorities need to be understood within the hierarchies of caste, class, region, religion and gender relations (Sarangi, 2009: 29). According to Abbi (2000:13), the very notion of minority would give one a picture of a group of underprivileged, dominated and subservient people. Even though the Indian Constitution recognises the minorities in India by making special provisions and outlining safeguards, it has neither been able to define minority nor has it been able to provide a criteria for determining a majority (Dua, 1986: 5). Mallikarjun points out that since the Constitution of India does not define who the linguistic minorities are but provides safeguards, "the definition of linguistic minorities is generally taken for granted as a known common sense fact than a concept to be defined or identified. The definition used to identify the linguistic minorities is largely context bound" (Mallikarjun, 2004) and hence often varies.

Benedikter (2009) and Pandharipande (2002) outline two different ways of defining a minority language. According to Benedikter (2009: 47), minority languages are those languages whose speakers are numerically less in number in comparison to the majority languages spoken in that State and do not occupy a dominant position. But, in India defining minorities by numerical strength alone is not appropriate because no language in India can be called a majority language; even Hindi, the National Official Language is only spoken by around 40 per cent of the population in India (Benedikter, 2009: 47). On the other hand, Pandharipande points out that (2002:216) in India (a) a language could be powerful and at the same time a majority language, e.g. Marathi in the state of Maharashtra (b) powerless but a majority language, e.g. Kashmiri in

the state of Jammu Kashmir (c) a minority but powerful language, e.g. English in all states (d) powerless and minority e.g. tribal languages (or indigenous languages) in all states (Pandharipande, 2002:216). So, Pandharipande (2002: 213) argues that the minority languages can be defined on the basis of their "functional load" and "functional transparency". According to her "functional load" is the ability of a language to successfully function in one or more social domains in a society. Thus, the load is considered to be higher or lower on the basis of the number of domains it covers. The higher the number of domains, the higher the load is. For instance, in India English language covers almost all the major public domains such as business, education, national and international communication, science and technology. In contrast, the tribal or the indigenous languages control only one (rapidly diminishing) domain, that of home and the regional languages cover private domains such as home, as well as public domains such as intra-state communication, education, government and law (Pandharipande, 2002: 213). The "functional transparency" on the other hand refers to the autonomy and controls that a language has in a particular domain (Pandharipande, 2002: 214). In other words "functional load" is higher if the language does not share the function with the other languages. For example, Sanskrit is most transparent to its function as a language of expressing Hinduism. Similarly, state/regional official languages are transparent to their function in State Government. Conversely, if the function is shared by other languages, the transparency is lowered and consequently the functional load is also lowered. For instance, the function of regional languages in the domain of education or business is shared by English in many states and this lowers the transparency of their function and subsequently lowers their functional load (Pandharipande, 2002: 213).

TABLE-8

The Hierarchy of Functional Load

+ functional transparency	+ number of domains	High functional load	Example: English and official regional languages
+ functional transparency	- number of domains	Higher functional load	Example: Sanskrit

(Pandharipande, 2002: 213)

With this it can be said that there is a hierarchy of functional load and this hierarchy of languages coincides with the power hierarchy of languages. In this sense it can be concluded that minority languages are those languages that carry a lower functional load and thereby hold a lower position in the power hierarchy. Therefore, this existing hierarchy of power, including socio-political, economical power and so on, should be taken into consideration in order to define and explain the status of the minority languages (Pandharipande, 2002: 214). Furthermore, she agrees that all of the definitions of minority languages have one thing in common; that is, all the minority languages whether numerically minority or not definitely carry a "marginal functional load" or none at all in the public domains of society. Due to this, English, though numerically a minority language cannot be called a minority language because it carries a heavy functional load in the public domain (Pandharipande, 2002: 217). Therefore, the concepts of "functional load" and "functional transparency" proposed by Pandharipande (2002) provide a clear framework through which a clearer definition of a minority language can be presented apart from the apparent numerical inferiority of a language which is also taken into consideration popularly by the Indian Government.

Then who is a Minority?

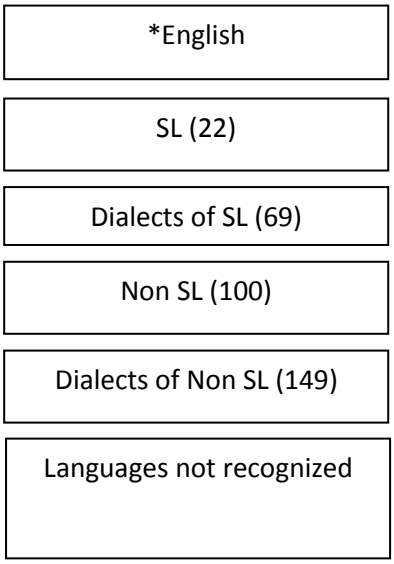
Benedikter points out that, India is a mosaic of "major and minor linguistic groups and communities" (2009:56). What he means by this is that majority and minority groups or speech communities can be distinguished at different government levels like State, District, Taluk (sub-division of a District). Also, as mentioned earlier, the numerical criteria or the size of a speech community is not sufficient to describe the minority situation in India. Besides, a simple criterion of language dominance also cannot be applied in India as different languages are dominant in different domains, as well as in different geographical regions. Therefore, in such a situation both the size of the speech community and the functional load and its distribution indicating the dominance of a language must be taken into account in order to explain the status of a minority language within the multilingual Indian context (Benedikter, 2009: 57). Clearly, the complexity of such a situation makes great difficulties for anyone trying to prescribe a legal status for different languages.

For instance, it is important to note that not all languages that come under the SL have a specific territory, such as, for instance, Kannada has in the state of Karnataka or Malayalam has in the

state of Kerala. Languages such as Sanskrit or Urdu are best examples of languages whose territorial location is unspecified. Furthermore, there are some SLs that are not the principal language of a state; for example Santhali is spoken in the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand and Assam, although it is not the state/regional official language of any these states (Benedikter, 2009: 58). The dialects of each of these SLs enjoy special status as well (like the 48 dialects grouped under Hindi: Refer table 11). On the other hand Non-Scheduled Languages (NSLs) are all the other languages that are "qualified as languages by prominent linguistic and State institutions (Census authorities)" (Benedikter, 2009:60). According to the 2001 Census there were 100 languages under this list (refer table 2 for list of SL and NSL). In Abbi's (2009: 303-4) opinion it is these 100 NSLs and their 149 dialects along with all those numerous languages represented by less than 10,000 speakers that constitute the "minor languages" in India. She further explains that languages that occupy the lowest position in the hierarchy are those that have less than 10,000 speakers. These languages are even omitted from being reported and these are the ones that are on the verge of being linguistically lost forever. However, this doesn't mean that the status of the other minor languages i.e. the 100 NSL and their 149 dialects is any better (Abbi, 2009: 304).

TABLE-9

Hierarchical ordering by status of the Indian languages and their dialects, with those in the bottom 3 categories being most in danger.



(Abbi, 2009: 302)

*English occupies a special status due to its socio-economic status as well as the role it plays in education. The 22 languages and their 65 dialects are considered as prestigious (Abbi, 2009: 302)

In Development of Tribal and Minor Languages, Reddy (2000: 46) approaches the problem of the definition too, but in a slightly different manner. He points out that in India minority languages are those that are Constitutionally recognised (in this case 22 SL, see the table above) but spoken in the regions other than their respective states like Punjabi in the state of Punjab, Telugu in the state of Andhra Pradesh and so on. To put it simply, such minority languages enjoy the status of a major language in some geographical region or the other. These language communities are socio-politically and culturally dominant than the others. Therefore, the rest of the languages can be considered as minor languages as mentioned earlier by Abbi. In addition, Benedikter (2009: 57) suggests another distinction which is also useful, when a language of a minority language is spoken as an official language in any other state then it can be called a "Relative Minority". But, if a minority language is not accepted by any other state as an official language and is not a Scheduled Language then the language becomes an "Absolute Minority" (Benedikter, 2009: 57).

Most of the minor languages are spoken by the aboriginal/indigenous populations termed as "adivaasis" or "tribals" (Reddy, 2000: 46). Tribe commonly called as the Scheduled Tribe in Indian context is an administrative and legal term to label some ethnic groups based on their socio-economic status, and religious and cultural customs in order to give special attention to them as mandated by the Constitution (Annamalai in Reddy, 2000:46). The Scheduled Tribes constitute about 8 per cent of the total population or 68 million people (*Census India*, 2009-10). Article 46 refers to tribals as "weaker sections of the society". The tribal literacy rates are significantly low in comparison to that of the majority languages (47.1 which is far below the National literacy rate at 64.84). As mentioned earlier (refer table 7and 9) the tribal languages occupy the lowest position among the linguistic hierarchy. The tribal languages are not recognised as languages but rather dialects by the non tribals. Often tribals are ridiculed for using their mother tongue in the public places (Gnanasundaram and Elangaiyan, 2000: 39). Furthermore, it is the tribals who learn the dominant language and it is very rare the other way round (Ishtiaq in Gnanasundaram and Elangaiyan, 2000: 39). There is a sense of inferiority, awareness of a lowly status of their own mother tongues among the tribals and this often discourages them to declare their mother tongue (Abbi, 2000: 25) even when they use it in the

home domain. This is quite common during the Census returns during which the tribals return Hindi or any other official regional language as their mother tongue instead (Gnanasundaram and Elangaiyan, 2000: 38).

4 (b) Use, Adaptation and Manipulation of the Constitution

Census and Representation of Minorities:

The Government, ever since Independence has always relied on whatever data that is available on linguistic diversity in order to plan and formulate policies. The best source in Indian context is the Census data which has been collected since 1881. In 'Languages in India' Bhattacharya (2002: 54), puts forth that, in a linguistically diverse country like India with over a billion speakers distributed in 28 states (including 3 more newly created states in 2000) and in 7 Union Territories, language identification is not a simple task for any government. Things get even more complicated when there is no definitive inventory of languages possessing linguistically autonomous systems recognised by the linguists. So far, most of the information relating to the languages is collected through the Census conducted by the Indian Government (Bhattacharya, 2002: 54). The latest published inventory on language was in 2001 and from this Census it can be noted that there are 22 Scheduled Languages and 100 Non-Scheduled languages and 234 identifiable mother tongues with at least 10,000 speakers in 2001 (*Census India*, 2010-11).

The information on language at all India level was collected for the first time in 1881 Census when the British Government presented statistics on language and birthplace (Bhattacharya, 2002: 54). In all, 162 languages were reported, of which 116 were Indian and 46 were foreign languages. Following the Census, Grierson proposed to the Government an overall Linguistic Survey of India (LSI) in 1887, which was finally accepted by the government in1896. However, in the meanwhile the 1891 Census took place and hundreds of mother tongue names were returned but these were reduced to 150 identifiable ones (Bhattacharya, 2002: 55). In 1901, the Census revised the number of languages from the Census 10 years earlier and reported around 147 distinct languages. From this time on until 1931 all the Censuses followed the classification proposed by the LSI. Grieson's LSI report was finally ready by 1927 and listed a total number of 179 languages and 544 dialects. In 1941, due to World War II, tabulations for language could not

be done. The first Census after independence was conducted in 1951 but this again failed to give precise data, but in any case 781 languages including 63 Non-Indian languages were reported. Later, in 1961 information relating to languages was presented in a more systematic way (Bhattacharya, 2002: 55). This time also the Census was based on LSI and a list of 193 languages was drawn from 1652 mother tongues that were returned. The 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 Census presented mother tongue data in terms of languages but was slightly different from Grierson's method (Bhattacharya, 2002: 55). The details collected in the Census varied depending on the inquiry made on mother tongue.

The persistent inability to find anything like consistency in the estimates of languages in India is owing to a range of different survey methods and assumptions:

1. In the 1881and 1891 it was the language ordinarily spoken in the household of each person's parent.
2. In the Census conducted in 1901 it was language ordinarily used.
3. In 1911 and 1921 it was the language which each person ordinarily used at home.
4. In 1931, 1941 and in 1951 it was the language first spoken from the cradle.
5. In the 1961 it was the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person, mainly spoken in the household.
6. During 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001 it was the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy then it was the language spoken in the person's home during the childhood (Bhattacharya, 2002: 56).

The number of mother tongues listed in Census has always varied significantly in every Census. For instance, in 1961, the 1652 mother tongues that were returned were classified into 193 languages with more than 10,000 speakers, and 184 languages with fewer than 10,000 speakers. The latter were then disregarded in language planning for minority languages. By 1971 only 105 languages were recognised and in 1981 about 109 languages were recognised. Therefore, each census has served to reduce the number of minor languages (Bhattacharya, 2002: 55). The following table illustrates the variations and the consistent reduction of languages in different censuses.

TABLE-10

Counting Languages in the Indian Censuses

Year	Returned Mother Tongues	Rationalized Mother Tongues	Number of Languages
1881			162
1891		723 (?)	150
1951		781	
1961	3,000	1652	193
1971	3,000		105
1981	7,000		109
1991	10,000	1576	114
2001			122

(Groff, 2003: 3; Bhattacharya, 2002: 55-6; *Census India*, 2010-11)

Abbi (2000: 14) is of the opinion that, "the reductionist policy" of the Government of India, with fewer languages listed each year, has left a large number of communities speaking languages that are not even listed (Abbi, 2000: 14). Furthermore, the Government also tries to fit as many languages as possible under one of the Scheduled Languages thus "creating an arbitrary cleavage between major and minor languages" (Abbi, 2000: 14). For instance, about 48 languages are grouped under Hindi therefore reducing them to mere dialects or minor languages.

TABLE-11

1991 Census: Varieties of Hindi

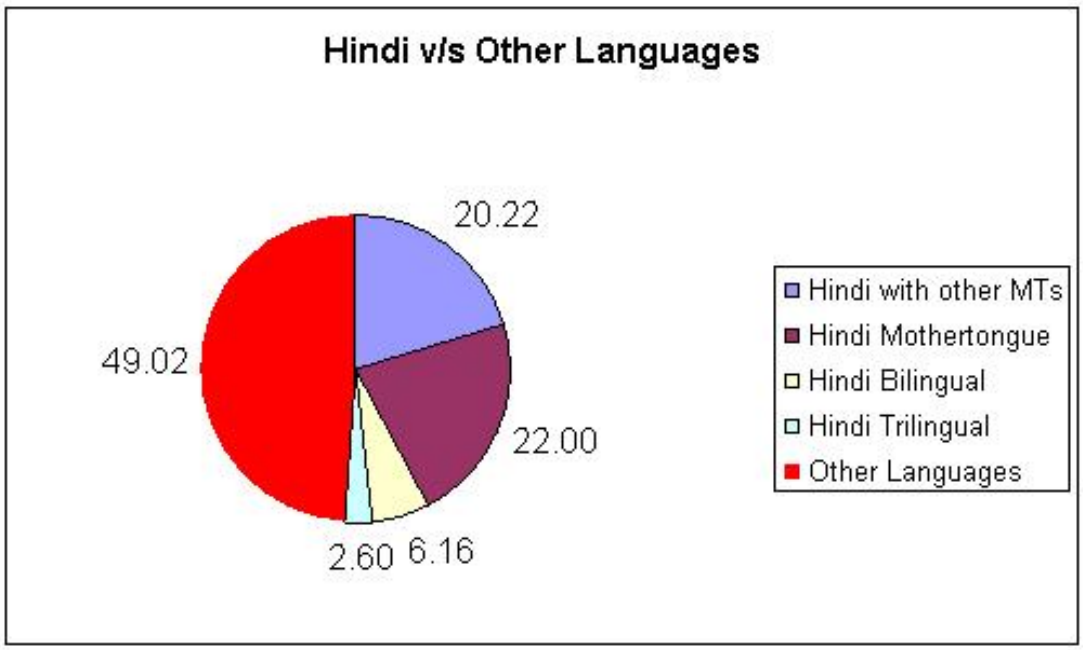
Name of the language & mother tongue (s) grouped under each language		Number of persons who returned the language (and the mother tongues grouped under each) as their mother tongue.
1		2
Hindi		33,72,72,114
1	Awadhi	4,81,316
2	Bagheli/Baghelkhandi	13,87,160
3	Bagri Rajasthani	5,93,730
4	Banjari	8,87,632
5	Bharmarui/Gaddi	18,919
6	Bhojpuri	2,31,02,050
7	Braj Bhasha	85,230
8	Bundeli/Bundelkhandi	16,57,473
9	Chambeali	63,408
10	Chhattisgarhi	1,05,95,199
11	Churahi	45,107
12	Dhundhari	9,65,006
13	Garhwali	18,72,578
14	Harauti	12,35,252
15	Haryanvi	3,62,476
16	Hindi	23,34,32,285
17	Jaunsuri	96,995
18	kangri	4,87,999
19	Khariari	14,307
20	Khortha/khotta	10,49,655
21	Kulvi	1,52,442
22	Kumauni	17,17,191
23	Kurmali Thar	2,36,856
24	Labani	13,772
25	Lamani / Lambani	20,54,537
26	Laria	64,903
27	Lodhi	68,145
28	Magadhi/Magahi	1,05,66,842
29	Maithili	77,66,597
30	Malvi	29,70,103
31	Mandeali	4,40,421
32	Marwari	46,73,276
33	Mewari	21,14,622

34	Mewati	1,02,916
35	Nagpuria	7,77,738
36	Nismadi	14,20,051
37	Pahari	21,79,832
38	Panchpargania	1,51,599
39	Pangwali	14,780
40	Pawari/Powari	2,13,874
41	Rajasthani	1,33,28,581
42	Sadan/sadri	15,69,066
43	Sonari	11,537
44	Sirmauri	18,280
45	Sondwari	37,958
46	Sugali	1,13,491
47	Surgujia	10,45,455
48	Surjapuri	3,70,558
	Others	46,42,904

(Abbi, 2000: 15-16)

TABLE-12

The statistical representation of Hindi with other mother tongues clubbed under it.



(Mallikarjun, 2004)

The graph seems to suggest that Hindi speakers form a majority of speakers in India, by classifying under Hindi all other languages whose speakers also speak Hindi as a second or third language. This is clearly manipulation of the data for political purposes. When one looks at data like this it can be said that deliberate suppression of linguistic data on the extent of Indian Multilingualism is another aspect of the linguistic diversity in India (Mahapatra, 2007:9) and the umbrella policy adopted by the government is nothing but a way of assimilating minor languages into the major ones under which they usually are labeled (Abbi, 2000: 14).

Education and Minorities

According to Article 350 (A) it is the duty of the Nation to provide Education for Minority Communities. Dua (2007: 87) points out in Education Planning for Multilingual countries,

> From the point of view of educational planning the language-status decisions about language allocation and use in the domain of education have far-reaching consequences for developing multilingual countries. They determine not only the function, status and the development of the indigenous languages but also the pattern of communication and socio-economic and political processes of change and modernisation since patterns of language choice and use are related to distribution of knowledge resources and power in the society (Dua, 2007: 87).

In brief, the quality of educational planning and the future of multilingualism in multilingual countries depend largely on the nature and scope of decisions based on the function of languages and their use especially in the domain of education (Dua, 2007: 90).

Article 350 (A) also specifies that Education had to be provided for the two types of linguistic minorities a) speakers of a state official language who live in other states with a different official language and therefore become a minority b) speakers of minor languages like the tribal languages. The facilities for teaching in their mother tongue have to be made available for linguistic minorities as per the provisions made by the Constitution in order to accommodate them into the realm of education. The National Policy on Education, following several reports from high powered committees and conferences (such as Secondary Education Commission, 1953, Central Advisory Board of Education, 1956, The Conference of the Chief Ministers, 1961 and Education Commission 1964-66) proposed the Three Language Formula:

> The Three Language Formula (TLF) gradually developed as a national consensus duly approved by the Parliament in order to promote national integration and provide wider language choice in the school curriculum. It is an educational strategy for communication between people at the national, regional and local levels (Srivastava, 2007: 43).

The National Policy on Education also laid down the following principles of the TLF for the study of the languages in schools:

> At the Secondary stage, the State Governments should adopt, and vigorously implement, the three language formula which includes the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi speaking states, and of Hindi along with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking states. Suitable courses in Hindi and/ or English should also be available in universities and colleges with a view to improving the proficiency of students in these languages up t the prescribed university standards (The National Policy on Education, 1968: XVII in Srivastava, 2007: 44).

Three Language Formula in Education (TLF)

The Council for Secondary Education first proposed the Three Language Formula (TLF) in 1956 and divided it into parts (Singh, 2000: 192):

i. Mother tongue, Hindi and English for non-Hindi regions
ii. Hindi, any other Indian language, and English for the Hindi regions

The main aim of TLF was to solve the problems of link language for communication and thereby promote National integration and unity. With some modifications it was accepted at the Conference of Chief Ministers of various States in 1961. According to Singh (2000: 192), "In terms of implementation of the policy, there were obvious pedagogic and curricular problems once such policy was adopted". It was severely opposed by the minor minorities whose mother tongues were different from the state language. The problem was for children who came from minor minority linguistic background; for them, it became a four language formula with their mother tongue, regional language, Hindi and English. Furthermore, in the Hindi speaking regions there was lack of motivation in learning a Dravidian language and in non-Hindi speaking states it was seen as ploy to impose Hindi (Singh, 2000: 192). Due to these reasons in 1966, the Education Commission once again reviewed and "liberalised" the formula so that by the end of the middle school, i.e. the lower secondary stage, a student will have acquired sufficient control over three languages: the mother tongue and two non-native modern languages, Hindi and English: Hindi as an official and link language, English as an associate official language as well as language for higher education and international communication. Furthermore, the individual states and Union Territories could decide whether to give Hindi a second or third language position (Singh 2000: 193).

TABLE-13

The revised TLF proposed the length of contact years for languages as follows:

Languages to be taught under TLF	**No of years to taught**
Mother tongue/ Regional language	10 years
Official language (Hindi/ English)	6 years (starting from class V onwards)
Modern Languages not covered under the two	3 years minimum

(Source from Singh 2000: 193)

Drawbacks of TLF:

In the course of implementing the TLF it was interpreted differently by the states to suit their own needs and requirements. Eventually two dominant patterns of implementations emerged with regards to TLF (Viswanatham, in Koul and Devaki 2000: 121).

a) In the Non-Hindi States:

First Language	The State Language that is the mother tongue of the majority population in the state.
Second Language	Hindi/ English
Third Language	English/ Hindi

b) In the Hindi speaking States:

First Language	Hindi
Second Language	English/Urdu/ Sanskrit
Third Language	English/Urdu/ Sanskrit

(Viswanatham, in Koul and Devaki 2000: 121-2)

The most crucial problem with TLF is that even though "it takes into account the language diversity and pluri-linguistic and pluri-cultural society that India represents, yet it fails to take cognizance of various minor languages and their learning either as a subject or as a medium of

instruction" (Abbi, 2009: 305). This invariably means that it does not provide for teaching in mother tongue for minor minority groups because it equates regional languages with mother tongues. Such languages are rejected on the basis of lack of standardised scripts and are believed to be not fully developed to become the language of education (Koul and Devaki 2000: 121). According to the Constitutional ideal, these languages should introduce children to the school and at the same time allow for their gradual transition to the regional language of their state (Srivastava, 2007:46-7). But the State Government's apathy towards these languages hinders their development and can lead to the erosion of minor languages.

Another problem was, even though it was agreed that if there are 10 students in any class or 40 students in a school who desire to learn in their mother tongue which is different from the regional language, provision for teaching in that language should be made by the State Governments (Mallikarjun, 2004). However, the State Governments, in order to cut down the costs incurred for appointing teachers, printing text books and so on, avoid their obligations by denying that the school has the required number of students, and thus they deny the right of mother tongue instruction.

> As agreed to in the Chief Ministers Conference in 1961, whenever there are 40 students in a school, or 10 in a class-room, desiring to learn in their mother tongue at the primary level, teaching will have to be done by appointing one teacher. Here normally the mother tongue of the child is different from the regional language and generally a minority language in the numerical sense (Mallikarjun, 2004).

Here, it can be noted that even though TLF was fully approved and supported by the Chief Ministers of various states; it faced severe setbacks at the time of implementation and has been uneven ever since. According to Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, the language policy formulation for education and implementation is left to the State Governments under the broad guidelines citied by Constitution. Since it is the responsibility of each State to provide for the education, each state has its own State policy for education (Mallikarjun, 2004). As a result, the duration for the compulsory study of the three languages has varied from state to state. Furthermore, the Hindi speaking states do not teach a modern Indian language, for example a southern language such as Kannada or Malayalam and substitute Sanskrit in its place even though it is a classical language. Another reason for poor execution of TLF was that the State

Governments did not seem to be clear about, and the policy did not prescribe stages at which all the three languages had to be introduced (Mallikarjun, 2004).

The following extract from The National Curriculum Framework for School Education: A Discussion Document released on January 1, 2000, while reviewing the Three Language Formula, best summarises the setbacks of TLF mentioned above.

> In a number of states/organizations/ boards, however, the spirit of the formula has not been followed and the mother tongue of the people has been denied the status of the first language … because of the changed socio-economic scenario, the difference between the second and the third languages has dwindled. Thus, in reality, there may be two-second languages for all purposes and functions. Some states follow only a two-language formula whereas in some others classical languages like Sanskrit and Arabic are being studied in lieu of a modern Indian language. Some boards/institutions permit even European languages like French and German in place of Hindi. In this scenario, the three-language formula exists only in our curriculum documents and other policy statements (in Mallikarjun, 2004).

TABLE-14

The Implementation of the Three Language Formula by States

State	First Language	Second Language	Third Language
1. Andhra Pradesh	Telugu, Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, Tamil, Oriya, Marathi, Gujarati, or composite courses of these languages (I-X)	For those who have not Hindi as first: Hindi For those who have not Telugu : Telugu Any other modern Indian language	English
2. Arunachal Pradesh	English	Hindi	Assamese
3. Assam	Mother tongue or regional language	English	Hindi (for Assamese mother tongue speakers) Assamese (for non-Assamese speakers)
4. Bihar	Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Oriya, Maithili, Nepali, English	English	Hindi (for not mother tongue speakers), Sanskrit, Bengali, Oriya, Urdu (for others)
5. Delhi	Hindi (or any other modern Indian language)	English	Hindi/Sanskrit
6. Goa	Marathi, Konkani, Urdu, Kannada, English, Gujarati	Marathi, Konkani, Urdu, Kannada, English, Hindi	Marathi, English, Gujarati, Konkani
7. Gujarat	Gujarati (or any other mother tongue)	Hindi	English
8. Haryana	Hindi	English	Punjabi, Sanskrit, Telugu
9. Himachal Pradesh	Hindi	English	Urdu, Telugu, Tamil
10. Jammu Kashmir	Urdu or Hindi	English	Urdu in Hindi medium school, Hindi in Urdu medium school
11. Karnataka	Kannada	Two other languages from the following: Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian, Malayalam, Kannada	
12. Kerala	Malayalam (for minorities Kannada or Tamil)	English	Hindi
13. Madhya Pradesh	Mother Tongue	Hindi (for non-Hindi-speakers) and Sanskrit (for Hindi-speakers)	English
14. Maharashtra	Marathi	Hindi	English
15. Nagaland	Mother tongue	English	Hindi
16. Orissa	Oriya	English	Hindi
17. Punjab	Punjabi	Hindi	English
18. Rajasthan	Hindi	English	Sanskrit, Urdu, Sindhi, Bengali, Gujarati, Punjabi, Malayalam, Tamil
19. Sikkim	English	Hindi	Nepali, Tibetan, Lepcha, Limbu
20. Tamil Nadu	Tamil or mother tongue, when different from Tamil	English or any other non-Indian language	
21. Tripura	Bengali	English	Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic, Persian etc.
22. Uttar Pradesh	Hindi	One of languages of 8th Schedule	English, modern European language
23. West Bengal	Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Lishi, Malayalam, Marathi, Modern Tibetan, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Gurumukhi, Santhali, Telugu, Tamil, Urdu	English, if any language other than English is first language. Bengali, if English is first language	A classical language, a modern foreign language other than English, a modern Indian Language other than the first language
24. Mizoram	Mizo	English	Hindi

(Benedikter: 2009: 137-8)

TLF also increases the burden of learning a language by the linguistic minorities whose language is not included in the educational curricula of the state. As mentioned earlier, while the students from the majority linguistic background learn three languages (or even 2 in some states because of the State Education Policy like in state of Tamil Nadu and Mizoram) students from minority linguistic background end up learning four languages including mother tongue so it becomes a 3+1 formula for the linguistic minorities (Sarangi, 2009: 34).

Finally, even with all these provisions for education in multiple languages and mother tongues promised by the Constitution, The Sixth All India Education Survey (1993) illustrates that in spite of having 122 Scheduled and Non-Scheduled Languages plus a few hundred mother tongues only 41 languages are taught as school languages and 19 of them are used as media of instruction at different levels (Mallikarjun, 2004). The following tables present the number of languages taught in school, the number of languages used as medium of instruction in schools and the list of languages taught in schools (Mallikarjun, 2004).

TABLE-15

Number of School Languages Taught as First/Second/Third Languages

All India Education Survey	Third Survey 1973	Fifth Survey 1986	Sixth Survey 1993
Number of languages	67	44	41

(Mallikarjun, 2004; Mehata, 2010)

TABLE-16

Medium of Instruction (Number of Languages)

Stage	Fifth Survey	Sixth Survey
Primary	43	33
Upper primary	31	25
Secondary	22	21
Higher Secondary	20	18

(Mallikarjun, 2004)

TABLE-17

These are the 41 languages listed in the Sixth Survey in 1993.

Angami	Gujarati	Lotha	Punjabi
Ao	Hindi	Malayalam	Sanskrit
Arabic	Kokborok	Manipuri	Sema
Assamese	Kannada	Marathi	Tamil
Bengali	Kashmiri	Maithili	Telugu
Bhutia	Khasi	Mizo	Tibetan
Bodo	Konkani	Nepali	Urdu
Dogri	Konyak	Nicobari	Zeliang
English	Ladakhi	Oriya	
French	Lepcha	Persian	
Garo	Limbu	Portuguese	

(Mallikarjun, 2004)

Although as mentioned earlier the Constitution guarantees the use of mother tongue in Education, majority of the minor languages are not used in primary and middle schools any more. There seems to be no space for the lesser used languages in the framework of TLF (Benedikter, 2009: 149).

What does this then lead to? Abbi (2009: 306) points out that minority and minor minority communities whose languages are not considered as medium of instruction or even recognised as

a subject to be taught will be forced either to forget their mother tongues or retain/maintain their respective mother tongues only in the home domain with increasing pressures from peer groups as well as from the seniors of the community to move over to dominant regional language for intra-community communication (2009: 306). This then often results in two kinds of submerging identities:

a) Firstly, at the State level, when speakers of a language, in the absence of their language being recognised for education purposes, try to identify themselves only at home domain
b) Secondly, the children are discouraged and at times, punished for using their mother tongues (Abbi, 2009: 307)

Public Administration and Minorities:

In India, even though not all languages are used in the public sphere there is definitely a clear distinction between the official languages (of the country) and languages used in administration (Mallikarjun, 2004). For instance, the Official Language Act of Andhra Pradesh in 1966 recognises Telugu as the Official Language for use in its territory, and also permits the use of English, Urdu, Kannada, Tamil and Oriya (but no others) for administration purposes (Mallikarjun, 2004).

Benedikter (2009: 156) summarises Article 347 of the Constitution that provides certain safeguards that govern the use of minor languages for official purposes such as:

a) At district level and below (such as municipality, tehsil (taluk), etc.), wherever a linguistic minority constitutes between 15 to 20 per cent of the population, important Government notices, rules and other publications should also be published in minority languages.
b) At the district level, where 60 per cent of the population in a district use a language other than the Official Language of the State, that language should be recognised as an additional official language in that district. Recognition for this purpose should ordinarily be given to the major languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule.
c) At the State headquarters, a translation bureau should be set up where arrangements may be made for translation and publication of the substance of important laws, rules, regulations,

etc., into minority languages in States or districts or wherever a linguistic minority constitutes 15 to 20 per cent of the population.

d) In correspondence with the public, petitions/representations received in languages other than the Official Language should be replied to wherever possible, in the language of petition/representation. The translation and publication of important rules, regulations, notices, etc., into all languages, spoken by the least 15 per cent of the total population at district or sub district level, is provided by special "translation bureaus", provided by the States' central administration. It is up to the discretion of the respective Governments to decide whether a notice, a rule or other official publication is so important as to be translated into minority languages (Benedikter, 2009: 156).

The last sentence makes it clear how weak these provisions are. They are merely statements on paper, as pointed out by Abbi (2009: 305) in her review of the Constitutional rights for linguistic minorities. Furthermore, according to Benedikter (2009:156), all of these provisions are only declarative in nature and therefore, creates "a certain margin of discretion for the State Governments in deciding on the recognition of local official languages" (Benedikter, 2009:156). Presently the use of minority languages in the administration at district level has been largely ignored by the State governments.

Therefore even though, each State and Union Territory, including the Union Government, has declared at least one or more languages as the official languages of the state only a few languages are being used as administrative languages at the district or taluk levels (sub-division of district). In a report submitted by the National Commission for Linguistic Minorities (NCLM) it complains that, there is no machinery at the state and district levels to redress grievances in matters of the protection of linguistic minorities, and comments as follows:

> In the beginning the concern was repeatedly expressed and whenever there was a deviation, remedial steps taken. As the system evolved, attention wavered and all these concerns became commonplace. Gradually a slackening was noted and, needless to say, the implementation of the safeguards at present is not uniform over the various states. With the passing of time the priorities have changed. A general sense of apathy seems to have taken hold of the states for various reasons. Perhaps one of the reasons is growing complexity of the administration. The harassed administer is far too much occupied with fire fighting operations to take a look at the other issues which can be left alone to take care of themselves. At the

> higher level, there are other problems which are of much more urgency to them (NLCM quoted in Benedikter, 2009: 157).

In addition, very often the petitions are written by petition writers who translate everything into the official language and consequently several State Governments claim that no representations are received in minority languages (Benedikter, 2009: 157). The actual reason is that petitions in non-official languages could be just discouraged (as was alleged by some persons in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere). Moreover, even where it has been admitted that representations are received in languages different from the State Official Languages, it is said that replies are usually sent in English or the state official language. According to NCLM, a variety of reasons "which appear to be more of excuses rather than explanations, are given such as lack of equipment whereas actually it is lack of will" (NCLM in Benedikter, 2009: 157).

The NCLM also points out that whenever "a substantial number of people desire and describe a certain language to be their mother tongue, their wishes should be respected and they should be given the same treatment as other residents of the state" (NCLM in Benedikter, 2009: 157) as per the Constitutional rights. Also, it has been noticed that the safeguards are considered to be the concern of minority departments set up by the Union like welfare department or the minority education department rather than the entire administration itself. A look at the requests raised by the representatives of linguistic minorities makes their concerns evident. The followings requests were made at Union and State levels.

1) ***At the level of Union:***

a) Providing a slot for broadcasting programmes in the minority language.
b) Printing the Money Order forms, railway tickets also in the language of the minority.
c) Printing voter lists and ballot papers also in the minority language.
d) Providing a postman who can read the language written in the address of certain localities where the linguistic minorities reside.
e) Avoiding delay in delivery of mail because of ignorance of the postman of the language of the address, etc. (Benedikter, 2009: 158).

2) ***At the level of State:***

a) Receipt of application in minority languages and responses in the language concerned. The NCLM reports, some Governments are reluctant to accept such applications in all the minority languages, and assert that they have difficulty in answering them in that language. Furthermore, while some States respond to the petitions in the language in which the people have signed (usually that of the petition writer), others claim that the Official State language is understood by all the residents of the State, so there cannot be any grievance. Currently only a few states agree to accept and respond to the petitions in the language of the minority.
b) Interaction with public officers in the State and district administration should be in the minority languages.
c) Posting signboards in the offices in the language of the minority. Typically when one uses any public transport service in India one could always notice that the signboards and instructions of any sort are only in any of the Official State Languages or National Languages because some Governments believe that the Official Language is understood by all (Benedikter, 2009: 158).

3) Behaviour of the public officers:

a) Some employees, whose mother tongue is not the minority language, should also possess a working knowledge of the minority language.
b) Officers in the office may know the language of the minority, but the clerks, who actually deal with ordinary people speaking the minority language, do not know the language of the public.
c) Officials, who are posted in areas where large number or linguistic minorities reside should have knowledge of the minority community otherwise it will not be possible for them to function properly.
d) Officials, who are in the minority regions, may not be considered for promotion in the same area, but officials from other areas, who do not know the minority language, are promoted and posted to minority areas (Benedikter, 2009: 159).

One of the major causes of concern is the lack of representation of linguistic minorities in the political sphere at state or district level in spite of repeated requests made by them to from committees (Benedikter, 2009: 159). Another cause of concern is also the issue of employment

and recruitment into the State Employment Services. In India, in order to work in the public sector an examination must be passed at Union or state level. In the beginning, the examination does not require knowledge of the respective State's Official Language at the time of the applicant's recruitment (Benedikter, 2009: 160). The test of proficiency in the State's Official Language can be held before the completion of the probation period. Some of the requests made for recruitment into State Services are:

a) Knowledge of the State official language should not be a prerequisite for recruitment to State Services.
b) A candidate should have the option of either using Hindi or English as a medium of examination for State services, as alternative to Official language of the State.
c) In addition, the other requests included an extension of time limits to pass the departmental language examination, elimination of oral examination in the departmental language examination and lastly appointment of a proper share of linguistic minorities (Benedikter, 2009: 160).

These requests were put forth because the State Governments besides the minimal educational qualification required for the jobs, generally followed the State Language Policy in recruitment of the staff.

Bilingualism/Multilingualism-Language Shift and Language Maintenance among Linguistic Minorities in India:

In a country like India, policies like the National Language Policy, Educational Policy and so on, were all formulated in order to accommodate diversity and harness multilingualism. These policies have however, led to a functional relation which is not linear but rather hierarchical in nature (Srivastava, 2007: 42). As a result, the speakers of Scheduled Languages enjoy a special status that has been bestowed on them while minor minority and minority linguistic groups are forced to acquire the Official (National or state) languages in order to gain access to the modern institutional spaces. According to Mahajan (2010:111), in developing countries like India, identities can be mobilised in order to gain access to valued social and economic goods on one hand. But, at the same time on the other hand minor minority and minority language

communities might also strive for "revivalism" and "revitalization" in order to establish an independent identity despite other multilingual factors that try to influence and motivate these speakers to shift to dominant state/regional languages (Abbi, 2000: 23). Therefore, it can be seen that both retention and shift co-exist within the same language group. Abbi, also points out that even though language shift is a common phenomenon among the minority communities it does not have a uniform pattern all over India (Abbi, 2000: 23). For instance, the tribals of Dravidian language family seem to manage shift easily, while the Tibeto-Burman family put up with a considerable resistance. The incidence of retention among the Tibeto-Burman could be due to the self-sufficient economic structure and also the absence of dominance of a particular regional language group (Abbi, 2000: 23). The following table presents the per centage of Language Shift among the Tribals.

TABLE-18

Language Shift among Tribals in Various States

Less than 1%	Sikkim, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Andaman and Nicobar
1-10%	Jammu and Kashmir
10-20%	Bihar
20-40%	Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam
40-80%	Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh
More than 80%	Gujarat, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Lakshadweep, Uttar Pradesh, Goa, Diu, Daman

(Abbi, 2000: 24)

In addition Abbi (2000:24) points out that,

> The people of minority communities live in perpetual state of bi/multilingualism, with the result that these communities are always at a higher level on the 'scale of bilingualism proficiency' than their dominant majority communities. The contact-induced changes in such minority languages lead to typological homogeneity on the one hand, and to a tendency of language attrition on the other. In the tug of war between language maintenance (retention of ancestral language) and language proficiency in the dominant/contact languages/s the tribal languages have begun passing through a transition period of language change and language convergence,

> postponing or avoiding the expected language obsolescence situation (Abbi, 2000:24).

This has resulted in language loss and shift on one hand and language maintenance on the other. This kind of a paradoxical situation according to Abbi (2000: 24) is more visible in the urban area than in rural area maybe because the motivation to shift language is much stronger in the urban areas as a result of extensive contact and the prestige attached to the contact language (Abbi, 2000:24).

Gnanasundram and Elangaiyan (2000: 31) note the Linguistic and Non-Linguistic factors that contribute in Language shift:

Linguistic factors:

a) Stylistic shrinkage that is from Polystylism to Monostylism
b) Frequent code switching
c) Pidginisation
d) Limited Vocabulary
e) Literary

Non-Linguistic factors:

a) Population size
b) Setting of the speaker
c) Institutional support
d) Economic factor
e) Political factor
f) Self esteem of the group

Abbi (2000:25) also examines the causes of language shift and maintenance. An in depth study undertaken by her on some linguistic minority communities like Kurux in 1991 and1994 indicate that these minority languages go through a process of "language shrink", "language contraction" and "language conflation" simultaneously (Abbi, 2000: 25).

a) Language Shrink: It is associated with gratuitous borrowing, replacement of basic vocabulary, simplification of linguistic structures, reduction or loss of tradition/indigenous morphological and syntactic structures.
b) Language Contraction is associated with reduction in the use of, and number of speakers of the language. The former refers to the reduction of domains and contexts of language use.
c) Language conflation is associated with expansion of lexical items borrowed or adopted, borrowing of linguistic structures not existing earlier, filling semantic voids by new structures.

The depleting socio-economic conditions have led several tribal languages to either shrink or contract. But, the same factors when coupled with pressures like domination of regional language and a sense of "community identity" have contributed in minority languages conflating (Abbi, 2000:25).

Scripts and Minority Languages:

Choice of scripts in minority languages also effects how widely they can be easily taught or well recognised. Some languages, of course, are not written at all, and some are written in different scripts, often suggesting different political allegiances. Most scripts are derivatives of Brahmi, Arabic and Roman resulting in 10 major scripts namely Nagari, Perso-Arabic, Gurumukhi, Gujarati, Bengali-Assami-Manipuri, Oriya, Telugu-Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Roman. In a few cases of alphabetisation, entire new scripts were invented to write languages and some languages continue to be written in more than one script (Benedikter, 2009: 52). For instance, Sindhi which could be written in either using the Devanagari or Perso-Arabic script, Konkani can be written in Devanagari, Kannada, Malayalam or Roman scripts. So the language scenario in India according to Bhattacharya can be summarised as follows:

a) There are a number of languages without a written equivalent.
b) Languages that have only recently acquired it.
c) Those with a long standing written traditions and
d) The languages/dialects that once had a written tradition but subsequently dialectalised (Bhattacharya, 2002: 65).

Sarangi (2009:32) points out that the question of choice of a script has been very contentious in India as the speakers of a linguistic community identify themselves "with specific scripts as symbolic of their historical, cultural and religious identifications" (Sarangi, 2009: 32). It is noticed that minority languages that have recently adopted a script largely favoured Devanagari (script used to write Hindi) while some others have adopted other major scripts. The reason for favouring major scripts by the linguistic minority communities is because these have advantages of being well-established scripts with "technological equipment" already in place (Benedikter, 2009: 53). But nevertheless, acceptance of a major script can also be considered as another form of political domination too (Sarangi, 2009: 31).

Media and Minority languages:

TV and Radio Broadcasting

In India there is no connection between education and the use of languages in Media. For example, news and programmes are broadcast in Tangsa, Noote, Indu-Mishmi and so on in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and Kulvi, Bilaspuri, Kangri and others in the state of Himachal Pradesh but none of them are used in education (Benedikter, 2009: 163). On the other hand, in some cases minority languages are used in education but not in broadcasting. Furthermore, Benedikter (2009: 163) points out that media coverage is not provided to the minority languages on a large scale. This is because, firstly, the key personnel in the production are more likely to be drawn from the majority communities rather than from the minority interests; and this implies that majority attitude and values are likely to get prominence rather than minority interests; and secondly, the news and programmes broadcast in minority languages are over-shadowed by programmes in the majority languages. A sociolinguistic survey conducted in the state of Himachal Pradesh showed that minority dialect speakers have less preference for programmes in their mother tongue than for programs in Hindi.

"All India Radio" (AIR) is a government funded radio broadcasting service that covers all of India with an objective to spread information and culture to illiterate people (Benedikter, 2009: 165). According to the official AIR website, it only covers 24 Languages and 146 dialects in home services (*All India Radio*, 2006). However, the 2001 Census reported that there are a total of 122 languages and 234 mother tongues (*Census India*, 2010-11). This again goes on to show that minority languages are ignored even in radio broadcasting too.

Print Media

In India there is no bar on starting newspapers or periodicals in any language in the country. According to the 2002 Survey newspapers and periodicals were published in 101 languages (Mallikarjun, 2004). One aspect of this that is very interesting is the number of publications in foreign languages, which include German, Arabic, French, Greek, Spanish, Chinese, Latin Esperanto and so on.

The main problem is that resources for running newspapers which are available for majority groups are hardly available to minority groups. The support from the governments is scanty and inadequate (Benedikter, 2009: 164). Another problem is the mass circulation of minority papers is a rare phenomenon. For instance, among newspapers printed in 42 languages other than the languages of the Eighth Schedule, the circulation of dailies, weeklies, monthlies and others in 1976 did not exceed 3,000 copies each, except in the case of Manipuri, Khasi, Nepali, Konkani and Lushani (Dua in Benedikter, 2009: 164). Furthermore, the educated minorities do not subscribe to the minority papers as their needs and interest are not catered for by the limited range of topics covered. Moreover, the minority papers cannot compete with the papers in majority languages in terms of coverage of topics and circulation there by making them naturally prefer a newspaper in another language (Benedikter, 2009: 164).

Information Technology and Minority languages:

Mallikarjun (2004), points out that in India one can find division of people based on ethnicity, language, religion, region, social identity, rural/urban, literate/illiterate and so on. In his opinion, one more important division can be included under this list is "Digital Divide" (Mallikarjun, 2004), which refers to "the disparity in access to information, skills, means and facilities" (Benedikter, 2009: 167). The computer in India is still associated with the elite and not the ordinary citizen. The computer technology projects undertaken by the national government have never sought to penetrate beyond the Scheduled Languages. However, even within the Scheduled Languages it has not benefited them equally. There are presently over one thousand or so projects for extending the use of computer technology but out of these projects nothing is known about the digital resources allocated for minor minorities (Mallikarjun, 2004). Furthermore, localisation of software in a few languages is again a process of digital empowerment which tends towards

the promotion of more dominant languages due to immense political pressure (Benedikter, 2009:167).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

> "Language, sooner or later, proves to be a thorn in the flesh of all who govern, whether at national or local level" (David Crystal 1987: 364)

It was speculated that linguistic diversity would lead to a breakup of India in the 1960's and 1970's because it was believed by many political analysts that such a linguistically diverse environment, and the political and religious division which it both mirrored and encouraged would overwhelm any unifying sense of nationhood (Mahajan, 2010: 112). It was believed that political compromises (such as the Linguistic Re-organisation of the states) provided only a "thin sort of unity" to groups (Brown in Sarangi, 2009: 13). If the pessimistic predictions of the analysts have been proven wrong it is only because the presence of diversity has not only been acknowledged but deeply valued by the Indian government (Mahajan, 2010: 112).

Although the framers of the Constitution of India always intended to make room for all of its linguistically, religiously and ethnically diverse communities and to make special provisions related to language (Mahajan, 2010: 112), the initial proposition to promote Hindi as a National Language was not only unpopular but dangerous (leading to many riots) because many people in the south and other parts of India believed that it would impose on them a northern identity. The government responded by modifying the National Language Policy. Hindi was made an "Official" rather than the National Language; English was made an Associate Official Language; and other regional languages were given official language status in order for them to exist equally along with the other two official languages (Amrithavalli and Jayasheelan, 2007: 81). The Linguistic Re-organisation of states into linguistic entities was another step towards promoting and maintaining linguistic diversity, so that linguistic minorities should be offered

opportunities for political and economic growth with no feeling of discrimination or neglect (Sengupta, 2009: 19). Another initiative (a result of many years of planning) was the Three Language Formula (TLF) in education, devised in order to encourage and preserve linguistic diversity by providing linguistic minorities means to acquire link languages and also to guarantee them the right to education in their own mother tongue. Therefore, it can be concluded that formulation of rights and provisions in the Constitution, formation of states on the linguistic principle and also the formulation of the education policy were all at least moderately sucessful attempts by the Indian government to ensure effective integration of linguistic minorities into the mainstream by guaranteeing them equal rights.

However, the overall success has been mixed. Certainly those measures have helped to preserve the integrity of the Indian nation, though not everyone is happy, and they have not helped the smaller minorities, i.e. the speakers of the Non-Scheduled Languages. The Linguistic Re-organisation of the states has become an ongoing process ever since Independence as demands for new states seems to be never-ending by large number of linguistic minorities, who can be found in all states despite the Linguistic Re-organisation. In addition, the very creation of states, based on language, has led to a few linguistic communities gaining the status of "majority" while leaving many others unrepresented. The new majorities have received special privileges, but that has simply resulted in other languages continuing to be disregarded minorities, as always. Further, in spite of having a noble and ambitious education policy in place which is inclusive in nature and at the same time guarantees the right to education in the child's mother tongue, the policy is not always implemented and is consistently ignored in practice. As Ambedkar (the head of the Colossal Committee that formulated the Constitution) pointed out, the provisions impose "no burden upon the Sate" (Ambedkar in Austin, 2009: 69) to implement them, so states are unable or unwilling to formally recognise their internal diversity. One strategy to avoid recognising minority languages is simply to assimilate them to the majority when returning Census results or implementing the TLF in education.

> A coordinated mechanism has to be created which needs to operate at the level of both the centre and states with clearly delineated roles for the two-tiers of government. The state governments also have to show greater initiative in evolving targeted and effective programs that encourage greater involvement of local governments in each state (Sengupta, 2010: 19).

But the question is whether there is any political will in creating such a mechanism. As if to prove this point, when the issue of 196 languages listed as endangered by UNESCO was brought up in the Assembly, the Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister of the State brushed aside the issue by saying that these languages were not even recognised as languages in the 2001 Census report (Singh, 2010). But in fact, the Atlas provided 2001 Census figures for many of the languages listed (if not all, as Census reports languages only with at least 10,000 speakers). Further, in a show of magnanimity, the minister mentioned that the Central Institute of Indian Languages, which functions under the HRD Ministry, had been meticulously documenting and digitally recording several of these imperiled languages (the CIIL was constituted in 1969 with the primary aim to develop and promote Indian languages) (Singh, 2010). Ironically enough, this is what the Head of Centre for Tribal and Endangered Languages CIIL said: "We don't go by the UNESCO atlas….We (CIIL) make a distinction between language and mother tongue" (quoted in Ali, 2009). When further questioned then whether the government would just sit back and watch these languages die, the Head was quick to respond by saying that "Government does intervene if [sic] language dies by making people realize that their language is important" (quoted in Ali, 2009). He also added that such languages are equipped with a script and dictionaries by CIIL in such cases. In brief, Ali (2009) sums up the government's attitude towards these minor minority languages or so called tribal languages in Indian context as follows:

> First the government refuses to recognize mother tongues as languages or labels them as 'dialects' of non-scheduled or scheduled languages. The same government then goes into a state, like Arunachal Pradesh, with 64% tribal population, institutes its own languages, provides token tribal languages in schools, fails at this, and instills a sense of inferiority in tribal communities. When the latter are ready to accept Hindi or English, the so-called 'languages of prestige', it acts with malevolent benevolence, saying, "No, even your language is important" (Ali, 2009).

If this is the plight of the minor minority languages the following episode illustrates the state of the other minority languages. Recently, in November 2009, a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) was slapped and manhandled in Maharashtra by a few Assembly members for taking an oath in Hindi instead of the state language Marathi. The MLA who slapped him justified his actions by commenting that the victim's insistence of taking an oath in Hindi showed his lack of respect for the regional language and its people. The whole episode is believed to be instigated by Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) party leader who is famous

(or rather infamous) for his anti-north Indian stance (North Indian states are predominately Hindi states) that had led to major riots in 2008 (*The Times of India*, 2008).

This is a partial illustration of the current state of affairs in India where language is almost always political. Despite these shortcomings one cannot stop but wonder how India has managed to thrive as a strong Nation State. The answer lies in the ability and also the willingness of the Indian government to adapt and recognise the variation that exists in its population. In addition, both officially and privately, much tolerance is shown towards all language groups (Amrithavalli and Jayasheelan, 2007: 82). However, it can be concluded that although India seems destined to continue as a nation, living with language tensions is part of being Indian.

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Vanishree V.M., MAPL and ELT, M.A., PGDHRM.
St Mary's University College
London
UK
vanivm@gmail.com