LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON EDUCATION OF MULTILINGUAL GROUPS IN INDIA

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled **"LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON EDUCATION OF MULTILINGUAL GROUPS IN INDIA"** submitted by **SANGEETA SRIVASTAVA** is in partial fulfillment of eight credits out of a total requirement of twenty four credits for the degree of **MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of the university and is her own work.

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With Divine Blessings

Of

Swami Vivekananda

Dedicated

to

my parents

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Place: New Delhi

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CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

This study is an attempt at understanding the linkages between the language, culture and medium of instruction within the context of multi-lingual social structure. It takes into account the cognitive and social psychological aspects of growing up as a multilingual in the Indian society and also of the circumstances leading to multilingualism. The pedagogical implications of multilingualism particularly for the linguistic minorities[1] in India have also been taken into consideration. Besides, debate on regional language as a medium of instruction for primary and higher education in India also finds place in this discussion. Policy implications for protecting multilingualism in India have also been dealt with.

[1] By the term "*Linguistic Minority*" we denote the numerical representation of people speaking a particular language in a group of languages, some being spoken by many or the majority and some by a few or minority. It also denotes the community which is inferior /subordinate in terms of access to power and status in the country they inhabit.

CONTEXTUALISING MULTILINGUALISM

The importance of preserving cultural diversity is realised throughout the world. Cultural diversity is closely linked with the linguistic diversity. Therefore, new educational programmes and provisions are being initiated to preserve and nurture linguistic and cultural diversities. Multilingualism is one step towards this direction. Multilingualism is neither an anomalous state of language behaviour in communication within a social group, nor is it a hindrance in social group communication, nor is it an obstacle per se in the linguistic interaction within a speech community. It is, thus, a natural phenomenon in a heterogeneous society.

Every individual or a community has a communication universe. In a multilingual situation, many languages share this universe. Learning these languages becomes quite natural and seamless process. Here languages are complementary to each other. They are allotted specific domains and purposes and are rarely in opposition to one another (Pattanayak, 1996). Multilingual society respects and treats different linguistic groups equally irrespective of the developmental status of languages they speak. Moreover, in a multilingual society a child may have many mother tongues. They share functions under congenial atmosphere. The concept of multilingualism is more relevant in the case of India

where the VIII Schedule of the Constitution enlists eighteen languages. In many cases, a person speaks more than one language. In the least a person can speak or get exposed to two dialects or languages in the Indian society making him or her bilingual. In this context, bilingualism may be treated as a type of multilingualism in which a person speaks/knows two languages. The term 'bilingualism' has its origin in the west and is seen as something challenging i.e. for learning another language as well as another culture. The American melting pot theory believes that diverse identities would melt and fuse themselves to form a single monolingual American identity. The validity of this theory has been later rejected by social scientists due to the fact that different groups were found to be maintaining their identities intact in a conglomerated society. On the other hand, bilingualism in India is seen as natural as part of the growing up into a multilingual life style (Mohanty, 1994).

MULTILINGUALISM AND EDUCATION[2]

Until recently, most studies of the cognitive effects of bilingualism have come to the conclusion that the bilingual

[2] The present study seeks to look into the studies on multilingual as well as bilingual contexts. In fact, the literature on multilingualism in the educational set up in India is virtually non-existent. So, the present study tries to understand the issues of bilingualism in the west as well as in India to present a picture on multilingual character in the Indian education system.

individual is intellectually disadvantaged as compared to a monolingual person citing evidence of former's generally low scores on IQ tests and in school examinations (Macnamara, 1966; Lambert, 1977). The reason to believe this is not one, but many. Besides the apparent intellectual burden of learning an additional language, a number of studies (Hunt, 1967; Blom and Gumperz, 1972; Rubin 1970) indicate that the bilingual or diglossic individual is under a certain amount of pressure to choose the right language according to situational demands, and sometimes there are penalties for making the wrong choice. If we apply this to situations of greater cultural, linguistic or ethnic heterogeneity particularly to upwardly mobile individuals this assumption is proved to be true (Rubin 1970: 529).

However, notwithstanding all these evidences, Lambert (1977) on the basis of his study pointed out that bilingual children as compared to their monolingual counterparts showed definite advantage on measures of "cognitive flexibility" "creativity" and "divergent thought". He concluded that verbal functioning of bilinguals was superior as compared to monolinguals of comparable background as the evidences suggested. Lambert pointed out that these early studies had several serious methodological flaws. The variable of class differences was not

controlled and the level of bilingual competence of the subjects was neglected. Moreover, most of all these studies were conducted in western countries. These countries had a dominant culture as well as language. In most of the cases, monolingual subjects belonging to the dominant culture were found to be speaking language of both local and international prestige, while the bilinguals generally spoke a less prestigious language and very often they belonged to ethnic minority groups. Monolingualism in the west was seen as a norm for a well adjusted individual and any deviation from this norm was seen as unnatural and as an additional burden too. In this way, any attempt to understand bilingualism as a general human phenomenon calls for evidences from a variety of different societies.

Problems of educating the bilingual child especially the one speaking a non-prestigious minority language such as Spanish in many parts of the United States attract special attention in this regard (Gardner, 1970; Bernstein, 1969). The problems of such children may be aggravated if, in addition to language differences, "rules of speaking" taught in their home environment vary greatly with that of the culture of dominant majority (Philips, 1970; Gumperz, 1970; Hymes, 1970; Erwin-Tripp, 1967). Besides these intellectual burdens, the very fact of belonging to a minority

culture acts as an emotional burden on these children which can not be ignored.

THE ISSUE OF IDENTITY

The literature on multilingualism or bilingualism often discussed the problem of 'social identity'. Some studies have endorsed the view that compulsory use of a language other than the mother tongue prevents a person from fully developing spoken and written command over the mother tongue and in some sense threaten that individual's "identity" (Taylor, 1977). Lambert, however, differed here questioning the basis of the view that bilingualism or even biculturality leads to loss of identity (1977: 19). On the basis of a study by him and Robert Gardner (1972), it was concluded that bilingualism and biculturalism strengthen each other and together they may even help ethnolinguistic minority groups in maintaining respect in and for their linguistic and cultural heritage so that they could become full fledged bicultural members of their national societies. Moreover, he cites the evidence of another study by Allen and Lambert (1969) on adolescent children of English-French mixed marriages. They were found to profit from the dual cultural influences found in their families. Rather than having cultural conflicts, these well adjusted young people with wider horizon and broader perspectives were

comfortable in the role of representing both of their cultural backgrounds.

Michael Byram (1988: 31) has mentioned about Swann Report which offers little general support for 'Ethnic identity'. The report says that 'membership of a particular ethnic group is ..... one of the most important aspects of an individual's identity – in how he or she perceives him or herself and in how he or she is perceived by others.'

The report further emphasises the importance of 'corporate identity'[3] over all others. It seems to be too inclined in favour of corporate identity at the cost of ethnic identities and minority languages. Byrum (1988: 37) argues against this assimilationist policy by saying that learning of a minority language is distinct from foreign language learning by virtue of the different relationship of the minority culture to the learners' own culture. The people belonging to a minority culture are not 'different' in the context of a 'nation', but they are different sub-group of the same 'people' to which learners belong by national identity. The suppression of regional, linguistic and other ethnic characteristics in favour of determining group identity may culminate in the

[3] "Whilst individuals may belong to different groups of various kinds they are in addition also part of the wider national society by virtue of a range of common shared characteristics, such as a common language and a common political and legal system, which taken together gives that society a degree of unity and its members a form of 'corporate membership' (Education for All, 1985: 3-4).

development of 'multiple identities' in the case of individual Allardt observes in this connection, that,

> "Modern man does not only have multiple group membership and multiple identities, but individuals are also permitted by most social groups to be members of other associations ..... It seems reasonable to assert that patterns of multiple identities will stimulate the maintenance of ethnic loyalties on one hand, but also weaken conflicts on the other" (1979: 39).

This argument makes it explicit that the notion of one national identity gets replaced by the notion of multiple identities peacefully and without any conflict.

It is a fact that language, and language variety-dialect or sociolect-is one of the meaningful signs to which people identify themselves culturally in their daily lives. Individuals utilize these language varieties to signify their social identities, often moulding their languages to live upto the requirements of situations and interlocutors (Giles and Powesland, 1975).* By and large, language embodies the values and meanings of a culture, refers to artifacts and signals people's cultural identity and distinctiveness. Thus in order to understand the process of language use in a culturally appropriate manner, it becomes essential to amalgamate "the code

* Cited in Byrum (1988) *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education*, Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd. p. 31, 37.

knowledge with socio-cultural knowledge" (Ochs and Shieffelin, 1984: 307).

While various studies referred so far have introspected and identified the factors tending to promote or inhibit the acquisition of second languages, the absence of any cross cultural studies on this subject disappoints social scientists. One thing which would be important to understand here is why some bilingual nations have comparatively low levels of individual bilingualism (e.g. Belgium), whereas other countries (e.g. many African and Asian nations) have been reported to be having very high levels (ICSSR – ISDL Research Project, 1978).

A study of organized efforts that aim to solve the existing language problems of social significance in the interest of a nation has been termed by social scientists as an area of Language Planning (Jernudd and Das Gupta, 1971). It can be defined as an area that embodies "conscious governmental efforts to manipulate both the structure and functional allocation of codes within a polity" (Fishman, 1969: 186). Neustupny (1970) has presented following scheme of language planing in the form of problem-process relationship:

Problem	Selection	Stability	Expansion	Differentiation
Process	Policy decisions	Codification	Elaboration	Cultivation

(Source: Srivastava, R.N. (1994) vol. III, Bi/Multilingualism in Studies in Language and Linguistics, Delhi: Kalinga Publications).

It is any nation's policy decision to affect the process of selection of code(s) as official or national language. India has been engaged in encouraging different regional languages by allocating them official status in their respective states through its policy formation. Any code or group of codes may be promoted in the areas of education, administration, management, trade, science and in professions such as medicine, engineering, etc. at the level of nation or state. Thus, this process of "code selection" under official policy formulation can be called as the "legitimization of language". This requires standardization of selected codes giving them stability, "modernization" which increases the functional importance of that code and "vernacularisation" encourages different regional language styles according to convenience. "Standardization" provides authenticity to regional (dialectal) and social (sociolectal) variations of a language through codification. "Vernacularization" makes the language context-specific, situation-related, event-centered and communication-oriented by encouraging language styles useful for masses. By "modernization"

of a language we mean to make the selected code competent and efficient enough to articulate in the new emerging areas of social activities in which it was not put into use till now due to several reasons (Srivastava 1994: 93). Thus the process of language planning calls for systematic vigilance at its subsequent steps.

Language policies in education are linked with a nation's internal and external political goals. When a nation aims to assimilate all its citizens to form a single language community, its language education progammes will promote monolingualism in the nation's signal, standard language. When a nation's internal goal is to protect its ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity, then its language education programmes will encourage knowledge in a standard national language while simultaneously fostering literacy in the different indigenous language varieties and dialects spoken by its inhabitants. When a nation's external political goals is to build communication network with other countries, its language programmes will promote knowledge of a standard national language and other international languages. Whereas, when a nation's internal goal is to revive a lost national identity (as a consequence of conquest/colonialism) - its language programmes will encourage restoration of the nation's language of historical importance (Banks, 1981: 168). Thus educational policy goals

determine promotion or prohibition of any language prevalent in a country. India presents an interesting scenario with a wide variety of languages in any given location. It is said that the language changes every five kilometers' range in the Indian context which is a huge nation of 100 million people. Let us now describe the actual scenario of multilingualism in the Indian society.

INDIAN CONTEXT

Multi-lingualism is an all pervading phenomenon in the Indian society, touching almost every aspect of the social life. The developed countries in the world can be regarded as monolingual states tending to become dominantly monolingual in their attempt to apply their model of developmental culture which can operate fully in the situation of monolingualism. That is why, the practice of multilingualism prevalent in entire third world is seen as problematic. Moreover, plurality of languages, religions, races, etc. is considered as resulting in fragmentation of society according to this western view. Multilingualism, in fact, accords respect and importance to every part of the whole and prevents elimination of human beings as persons (Choudhari, 1995: 104).

Moreover, Indian multilingualism is different from western multilingualism. India being a multiethnic and multicultural

country, multilingualism becomes an integral part in the day-to-day life of people here. Various languages, dialects or distinct styles of speech complimentarily make a contribution to the speech of its people minimizing competition with each other. Furthermore, different languages can be used here in different contexts. For e.g.- an individual may use English in the office, Kannada in the home and Hindi in the market. Switching over to different languages according to situational demand becomes a natural phenomenon without calling for much additional effort. In the traditional and stratified society of India, there exists a hierarchically arranged network of social identities comprising different layers of language loyalties, i.e. international, national, regional (state), local (district) etc. However, one can not deny the occurrence of language conflict in such a situation. Language conflict may manifest itself in the form of clash of interests between different levels of identities or loyalties, for example, Hindi being an official language of the country may come in conflict with English-the lingua franca of the world or with Kannada, Bengali, etc.-the state level regional languages or with Maithili, Bjojpuri etc.-the regional dialects (Srivastava, 1994:78). These language conflicts may generate destructive forces fatal to man's social existence. As language is potentially capable of both unification and disintegration, it is on

our part to exploit it in favour of its positive value, in the direction of our goal of nation-building and national integration.

The language policy in India is by necessity complex, multilayered, and frequently ambiguous with reportedly over 1,500 mother tongues. Hindi, spoken by about 40% of the population, was designated as the official language of India by the Constituent Assembly after independence. The Indian government is constitutionally committed to allocate resources for its spread and development. English, the former colonial language has been extended for indefinite period by the Government of India Official Language Act, 1967 for its use as an "associate" official language. The Schedule VIII of the Constitution recognises major languages of India by referring to them as India's national languages. Recently, three more languages (Konkani, Manipuri (also known as Meithei) and Nepali (Gorkhali) were added to the Eighth Schedule by the Constitutional Amendment in December, 1992. The schedule is an example of ambiguous language policy i.e. having no clear criteria for including particular languages under it (Krishna Murti, 1998: 252).

India is an example of a federal system composed of 29 states. Within each major linguistic state, the practice of multilingualism can be easily observed. Each state therefore has its

own language policy allocating official language status to the most widely spoken language while conferring secondary official language status on (a) significant minority language(s) within the state. Conferring official language status on any language implies its use for administrative purposes by the state government (Sonntag, 2002: 166).

In India, to achieve the objectives of language policy in education, the so-called 'Three Language Formula' has been adopted. This formula prescribes the teaching of regional language and mother tongue (if different from regional language), Hindi and English or any other modern European language as language subjects (Srivastava, 1994: 110). It promotes regional or state language instruction at the primary level along with the federal union official language (Hindi) and English being subsequently introduced later in the curriculum in mid-primary years. Linguistic minority students having mother tongue different from the dominant and official language of their state, are offered a four language formula, i.e. mother tongue instruction in addition to state's dominant language as medium in early primary years (Agnihotri and Khanna, 1994; Nayar, 1969: 152 – 163).

Such a complex, multilayered and ambiguous pattern of language policy calls for an intrigue critical analysis of minority

language politics. The linguistic mosaic of India presents a conglomerated picture of various inter-cultural and inter-lingual complexities associated particularly with its language policy in education. The concept of multilingual education comes central in this concern. How do language policies in education serve the interests of dominant groups within societies? How can the interests of linguistic minorities be protected through language education policies and practices (by promoting bi/multilingual education etc.)? These questions are at the heart of fundamental debate about the role of schools in the society, the linkages between language, education, culture and medium of instruction and conflicts between linguistic minorities and "mainstream" populations. There is a growing body of literature on how does bi/multilingualism and bi/multilingual practices in education serve/hinder the interests of students particularly belonging to language minority communities. Following section brings out a review of such studies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A number of studies[4] have been conducted on multilingual education, language and medium of instruction in various socio-

[4] Since the studies conducted in India are a few, the studies conducted in the western comparative context are also quoted here.

cultural contexts. They have raised different issues related to the practice of bi/multilingual education in different contexts. For instance, a study carried out by Linguistic Minorities Project (1984: 95-115) on the linguistic minorities of England raises following questions.

(i) "What are the educational needs of monolingual children growing up in a multilingual neighborhood, a multilingual society, and an increasingly interdependent world?

(ii) What is the responsibility of the state vis-a-vis the educational rights of bilingual children?"

It reports that the focus of provision of mother tongue for linguistic minorities in England is either on teaching in the later stage of secondary school or on the development of skills in the spoken language in the early primary school. There is relatively less attention on the use of two languages as media of instruction beyond the very earliest stages of schooling. The report provides a broad framework of history and background of linguistic minorities in England. It provides an account of multilingual education in England. However, it did not attempt a comprehensive review of sociological research on bilingualism leaving it on to the reader to have some idea of same ground.

Milk in his study on the bilingual classrooms in United States of America has mentioned following keypoints (1993: 102).

i) 'Translation is seen as both ineffective and inappropriate as a bilingual method of instruction

ii) There is a need for trained bilingual teacher for "self monitoring" their language use and making conscious decisions about language choice in the classroom.

iii) Substantial use of the primary language as a medium of instruction is an essential pre-requisite for full implementation of bilingual education programme.

iv) There is a basic similarity between bilingual education for language minorities in the United States and vernacular education movements worldwide.'

Milk's study seems to be centered around assimilationist policy of bilingual education advocating English as a second language for linguistic minority students. It has raised issues related to their proficiency in English and not in their mother tongues. Another study by Tariq Rahman (1999: 89) in Pakistan brings forth some other facts. He discusses the medium of instruction controversy as a power struggle between different pressure groups, or elites and proto-elites in Pakistan. The ruling elite's support to Urdu as the medium of instruction is seen as the bone of contention with proto-elites advocating the use of

indigenous languages in primary schools to protect the interests of different ethno-cultural groups. This study lacks a thorough sociological analysis of this problem. It seems to be a mere description of facts.

Christian, Chester C. (1976) analyzed the social and psychological significance of the development of bilingual literacy. He mentions its benefits in terms of increase in personal alternatives for work, etc., development of intercultural understanding, enrichment of the socio-cultural environment, mitigation of provincial attitudes and values and increase in personal and social flexibility. He has used the term 'bilingual literacy' referring to learning to read and write the home language during the preschool years, continuing to learn in and through it together with the school language upto the entire period of formal education. Focussing mainly on the significance of the bilingual literacy, the problems associated with bilingual literacy have not been dealt comprehensively.

A study on language maintenance and language shift among Kannadiga in the New York was conducted by Sridhar (1989). He found that Kannadigas maintained the "ethnic separateness of home life" only to a limited degree. The pattern of language use among them was part and parcel of their perceptions – and the

relatives of their role in their adopted society. The Kannada parents' attitude towards the use of English by their children was relaxed or liberal. Kannadiga community perceived itself as an economically successful group with a clear possibility of moving upward on the socio-economic scale. Their own success in life and migration to the U.S. were made possible by their proficiency in the English language, and they saw that skill as the key to success in their adopted country as well. This perception of the possibility of upward mobility is clearly a contributing factor in their acceptance and encouragement of English.

Nida and Wonderly (1971) in their paper emphasized the communication roles of languages in multilingual societies. Three types of language structures are described by them:

(a) The three language structure;
(b) the two language structure and
(c) the one language structure.

In the three language structure, a so-called 'world language', for example – English, French or Portuguese serves as the language of specialized information. In the two language structure, the second language tends to be both as the language of out-group communication as well as the source of specialized information. Whereas in one-language structure, a local regional dialect is used

as a language of in-group identification ; but the standard form of the language is the means of communication for most out-group contacts and for specialized information. In this way, different communication functions distributed among two or more languages is not an indication of inherent inadequacy in either of the languages involved but it is the case of a "social handicap" - that is of limitations imposed on one or both of the languages by the society itself. Moreover, in many two language or three - language situations, the in-group language is in primitive form i.e. unwritten and usually not standardized.

Michael Clyne (1987) through his study on the development of the functions of language in a certain girl named Joanna concluded that bilinguals as compared to monolinguals have clearly different kind of metalinguistic awareness (i.e. capacity to think about and reflect upon the nature and functions of language). Bilingual children while learning to express themselves in two languages are likely to have more opportunity than their monolingual counterparts to develop from a relatively early stage- and make use of-an awareness about language, languages and their appropriate use and function.

All these studies help in putting the more or less holistic picture of bi/multilingual education practices and problems associated with it.

STUDIES IN INDIA

There are a few studies conducted on multilingualism in education in India. Rao (1975) in his study on bilingual children tried to find the relation of language and personality in bilingual children. His main purpose was to find out if bilingual children who had grown up in a bilingual environment were maladjusted, and if so to discover the relation of his maladjustment to their achievement in second-language skills. He finally came to the conclusion that perhaps the cause of maladjustment in a bilingual child is not the second-language inadequacy but the inadequacy in the knowledge of their mother tongue itself. Bilingual child's personality seems to be fractured in two languages where one language is restricted largely to one set of situations and the other language is limited to another set. Thus a bilingual child seems malintegrated to his society as well as his family also. This study opens the door towards further investigation in the direction of influences on bilingual's mother tongue.

Deepika Phukan (1979) in her study on the effect of parental bilingualism on the acquisition of language skills of pre-school children found that bilingual child sometimes get confused when certain verbal expressions at one time had a definite effect on those who hear him (especially in home) and at another time failed to have that effect (outside home). She discovered that bilingualism did not pose serious threat to the linguistic development of the child. Moreover, children in an environment of parental bilingualism prefer to use the language which is "common-to-both" parents. Finally, she concluded that bilingualism causes no detrimental effect upon linguistic development of children provided that each one is taught correctly and no emotional factors are involved regarding the use of one or the other language.

In a significant study of bilingual situation of Tamil speaking Nadar community migrated to southern parts of Kerala, Reginald Solomon (1974) has tried to find out the impact of migration on language. According to his viewpoint, the L_1. or Tamil i.e. the mother tongue of immigrant community interacted with L_2 i.e. the mother tongue of migrated area (here–Malayalam). This process gave rise to the development of a fused variety of language i.e. L_3. Consequently this L_3 became the mother tongue or the only language of this particular group of migrants. This L_3 has shared

features with L_1 and L_2 as well as features peculiar to L_1 and L_2. In this way, the two languages intermingled to help these bilingual groups survive in this new area.

In an investigative study into the Indian school of bilingualism, Annamalai (1986) proposed that national bilingualism is possible if due importance is given to regional language outside their states and if the teaching methods of SL (second language) and FL (foreign language) are improved by incorporating radical changes in the ideology and methods of language teaching in schools.

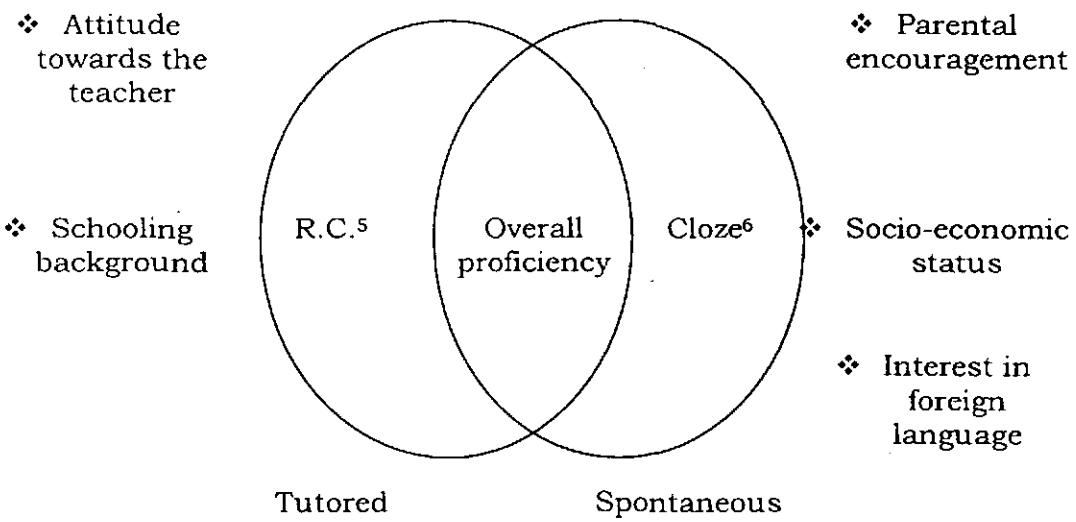
Goldthorpe (1975) in his study on third world countries mentioned about India. He said that in India people had to be not only bilingual but tri-lingual and tri-scriptural as well. They learn first the language of their state with its traditional script, then Hindi in Devanagari and then English in Roman script. More time and emphasis on language leaves students with less time for other substantive subjects like-mathematics, science, history etc. Moreover, the emphasis on memory work and rote learning affects other subjects adversely.

Examining Tamil children's proficiency in Hindi (the official language of India) in Delhi in a social-psychological framework, Sawhney and Agnihotri (1998) found out that the overall

proficiency of the Tamil students in Hindi was poor. Parental encouragement, socio-economic status of the family, interest in another language or foreign language, positive outlook towards the language teacher and schooling background were found to be important variables in gaining proficiency in second language i.e. Hindi.

Figure – 1

L_2 Proficiency in Multinational Settings



Source: (Sawhney and Agnihotri, 1998 'Acquisition of Hindi as a Second Language by Tamils in Delhi: A Social Psychological Perspective, in Agnihotri, Khanna and Sachdev (eds.) *Social Psychological Perspectives on Second Language Learning,* New Delhi: Sage Publications).

[5] Reading comprehension
[6] It was a type of test in Hindi.

If we consider reading comprehension scores as an index of achievement in Hindi, variables associated the school setting such as attitudes towards the Hindi teachers, schooling background etc. acquire considerable significance. On the other hand, proficiency in Hindi, as reflected in doze scores is closely linked with the variables of informal setting, e.g. parental encouragement, socio-economic status and interest in foreign languages.

Modern research suggests that bilingualism may in fact promote rather than hinder cognitive development of children. Mohanty (1994) tried to emphasize the relationship of bilingualism with cognitive and academic performance. A model proposed by him establishes the link between bilingualism, metacognitive process and cognitive development. As suggested by this model, bilingualism fosters in the individual special analytic orientation, cognitive flexibility and an enriched world view helping to promote the development of metalinguistic and metacognitive processes. The metacognitive processes serve as a central process making cognitive intellectual and academic functioning more effective and flexible.

All these studies though throw some light on the phenomenon of bilingualism, certain aspects still remain hidden or neglected. Rao (1975) could not provide ample research evidence in

favour of his conclusion regarding the effect of bilingualism on a child's mother tongue. His study had problems in sample selection and assessment. Tariq Rahman (1999) failed to suggest any possible solution in case of conflict between languages due to political reasons. Though Mohanty (1994) had tried to bring forth certain facts about psychological, linguistic and behavioural processes, he draws heavily on researches based in India.

Therefore, the review of literature reveals that the issues of multilingual education, the linkages between culture, education, language and medium of instruction have not been kept abreast with new developments comprehensively and holistically. The present study attempts to take these issues for an exploration.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

In the context of the rapid socio-economic changes taking place in the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural developing countries in the world, the importance of language as a means of cultural rootedness and group identity has also increased. The question of preserving the identity of different minority groups stands central in this regard.

In this context, India as a multi-cultural and multi-lingual society for several millennia having speakers of distinct linguistic

and ethnic stocks coexisting and living in an atmosphere of mutual acceptance and cooperation. Its land has witnessed fusion and amalgamation of ethnic, cultural and linguistic traits among speakers of Aryan, Dravidian, Austro – Asiatic and Tibeto- Burman families. Linguistic convergence under conditions of stable bi/multilingualism has been an ever existing phenomenon all through its history. Recently, the phenomenon of multilingualism has become a matter of concern in the wake of rapid globalization and modernization. In this context, the studies conducted so far leave behind certain lacunae in the area of multilingual education. Some seems to be too inclined towards one or the other aspects or dimensions, like political conflict between different elite groups regarding languages. Here language is seen merely as a symbol of power. Bilingualism /multilingualism as an individual phenomenon is neglected here. This study, therefore, is an attempt to bring forth certain issues regarding individual experiences of multilingual education. Why the multilingual children fail to integrate themselves in the society as well as in their family? What are the problems of adjustment? Is multilingual education really helping children (especially linguistic minority) towards their development or is it hindering their development? All these and other related questions will be sought to be answered through this study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

Broad Objectives

1. To examine the linkages between culture, education and medium of instruction in a bilingual or multilingual context.

2. To understand the dynamics of multilingual education in various socio-linguistic regions of the country.

3. To analyze the role of mother tongue in promoting adjustment of bilingual children in a school setting.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the Constitutional provisions and the language policy in the light of the multi-cultural and multi lingual nature of the Indian society.

2. To explore the existing practices of multi-lingual education in India.

3. To bring forth the issues, specific problems and complexities in the implementation of multilingual education in India.

Methodology

The information and data required for the study is collected through secondary sources, like-books, articles, doctoral theses, journals and periodicals, etc. The study has looked into various surveys conducted in this field in order to understand the dynamics of bilingual education in India. It has also undertaken an examination of reports, statistical data base and policy pronouncements on the topic under investigation.

SOURCES OF DATA

Primary data is collected from the reports published by the Government of India. Secondary data is collected from various books, articles, journals and periodicals relate to bi/multilingualism.

CHAPTERISATION

The theme of the study is organised into five chapters. The second chapter theorises the concept of multilingualism keeping in context its relevance to Indian multicultural scene. Chapter 3 focuses mainly on multilingual education in India. It describes in detail various aspects related to it. Chapter 4 seeks to analyse issues and problems related to multilingual practice and education

in India. Finally, Chapter 5 sums up and provides conclusions. It also delineates some insights for future researches in this field.

CHAPTER – II

LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION: THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

This chapter attempts to provide a theoretical framework to understand the dynamics of multi-lingualism in education. It seeks to clarify different terms such as culture and language and bring out linkages between language and culture, between language and medium of instruction. The chapter describes the significance of multi-lingual education, particularly for linguistic minorities in multi-lingual societies.

CULTURE

Every society has a culture of its own type. In fact, societies are characterised in terms of their culture. Culture is a complex entity which comprises of a set of symbolic systems, including knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs as well as habits and skills acquired by individuals as members of a given society (Tylor, 1871:1).

The word 'culture' has been defined in various ways by different sociologits. For instance Linton (1945) insists that culture

is a configuration of learned behaviour and the symbolic meanings attached to it. Moreover, the components of a culture are passed on by members of a society to other members and shared among them. Rohner (1984), however, says that the sharing of symbolic meanings and behaviour is only approximate because they are equivalent and not identical for any two members and also because their distribution is unequal.

Bruner (1965; 1973 a) treats culture as a dynamic and developmental aspect of human behaviour and defines it as a system of techniques for giving shape and power to human capacities. Malinowski (1944) defines culture as a combination of various elements which have two common characteristics. First, they are learned and acquired by humans, and secondly, they are an attribute of society. To him, culture is an instrument which enables man to secure his bio-psychic survival and, subsequently, a 'higher' mental-intellectual survival. Therefore, since each element of a culture i.e. economic organisation or social organisation or religion or language, is rooted in the needs of the human being and his survival, they are all inter-linked to each other through the common base in which they are rooted, i.e., the human being with his needs.

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) described the concept of culture as 'a set of attributes and products of human societies, and therewith of mankind, which are extra-somatic and transmissible by mechanisms other than biological heredity .....' He cited 164 definitions of culture ranging from "learned behaviour" to "ideas in the mind", "a logical construct", " a statistical fiction", "a psychic defence mechanism", and so on. According to Spencer (1897), culture is defined as "the superorganic environment as distinguished from the organic, or physical and from the organic – the world of plants and animals."

For Green (1956), culture is "the socially transmitted system of idealised ways in knowledge, practice, and belief, along with the artifacts that knowledge and practice produce and maintain as they change in time." Further, Mac Iver (1945) defines culture as "the expression of our nature in our modes of living and our thinking, intercourse, in our literature, in religion, in recreation and enjoyment." Culture is also defined as "the sum total of human achievements, material as well as non-material, capable of transmission, sociologically i.e., by tradition and communication, vertically as well as horizontally." (Mazumdar, 1966).

From these definitions, it is clear that the concept of culture has four dimensions – (i) learned behaviour, (ii) social heritage, (iii)

superorganic, and (iv) a design for living. Further, culture is usually passed on with the help of language.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Language is a component of culture alongwith other things such as – values, beliefs, and norms; language is a product of culture, passed on from one generation to the next through the process of socialisation; it also gives shape to culture, that is, our cultural representations are determined by language. But, being distinct from other components of culture, language interacts with it in specific manners: for language is a means of transmission for culture; besides, it is the primary tool for the internalization of culture by the individual (Hamers and Blanc, 1983: 116).

Culture is relative. This kind of *'culture relativism'* is an intellectual doctrine which insists that concepts are culturally constructed and can only be evaluated within their social and cultural context. This doctrine comprises both intellectual standards of true or false (cognitive relativism) and ethical parameters of right or wrong (moral relativism). The idea of cultural relativism was developed by linguistic philosophers Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf who asserted that any reality based upon construction of language can not exist in isolation; rather it is

shaped by cultural and linguistic categories (Palmisano (ed.), 2001: 145). Thus, the concept of cultural relativism means that the function and meaning of a trait are relative to its cultural setting. A trait is absolute that means it is neither good nor bad in itself. It is good or bad only in respect of the culture in which it is to function. Therefore, the values, ideals and behaviour patterns of a person are not to be evaluated and judged in terms of our own values and ideas but must be understood and appreciated in their cultural context. Moreover the cultural relativity principle implies that each society has its unique culture and what is a standard cultural practice in one culture may not be a standard cultural practice in another. When more than one culture and/or more than one language interact in the same society, culture and language are not isomorphically distributed. To the extent that language is an element of culture members of a society who do not speak the same language do not share all meanings, values, beliefs and behaviour of that society. However, there is a possibility of a great degree of overlap between the cultural behaviour of members who do not share the same language, as is in the case of Luxemburg or of countries in Africa and Asia e.g. Nigeria and India. On the other hand, societies can be culturally very different and concurrently speak different forms of the same language as, for example, English speaking communities in Great Britain, the United States,

Australia, the West Indies, Zimbabwe, or India, or French-speaking communities in France, Belgium, French Canada or former French colonies in Africa (Hamers and Blanc, 1983: 116). There can be minority and majority cultures in any society depending upon the dominant groups existing there.

Language may be treated as a culture's primordial institution. In fact, an individual's over-all competence is judged by his two basic competencies-linguistic and cultural (Srivastava, 1994: 29). Moreover, language binds individuals with each other and with groups. Without it group life seems impossible. In this context, language serves three major functions –

i) inter-group communications;

ii) transmission of the group's ethnicity and culture; and

iii) maintaining a systematic account of the group's ethnicity, culture, and history, which provides that group a sense of identity.

Thus language can be interpreted as a time-binding agent, tieing the past with the present (Banks, 1981: 160).

In this way, understanding of a group's language is an important pre-requisite to understand its culture. On the other

hand, an appreciation of culture is required to develop a thorough understanding of any group's linguistic behaviour (Mohanty, 1994: 208).

LANGUAGE AND SOCIALISATION

As a child grows it is the language that gradually socialises him/her according to the type of society. It also imparts socio-cultural knowledge to him/her. In fact, language is seen both as a tool for and as a process of socialisation (Mohanty, 1994: 209). Language is central to the whole process of education and it is the principal means of cultural transmission. Ochs (1986: 2) defines language socialisation as the process of "socialisation through language and socialisation to use language." Following socialisation goals have been identified by Mohanty for the development of communicative competence in children (Mohanty, Panda and Mishra, 1999: 130):

(a) orienting towards social status and role-appropriate language use;

(b) teaching culturally appropriate communication through instruction, practice and exposure;

(c) transmitting values and affect in communication;

(d) setting functional priorities in social communication;

(e) developing stylistic preferences in language use; and

(f) fostering metacommunicative awareness.

Language socialisation processes in different societies orient the child towards different cultural priorities and practices. They are processes of learning socially appropriate communication which involves learning the social rules associated with multiple languages.

MULTICULTURALISM

'Multiculturalism' or 'pluriculturalism' is a term used to refer to that situation in which different socio-cultural groups co-exist. Sometimes it is also referred to as 'cultural pluralism'. These socio-cultural groups speak different languages associated with their culture. There exists linguistic and cultural code-differences around these groups. Thus, a multi-cultural society is also multi-lingual because of multiplicity of languages. However, multi-culturalism and multi-lingualism are neither to be despised as a burden on society nor as an obstacle per se for its cultural or political progress. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of Canada has clearly acknowledged that "ethnic pluralism can help us overcome or prevent the homogenization and de-personalization of mass society," and further, it states "ethnic

loyalties need not and usually do not, detract from wider loyalties to community and country" (Srivastava, 1994: 101).

India is a good example of multi-lingual and pluricultural country. Here the policy of 'cultural pluralism' within a multi-lingual framework provides, on the one hand, the scheme of safeguards for minority languages and, on the other hand, shows the readiness on the part of the government to integrate them into the mainstream of socio-ecological conditions of national life. Plural societies like India are thus significantly characterised by the coexistence of a variety of distinct cultures and linguistic codes. There are specific types of relationships between socio-cultural settings and code-selection rules, i.e. it has evolved distinct communicative strategies. For example, for in-group and family interaction, dialects or minority languages are spoken, for wider communication, particularly with outsiders, the majority language with colloquial standard variety is employed, while for status-symbol exolossic language (English) or classical language (Sanskrit) is used for the interaction. Thus, this significant alternation of codes under the socio-culturally different contexts facilitates and provides functional efficacy to the phenomenon of bilingualism (Srivastava, 1994: 118).

As evident from the above description, bilingualism and biculturalism can be observed in multilingual and multicultural social settings. Taking into account both bilingualism and biculturalism at the level of individual, a fourfold classification has been given (Rao, 1975: 15-16):

(1) bicultural-bilingual (e.g., immigrant groups which carry on speaking their native languages in their homes or groups);

(2) monocultural-bilingual (e.g., different speech communities which are members of the same culture);

(3) monocultural-monolingual; and

(4) bicultural-monolingual.

Bilinguals are characterised in terms of their cultural identity. A bilingual may identify himself positively with the two cultural groups that share his languages and in turn gets acceptance as a member of each group: in this case he is also *bicultural*. A balanced biculturalism often corresponds to a balanced bilingualism. However, other cases are also possible, for example, in plurilingual societies dominant bilingual competence can be observed in a wide range with multiple cultural membership. A high bilingual competence does not always signify a dual cultural identity; a person may become a proficient bilingual

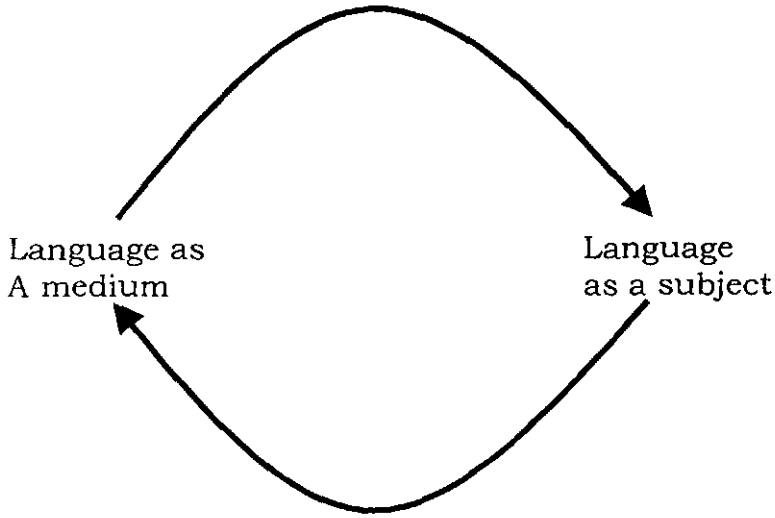
while at the same time he may remain *monocultural* and identify with one of the groups only. The development of bilingualism can also make a person to give up the identity of his mother tongue cultural group and adopt that of the second-language group, in this case he can be called as a *L_2 accultured bilingual.* Sometimes, the situation becomes even worse when a bilingual rejecting his own cultural identity may end up failing to identify even with the L_2 cultural group. As a result he turns out to be anomic and *decultured* (Berry 1983). Thus language and culture interact with each other in specific ways depending upon the socialization goals.

LANGUAGE AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in any kind of educational system. With regard to education, language has two primary roles – (a) development of language skills in the learner, and (b) its use as medium of instruction and learning (Koul, 1983: 6).

The discourse on language in education will have to differentiate between its use (a) as a medium of teaching, and (b) as a subject of teaching. These two aspects are related in a circular-give-and-take relationship (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1



Thus language as a teaching medium should be efficient enough to accommodate increasingly complex thought patterns of the maturing student. Moreover, the medium language should be given emphasis as a subject of teaching, regardless of whether, it is similar to the mother tongue or not (Lutze, 1969: 477).

Several crucial issues emerge in language education when we focus on the practice of language teaching in different teaching and learning situations at different levels. The core issues drawing the attention of social scientists, educational planners and applied linguists in this regard have been the determination of aims and objectives of language teaching, language curriculum and syllabus, preparation and gradation of instructional materials, application of audio-visual aids, methods of language teaching, language tests

and evaluation at different levels of education (Koul, 1983: 7). Aims and objectives of language education need to be specified in an adequate manner especially for a multilingual country like India. Preparation and gradation of instructional materials, language curriculum and syllabus and training for language teachers are on topmost priority. The choice of medium of instruction has a significant bearing upon education in a bilingual or a multilingual setting. In bilingual or multilingual countries, the choice of medium of instruction is associated with numerous educational, political and socio-cultural problems. The use of mother tongue/home language as a medium of instruction has been recommended in this regard. According to the UNESCO Press release on the Nuwera Eliya Conference, 1953:

> 'It is axiomatic that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue. Psychologically, it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind work automatically for expression and understanding. Sociologically, it is a means of identification among the members of community to which he belongs. Educationally, he learns more quickly through it than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium. (Koul, 1983: 9-10)'.

Mc Quown advocates the importance of mother tongue in national education in the light of a variety of human resources. It is mother tongue only which facilitates variations in human resources. It is like a vehicle which provides the basis for the

acquisition of extra-linguistic knowledge. Educational policy, therefore, needs to be based on the maximization of diversity giving recognition to inevitable factors of efficiency and of specific utility. It should give importance to languages according to this ordering: the mother tongue, a language of greater regional or national efficacy, and a language of great utility around the world (1982: 193).

Geetha Nambissan has mentioned about two kinds of perspectives in favour of the use of mother tongues as media of instruction in case of tribal children to promote linguistic plurality in classrooms (1994: 2751-2752)-

1. The first perspective links languages provided by the school to the social and emotional identity and culture of children. It sees instruction in mother tongue as an indicator of acceptance of child's culture by the school and as enhancer of child's self worth.

2. The second perspective is related to pedagogical principles. It emphasises the role of mother-tongue or home languages in facilitating the process of learning in school children. Oral traditions of tribal children need to be acknowledged through the use of their mother tongues in the process of learning in schools.

Basil Bernstein (1961) while trying to establish a link between language and socialisation has provided a theoretical framework which polarises *'restricted* and *'elaborated'* codes of

language as *'ideal'* types. Possession of 'elaborated' code implies an orientation to language as a major means of communication of diverse types of information about the physical and social world. Elaborated code provides their users with an orientation towards universalistic meanings. Universalistic meanings are those in which principles and operations are made linguistically explicit. The middle class children are socialised into the attitudes, values, beliefs, behaviour and skills which constitute this code. For the working class children, especially the lower working class, language is not specially significant as a medium. Speech serves mainly the function of defining the nature of such immediate role relationships as mother, mate or boss. The 'restricted' code governing this speech has a definite linguistic structure corresponding to its social functions. Restricted codes orient and make their users receptive to particularistic meanings. Particularistic orders of meanings are meanings in which principles and operation are relatively linguistically implicit, less context independent and more context bound (linked to a local relationship and to a local social structure). Restricted codes have relatively less potential for change in principles. Elaborated codes, on the other hand, are less tied to a given or local structure and are thus potentially capable of change in principles. Where codes are elaborated, the socialised individual has more footing on the

grounds of his own socialisation, and, therefore, he can enter into a reflexive relationship to the social order he has taken over. Where codes are restricted, the socialised individual has less footing on the grounds of his socialisation, and this reflexiveness may be limited in range. Robinson (1971) while analysing Bernstein's framework came to the conclusion that restricted code is unsuitable for success in educational attainment. He gave following reasons for this incapability:

(i) It does not orient the child to use language as the major means of communication of what schools are trying to teach.

(ii) There is a lack of hierarchical and flexible structure in its grammar and lexis limiting the range of units for the encoding and decoding of appropriate messages.

(iii) It is deficient in the requirement of a referential anchorage to non-linguistic events, since its own latent function is mainly to articulate effect or control behaviour directly.

Such problems get aggravated in the teaching situation when similarities in the grammar and lexis of 'elaborated' and 'restricted' code can give rise to two types of misunderstandings:

(i) "The teacher's speech in 'elaborated' code is decoded by the child as a message in 'restricted' code.

(ii) The child's 'restricted' code speech is decoded by the teacher as a debased level of operation in 'elaborated' code."

Progress of children in schools may be delayed because of these misunderstandings (Robinson, 1971: 78-79).

This concept of Benstein is of special importance in the case of multilingual society. A multilingual nation may promote use of national or a metropolitan language for induction into the 'elaborated' codes of object–centred disciplines to maximise industrial development. Moreover, educational experts and teachers would be aware of the nature of the problem of 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes of language use, so that in future they may not misjudge students about brightness and aptitude on the basis of their speech characteristics.

The mother tongue debate had been in focus for several years to protect the cultural and linguistic identity of various linguistic minorities. Multilingual method of teaching has several social and psychological implications for these people.

Multilingual Education

In the wake of large scale migrations, changing economic and technological scenario and new norms of communication in the post-colonial world, bilingualism and multilingualism have

become far more common phenomenon throughout the world. Multilingualism is closely associated with multiculturalism in the context of education and other spheres also. According to Burnet (1979), in the context of Canada, the educational policy of multiculturalism has meant the recognition and teaching of the languages and cultures of different ethnic groups and, in some cases, the implementation of bilingual programmes in which English and another unofficial language for instance, Ukranian or German in Manitoba – are used as languages of instruction for standard academic subjects. Thus, bilingual programmes are a part of multilingual , multicultural education policy.

A bilingual society is found in an area, community or country where two languages exist concurrently, one often being the mother tongue or lingua franca of that community, and the other the official language prescribed by the state comprising that area or belonging to that country (Davies, 1984: 54).

Mohanty (1994) has defined bilingualism as following:

> "Bilingual persons or communities are those with an ability to meet the communicative demands of the self and the society in their normal functioning in two or more languages in their interaction with the other speakers of any or all of these languages."

Thus, bilingualism is both a social and an individual phenomenon. At the individual level, bilingual individual is characterised by a comparable and very high degree of proficiency in two different languages, he can use either of them in any situation with equal ease and effectiveness (Siguan and Mackey, 1987: 17-18).

Siguan and Mackey have distinguished between two types of bilingualism, namely *compound bilingualism* and *co-ordinated bilingualism*. The co-ordinated bilingual makes use of two independent verbal systems. He can understand a message received in language A in that language and produces and issues his reply in the same language and he can comprehend a message received in language B in that language and produces and issues his reply in the same language. On the other hand, the compound bilingual has one major verbal system, that of language A. Thus when he receives a message in language A he will understand and give reply in that language, whereas when he receives a message in language B he will translate it into that language A in order to comprehend, produce the reply in language A and then translate it into language B in order to issue it (1987:18). Thus, the co-ordinated bilingual can be regarded as a person possessing two

fold system of meanings and the compound bilingual one system only, with a gradual differentiation between the two types.

Seeing bilingualism at the social or collective level involves society or any social context. Siguan and Mackey described it as - 'social or collective bilingualism makes use of two languages as means of communication in a society, group or any given social institution.'

In this context, a bilingual society may be analysed from two view points – (i) the number of speakers of that language, and ii) the standing and function of each language. While seeing bilingualism as a social phenomenon there is one term which is now increasingly being used to indicate linguistic imbalance, namely, *'diglossia'*. By 'diglossia' we mean any situation where two languages co-exist with an imbalance in favour of one of them, which can be called as the *'strong language'* while other language is regarded as a *'weak language'* (Siguan and Mackey, 1987: 32).

This diglossic situation arrives many times when ever the policy of bilingual education is adopted in practice. *'Bilingual education'* refers to any education system with two languages as the medium of instruction. One of them is usually (not always) the student's first language (Siguan and Mackey, 1987: 44).

The US Office of Education (1971) defines bilingual education as "the use of two languages, one of which is English, as medium of instruction for the same pupil population in a well organised programme which encompasses all or part of the curriculum and includes the study of the history and culture associated with the mother tongue." This definition had been made concise a decade later as "bilingual education means instruction given through two languages, one of which is English" (Milk, 1993: 91).

According to Hamers and Blanc (1983) "bilingual education' is "any system of school education in which, at a given moment in time and for a varying amount of time, simultaneously or consecutively, instruction is planned and given in at least two languages."

Thus, this definition covers use of the two languages as media of instruction; it does not include second/foreign language teaching as a subject and its no other use in academic activities, although L_2 teaching may be part of a bilingual education programme.

Further, according to this definition, most programmes of bilingual education may be classified into three categories:

(i) simultaneous instruction given in both languages;

(ii) instruction first given in L_1 till the maturation period of pupil so as to make him able to use L_2 as a means of communication;

(iii) instruction imparted largely through L_2 and introduction of L_1 at a later stage, first as a subject and later as a medium of instruction (Hamers & Blanc, 1983:189).

Broadly speaking, bilingual education is education in which two languages are used within the school setting. Two major varieties are possible. First one is called *transitional variety*. Here bilingual education is seen as a temporary bridging mechanism proposed to help children entering school with limited (or no) knowledge of the national language, by first imparting them education in their mother tongue until they become mature enough to switch over to national language without any kind of loss to their mother tongue. On the other hand, there also exists another variety referred to as the *maintenance variety* of bilingual education in which both languages are to be kept throughout the whole process of schooling (or at least a good part of it) (Edwards, 1984: 185).

As it is clear from the above discussion, language itself may be strong or dominant or weak or neglected. Corson (1993) tried to explain this kind of relationship between power and language. In every society, there are certain dominant norms. Education and its discourse practices repress, dominate and disempower language users whose cultural practices are different from these norms. Particular forms of language are promoted to favour the interests of the powerful. Clear cut demarcations exist in schools between people of very different statuses and social power. Different types of relations to language that different social groups possess are responsible for their status as powerful or powerless. To a large extent, *'linguistic capital'* (concept introduced by Bourdieu) brought by children to schools form the base for their categorisation into different ability groups and their treatment accordingly by their teachers.

Thus, the languages in contact in a society can not operate in isolation with the power-relations existing in that society. In fact it is these power equations which determine the status and development of different languages according to their functional value.

Multilingual Education and the Linguistic Minorities

A very important objective of multilingual education in schools is to accord respect and dignity to the linguistic and cultural traditions of a particular country and its inhabitants. It has been said that in every country at least two languages are spoken and, therefore, in every country there exists a minority linguistic and cultural community. The question which automatically comes to mind here is – what is a minority community and what is a linguistic minority specifically?

Phillip Williams (1984:3) has mentioned the definition given by Megarry as: 'We use the word minority to refer not to relative numbers but to the condition of being inferior or subordinate ..... ethnic minorities ..... distanced from the sources of power and status in the country they inhabit.' Similarly, the linguistic minorities as defined by the Linguistic Minorities Project (1985:18) says "..... it is a category of people who share a language which is not the language of the dominant majority....."

This definition based on 'sharing a language' is clearly employing a minimal criterion of belonging. It seems to cover those people who identify with a given language or the collectivity in which it is used, without themselves having a wide range of linguistic skills or even speaking or fully comprehending the

language in regular practice. While on the other hand, people using the language in question without reckoning with the linguistic minority would also be included (Linguistic Minorities Project, 1985:18).

Thus, it seems perhaps impossible to construct a definition theoretically coherent and having clear demarcations to deal with every case in a clear cut way as situations totally differ across different countries.

Linguistic minorities, wherever they exist do not assimilate themselves into the dominant majority culture and language though they are under constant threat to do so. On the contrary, they try their best to retain their separate linguistic identities. It is generally noted that immigrant families speak a particular language to organise themselves into an association to maintain their loyalty to their language, or where the number of such immigrant families is large they join hands to run schools with that language as the medium of instruction (Rao, 1975:3).

Corson (1993:48) has mentioned about problems faced by minority culture students in mainstream schools. He sees the root cause of this problematic situation in discursive practices of classrooms and schools, inability of teachers in noticing subtle

differences in linguistic capital and habitus of minority culture children.

The demand for the recognition of minority languages and their use in education, science and technology, administration and mass-media is continuously growing.

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE AND LANGUAGE SHIFT

In stable diglossia, a multilingual community maintains its diverse languages by allocating each of them specific domains, roles and functions with little encroachment of one language upon the domains, roles and functions of another. This maintenance is directly proportional to the degree of stability of the relations between the groups of the community. When these relations alter, however, and one group begins to be absorbed into another group, language maintenance starts to break down. Members of that group start to make use of language of another group for domains, roles and functions allotted to the first language till now. Thus its own language suffers due to the dominant group's language. Process of language shift gets over when the group gives up its mother tongue. A similar case is observed when an indigenous monolingual minority group is assimilated into the dominant majority or an exogenous ethnic group migrates to a new area

where the dominant language is distinct from its own language and is assimilated. When the group stops to speak its mother tongue we have a case of 'language death', despite the fact that language may continue to be spoken somewhere else and this group succeeds in keeping its ethnic identity intact. An analysis of various forms of inter-group relations and dependency shows that when the subordinate groups' internal cohesion is affected, the dominant language pervades and gradually encroaches upon the domains, functions and roles of the subordinate language. In such a situation these speakers adopt dominant languages, forms in more and more roles, functions and domains. The process of language shift becomes nearly complete when at least even the domain of family is invaded. It takes place in varying degrees in various manners and at different paces of development depending upon the type of group. If we take the group as a whole comprising different generations and social categories, we can depict the process as a transition from unilingualism in the minority language to unlimgualism in the majority language. If we have different levels of bilinguality and bilingualism, from dominant in L_1 to dominant in L_2, with a stage of relative balance between the languages. This process may be represented by the following undimensional model:

UNLINGUALISM → BILINGUALISM → UNILINGUALISM

$$L_x \rightarrow L_x > L_y \rightarrow L_X < L_y \rightarrow L_Y$$

Undimenstional model of language shift

Language shift characteristically occurs over three generations, the first monolingual or dominant in L_1, the second differentially bilingual, and the third dominant or monolingual in L_2 (Hamers and Blanc, 1983: 175-176). Reitz (1974) on the basis of his study of three generations of immigrants to Canada, has held following factors responsible for impeding the progress of language shift in decreasing order of importance: maintenance of close ties with the ethnic group, identification with the in-group, endogamy and religious affiliation. For Fishman (1964) three main classes of factors give rise to language shift: (1) changes in the way of life of a group that weaken the strength of its social networks; (2) changes in the power relationship between the groups; (3) stigmatised attitudes towards the minority group values, beliefs and languages, shared by minority and majority alike; or various combinations of all three.

According to Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977), three factors are important for language maintenance: institutional support, status and demographic concentration. Suzanne Romaine (1989:

39) has given an account of ten factors responsible for language maintenance, shift and death. These are (i) numerical strength of the group in relation to other minorities and majorities; (ii) social class, (iii) religious and educational background; (iv) settlement patterns; (v) ties with the homeland; (vi) degree of similarity between the minority and majority language; (vii) extent of exogenous marriage; (viii) attitudes of majority and minority; (ix) government policy towards language and education of minorities; (x) patterns of language use.

These processes of language shift, maintenance and death have meaningful implications for any group's identity. The problem of preserving these minority or subordinate group's identity becomes a matter of concern in these circumstances.

PROBLEM OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

Language is a symbol of a group's identity and an important characteristics feature for two members in a communication dyad. In this case, either member adopts strategies for positive linguistic distinctiveness when : (1) his identity is firmly rooted in his own ethnolinguistic group; (2) he feels comparative cultural insecurity with regard to his group status; (3) he perceives clear-cut demarcation between his group and other's in-group possessing

high ethnolinguistic vitality; (4) he fails to identify strongly with other social categories, e.g. professional ones, sees little commonality between himself and other person in terms of social group membership and perceives his social identity as inadequate and a derivative of other categories; and (5) he finds himself in a better position in terms of intra-group status in his cultural group as compared to same in other social category groups (Giles and Johnson, 1983:1983: 135-136).

In examining the role of language in inter-ethnic group relations it is useful to define the possible forms that ethnic relations may take in multi-cultural and multilingual societies. Berry (1980) categorises five possible forms of acculturation by individuals or groups: assimilation, integration, segregation, separation and deculturation; further makes a distinction between cultural acculturation and structural acculturation. In cultural acculturation, the behaviour of one group becomes more similar to that of another, whereas in structural acculturation, one group participates in the economic and social systems of the larger society while keeping its cultural distinctiveness intact. Assimilation is a process in which the subordinate group gives up its cultural identity and gets absorbed into the larger society. Assimilation is called complete when the members of the group

perceive themselves as belonging to another group and when they are fully accepted as that new group's members. In integration, a group becomes an integral part of the society while preserving its cultural uniqueness to varying degrees. Segregation is observed when the dominant group imposes its solution (e.g. apartheid in South Africa). In the case of separation, the subordinate group insisting upon its cultural distinctiveness leaves the society. In deculturation, a group loses its cultural identity without obtaining another identity (e.g.-when a subordinate group gets marginalised).

A minority group is characterised in terms of its powerlessness to define the nature of its relationship with the majority and therefore define its own identity. Mostly, their status is defined by the majority and that is why they reflect negative self image. The survival or loss of the minority language rests on the interests of the dominant majority. In some cases they may follow the policy of protecting minority languages in order to divide and rule. Very often, the majority imposes its language as the only legitimate one upon the minority through the policy of assimilation to remain in power and authority. Minorisation or giving minority status to subordinate groups results in negative group identity. In such a situation some members try to be more acceptable by positively identifying themselves with the majority either

linguistically or through any other way. Thus in their attempt to raise higher in social acceptability scale they become bilingual (Hamers and Blanc, 1983: 159-160).

Bilingual children are under constant dilemma of whether to identify themselves with the dominant majority language or with their mother tongue or home language. Sometimes they fail to identify themselves with either of the two. Besides, children who do not learn to read and write the language of their parents are, after entering school, subject to constant pressure to identify with members of the dominant majority as a condition for personal and social "success", even when they continue to speak the minority language. Under these circumstances, they may consider identification with family and friends as secondary in importance to identification with members of the majority society.

PROBLEMS OF THE SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER

Bilingual children face several adjustment problems during their school. Some become low achievers due to finding themselves in a complex situation. It is often noticed that children who are not well versed in their mother tongue are more likely to face problems in learning the second language in schools. These problems become aggravated when the second language learner is a slow

learner i.e. child in need of special education. Child may be facing learning difficulty due to low intelligence, physical disability or any other disorder. The problems of bilingual education in such case may be related to training personnel and the acquiring of qualifications and problems directly related to classroom management and to teaching skills. However, the existence of two languages side by side has always an additional angle to view any particular problem (Williams, 1984).

The social and psychological implications of bilingual literacy for the child whose parents do not speak the school language are closely associated with the myriad technical problems of learning to read and write a language one does not speak. Matluck and Mace (1973) have discussed the inter-relation of phonological and grammatical problems for Mexican-American children that result in increasing educational retardation, as long as the child remains in school, as compared with monolingual speakers of English. Christian's (1976: 24) study indicates that these problems rarely occur for students who have learned to read and write first language (Spanish) before learning to read and write second language (English). The person who does not read or write his home language, on the other hand, but is forced to read and write another, may become confused even about the sounds in his first

language as he learns new sounds and learns their representation in the second.

SUMMARY

From the above discussion, it appears clearly that we are just beginning to understand how the language, culture, education and bilingual processes are related and how they operate under different socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, their influence on bilingual's identity development and behaviour processes can not be ignored. In summary, bilinguality is an important socio-psychological dimension that affects inter-ethnic relations, is shaped by social factors. It will in turn condition the development of social psychological mechanisms necessary for the integration of the individual in society. The implications of education for bi/multi-linguality are not the least in significance and importance in this regard. If we examine the situation of India, the scene which emerges is quite complex and interesting.

CHAPTER – III

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

This Chapter describes the actual policy of multilingualism in India and its implications. It discusses the existing scenario of the media of instruction that are practiced at various levels of education. The Chapter also takes into account the patterns of language use and takes the particular case of incidence of bilingualism among tribals in the Indian context.

MULTILINGUALISM IN INDIA

Multilingualism in India is characterised by its social acceptance as a normal societal phenomenon. Multilingualism as such is not regarded as a deviant, abnormal or exceptional behaviour although the percentage of bilinguals in India is hardly 10% (9.7%) according to 1961 Census) of the total population (Annamalai, 1986: 65).

Indian linguistic scene often referred to as 'sociolinguistic giant' or 'museum of languages' offers a variety of language contact situations for the incidence of bi/multilingualism. There are several

features which can be said to be characteristic of Indian bi/multilingualism.

The salient features of bilingualism in India as described by Sridhar (1989: 1-2) are as following:

(a) "the fluidity of language identity, leading to the under-reporting and variable reporting of the extent of bilingualism in the area;

(b) high degree of societal bilingualism, not only in border areas and among the educated population, but on a very widespread scale among the population in general;

(c) high incidence of polyvarietalism and multilingualism, involving regional, social (e.g. caste, occupation, etc.), and institutionalised (e.g., diglossic) varieties on the one hand, and cognate languages as well as unrelated languages, on the other;

(d) the widespread use of 'mixed' language varieties;

(e) the phenomenon of linguistic convergence, i.e. the tendency for languages in contact to adopt one another's formal features, resulting in the formation of the South Asian 'linguistic area; and

(f) the tendency on the part of minority language speakers to maintain their languages, despite a low level of literacy and inadequate formal language instruction."

These features of Indian multilingualism differ significantly from other western and African countries. Expressing his opinion on Indian bilingualism, Pandit (1988 b:44) asserts that in India there exists *'grassroot bilingualism'* due to the fact that 'speakers of different languages and dialects live side by side and maintain their divergent speech habits.' He regards this situation as the situation of *'stable bilingualism.'* In stable bilingualism, the second or third generation (or even subsequent generations) of the population of bilinguals does not surrender its mother tongue to the dominant language of the region. We can distinguish this situation from United States of America (USA) where the second

generation of immigrant people gives up its mother tongue or home language to adopt the English language. Indian bilingualism can also be said to be *'unidirectional'* in-nature, i.e. speakers of all the major languages (except Kashmiri) are predominantly bilingual in Hindi, but the Hindi mother tongue speakers show less willingness on their part to learn these languages for the sake of bilingualism. Or we can say the same is the situation where speakers of tribal languages who are predominantly bilingual in the state language, but very few state language speakers tend to become bilingual in tribal languages (Beg, 1996: 97-98). B.G. Mishra makes a distinction between inter-lingual bilingualism and intra-lingual bilingualism. Malayalam – Hindi bilingualism can be taken as an example of inter-lingual bilingualism whereas Maithili-Hindi bilingualism is an example of intra-lingual bilingualism [Sharma and Kumar, 1977: XVI]. The phenomenon of bi/multilingualism is so pervasive in Indian society that no state or Union Territory of India is completely monolingual. It is also noticed that some urban centres and metropolitan cities are predominantly bilingual representing the existence of cosmopolitan culture there. Moreover, Indian bilingualism is also categorised as *'functional bilingualism'*. Hindi, English and State languages are said to be having more

functional value and extensive domains causing them to be preferred over other languages for bilingualism. Throwing light upon the salient features of Indian bilingualism, Srivastava (1977) has made a distinction among different contexts of bilingualism – national, societal and individual. It is the functional use of the second language which draws up a line of distinction between the societal and individual contexts. For example, if the second language is non-complementary to mother tongue in function (i.e. Auxiliary or supplementary role), then bilingual is said to be individual. It results in the creation of passive or unstable type of bilinguals. Whereas, when the second language is complementary in function to mother tongue, the context is social and it results in the creation of stable type of bilinguals. When the phenomenon of bilingualism operates at the national level, the use of second language as national language is promoted with the aim of political integration. He cites the example of Switzerland in this case where bilingualism is practised for the purpose of administration giving its citizens full freedom to remain monolingual in their day-to-day life. Srivastava (1977) has discussed the salient features of Indian bilingualism and their roles in creating stable state of linguistic pluralism.

Distinctive Feature 1: "Indian bilingualism at the level of nation is a resultant of two distinct internal tendencies – Nationism and Nationalism."

Distinctive Feature 2: "All major Indian languages are lingua franca, but Hindi and English are more functionally potent languages of wider communication."

Each multilingual country adopts a lingua-franca for its cross regional interaction. This language either emerges as a national language or as an official language of the state. Official language promotes nationalism and integrates the country through its administrative goals into political and economic unity. The national language has its origin in the socio-cultural authenticity and great traditions through which it integrates the nation on socio-cultural level (Fishman 1971). It is any nation's language policy which plays an important role in resolving the conflict between nationism and nationalism. For example – Israel, Thailand, Somalia etc. driven by the tendency of nationalism tended to establish their own languages as the national language whereas countries with many developed languages having strong traditions and cultural heritage such as India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia,

etc., adopted language policies to protect and preserve these languages in the national interest.

In the case of India, though each major language or dialect on its own defined functions as a lingua-franca, but on pan-Indian level Hindi-Urdu and English are comparatively more efficient in function for wider communication. Bilingual returns of 1961 indicate that Hindi-Urdu and English together cover more than half of the entire bilingual population (52.5%; H-U-26.8% and E=25.7%) (Khubchandani, 1972).

Distinctive Feature 3: "Indian bilingualism is not merely a realisation of intrinsic demand of its social communication system but is also sustained by its social institutions."

Out of the sheer demand from social institutions like marriage, family interaction or other contacts with the native region, an Indian (Tamil, Malayalam, etc.) migrating to a new area carries his language, traditions, customs, culture, etc. with him as Janki Raman (1975) quotes, "wherever he went he carried his Tamil Sangam, his temple, his Tamil school, his amateur theatre and his Karnatak concert."

Distinctive Feature 5: "Indian bilingualism brings forward the notion of 'linguistic area' wherein linguistic features transcend genetic boundaries."

India has witnessed the process of linguistic amalgamation i.e. Dravidinisation of Indo-Aryan languages (Gumperz 1971) and Aryanization of Dravidian languages (Sridhar 1975) which resulted in the structural harmony of these languages. Similarly, linguistic similarity arising out of language contact between Indo-Aryan (Nepali) and Tibeto-Burman (Newari) is also well noticed (Bendix, 1974).

It is also well-known fact that Indian languages belonging to different ethnic stocks did not develop in complete isolation. Emeneau (1956) defining the notion of "linguistic area" in this concern says that it "includes languages belonging to more than one family but showing traits in common are found not to belong to the other members of (at least) one of the families" (1956: 16). He accepted India as a 'linguistic area' where linguistic similarities were the result of contact process instead of common origin or source.

Distinctive Feature 5: "The ratio of bilinguals for a given language of India is inversely proportionate to the functional value of that language as a means of wider communication."

Srivastava (1977: 78) has given an account of hypothesis which may be said to be at the base of nature and extent of Indian bilingualism. It says that the percentage of bilingualism within the speakers is lower for that language which has higher functional value for cross regional speech interaction i.e. lingua-franca potential. This fact can be supported by the data shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1.

Percentage of Bilingualism Among Different Language Speakers

Bilingualism among Hindi speakers	**5.105%**
Bilingualism among major state language speakers	**9.569%**
Bilingualism among major non-state language speakers	**18.842%**
Bilingualism among minor non-state language speakers	**42.144%**

(Source: Apte, Mahadev L. (1976) 'Multilingualism in India and Its Socio-political Implications: An overview in Fishman, Joshua A. (ed.) *Contributions to the Sociology of Language*, The Hague: Mouton and Co. Publishers, p. 153).

Table 3.1. shows that the major languages of India are characterised by their low percentage of bilingualism, particularly, Hindi which has 'maximum degree of communicability' and possesses 'higher functional value' and 'lingua franca potential,' but claims the lowest percentage of bilinguals at the all-India level (Beg, 1996-99). That is why major nationalities are less willing to learn a second language and that "high levels of bilingualism characterise the small national groups especially if they are in minority within larger linguistic communities" (Lewis, 1972: 46).

EXTENT OF BILINGUALISM IN INDIA

According to the bilingual data provided by the Census authorities, out of a total of 108 languages excluding others, there are 18 Scheduled and 90 non-scheduled languages including two languages of the foreign origin, viz., English and Arabic/Arbi. The 1981 census of the bilingual population claims the national average of bilingualism as 13.34% for India as a whole. Except Hindi (4.76%), Bengali (5.61%), Oriya (9.56%), and Telugu (13.25%), all the scheduled languages are above the national bilingualism average of 13.34%) (Beg, 1996: 101).

For non-scheduled language, Indian bilingualism is much higher ranging upto 82.28% as found in the case of Coorgi/Kodagu (language mainly spoken in Karnataka). There are only three languages, viz., Garo (12.93%) Wancho (11.77%), and Khasi (9.77%) which are below the national average of bilingualism.

Bilingualism among Speakers of the Scheduled Languages

All the scheduled language speakers in India show bilingualism. Hindi shows the lowest percentage of bilingualism i.e. 4.76% which is even below the national average of bilingualism. Whereas in case of Urdu, percentage of bilingualism is 29.42% which is more than double the national average bilingual percentage. Among all the scheduled languages, Konkani shows the highest range of the incidence of bilingualism among its speakers accounting for 68.37% followed by the Sanskrit speakers with 66.79%.

PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE USE IN A MULTILINGUAL SETTING IN INDIA

Anju Sahgal (1994) has tried to investigate the functional role of English vis-à-vis the other languages (mother tongue and

Hindi as a second language) to see if the predominant status of English has caused a real reallocation of the status of different languages in the verbal repertoire of some Indian communities. She took a sample of 45 informants from three communities living in Delhi: Hindi speakers, Bengalis, and Tamilians. It is to be noted that the Hindi-speaking natives of Delhi speak only two languages, viz., mother tongue (Hindi) and English; while Bengalis and Tamilians, who migrated from the east and south of India, respectively, use three languages, namely, mother tongue (Bengali or Tamil), Hindi and English; both Hindi and English are second languages for them.

She found that English had acquired more functional role and was the main language of the friendship and institutional domain. Moreover, it has also invaded the family domain indicating the disappearance of domain separation. English is increasingly now becoming linked with intimacy, spontaneity and informality along with its use in the fields of education, administration and the mass media. At the same time, the extensive use of the mother tongue in the family domain disproves the validity of the belief that English bilingualism in India is replacive in character. The study also recognises the existence of linguistic rivalry between English

and Hindi. In terms of popularity, English ranks higher among migrated population in India. Finally it says that English has become part of the cultural identity of India clearly emphasised by the fact that most of the informants preferred a *'local;* variety of English rather than an adherence to native speaker norms.

According to Singh (1992) following are the numbers of the communities speaking the languages belonging to the language families: Indo-Aryan (2549), Dravidian (1032), Tibeto-Burman (175), Austria-Asiatic (44), Indo-Iranian (5), Andamanese (4), other language families (15) and unclassified languages (25), in all 3849 linguistically homogeneous communities listed against each language/dialect out of 4532 communities. The 'People of India Project' under the guidance of Singh (1992) It says that the people of India are linguistically diverse, and 2287 communities (50.46%) speak the fourteen languages (except Sanskrit) belonging to the Eighth schedule of the constitution. In its significant finding, it discusses the pattern of bilingualism in India. According to this report, the incidence of bilingualism is as high as 64.2 percent in terms of the number of communities. A trend observed among the tribes and non-tribes living together was a rise of creolised linguistic formations as Sadri, Desi, Nefamese and Nagamese by

natural socio-linguistic process. The Schedule languages are spoken by 2670 communities (58.91%) for bilingual communication. Another important finding was related to the scripts used by the people of India. Out of the total of 24 scripts studied, eleven major scripts are used by the scheduled languages whereas twelve minor scripts are also in use. Interestingly, many tribal communities in India claim to have discovered their "lost" scripts or invented a new script. For example, Santhal's Ol Chiki was invented by the Santhal savant, Raghunath Murmu and Hos of Singhbhum, the Kharias and the Savaras have also discovered a script of their own. Moreover, almost all the states and union territories are both unlingual, marked by the dominance of a major language group, and also multi-familial, having languages belonging to at least two language families. For instance, states like West Bengal and union territories like the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are reported to have languages belonging to at least six different language families or subfamilies.

INCIDENCE OF BILINGUALISM AMONG THE TRIBALS

The tribal communities living in different regions of India can be categorised into five territorial groupings (Abbi, 1997: 6):

(1) the Himalayan region consisting of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, hills of Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh;

(2) middle India having 55% tribal population which consists of Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh (including Jharkhand currently formed);

(3) western India consisting of Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadra and Nager Haveli;

(4) south India which has 6.4% tribal population consisting of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala; and

(5) islands such as Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep.

Similarly tribal languages of the country also fall into five distinct family groupings. These are Andamandse, Austro-Asiatic, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and Tibeto-Burman. The 1971 and 1981 Census list 81 tribal languages whose population is over 10,000 each : 54 languages of Tibeto-Burman family (4.3 million), 14 belonging to Austro family (7.9 million), 11 to Dravidian (4.6 million), and two to Indo-Aryan (5.0 million) families. A major chunk of tribals representing Austric, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan

languages is dispersed throughout the central belt of the country, mingled with the vast non-tribal population. Thus, the tribal languages in this region experience minimum functional load because they are largely confined to the home environment and are primarily a symbol of group identity. Thus in everyday life activities, these languages are under constant threat to get assimilated into major regional languages. On the other hand, tribals representing Tibeto-Burman languages though making up a smaller section of the total tribal population (roughly eight percept), predominate in most parts of the North-East region (including Khasi, an Austric language). In Assam and Tripura, the speakers of tribal languages constituting a 'powerful' minority are now increasingly becoming aware of their 'ancestral' dominance in the region in recent past (especially during the period of Ahom rulers). Various tribal languages of this region are allotted various functions in diverse socio-cultural, educational and mass media domains. As a result, they are less pressurised to show the tendency of language shift. According to 1981 Census, four tribal languages claiming over one million speakers each are as follows:

1. Bhili, Indo-Aryan, 4.45 million
2. Santali, Austric, 4.21 million
3. Gondi, Dravidian, 1.96 million

4. Kurukh, Dravidian, 1.26 million

Moreover, about 21 classified tribal languages are spoken by populations between one hundred thousand and one million each: 7 Austric, 9 Tibeto-Burman, 4 Dravidian, and 1 Indo-Aryan (Khubchandani, 1997: 73).

Incidence of bilingualism is also reported among tribals. A contact situation between two distinct linguistic groups leads to bilingualism that facilitates communication between members of the two groups, i.e. bilingualism inevitably occurs more frequently in those places where there is the least homogeneity of mother tongue (Census of India, Bengal and Sikkim, 1981:365). Tribal communities in India, together constituting about 7.8% of the population of the country, make up one such significant minority group exhibiting a very high incidence of bilingualism - about 16% as compared to 9.7% in the total population (including tribal population). However, the incidence of bilingualism in the tribal population differs considerably from one region to another ranging from 0.2% in Rajasthan to 33% in Tripura and, at the level of district, from less than 1% in as many as 62 districts to 55.7% in Betul in Madhya Pradesh.

Table 3.2.

Districtwise Incidence of Bilingualism in the Tribal Population

Incidence of Bilingualism in the tribal population	Number of Districts
30-55.7	42
20-30	30
10-20	36
5-10	27
1-5	35
< 1	62
Nil	4
	236

[Source: Itagi, (1994) 'Spatial Variation in the Incidence of Bilingualism in the Tribal Population of India' in Itagi, N.H. (ed.) *Spatial Aspects of Language, Mysore: CIIL]*

A Census report on bilingualism among the scheduled tribes rightly points out that the purpose of such tables/reports is to ascertain the nature of and extent to which the members of one particular linguistic category have found it necessary or expedient without giving up their own mother tongue, to adopt as a subsidiary language the tongue of some other group with which they are brought into close contact in day-to-day life. Fürer-Haimendorf (1982: 316) is of the opinion that bilingualism is only a

transitional phase, followed by the decline and ultimate extinction of the tribal tongue.

Therefore, the widespread occurrence of bilingualism at the national level necessitates the need to look into this aspect in the light of national language policy and other policy provisions. Examining these provisions keeping in context the complex linguistic equations of India is a matter of prime concern in the present scenario.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND MULTILINGUAL POLICY IN INDIA

The newly independent nations were face to face with the major problem of the selection of national language after their independence which can serve both purposes – as a symbol of national identity and solidarity as well as act as a lingua franca of that country. It was comparatively easier for smaller nation states as compared to countries such as India with diverse and sizeable ethnic populations speaking different languages. This compelled the founding fathers of Indian Constitution to think comprehensively about formulating a language policy that can be broadly accepted by all regions and linguistic groups. As a result,

the language policy of India is enshrined in the Constitution itself in a complete Schedule (i.e., Schedule VIII). The existence of linguistic minorities and the need to safeguard their rights is accepted by the Constitution.

In every Indian state, one or more than one language is dominant. In these states, there are speakers whose language is different from that of the dominant majority. For instance, Tamils and Gujaratis in Maharashtra, Telugus and Marathis in Karnataka, Marwaris and Punjabis in Tamil Nadu, etc. may be termed as the linguistic minorities in the Indian context. To protect the interests of these linguistic minorities, various safeguards are provided. They are of two types-

The Articles of the Constitution having direct bearing on the interests of linguistic minorities include articles 29,30, 347, 350, 350A and Article 350B. Though not specifically designed as safeguards for linguistic minorities, the articles of the Constitution guaranteeing to all the citizens certain fundamental rights, such as equality before the law (Article (14), prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. (Article 15) and equality of opportunity in matters of public

employment (Article !6) also serve as safeguards for the linguistic minorities In terms of their relevance to education, Article 350 A needs to be mentioned. It reads, " 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."

Article 345 of the Constitution of India provides full freedom to the states to choose a language or languages in a region as 'official' language(s). The Constitution also allows linguistic minority groups to receive education through their mother tongues and set up institutions of their own for their education under the Article 30.

Any language is termed as a national language when it serves the function of nationalism. When it is employed to achieve the end of nationalism, it is specified as official language. Indian polity promotes bilingualism through its Constitution with Hindi as the primary and English as an associated official language. As a

socio-ethnic entity, it is pluri/multilingual because almost all major regional languages have come to be generally recognised as 'national languages' of India due to their prevalence and resilience. English is a pan Indian language. It was nationism (rather than nationalism) which promoted the use of English as an official language of the Union Government of India. At the same time, nowhere in our Constitution, has Hindi been acknowledged as an exclusive National language, though Article 343 of our Constitution gives Hindi the status of primary official language of the Union and Article 351 epitomises the direction of its development for all-India use.

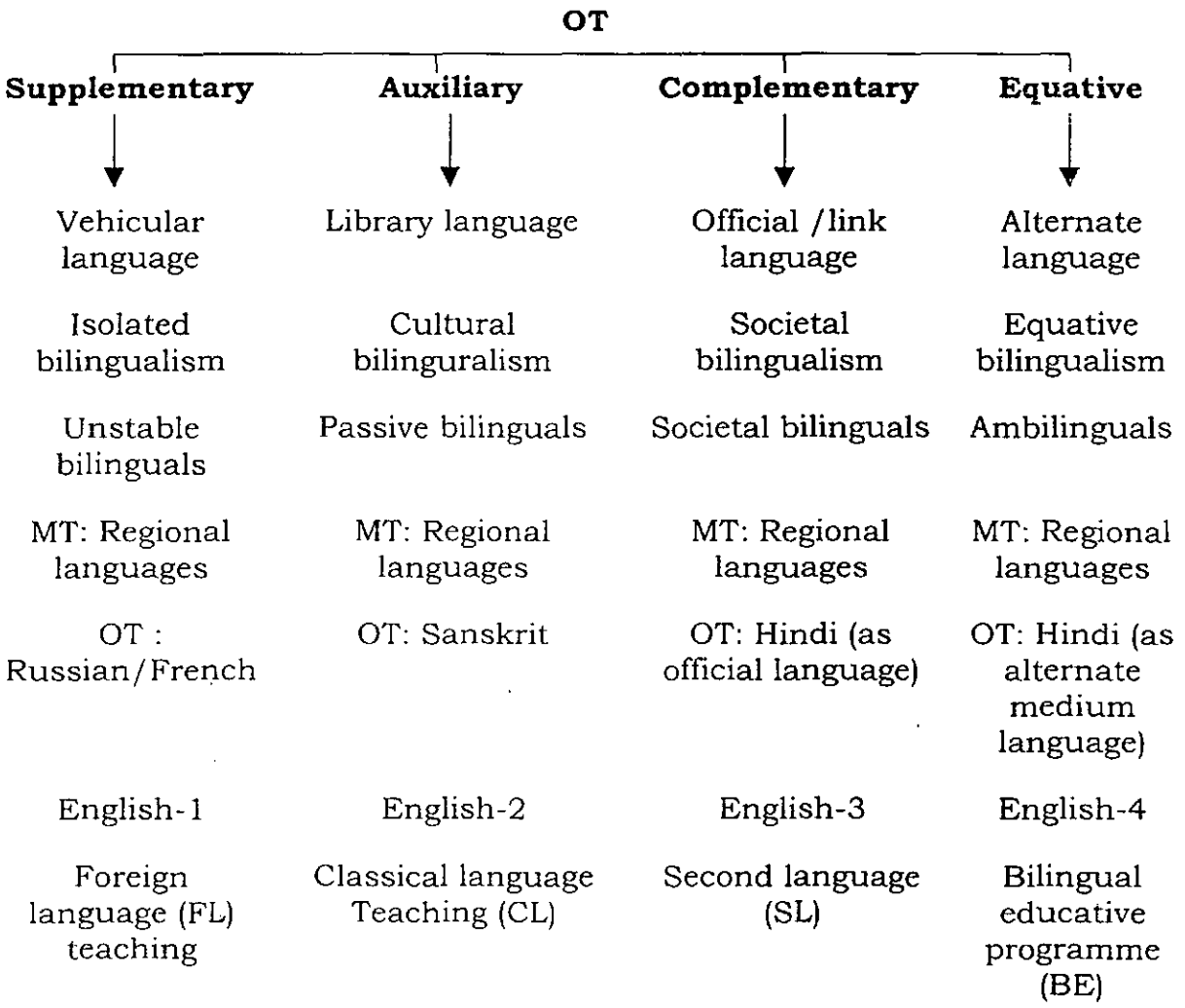
The practice of bi/multilingualism has penetrated the domains of administration, education, mass-media, etc. Educational implications of the practice of bi/multi-lingualism are now increasingly being discussed in the wake of new developments in the national policy on education.

It is evident that different Indian languages serve different functions depending upon the socio-cultural contexts. These socio-linguistically oriented functional roles make implicit assumptions about the type of bilingualism that exists in a given

speech community and about the nature eof bilinguals, competence of languages involved. Implicit in it are also assumptions providing insights about the kind of language teaching we need for achieving the objectives of the different programmes.

The typology of other Tongue (OT) teaching programme (given below) goes opposite to the simplistic notion that there is only one real kind of language and that this kind can be use by everyone in every domain of activity. Thus, we find in India socially determined different kinds of Hindi or English and kinds of bilinguals using these languages with differential competence. Thus in order to develop and evaluate an educational programme of OT-teaching, it becomes desirable to ascertain first the particular functional roles of the language taught and work out the socio-linguistic assumptions implicit in the programme objectives:

Figure 2.2.



[Source: Srivastava, (1994) Vol. III, *Bi/multilingualism in Studies in Language and Linguistics:* 7 Volumes, Delhi: Kalinga Publications, p.120].

Thus, the linguistic situation in India is quite complex and different as compared to monolingual west. Keeping in view the functional importance of different languages in India, following three language formula has been advocated:

Table 3.3

Graduated Three Language Formula

Stages	**Lower primary stage**	**Higher primary stage**	**Lower secondary stage**	**Higher secondary stage**
Age	6 7 8 9	10 11 12	13 14 15	16 17
Class	I II III IV	V VI VII	VIII IX X	IX XII
No. of language	One	Two	Three	Two
Compulsory	Mother tongue or regional language	1. mother tongue or regional language	1. mother tongue or regional language	Any two studied earlier or any one of the following
		2. official language or associate official language	2. Official language or associate official language	Classical language Indian or foreign, one more
			3. which so ever is not covered in 1 & 2 above	3. Modern foreign language
Optional languages	Nil	One	One/more	One/more
(a) No	Nil	Union official language or associate ever is not offered as compulsory language	Modern Indian languages	Modern Indian languages
Optional for languages in lieu of Hindi and English	Nil	1. modern foreign language	2. Modern Indian language other than Hindi & English	

[Source: Srivastava (1994) Vol. III, Bi/*Multilingualism* in Studies in Language and Linguistics: 7 volumes, Delhi: Kalinga Publicatins p. 126].

However, it was observed later that the three language formula, inspite of promoting and upholding the cause of national integration, was not quite successful in execution and effect. The

factors which may be accounted for this failure are many: ignorance pertaining to the nature and function of grassroot societal bilingualism of our county; negligence of both the structure and functional allocation of linguistic codes within the general framework of educational policy; non-acceptance of the three language formula as a strategy rather than goal for implementation; promoting LWC (lingua franca) as dominant language rather than language for mass participation; standardising and modernising regional languages in a direction contrary to the logic of mass literacy and to socialisation of maximum of human resources in general (Srivastava, 1984, 150).

Keeping in view India's present critical stage of social transformation in which the recollection of roles and functions of languages are taking place, there is an urgent need to develop an attitude that each language is important within the bounds of its particular role. Moreover, social management of linguistic diversity calls for giving importance to all functional languages in which no particular language is discriminated against or no language is promoted to a dominant position. The communicative potential of various out group and in group languages needs to be fully exploited here.

Bi/Multilingualism through Schooling in India

The schools offer a wider choice of languages than Three Language Formula (TLF) suggests. The three languages are taught as first, second and third languages and under each category a choice is given. The number of languages offered in schools, as per their curricula, are 58 in 1981 (Chaturvedi and Singh, 1981) which is 29% of the total number of 200 languages (reduced from 1652 mother tongues in the 1961 census) in the country.

The statewise details of languages in schools can be seen in the Report of the Conference of Education Secretaries and Education Ministers of all states and Union Territories in 1984 (Govt. Of India ; 1984c). As an illustration we may take West Bengal, though all states do not have the same range of choice. The languages offered in this state are as follows:

1. First language -one

Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Lushai, Malayalam, Marathi, Modern Tibetan, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Gurmukhi, Santali, Sadani, Telugu, Tamil and Urdu.

2. Second language –one

English, if any language other than English is offered as first language or Bengali, if English is offered as first language.

3. Third language–one

a) A classical language

b) A modern foreign language other than English

c) A modern Indian language other than English.

The break-up of the 58 school languages is as follows (Chaturvedi and Singh 1981);

Table 3.4.

Modern Indian languages	48
Modern foreign languages	4 (French, German, Portuguese, Tibetan)
Classical foreign languages	2 (Pali, Sanskrit)
Classical foreign languages	4 (Arabic, Latin, Persian, Syrian)

The distribution of modern Indian languages is as follows (Table 3.5):

Table 3.5.

Major languages (Scheduled languages)	14
Minor languages	33
English	1

[Source: Annamalai E. (1986) 'Bilingualism through Schooling in India' in Abbi, Anvita (ed.) *Studies in Bilingualism*, New Delhi: Bahri Publications Pvt. Ltd.].

Among the minor languages, 28 are spoken by tribal communities and 5 by non-tribal communities (Bodhi, Dogri, Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali).

The three languages are not taught simultaneously throughout the school years. The first language is taught from the primary stage (from class I to X), the second language from the middle stage (from class IV or to X) and the third language at the middle stage (from class IV or V to X) and the third language at the middle stage (from class IV or V to VIII). All the states do not have uniform breakup of school years into three stages viz.,

primary, middle and secondary and do not introduce each of the three languages in the same class.

The regional languages may be learnt as second or third language by linguistic minorities and these languages may be the mother tongue of the minorities or the dominant languages of the minorities or the dominant languages of the state where they live. In other words, the minorities may learn their mother tongue when it is a regional language or the dominant language of the state as second or third language. To give an example, the Tamil speakers living in Karnataka, where the dominant language is Kannada, may learn Kannada (or English) as first language and Tamil as second or third language, or Tamil (or English) as first language and Kannada as second or third language.

The preference of languages in the bilingualism developed in schools, as seen in the above discussion, is in the link languages, classical and religious languages and regional languages (which are either the dominant language of the state of domicile or the mother tongue of the minority. In this order school bilingualism for the majority group is not in any modern Indian language besides Hindi (and English) as suggested in TLF.

As the learning of second and third languages contribute to school bilingualism, the combined number of schools where a language is taught as a second language or as third language will indicate in a general way the rank order of languages in which the students will become bilingual. The languages which are taught in more than 1000 schools as second or third language in the descending order are English (2,28, 948 schools), Hindi (1,28, 791), Sanskrit (33,384), Urdu (4018), Marathi (1697) and Arabic (1497). The first four most preferred languages by students as second or third language are same as the first four geographically widespread second or third language. This shows that school bilingualism is more prevalent both numerically and spatially in four languages viz., English, Hindi, Sanskrit and Urdu. For schools to play an effective role in the development of national bilingualism, the first crucial factor is the social role and status of the languages taught, which are determined by the preferred language use and language needs in all domains at the state and national levels. The second crucial factor is the efficiency of language teaching which requires a radical change in the ideology and methods of language teaching schools.

Bi/Multi-lingualism in Higher Education in India

The University Education Commission Report of 1949 suggested, among other things, that 'English be replaced as early as practicable, by an Indian language as the medium of instruction of higher education. Universities seem to be making a steady, if not slow, progress towards indianising the medium of instruction. The recent statistics on the medium of instruction in Indian universities in various subject areas and at the graduate and undergraduate levels are as follows:

Table 3.6
Medium of instruction of graduate and post graduate levels for different courses at Indian Universities

Subject	Level	Regional language	English	Regional language & English	Other
Arts	UG.	12	16	50	9
	G.	6	43	33	5
Science	UG.	10	23	43	13
	G.	3	58	21	7
Commerce	UG.	11	15	48	15
	G.	5	37	26	19
Law	UG.	4	41	26	3
	G.	0	30	12	3
Engineering	UG.	1	48	3	37
	G.	0	37	3	49
Medicine	UG.	0	53	5	2
	G.	0	48	4	3

[Source: Sridhar, Kamal K. (1989), *English in Indian Bilingualism*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, p. 32].

The Commonwealth Universities Yearbook (1987, vol. 3) provides information about the medium of instruction for only some universities. Of the 154 institutions listed in the Yearbook, there are eight central universities, five Indian Institutes of Technology, Twenty Four Professional (agricultural, technological, etc.) universities/institutes, twenty 'deemed to be universities' and institutions of national importance and ninety six multi- faculty universities.

Table 3.7

Medium of Instruction at universities/ institutes

Institutions	**No.**	**Medium of instruction**
1)Central universities	8	English
2) Indian Institute of Technology	5	English
3) Professional Universities/Institutions: Agriculture Universities	25 22	Not stated for most
Gujarat Ayurved university	1	
J.N. Technological University	1	
Indira Kaka Sangeet University	1	
4) Deemed to be Universities	20	English (for professional institutions) Sanskrit, Hindi, English (for language institutions)
5) Multi-faculty Universities	96	English at P.G. level and regional languages as optional medium at the undergraduate level
Total	**154**	

[Source: Krishnamurti, Bh. (1998) *Language, Education and Society* in Language and Development, Vol. 7, New Delhi: Sage Publications p. 313].

(Notes: in Viswa-Bharathi, Bengali is an optional medium in postgraduate non-professional courses. Agricultural universities have generally English as the medium of instruction. Gujarati Vidyapeeth has Gujarati, English and Hindi).

Although it is encouraging to note that so many universities offer the regional languages as additional or alternative media, the reality is less rosy than the statistics. Often the regional language media classes have very few students. Observations show us that regional languages are not popular. Students have to be coaxed to enter the regional language medium courses.

The main reason for the less than enthusiastic response from parents and students to the regional language medium is attitudinal. English is perceived as potentially more useful. A larger number of more highly valued roles are made possible by the study of English. The second major reason for the higher evaluation of English is the widespread belief that the regional languages are simply not yet ready to function as media for technical subjects, despite the assurance of the experts (Sridhar, 1989: 33). In a sense, the dilemma of the medium is not unlike the other dilemma in which the Indian educational institutions find themselves caught.

SUMMARY

The data on bi/multilingualism at the school and higher education level suggest that bi/multilingualism is a growing phenomenon and will acquire special significance in the near future. The processes of language maintenance and language shift among the linguistic minority groups or tribals are examples of contact- induced changes, which may not necessarily be detrimental and fatal to language growth. The tribal languages have begun changing and converging themselves to the mainstream linguistic structures. The need to review the present language policy in the light of new socio-linguistic developments can not be overlooked.

CHAPTER – IV

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS OF MULTI-LINGUAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

There are various problems and issues involved in the phenomenon of multilingualism. The present chapter tries to analyse various issues and problems pertaining to the multilingual education with special reference to India. Misconceptions and myths regarding Indian multilingualism have been dealt to provide a real picture of the whole phenomenon of bi/multilingualism. In the context of multilingual situation in India, some pre-conceived notions are also presented.

ISSUES AND PROBLEMS

LANGUAGE SHIFT AND MAINTENANCE

We find in the multi-lingual and multi-ethnic society of India that many of the immigrant tribals have opted to shift their indigenous languages in favour of another 'minor' language rather than in favour of any 'major'/ 'job-select' language of the region. This sometimes affects the educational progress of a child.

Sometimes, a child growing in the transition from one language to another faces with a unique situation of which language to be picked up and use. For instance, we find that 10.3% of the Kurux in Bihar have shifted to Sadari, a minor language, and only 8.05% to Hindi, a job-select language of the region. The reason is not difficult to find. Sadari, though a variant of Bhojpuri (an Indo-Aryan 'language' having the functional status of a dialect of Hindi), functions as an inter-tribal lingua franca in the states of Bihar, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh. It is said to be originally the MT of Sadaris, but at present it is spoken by a great number of Hinduised tribals. It is remarkable that while only 56 persons reported it as their MT in the 1951 Census, their number, as reported in the 1961 census, increased to 365,772 within a single decade. This fantastic increase is directly relatable to the phenomenon of general tribal awakening and the search by the tribals for an inter-group communication media. Though it is a fact that Hindi was and is a job select languages, it was also perceived by the aborigines as a symbol of Aryan culture. A shift to Hindi means a shift in ethnic identity. Their deep-rooted fear of assimilation caused many of the tribals to reject Hindi as their identity language, though many of them do possess a working

knowledge of it. There is no such ethnic stigma attached to Sadari. Sadari as a lingua franca served Kurux for communication with other tribal and non-tribal populations of the region and also helped them to conserve their ethnic identity in the face of Aryan domination and absorption (Srivastava, 1994: 273-274). This shows that the assimilationist policy in education can be detrimental to the development of major language skills in tribal children as the atmosphere in their home is not conducive to major language promotion. It indicates that they can be provided support by the educational policy which aims at pluralisation. In such type of bilingual maintenance programmes, the non-Hindi language group may be encouraged to maintain its bilingual--bicultural status because of the inherent perception that non-national languages and dialects have separate and equal standards.

Khubchandani (1997: 81-82) has given an account of language maintenance and language shift among different tribal regions of India. The intensity of language assimilation with major regional languages among tribal communities varies in different states, characterizing differential pressure of maintenance and shift in ancestral languages as shown by following table:

Table 4.1

LANGUAGE RETENTION RATIO AMONG TRIBALS: 1971-1981

States	Tribal % to state population	Tribal population (Thousands)	Tribal languages speakers (Thousands)	Language Retention Ratio	Tribal population (Thousands)	Tribal languages speakers (Thousands)	Language retention ratio
	1981	1981	1981	1981	1971	1971	1971
INDIA	7.9	53,818	22,340	42	38,015	18,420	49
North-East							
Mizoram	93.6	462	412	89	313	NA	--
Nagaland	84.0	651	606	93	458	422	92
Meghalaya	80.6	1,076	1,075	99.9	814	813.6	99.9
Arunachal Pradesh	69.8	441	367	83	369	313	85
Tripura	28.4	584	515	88	451	394	88
Manipur	27.3	388	416	107	335	272	81
Assam	11.0	2,189	1,836	84	1,607	1,646	86

Centre-East							
Sikkim	23.3	74	55	74	--	41	--
Orissa	22.4	5,915	2,573	44	5,072	1,937	38
A & N Islands (UT)	11.9	22	21.4	99	18	17.96	100
Bihar	8.3	5,811	4,094	70	4,933	3,844	78
W. Bengal	5.6	3,071	1,880	61	2,533	1,765	70
Centre-West							
Dadra & NH (UT)	78.8	82	70	86	64	62	96
Madhya Pradesh	22.8	11,987	4,031	34	8,387	3,420	41
Gujarat	14.2	4,849	427	9	3,734	756	20
Rajasthan	12.2	4,183	1,586	38	3,126	838	27
Maharastra	9.2	5,772	1,491	26	2,954	970	33
Goa, Daman & Diu	1.0	11	0.2	2.2	7.7	0.3	3.3

South							
Lakshadweep (UT)	93.8	38	Nil	--	30	Nil	--
Andhra Pradesh	5.9	3,176	391	12	658	377	23
Karnataka	4.9	1,825	0.8	0.04	231	0.5	0.2
Tamil Nadu	1.1	520	2.0	0.4	312	NA	--
Kerala	2.0	261	NA	--	269	NA	--
North							
Himachal Pradesh	4.6	197	76	38	269	NA	--
Uttar Pradesh	0.2	233	1.5	0.6	199	13.5	6.8

Following trends can be observed through the table 4.1-

1. **Strong tendency to maintain tribal language identity:** In Manipur, Meghalaya, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands almost all tribal communities retain their ancestral mother tongues. In remaining states of the North-East (Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Arunachal, Assam) and Dadra and Nagar Haveli the number of tribals claiming their distinct mothertongues is quite high (83-89%). These languages are also favourably disposed as contact languages in respective regions.

2. **Coexistence of tribal and non-tribal languages:** In Sikkim, Bihar, and W. Bengal, the non-tribal mother-tongue identity is claimed between 25-40 per cent and a majority of the population retains their ancestral languages.

3. **Overwhelming tendency to shift ancestral tribal mother tongue in favour of non-tribal language:** In the Central-belt states (Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan) and in the North (Himachal Pradesh), the non-tribal mother-tongue, identity is claimed by 40-75% tribal populations and the forces for retaining ancestral language are rather subdued.

4. **Least resistance by tribal languages in favour of dominant languages(s):** In most of the southern states (Andhra Pradesh) Tamil Nadu, Kerala), on the West coast (Gujarat, Goa, Deu, Daman), and in the North (Uttar Pradesh), the non-tribal mother-tongue identity is claimed by more than 75 per cent tribal population in each state and ancestral language identity gets merged with the dominant language(s).

5. In Karnataka and Lakshadweep, almost all tribals speak a variety of the regional language, i.e. Kanada or Malayalam.

6. The 1981 Census enumerates stray returns (about 1800) of tribal languages from the states which do not come under the purview of Scheduled Tribes: Delhi 774, Haryana 170, Jammu and Kashmir 500, Punjab 255, Chandigarh 43, Pondichery 1 (Khubchandani, 1997: 80, 83).

This indicates that there are regionwise differences in the processes of language shift and maintenance. These trends can be taken as a guide for formulating language educating policy goals in different states/regions. Moreover, these profiles make us ponder over how to channalise the concerns of ethnic identity of small groups in a positive and sublime manner to enrich the nation's

heritage, instead of treating them as underprivileged 'powerless' minority and allowing the 'small' cultures to submit to the pressure of assimilation within the dominant culture, under the compulsions of joining the mainstream.

PROBLEMS OF LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN INDIA

When we consider linguistic minorities, we ought to think of them as falling into two major categories (Fishman, 1976: 153). The first category consists of linguistic minorities which speak one of the languages listed in the Constitution. For eg. in Assam, the Bengali speakers constitute a linguistic minority because they are 18 percent of the population. However, Bengali is also the state language of West Bengal. In such cases, there is always the possibility for members of minority groups to move to the state(s) where their language is an official one if they feel that they are being discriminated against. The second category consists of minorities who speak one of the many languages which fall into the category of 'tribal' or other languages which are indigenous to the region but whose speakers are numerically small. Members of such groups have no alternative because no matter where they go, their languages will always be minority languages. They are also at a

disadvantage because their mother tongues are not being given the same attention as major regional languages of necessity have to be bilingual in their mother tongue and the official language of the state in which they are domicially if they want to gain socio-economic benefits. This indicates that if there are serious short-comings in the implementation of proper language education policy in India, the worst sufferers are the linguistic minorities. Giving their languages a secondary status imparts a sense of inferiority in these groups. Children of these groups may develop 'negative identity' which may hinder their academic achievement.

The phenomenon of bi/multilingualism is not untouched by pre-conceived notions and myths.

INDIAN BILINGUALISM: MYTH AND REALITY

There are several myths with reference to the Indian bilingualism. Srivastava (1984: 48) has given an account of five myths (those generalised concepts and moorings which are out of accord with fact and imply absurdities). These are as following:

Myth 1: Linguistic homogeneity is currently related to many more desirable characteristics of polities than linguistic heterogeneity.

Myth 2: Bilingualism is a source of educational disadvantages and intellectual impoverishment.

Myth 3: Bilingualism cripples the creative abilities of human mind.

Myth 4: Bilingualism is rather anomalous state of language behaviour involved in social group communication,

Myth 5: Bilingualism is an obstacle per se in the linguistic communication within a speech community.

Myth 1: Linguistic homogeneity is currently related to many more desirable characteristics of polities than linguistic heterogeneity.

Delusions about bilingualism still exist in one form or the other. The above myth is one of them. Fisehand (1967: 24) has created a myth about the desirability of linguistic homogeneity. According to him, "linguistically homogenous polities are usually economically more developed, educationally more advanced, politically more modernised and ideologically-politically more tranquil and stable. They more frequently reveal orderly, libertarian and secular form of interest, articulation and aggregation, greater division of governmental powers, and less attraction towards personalismo and charismo." His conclusions are based primarily

upon two variables per capita gross national product (GNP) related to the nature of political enculturation and sectionalism dichotomised with linguistic homoeniety-hetrogenity factor. He further says, "it remains to be seen whether these countries can move significantly forward into the modern world, without bringing about or being helped with a greater degree of homogeneity as recorded in western experience." He seems sceptical about the progress of linguistically and cultural heterogeneous countries of Asia and Africa.

On the basis of the above description, following distinct but inter-related meanings can be suggested.

(a) linguistic homogeneity is desirable for the political enculturation and economic growth.

(b) Languages of lower income group population is degenerate and structurally underdeveloped.

There is no doubt in accepting the relative character of the relationship between linguistic factors and the GNP. On the one hand, there are countries like – Belgium, Canada, Balgaria, Trinidad, Malaya, etc. linguistic heterogeneous in character but with very high or medium GNP and, on the other hand,

linguistically homogenous countries like – Albania, Brazil, Mexico, Tunisia, Jordan, Korea, Libya, Somalia, Yemen, etc. with low or very low GNP. This pattern questions the desirability criteria for linguistic homogeneity on the basis of political enculturation and economic growth. According to Glyn Lewis (1972:3), 'the exclusive cultivation of a single language has been a concession to political philosophies of a nationalistic tendency'. This seems to be logical and true without doubt. However the degree of emphasis to this linguistic nationalism may affect the creation of favourable circumstances for democratic set up and economic growth, especially among countries with multiplicity of culture.

The second implicational meaning suggests the origin of the concept of 'cultural deficit' and 'verbal deprivation' in impoverished environment. The example of lower class children with fully developed and well formed grammatical system can be cited against this argument. (Labov 1969; Gumperz 1973) Labov has conveniently proved that the Negro children's 'capacity for conceptual learning' and 'use the same logic as anyone else' who learns to speak and understand English. To him, 'the notion of "verbal deprivation" is a part of the modern methodology of

educational psychology, typical of the unfounded notions which tend to expand in our educational system" (Labov 1969).

Had the linguistic handicap factor been decisive for the bilingual situation, bilingual population would have been psychologically more maladjusted, temperamentally more phlegmatic, morally more deprived and intellectually more stupid and stubborn as compared to monolingual societies. Is the character of Indian speech community in consonance with the above effect? Not that this has never been proved or elucidated but evidence accumulated from the research on the stable type of societal bilingualism even contradict such sweeping generalisation.

Myth 2: Bilingualism is a source of educational disadvantages and intellectual impoverishment.

Some scholars are of the opinion that bilingual children are left behind their monolingual counterparts and the education of bilingual children often gets retarded (Macnamara, 1966). There have been attempts to prove that when measured by verbal tests of intelligence bilinguals generally indicate intellectual impoverishment. It has been also reported that a child commencing

to really master a second language begins to suffer from anomie (Lambert 1967; Fishman 1969).

A viable research infrastructure determines many variables. It systematically collects data to test well-formulated hypothesis. For example, reaction of bilingual student to group pressures may be affected by his attitude toward his own group, by motivation to possible membership of a secondary society or by his overall relations with his teacher and students. It is desirable for any evaluation of a programme to control all these pertinent variables. Several earlier studies which were intended to bring evidence as to the adverse effect of bilingualism on obtained I.Q. suffered from ill-conceived research planning. Otherwise, experiments conducted by Jones (1960), Elizabeth Peal Lambert (1962) clearly establish that bilingualism is not a source of intellectual disadvantage. Their evidence proves that truly bilingual ten year old children belonging to French speaking community did far better in intelligence and language tests than the monolingual group. (Balkan, 1970; Lambert, Tucker, 1970; Anglejan and Tucker, 1971).

It may appear superficially that anomie is the natural consequence of bilingual education but Srivastava (1977: 62) is

against this observations and, according to him, it is not an intrinsic feature of bilingualism. It there are distinct sets of linguistic rules that identify a language, one finds well-defined organisational rules of social behaviour that characterise a culture with typical personality. Both are indispensable for the social being of a person and both can be said to be major constitutive elements which give specificity to any speech community. In spite of intricate linkage between language and culture, it does not follow that a monolingual speech community should invariably be unicultural and a bilingual one be necessarily a bicultural. Because as pointed out by Christofersen (1973: 66), in theory, there are four possible combinations:

a. unlingualism – uniculturalism

b. unlingualism – biculturalism

c. bilingualism – uniculturalism

d. bilingualism – biculturalism

Myth 3: Bilingualism cripples the creative abilities of human mind.

Hitherto the mythical contention about bilingualism has been that it impairs the creative faculty of a human mind. It was

conceived that the energy required to acquire two languages retards the man's learning process. Sweet (1899:82) made the statement – "no phenomenal linguist has ever produced real literature, nor, what is more remarkable ever made any great contribution to the science of language." Strangely enough Jesperson (1922:148) also maintained that no bilingual child had ever become into a great poet and a bilingual man has two strings to his bow but unfortunately both remain slack ones. Weinreich (1963: 116) can be quoted as one more instance of upholding the unrealistic and extreme view: "If one were to believe such writers as Wisgerber, bilingualism is capable of impairing the intelligence of whole ethnic group and crippling its ability for generations."

History of literacy or social traditions has disporved the validity of this strange assessment of the effects of bilinguals on the creative sensibilities One can very easily put forth innumerable examples of bilingual literacy giants from India and abroad, from middle ages and modern period, to disprove such a fallacious stand.

Indian literacy scene offers many examples to prove that multilingualisation could itself become the matter and form of great

literary product. It also suggests that writers felt more at home in second language than they did in their home dialects.

Sanskrit continued to attract writers even after Prakrits and Apabhramsa got standardised for the literary use and as observed by Burrow, "though it appears paradoxical at first sight, the Sanskrit language only reached its full development as a language of culture and administration at a time when it had ceased to be a mother tongue (1955: 57)."

Myth 4: Bilingualism is rather anomalous state of language behaviour involved in social group communication.

and

Myths 5: Bilingualism is an obstacle per se in the linguistic communication within a speech community.

Bilingualism may be a freakish and an anomalous instance of social situation for the Western scholars, our contention is that it is not only a characteristic phenomenon for many speech communities of Asia and Africa but is even a natural situation of verbal interaction for many Western societies. Scholars now have come to realise that bilingualism is the earliest condition of a large

numbers of people and is the present need of many contemporary societies (Haugen 1972; Hymes 1967; Fishman 1972; Glyn Lewis 1972; Gumperx 1971). Moreover, the importance of bi/multi-lingualism in the current scenario of globalisation can not be ignored.

Linguists, at present, do not employ Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence and homogeneous code for describing linguistic forms regularly employed in real social situations. This notion has been elaborated by Hymes to communicative competence in order to include socio-cultural rules that discipline the use of speech in different social settings and Gumperz has postulated a construct of 'linguistic repertoire' so that plurality of codes which exist in the same speech community can be included. Gumperz (1968) opines that no speech community is restricted in its verbal repertoire to a single variety and that 'in multilingual societies the choice of one language over the other has same signification as selection among lexicon alternates in linguistically homogeneous societies.' Rubin (1961) and Fishman (1965) also hold the view that a multilingual selects one language over the other in a particular context for more or less similar reasons that motivate monolinguals to choose from different styles or functional

variants of a single language. Thus, in process or in operation a bilingual speaker is in no way different from the monolingual one.

It is thus quite feasible that as two/more speech varieties in a monolingual setting can function efficiently to discharge different social roles, two or more languages taken together can also function on similar pattern. The most remarkable characteristic of Indian bilingualism has been its allocation of societal roles to different languages that form a universe of socio-cultural behaviour. Different languages configurate in a diglossic relationship that encouraged stable maintenance of their compartmentalised roles. It is this non-competing nature of these roles that sustained the non-conflicting and socially stable pattern of bilingualism. These arguments support in clarification of stereotypes attached to minority languages ('inferior', 'under developed' etc.). Moreover, they emphasise the functional importance of different languages and their importance to various educational practices to allow growth of different languages in harmony with each other.

Thus, neither language learnings has been at any time a burden nor language maintenance posed any serious problem for

the members of the Indian speech community. The societal needs initiated the language course, inherent social structure created an environment and earnest desire to form the speech community as an integrated whole.

SUMMARY

Thus, the issues and problems pertaining to the multilingual setting in India are quite complex and intrinsic in character. The trends observed in the case of language maintenance and shift of tribal languages indicate a need to preserve the ethnic identity of these tribal groups while channeling them into the mainstream of national development. Moreover, myths associated with Indian bilingualism require to be viewed microscopically in order to trace their origin and subsequent ramifications. However, the most crucial is the strategy to tackle the problems surfacing in the various educational practices particularly in case of these tribal/linguistic minority groups.

CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION

The present study tried to explore the linkages between language, culture, medium of instruction and education. The study relied both on primary as well as secondary sources of information. It has attempted to draw a theoretical discussion on the theme of the study from various discipline such as Sociology, Socio-linguistics, Social psychology and Social anthropology. The study also has tried to bring into focus the multi-lingual or bi-lingual character of Indian society and it made an attempt to relate it to the educational scenario.

In the Indian context bi or multilingualism grew out of complex instances of language contacts and convergence. The protection and preservation of interests of linguistic minorities regarding linguistic heterogeneity calls for introspection into the existing language policy and practices in the field of education. This study tried to critically analyse the effect of various educational practices and policies on the heterogeneous population of India specifically the linguistic minorities. The analysis in the

foregoing chapters raises certain critical issues which become important to the study.

The conceptualisation of the issue of bi/multilingual education by the government places it within the larger national perspective. In a heterogeneous society different languages come into contact with each other resulting in the processes of language convergence and bi/multi-lingualism. Therefore, the concept of multi-bilingual education grew out of a need of a multicultural country like India to accept and give recognition to different ethnic and linguistic groups existing in harmony with each other. Three Language Formula (TLF), teaching of languages at the higher education level are some of the practices which are incorporated in the education policy of India. If we look at the language education policy in India and its implications for bi/multilingualism several issues emerge out of Indian linguistic scene.

Though the policy provisions are necessary indication of willingness on the part of the government to give patronage to different languages to flourish in a congenial atmosphere, the purpose is not actualised in the real sense. The problem is the hiatus between the professed policy and the actual practice as far

as language use and value is concerned. Due to restriction of regional languages within the domain of state, their development at the national level is hindered.

Moreover, the efficiency of language teaching calls for a radical change in the ideology and methods of language teaching in schools. The policy makers tend to pay little attention to the needs and wishes of the potential beneficiaries of their policies as compared to their political interests. If bi/multilingual education and other programmes can truly be seen as responses to appeals from the people themselves, minority groups should be given the right to define themselves vis-à-vis the mainstream as they think proper and in aspects of their life. However, in the face of social, economic and regional disparities among different states, a common solution for all can not be prescribed. These practices should have flexibility and applicability to different regions of India. Another concern is how the developmental efforts by the government aimed at national goals are causing detrimental effects upon some minor languages leading to their loss and ultimately death. It becomes further essential to analyse the problems of bi/multilingual education from the perspective of children. How they see it as a facilitator or as a stumbling block in their academic

achievement? Ultimately, it is children who have to suffer if there are some lacunae in the effective implementation of the programme.

Research on the subject suggest that acceptance and encouragement of the first language of the child is necessary in order to promote achievement in the second language. Linguistic diversity and varied cultural experiences brought by children to school can be seen as assets and can be utilised as pedagogic resources to facilitate the development of skills such as reading and writing. Bilingual educators working within whole language approaches need to incorporate strategies and procedures to counter socio-linguistic pressures existing within schools and communities leading students and parents to neglect full development of literacy in the primary language. The particular cases of drop outs due to rejection of the linguistic and cultural resources brought by them need to be studied in detail.

The pervasion of stereotypes attached to the minor languages ('under developed', 'inferior') into the recommendations in education policy as well as the attitudes and expectations of teachers can not been overlooked. Their needs to be greater societal

acceptance for these languages. Conferring 'official' status on a few languages has in effect not only stigmatised 'non-official' languages but also imposed curbs on their development. Formulation of new language policy to restore the dignity of minority languages and financial and institutional support for their development are indispensable. Moreover, improvement in the infrastructure of these languages such as – scripts, grammar, vocabularies, dictionaries, etc. becomes important in this regard. There is a need to sensitise teachers, policy makers and the larger public against the detrimental effects of negative attitudes towards tribal or linguistic minority children and their mother tongue. The process of transition from the tribal language to 'standard 'or regional language needs to be in a smooth manner. Servicing the needs of a diverse student population is a complex, deliberate, and dynamic process. It is not a packaged approach that can be applied intact to every situation and regional location. It requires cross-level effort involving relevant local institutions, such as the home, the school, and the university, and all adaptations must be grounded on the linguistic and cultural resources available in the local community. Importantly, it must be a project in which all participants – patents, children, and researches – helps to shape its goals and

objectives and therefore the process of change. Bilingual education can be well equipped by language educators by stimulating interest in the study of language and culture as an indispensable element within every general education. The impact of family patterns of behaviour and differences between families and outcome of education in general and bilingual education in particular can not be ignored. Any attempt to describe a collective bilingual situation or to design a bilingual education system must comprise an analysis of family patterns of linguistic behaviour, just as any assessment of an experiment in bilingual education must include such patterns of behaviour among the variables to be taken into account.

However, it may be noted that the non-availability of studies on the educational problems of linguistic minorities in India, the present study could not take up this issue holistically. Further, the material available on various educational practices regarding bi/multilingualism in the Indian context was also limited. The restrictions of time also forced the researcher to get confined to the review of secondary sources of material. However, a few future areas of research may be identified to carry on the interest in this very significant field of study.

Particularly an extensive study of the socio-psychological impact of bilingual education programmes on the tribal or linguistic minority population may be undertaken. This would bring into focus the overall outcome of these programmes. A study on the problems of linguistic minorities in India may also be undertaken on a large scale to arrive at a more comprehensive picture on the subject.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the study has attempted to summarise and bring together pieces of research as a very vital issue of the contemporary societies.

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