Chapter 5: Conclusion
Most sociolinguistic studies have generally attempted to show close links between social patterns of language use. This has been done by using different quantitative techniques of correlating average scores for sociolinguistic variables with a wide range of independent variables like socio-economic class, sex, age, education profession. Depending upon the nature of the society concerned, these independent variables do exert different kinds and degrees of influence on language proficiency, use, attitudes and identity of individual speakers, groups and communities. However, they do not contribute much to the study of ethnolinguistic identity in multilingual context, which constitutes the main focus of the present study. We have analyzed the findings of the empirical study in terms of four major ethnolinguistic communities in Jharkhand, viz. Santhali, Mundari, Ho and Kurukh language speakers. The study presents an overall view of the linguistic situation among the tribal language speakers of Jharkhand based on an investigation by means of questionnaires, to determine some of the most prevalent sociolinguistic aspects such as acceptance level of Hindi, the attitude of the population towards Hindi language and their native language, the extent of multilingualism among the respondents. This sociolinguistic survey is based on the assumption that questionnaires can be constructed and distributed which are extensive enough to cover the most significant aspects of language attitudes and language use. The investigator believes that the questionnaire developed for this study is essentially a very useful testing devise. Improvements to be made are mostly concerned with the “external” aspects of the questionnaire such as mode of distribution, arranging and structuring of questions as well as gathering and collection of the data. There is no doubt that a wider application of this type of questionnaire is not only feasible but also highly desirable for the study of multilingualism and its attitudinal manifestations.

The main objective of this study was to understand the impact of acceptance level of Hindi on tribal identity in terms of patterns of language use in Jharkhand. To examine this issue, data was elicited from a set of 197 informants from all the four ethno-linguistic communities such as Santhali, Mundari, Ho and Kurukh language speakers belonging to
different age, sex, education, and area of residence. The main aim of taking the data was to understand the social and psychological tendencies in the direction of language preference, the changing patterns of language use, the changing notion of tribal identity and linguistic assimilation.

In this study it was observed that there is a progressive decline in the use of mother-tongue and the presence of mother tongue in public domain is negligible. The share of mother tongue even in the family domain shows diminishing trends with the passage of time, and a process of reallocation of languages such as Hindi, Sadari, and English has started taking place in different domains. In Jharkhand linguistic scene, the tribal languages are pitted in an unequal battle against the two superimposed languages Hindi and English. Hindi is the Official Language of the State and English the Associate Official Language of the Union of India and also the language of the most developed nations in the world and is thereby considered the language of progress and therefore that of the future.

On the one hand, English has developed as a prestige marker and Hindi on the other hand, as the symbol of national integration and language of wider communication. Overall, it was observed that among the different age and sex groups there was an obvious preference for Hindi and English. Language hierarchy was another interesting point. The most prestigious language was observed to be English followed by Hindi; the mother tongue was at the bottom.

The preferences in terms of language use were not homogenous but appeared to vary across different social and psychological variables. The young samples showed the strongest tendency towards the use of Hindi and English. This was attributed to societal pressures and social priorities.

On studying the pattern of language use, it was found that there is a progressive reallocation of mother tongue domains in favour of Hindi and Sadari. Mother tongue appears in the home domain but in conjunction with Hindi. In this case of reallocation, the young educated generation, appears to increase the use of Hindi and English. This study reveals that the attitude towards Hindi is highly positive.
In the present study it has clearly emerged that the dominant languages in Jharkhand are Hindi, English and Sadari. The coexistence of Dravidian language like Kurukh, Austro-Asiatic (Munda branch) languages like Santhali, Ho, Indo-Aryan languages like Hindi and Sadari and Indo-Germanic, viz. English makes this place a complex linguistic area, highlighting bi/multilingualism, worthy of further linguistic investigation.

The linguistic repertoire of the four ethno-linguistic groups constitutes mainly of Mother Tongue, Hindi, Sadari, English and "Other" languages, thus rejecting the notion of monolingualism and affirming their allegiance to their tongue, recognizing their language as the basic mark of their identity.

As for language use in domains such as family, friendship, institution, market and media, Hindi language seems to have high acceptance level among these communities. English also appears to invade the home domain of these four ethno-linguistic communities. To compare the patterns of language use in respect of Hindi and Mother tongue, competence level in Hindi is more than the competence level in Mother tongue among these communities.

In terms of Gumperz’s “we” and “they” code, the respondents of all the four ethno-linguistic groups construct “we” identities with Hindi. Hindi as language of out-group is dominantly perceived by these communities. Though around 15-20% of the respondents would like to have matrimonial alliances with Hindi speakers, and Hindi speakers are accepted in home domain and only a negligible percentage of people show hostile attitude towards the Hindi language speakers. Majority of the respondents treat Hindi language as structurally different from their respective mother tongue but at the same time, they perceive Hindi to be easy to learn, pronounce and write. These respondents show a positive attitude towards Hindi language but the researcher feels that necessity has overpowered attitude. It could therefore be maintained that proficiency in Hindi may owe much more to socio-economic and political exigencies than to attitudes.
The Jamshedpur and Ranchi regions are relatively more industrialized than the Dumka region. Hence, a large number of migrant population i.e., in-migrants, are residing in Ranchi and Jamshedpur areas and have considerable economic productivity and domination in economy. Hence they dictate the language of communication. So, the high acceptance level of Hindi in this region among these communities is to ensure acceptability within the community.

The findings also reveal that bilingualism on its own cannot neutralize ethnic identity. One needs to exclude socio-cultural, political, economic and demographic variables in order to reasonably account for a desire to identify with another ethnic group. The findings also suggest that the value of multilingualism as a tool for achieving national unity and integration is beyond any doubt.

It seems that the respondents of all the four ethno-linguistic groups believe that language and culture were closely related, but high acceptance level of Hindi in various domains is not a threat to their identity. It seems that these communities can preserve their identity even while they displace the linguistic identity. That is to say that tribal identity is composed of markers such as (i) linguistic (ii) religions (iii) customs. All identity markers of a social group together constitute the “culture” or cultural identity of the social group. Therefore, the loss of one maker does not automatically entail the loss of tribal cultural identity.

Language choice is an expression of individuality with speakers switching in order to align themselves with the groups with which they wish from time to time to be identified. Linguistic choices – especially variation in choices - are best explained by an analysis assuming that the choice depends on the speaker's estimation of what choices offer him or her greatest benefit. That is, choices reflect a goal to enhance interpersonal relations and or material or psychological rewards and to minimize costs. When faced with several courses of action, people usually do what they believe is likely to have the best overall outcome. Speakers make choices as individuals; they typically behave as group members in that they make more or less the same or similar linguistic choices.
Speakers intend their actions to reflect goal or attitudes and observers attribute intentions to these actions.

The investigator argues that the concept that each language variety contains more than one attribute, not all of which are equally salient in a given situation is important in explaining these data. In the public domain, the most salient attribute of Hindi is + education, + state official language. Hindi has other attributes which may or may not be equally salient when the qualification "interaction with peers" is added. Hindi also has the attribute + formal via its use in public and/or formal settings. Use of tribal mother tongues such as Santhali, Mundari, Ho, Kurukh says little about a speaker's education, since these languages are not normally learned in school. Though these languages are taught in the school as a subject, many of them acquire it from their parents informally. In addition, these tribal mother tongues have certain neutrality with regard to the attribute "high socio-economic status". Most people using some of their tribal mother tongues have an attribute "+ community" i.e. their perception as distinctive speakers of tribal languages, as majority of them would like to choose tribal mother tongue as their mother tongues.

The Status/Prestige is a major factor in language choice.

High Prestige/Status

a. English as the language of power and Associate official Language of the Union

b. Hindi (National/Official language) State Official language

c. Minority language such as tribal mother tongue

Lower Prestige/status

A close examination of the survey shows that the prestige/importance of the language at a national level as well as in its native state is a major determining factor in language choice. Despite the fact that English is a minority language, the tribal mother
tongue speakers would like to educate their children in English. The high acceptance level of Hindi is due to the fact that Hindi is a national language as well as State Official Language. The linguistic landscape in Jharkhand shows the prevalence of Hindi and English in public signs. The names of public signs such as landmarks on roads, places, statues, hospitals etc are inscribed both in Hindi and English. Private signs such as those used by commercial stores, cinema halls, retail shops etc are inscribed in English. Even the Jharkhand Government’s proposal to start teaching English as a subject from class 1 onwards (Jharkhand Vikas Ki Or) can be seen as a futuristic step towards “openness to the world”. These factors in turn affect the linguistic choices made by these tribal mother tongue speakers of Mundari, Ho, Santhali and Kurukh.

The degree of acceptance level of Hindi among these tribal mother tongue speakers is not uniform. There is a cline of acceptance on which some tribal mother tongue speakers show a higher acceptance level than others. While Kurukh language speakers show a very high acceptance of Hindi in various domains of use, Santhali language speakers show a relatively low acceptance level of Hindi.

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<tr>
<th>High Acceptance Level of Hindi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kurukh</td>
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<td>HO</td>
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<td>Mundari</td>
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<td>Santhali</td>
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| Low Acceptance Level of Hindi |

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This cline of acceptance level does not mean that there is an assimilationist tendency. These language speakers can be better grouped as maintaining cultural and linguistic co-existence with the dominator majority group.

Assimilation <-> Co-existence with <-> Isolation.

the dominant language/
Kurukh
HO
Mundari
Santhali

The young generation show less resilience to their Mother tongue. There is a perceptible difference among the less than 25 years category, when asked about their native language and their parent’s mother tongue. Most of them claimed Hindi or Sadari as their native language. Asked about what you would choose as your mother tongue—choose either Hindi or Sadari. Around 21% of the less than 25 years category claimed Hindi as their mother tongue. This shows the willingness within the less than 25 years category to use Hindi becomes a marker of their inclusion or integration into the Hindi speech community.

The findings on the acceptability of different registers of Hindi reveal that it is the vernacular i.e. colloquial variety of Hindi which is accepted by these four ethnolinguistic groups.

The respondents of all the four ethnolinguistic groups overwhelmingly reveal that Hindi has the potential to become the National language and Hindi language alone could be the tool for National Integration. It seems that the respondents construct Hindi language as “we identity” at the National level.

The findings suggest that the respondents do consider that their tribal cultural identity is changing and they are adopting cultural ways of Hindi language speakers. The findings suggest that both continuity and change are the hallmark of the dynamics studied
here i.e. the notion of tribal identity and their linguistic identity both show continuity and change in variable degrees.

Modern civilization has been as inimical to tribal peoples all over the world. It cannot tolerate life in the wild and wants to tame and civilize everything around it. Disappearance of "wild life" and tribal peoples from Europe and America is an evidence. It, of course, wants to study primitive societies and cultures all over the world and establish societies for the preservation of wild life and 'wilder' peoples and maintain ecology. Given the rich multilingual tradition of India where languages act as facilitators rather than as barriers in communication, one hopes that their linguistic identity and their tribal cultural identity will not easily disappear from Jharkhand.