CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

India is the only country in the world having a great diversity of languages with an underlying unity among them. The fourteen significant language groups which have been studied in the present work account for 87% of the entire population of the country. The study of the speakers of these fourteen significant languages as linguistic minorities i.e. the population of a language group staying outside its home region, has revealed following facts:

The total of the linguistic minority population of India forms about 16% of the entire population of the country and numbers about seventy-two millions. In other words, one in about six persons in our country stays outside the home state of his mother-tongue, i.e. he is considered a speaker of a minority language of a certain region. The total minority population of seventy-two millions is inclusive of Hindi population of Rajasthan enumerated as minority in 1961. It also includes Rajasthani
minority. In 1971 Census, Rajasthani has been included in Hindi and now Hindi is the majority language of that state.

Urdu is most significant as a minority group having a total strength of more than twenty-three millions. It has been followed by Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, Rajasthani (1961), Punjabi and Marathi. More than 18.6 million speakers of Hindi stay outside its home region. The other minorities mentioned above have more than three million persons each. A little more than two million speakers of Kannada and a like number of Tamils reside outside their states. Gujarati, Oriya and Malayalee minorities stand next in order based upon total strength of the minority groups in the country as a whole. Assamese and Kashmiris have not moved outside their home states and so are least significant as linguistic minorities.

If the relative proportion of a minority group to the total strength of that language is considered (Graph 1), Urdu again ranks first because it has no home state and the total Urdu population, therefore, forms minority group everywhere in the country. Among the other language communities, Punjabis are leading with a very large proportion of their total population in the country staying outside Punjab as compared to other language groups.
Every third Punjabi is found outside his home region, that is, one-third of the total Punjabi population is enumerated as a minority. Rajasthani minorities follow Punjabis with one-fourth of their total strength staying outside Rajasthan. In the Census of 1971, they are not enumerated separately. Telugu, Bengali, Kannada and Marathi rank next in this order based upon the relative proportion of a language group inside and outside the home state. Though Hindi minority is largest in strength, on account of its home region being very extensive, it is enumerated as a minority only in two-third of the total geographical area of the country. Tamil, Oriya and Gujarati minorities form equal proportion (8%) to their respective total population and have been followed by Malayalee minority. The causes of emigration of these people belonging to particular language communities from their home states can be generalised as follows:

'Push factors' and 'Pull factors' in the movement of Linguistic minorities

The precarious conditions of climate in Rajasthan and Rayalseema parts of Andhra Pradesh, the pressure of population and hazards of floods in West Bengal and the evacuation of the erstwhile Punjabi population
of the present Pakistan may be included in the major forces pushing people out of these home states. The historical incidents explain the present geographical distribution of Urdu and Marathi minorities. Among the 'Pull factors' attracting large number of linguistic minorities from various states especially in urban areas may be included the industrial and commercial activities providing job opportunities to these migrants.

Maharashtra - the leading receiver of linguistic minorities

Urdu is the only dominant minority in Uttar Pradesh which leads all states of the country in the total strength of minority population, but the other minorities are represented only in small numbers in this state. As compared to this, Maharashtra state has received the largest number and greatest variety of linguistic minorities. One in nine persons belonging to the group of minority population in India has entered this state on account of its central location in the country and development of industrial and commercial sector especially in the capital city of Bombay. The state of Karnataka follows Maharashtra in this respect and has attracted one in eleven persons belonging to the entire minority group. The state of Tamilnadu and Bihar, each has about six millions of the minority
population, while Andhra Pradesh has a little less than five millions. Each of the states of Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal has about four millions (Graph 2).

Generalising the above pattern, it may be stated that a large number of people have migrated from Gangetic plains towards Deccan plateau and the coastal areas, where industry, trade and commerce have developed very rapidly during the present century and due to the expeditions of Mughuls in the past.

The following conclusions have been drawn by studying the present patterns of geographical distribution of the various linguistic minorities in the country.

As judged by its total strength, Urdu is not a minority but the sixth majority language group of our country. It is the leading minority in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. It is also dominant in the state of Karnataka. Urdu language is representative of the grand assimilation of Persian, Arabic and Turki languages with Hindi. Though it developed as an independent language in Delhi, at present the largest concentration of Urdu minority in Uttar Pradesh is found in
districts of West Plain with Moradabad at the top. Over the Gangetic plain, Urdu population has a compact pattern of distribution and has formed a continuous block of its dominance as a minority (Map C). On the other hand, over the Deccan plateau, they are widely diffused over the rural and urban areas of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. In these regions, a peculiarity of Urdu concentrations has been observed. One finds a number of small but very dominant pockets of Urdu people. Central states of India, including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa have attracted only a small portion of this minority group. In these areas, Urdu speakers are mainly confined to Mewar region of Rajasthan and Malwa plateau of Madhya Pradesh. Urdu population is almost absent in the remote states of Kashmir, Assam and Kerala (Map C).

Outside the extensive home region covering more than one-third of the total geographical area of the country, Hindi minority is very dominant in all districts of Punjab, West Bengal and Assam. Southwards, in the state of Maharashtra, they are more dominant to the north and northeast of Poona than to its east and south. A line drawn on the map connecting Poona with Nagpur district of the state decides the limit of dominance of Hindi minority in
this part of the country. In the state of Gujarat, they are confined to Sabarmati and Mahi valley areas. In the whole of South India, only Bangalore and Hyderabad areas have large concentrations of this linguistic minority (Map D).

As a general rule, all other linguistic minorities of India are confined to the regions bordering their home states. This is true of Punjabi minority which is very dominant in the districts of Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Rajasthan bordering the state of Punjab. They have also penetrated deep in the state of Uttar Pradesh along the lines of communication. In the rest of the country, they are found either at army headquarters like Jabalpur and Poona or industrial and commercial centers like Bombay and Calcutta. Considering the remote location of Punjab, Punjabis have moved far and wide in the country (Map E).

The Rajasthani minorities (1961) mainly include the tribal groups like Banjari, Malvi and Nimari. Marwaris are exceptional to this and are known all over the country for retail trade and are said to be found even in remote villages. Among the tribal groups included in Rajasthani minority, the speakers of Malvi are dominant in
Malwa plateau region and those of Nimari reside in the Nimar districts of Madhya Pradesh located in Vindhya-Satpuda mountains. Banjaries (Lambhanis) are mainly confined to Godavari valley crossing the states of Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh and also in Karnataka plateau region (Map P).

The well-known trading community of India, namely, Gujaratis, are very dominant as a minority in the region extending between the southern borders of Gujarat and Bombay industrial region. Calcutta has the farthest and significant concentration of Gujarati traders. Gujaratis have mainly specialized in wholesale trade and cluster around urban areas.

Marathi minority is confined to those areas in Madhya Pradesh which formerly belonged to the dominion of Peshwas and the areas ruled by Marathas in Karnataka. The historical factors are mainly responsible for their present geographical distribution.

Bengali emigrants have penetrated very deep in Brahmaputra valley of Assam and have been attracted towards the tea growing districts. Towards west, they are found in large numbers in the districts of Bihar bordering West Bengal and have also migrated in large numbers to the state of Uttar Pradesh. A line connecting Delhi with
Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh and running towards southeast to reach Koraput district of Orissa forms the limit of westward spread of Bengali minority. Outside this boundary, they are found only in Bombay industrial region (Map I). Bengalis are mainly engaged in business, administration and educational activities.

Oriya minority is confined to the districts of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal bordering Orissa.

Among the dravidian linguistic minorities, Telugu speakers are most widespread. They sweep over the entire state of Tamilnadu and eastern border areas of Karnataka state. They are diffused all over the state of Maharashtra. Northeastwards, they have penetrated through the eastern parts of Orissa and have reached the industrial and commercial region of Calcutta. Beyond the tropic of Cancer, Telugu minority is found only in the national capital, Delhi, and the district of Lakhimpur in Assam. In all these areas, they are in demand for labourious heavy work which needs strength and capacity to work very hard. In the state of Maharashtra, they have more or less monopolised the occupation of stone breaking and are preferred to and are better paid than local labour.
Kannada minorities have moved only to the border areas of the neighbouring states of Karnataka. The same is true of Tamil and Malayalam minorities but unlike the former, they are found, even though in small numbers, in all the major urban centres of the country which makes them appear to be widespread.

The languages of India may be broadly grouped into Indo-Aryan and Dravidian family, the two being in a close contact with each other for many centuries. As a consequence, they are mutually related to each other as language communities representing a particular type of culture. It is very difficult to draw a line of separation between any two major languages belonging to the same family on account of the mixed dialects forming a link between the two. Besides this, along the border regions, one finds a zone in which people speaking two or sometimes more than two languages stay together and a sort of composite culture springs up out of the cultural exchange of these groups. The geographical extension of such bridge areas has been delimited on the basis of the proportion of a minority language group for which 15% has been taken as the minimum percentage. Accordingly, following bridge areas have been identified.
Hissar and Ambala districts of Haryana, Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh and district of Ganganagar in Rajasthan state are areas having more than 15% of their population speaking Punjabi. On the other hand, Hindi is spoken by more than this much proportion of the population in every district of the present Punjab state except the districts of Amritsar, Sangrur and Bhatinda.

The bridge area between Hindi and Punjabi is most extensive among all bridge areas in our country.

The industrial and commercial area around Calcutta in West Bengal is the only region where Hindi minority forms more than 15% of the population, while Bengalis are significant as minorities in the mining and industrial districts of Singhbhum and Dhanbad in Bihar. Besides these two districts, the district of Santal Parganas also has more than 15% of its population being Bengali on account of its border location.

The districts of Balaghat, Betul and Chindwara and Khandwa (East Nimar) in Madhya Pradesh and the district of Bhandara in Maharashtra comprise the extent of linguistic bridge between Hindi and Marathi.

In the state of Assam as a whole, Bengalis form 19% of the population. They are very dominant
in the district of Cachar, Nowgong and Goalpara. Assamese have not moved even to the neighbouring state of Bengal.

Bombay industrial area has more than 15% of its population speaking Gujarati but Marathi minority is not significant in same proportion in any part of Gujarat.

Kannada minority is dominant in the taluka of Jath in Sangli district and Gadhinglaj and Shirol talukas of Kolhapur district in Maharashtra while Marathi minority is very significant in the districts of Belgaum and Bidar districts of Karnataka. These areas together form the bridge area between Marathi and Kannada.

The Sironcha taluka of Chandrapur district of Maharashtra on one side and the areas in Adilabad on the side of Andhra Pradesh form the linguistic bridge between Marathi and Telugu.

In the state of Karnataka, Telugu minority forms more than 15% of the population in the districts of Kolar, Bangalore and many other areas (p.185), whereas Kannada speakers are significant in Madaksira and Raidurga talukas of Anantapur district and Narayankhed taluka of Medak district in Andhra Pradesh.
The northern talukas of Chingleput and North Arcot districts and the districts of Dharampuri and Coimbatore in Tamilnadu on one side and the district of Chittor in Andhra Pradesh form the bridge between Tamil and Telugu, while that between Kannada and Tamil includes Bengalore district on one hand and the taluka of Hosur in Dharampuri and the district of Nilgiris in Tamilnadu on the other. The bridge area between Kannada and Malayalam extends over the districts of South Kanara and Coorg in Karnataka state and Cannanore district in the state of Kerala. The border talukas of Palghat, Trivandrum and Kottyam districts in Kerala and the talukas of Vilavancode and Kalkulam in the district of Kanyakumari of Tamilnadu form the bridge between Tamil and Malayalam.

All these areas mentioned in the above description are the zones of contact between manor language areas. They cultivate a sort of composite culture leading to progress of all communities by way of cultural exchange. Besides the border regions, the major urban centres of India are the present cradles of Indian composite culture. The industrial and commercial development in the million cities of India have been mainly favourable to a large scale movement of people and intermingling leading to cultural enrichment.
Scope for further research on the same lines

Many attempts have been made to study Indian languages in all their aspects. But the geographical aspect has not been specially considered in spite of the fact that it is basically important. The geographical distribution of major languages and of linguistic minorities will indicate the fact that no language group is strictly confined to its home state and the state boundaries have been drawn for administrative convenience.

There is a very little probability of having unilingual states for ever in our country on account of increasing movement of people from various parts of India towards centres of economic opportunities and the greater extent of intermingling of different language groups in the border tracts than ever before. A detailed study of this cultural assimilation would be a significant contribution from the point of national integration. Various indicators like the significance of linguistic minorities in particular regions, the proportion of bilingual and trilingual population in these areas, extent of cultural exchange etc. may be used in attempting this work.
Studies may be attempted with the universal assumption 'contact leads progress', which is sure to be proved correct in the border tracts, termed as linguistic bridge areas in the present study. The major centres of industry, trade and commerce may also be studied in the respect of their linguistic composition. The cultural development in such areas can be studied both quantitatively as well as qualitatively. The development of conditions of life, educational progress and an overall development of composite culture which is an outcome of these zones of contact of different groups of people would be revealed in such studies. This will be helpful in creating the sense of nationality and mutual relationships among our people. A fair treatment will be then meted out to linguistic minorities and this will further encourage the greater intermingling of people, thus, minimizing the diversities of various kinds.
Areas in India where Urdu minority forms more than 15% of the population

Map 19