CHAPTER-5

CONCLUSION

Linguistic identities are negotiated in plurilingual conversation. The two processes of maintenance and shift go simultaneously. Abbi (1997) observed that this oscillation between the two processes give them a new lease of life and saves them from the dangers of extinction. A gradual adoption of non-tribal language as mother tongue is indicative of the fact that negotiations are taking place at cost of language shift by the dominated tribal communities.

Weinreich (1951) pointed out that language shifts should be studied against time in the context of language loyalty and the functions of the languages in contact. Only a study across generations can give us a quantitative index to language shift. The hypothesis that old generation tribal speakers maintain their tribal language while middle and the younger generation tribal speakers are giving up their tribal mother-tongue and shifting to Hindi is accepted greatly in the case of Oraon and Munda Community but is partially accepted in the case of the Santhali speakers and to a great extent unacceptable regarding the HO community.

The major dimensions of the study are verified. Negotiation of identities is an important feature found is Pluri-lingual conversation
in all the four communities in varying degrees. In the Oraon community this negotiation has occurred in the maximum degree, then is the case of Munda community and then Santhal. HO is the community in which negotiation has taken place in the least degree. In all the four communities, negotiation was mostly found in the younger generation, then in a lesser degree is the middle generation and in the least degree in the older generation. It was particularly they older generation who maintained the tribal mother tongue. Tribals settled in Urban locations negotiated or shifted more than the rural settlers. Tribals who were more educated or at least literate shifted or negotiated more than the illiterate who maintained their tribal mother tongue. Upper and the middle class tribals shifted more while the lower socio-economic strata better maintained their tribal mother-tongue.

Much of the Oraon/ Munda speaking area is ethnically heterogeneous as compared to Santhals and HO, which is more homogenized. The co-existence of the Oraon/ Munda community with the non-tribal population which is numerically, socially, and economically dominant, creates a multilingual milieu where these two languages cannot function as socially equal languages. Santhali and HO speakers were better guarded from identity crisis. The trend indicates that the urban tribals seldom consider it their privilege to
speak their mother tongues. On the contrary, ignorance of the tribal languages is regarded as an enhancement of status and prestige. By speaking Hindi they feel superior to other fellow-tribals who cannot speak it. A negative attitude towards language loyalty is also induced by ethnolinguistic minority status. A gradual increase in the adoption of a non-tribal language as mother tongue presents a classical case of language shift. All the four processes incorporated in the speech Accommodation Theory i.e. Similarity-Attraction Process, Social Exchange Process, Causal Attribution Process and Process of Inter-group Distinctiveness, is found to be greatly applicable to the tribal speakers of Jharkhand.

The historical, social and cultural factors, which are responsible for Negotiation of identities in plurilingual conversation is also highlighted.