Throughout the long period of history there has been considerable amount of migrations of our people from one part of the country to another due to religious, cultural, economic or other considerations and this has really produced a cultural unity in the country in spite of the multiplicity of languages. During the post-independence era following rapid industrialization and economic development of the country, this internal movement towards centres of economic opportunities has been greatly accentuated so that the country has been tending to a state of greater unity in the midst of diversity than ever before.

However, the division of the country into different states according to the language spoken by the majority in the area for the convenience of administration so that democracy becomes more meaningful
to the common man, has as a consequence engendered linguistic antagonism, lack of fair treatment meted out to linguistic minorities and border disputes. Of these problems, the border disputes based upon languages are found to be highly political in nature because as Grierson (1908) mentions it 'Indian languages gradually merge into each other and are not separated by hard and fast boundary lines. Their boundaries are just conventional. On each side of this line, there is a border tract, the language of which may be classed at will with one or the other' (LSI, I, p.31). One finds a great amount of intermingling of languages as well as of cultures of two different communities in this region. The extent of mingling may vary from place to place but it does exist everywhere. Therefore, it is almost impossible to draw an absolutely clear line of separation on the basis of linguistic majority between any two states of India. The border regions of these states include people speaking either or both or sometimes more than two languages spoken in the adjoining areas of the respective states. As a result, the border tracts are not those of separation but, in fact, zones of contact. They form bridges between two or more language groups.
In this background, an attempt has been made in the present study to explain the facts regarding fourteen significant linguistic minorities of India. Chapter one deals with the general classification of Indian languages. The concepts of 'Majority and minority languages' have been defined and discussed in the second chapter which also includes a generalised account of the linguistic minorities of our country and their statewise distribution. The geographical distribution of each linguistic minority has been dealt with in detail in the third chapter. The facts regarding the concentration or spread of these minority groups in various parts of the country have been sought to be explained where possible by their causal relationships with historical, economic and cultural factors which are taken into account in every geographical study. The fourth chapter deals with the intermingling of linguistic minorities in the border regions giving rise to either compound or mechanical mixture of different languages, thus, forming 'Linguistic bridges'. This description has been mainly based upon Census data and comments made by George A. Grierson in his work 'Linguistic Survey of India'. The assimilation of minorities with the majorities forms the subject
matter of Chapter five, while the concluding remarks and a comment upon the scope for further study on the same lines form the last chapter.

This work is a deductive study based upon the data published by Census of India and the written information collected from various sources. Table C-V: Mother-tongue (1961) in each District Census Handbook of India which gives talukawise population speaking each of the fourteen significant languages has been mainly used for drawing maps to show the geographical distribution of the minority groups. These statistics are for 1961 because for 1971, the whole set of data is not available. The figures for 1971, wherever they were obtained, have been put next to those for 1961 in brackets. The tables showing decadal variations in the minority populations during 1901-61 in each state of the country have also been represented by means of graphs and used for discussing the temporal changes in the geographical distribution of linguistic minorities. The distribution as per 1961 Census has been depicted by dot maps on the scale of 1:4,500,000 reduced photographically. The distribution patterns revealed in these maps have been explained in historical, cultural and
Introduction

It has been accepted that greater the amount of intermingling of various language groups, the greater is the extent of cultural enrichment. This actual state of affairs has been clearly brought out in the present study which would help to counteract the prevailing fissiparous tendencies in our country. It does not pretend to put forward novel ideas but presents rather a correct approach of looking at facts regarding the minority groups and border regions of the linguistic states of India. These have been looked upon as the mutual links between various cultural groups. In short, this study aims at identifying the extent of penetration of minority languages into the majority language areas as well as that of the linguistic bridges between major languages and to assess the causes and consequences of this kind of movement of population from one part of the country to other.

Reference: