CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Goa was liberated from Portuguese colonial rule on 19 December 1961. Immediately after Liberation, Goa began the process of integrating with the mainland, from which it had been cut off for over four hundred and fifty years. Goa, like any other unit of the Indian Union, had to experience the process of nation building which was couched in religious, ethnic, and linguistic nuances. While in the early years of Independence, religion posed a grave threat to the making of ‘India’, issues pertaining to language soon became a major challenge for nation building. The centrality of language to the functioning and formation of the Union was acknowledged in the politico-administrative decision, taken in 1957, of redrawing the territorial boundaries of the Indian Union on linguistic lines. Accordingly, once liberated, Goa too had to comply with the norm of linguistic states. This development brought back into focus the key role that language has played in articulating the public sphere in Goa right from its inception during Portuguese colonial rule.

Language has continued to play an integral part in defining the socio-political landscape of post colonial Goa. This fundamentality of language in chartering the social, religious, and political history of the public sphere in Goa prompted me to research the language question at the dusk of the twentieth century and dawn of the twenty-first century. This thesis addresses the specific problem of the political dimension of language use in the public sphere of Goa. My study, located at the juncture where language, politics and society intersect, attempts to highlight the varying nuances of this interface. It has sought to understand the language question in Goa, specifically after the passing of the Official Language Act on 4 February, 1987. Ordinarily this Act should have put to rest questions pertaining to language use in Goa
where language has been dominating the political landscape ever since Liberation. Interestingly, this has not happened.

My study addresses notions of literary cultures, linguistic identities and their social and political implications by locating them in the wider context of colonial domination, print production, religious advocacy, political compulsions, and the deliberations of the various elite in the public sphere in Goa. It has examined the role that language played in the public sphere of Goa, more specifically after 1987.

**POLITICS OF LANGUAGE USE**

Language is primarily a medium of expression and communication. But what it expresses and communicates goes beyond simple speech. It is inundated with symbolic power. Both primordial and instrumental components such as our identity, culture, social position, and education are all manifested in language. Languages can be a unifying, mobilising and as well as a disintegrating force. If a given language in its positive role serves as a vital instrument of social, cultural, and national integration, then conversely in its negative role, it can serve as a powerful divisive tool (Prasad 1979: 9 cited in Rodrigues 2002: 43). Language can be a source of public discontent, a pawn in the tug of domestic politics.

Questions relating to language have evoked strong emotions in India as linguistic diversity is also related to ethnic diversity. Being an element of primordial loyalty, language is a potent source of ethnification. But there is nothing inherent in the nature of language, which automatically makes it the basis for political contestations. In fact, up to the 19th century, we cannot speak of a dominant language with reference to linguistic practices in India; there is the language of ritual and religion, the language of the court and elite, the language of the home and neighbourhood (Pandit 1977). This usage of different languages for varied purposes
enabled harmony with regard to language use. But mobilisations of linguistic loyalty for political purposes are implicated in the very nature of modern democratic processes (Brass 1974 and 1994). As concluded by Kaviraj (1992 cited in Thakur 2002), they are an accompaniment to the arrival of modernity and the associated transition from fuzzy to enumerated communities.

The challenges thrown up by multilingualism in the context of modernity have led to various language movements in India. Following Chaklader (1990: 90) language movement may be defined as ‘an organised and persistent effort of a speech community to influence the development of language, and the policy and planning of the government with regard to language’. There have been a variety of language movements in India. The various language movements in post-independence India can broadly be divided into two categories: language movements from the pan Indian perspective like the Hindi anti-Hindi agitation and language movements from the regional perspective like the struggles for linguistic states. The language movements of Goa fall under the ambit of the second perspective. These movements traverse the three stages of ideology, mobilisation, and institutionalisation as conceptualised by Rao (1979: 9). The mobilisations may take both political and cultural nuances.

For Morgan (2006: 452) effective mobilisation rests on the formation of collective identity among a targeted group. To understand a movement’s success in forging such an identity, we have to consider the context that sub-national movements inhabit. Very often, the most pervasive and visible component of culture, especially where racial or physiological variation is minimum, is the linguistic practice. Morgan (2006: 454) further suggests a three-stage model for understanding mobilisations on linguistic grounds: consolidation, politicisation, and actualisation. The articulation of all these three stages takes place in what Habermas refers to as public sphere which is
a 'realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed' (Habermas 1989). The public sphere is the 'space where arguments and reasons about the shared real world and hypothetical literary world are made and contested, given and taken, in a manner which is democratic and civil. A portion of the public sphere comes into being whenever private individuals assemble to form a public body' (cited in Orisini 2002: 11).

In this study I have not engaged in a complete borrowing of Habermas' characterisation of a European bourgeois public sphere. Chatterjee (1993, cited in Mahajan 2003: 132) insists that the meaning and significance of the public sphere in India is not the same as those that has occurred in modern Europe. This is so because qualitatively different processes have taken place in the Indian subcontinent. In this thesis, I have not applied the theory of public sphere to test the empirical reality; rather I have used the term public sphere as a sensitising concept to guide analysis. More specifically, I have incorporated this concept to articulate the significance of language dynamics in post-Liberation Goa.

While developing my ideas on the public sphere, I also encountered the problem of it's multiplicity of usage in a variety of contexts. Though Habermas is credited with the first systematic analytical use of the concept, he did not create it. The idea of a public sphere or public realm has already been present in many social theories throughout the twentieth century (Peters 2001). Habermas' views on the public sphere too have undergone modifications. His systematic efforts to reconstruct an idea of the public adequate to a heterogeneous modern society began in 1962 with the publication of the 'Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere'. In a number of texts since then, he has revisited this theme to mount a contemporary defense of the notion of Public Sphere.
I now attempt to problematise the public sphere by examining the varied and at times contradictory usages of this concept.

**TOWARDS CONCEPTUAL CLARITY OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

Social scientific concepts are context specific. Mahajan (2002: 9) explains that it is by referring to the institutional and ideological practices that configure a given totality that we can understand any particular concept. She reiterates that this methodological insight is especially necessary when dealing with concepts such as public and private that have been in use for at least twenty-five centuries.

While the idea of the public and private figured prominently in the writings of Aristotle in the 4th century BC primarily in his works on *oikos* and *polis*, the modern conceptions of the same is not an extension of the perspectives that existed in pre-modern times. Since the eighteenth century, prominent thinkers like Kant, Rousseau, Hegel, Nietzsche, Tocqueville, J.S. Mill, and Tonnies began developing systematic theories on the public. The massive socio-political developments and catastrophes that Europe witnessed in the early twentieth century as well as the extraordinary social changes taking place in various parts of the world, propelled a theoretical return to the public sphere. Though a number of scholars like Raymond Williams (1971), Richard Sennet (1977), Benedict Anderson (1983), and Charles Taylor (1992) produced voluminous works on the public sphere, I will focus on the works of two scholars-Julien Freund and Jurgen Habermas- to categorise the thematic variations of the concept.

**Freund's notion of a Political Public**

Julien Freund (1965, 1978 cited in Sales 1991) sought to define the categories of private and public. He uses these categories as criterion to delimit the political realm
from the non-political (Sales 1991: 297). He makes a clear distinction between the political sphere and other social spheres:

“The true political relation is public and from this standpoint other social relations are said to be private......The private is not the individual, that is the specific relation of the individual with himself but rather all of the relations within which he is but one individual among others” (Freund 1965: 292-293).

For Freund thus the “public or the state and the individual as such rarely confront each other directly, for between them exists the private sphere which consists both of the individual’s intimate relations with others and inter individual and more impersonal relations of various associations of civil society where the dialectic of the private and the public are negotiated” (Freund 1965: 309). The public sphere for Freund thus incorporates the constitution of a political unit, the need for representation and a demand for homogenisation through law (Sales 1991: 298). Thus, Freund defines public sphere in narrow political terms.

While Freund accentuates the political connotations of the public sphere, Habermas through his work underscores the varied meanings associated with the concept in the process of tracing its evolution.

**Habermas and the Bourgeoisie Public Sphere**

The cardinal question of how to construct a viable and legitimate democratic state in Germany in the aftermath of National Socialism and the Holocaust has been the driving concern underlying Jurgen Habermas’ theoretical efforts. “The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere” offers a historical/sociological account of the emergence, transformation, and partial degeneration of the bourgeoisie public sphere. Throughout the eighteenth century, the consciousness of the emergence of a new
public was closely connected with the development of a vibrant urban culture which formed a spatial environment for the public sphere: lecture halls, parks, museums, coffee shops, and the like (Boyte 1992: 342-3). Subsequently this gave rise to the emergent infrastructure of social information like press, publishing houses, lending libraries etc. Therefore in the eighteenth century a line between state and society emerges that divided the public sphere from the private realm (Habermas 1989: 176). Because of changing conditions in production and exchange, structural changes do take place in the public sphere and Habermas’ work traces those changes.

**System and Lifeworld: From Bipolarity to Integration**

A reading of the ideas put forth by both Habermas and Freund have one thing in common: a dichotomy between the public and the private. But this bipolarity is inadequate and does not reflect reality. Habermas seeks to bring a convergence of the two seemingly distinct spheres in his “Theory of Communicative Action”. Combining two very different approaches- interpretive sociology with systems theory- Habermas proposes to conceptualise society as both system and lifeworld. The private sphere as well as public sphere is found both in the system and the lifeworld. In the system, the private sphere occupies the institutional core of the capitalist market economy, while the public sphere incorporates the state. With regard to the lifeworld, the institutional core of the private sphere is the nuclear family and that of the public sphere comprises communicative networks, including mass media. This is where the production of culture and the formation of public opinion take place.

The cultural and political public sphere interchange with the administrative system via the medium of power, and from the systemic perspective of the State, the cultural and political public spheres are seen as necessary for generating legitimation
Thus Habermas’ theory of communicative action, through the dialectics of system and lifeworld, integrates the private and public sphere.

A holistic understanding of Habermas’ public sphere also remains incomplete without a western Marxist political and intellectual context within which the Theory of the Public Sphere was introduced to the English speaking world. Broadly this analysis was dominated by the concepts of ideology and hegemony and was needed to explain the increasing stability of western democracies which were complicit with the system (Garnham 2007: 204). Political struggles shifted to the cultural sphere, where new social movements arose ‘at the seam between the lifeworld and the system (Sales 1991)’. In this new world order, a legitimacy crisis rested not on economic exploitations but on a range of cultural dissatisfactions.

It is this new left, neo-marxist context that informed me to use Habermas’ conceptualisation of the public sphere as a sensitising concept to enable me to understand the language dynamics in contemporary Goa. Habermas conceives of not one, but a multiplicity of public spheres, of which the linguistic/language public sphere occupies a place of significance.

**LANGUAGE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE**

Habermas' argument is that language itself contains norms to criticise domination and oppression and a force that could ground and promote societal democratisation. Habermas has been arguing that language and communication are central features of the human lifeworld that can resist the systemic imperatives of money and power which undermine communicative structures. According to this view, language is thus integrally related to power and is the instrument of particular social interests that construct discourses, conventions, and practices, while embedding language and communication
in untruth and domination, making it an imperfect model for rationality and democracy (Kellner 1999).

Hence, rather than conceiving of one liberal or democratic public sphere, it is more productive to theorise a multiplicity of public spheres, sometimes overlapping but also conflicting. The literary sphere in India and its transformation and growth, very often mirrors more general processes of expansion, institutionalization, and consolidation in the larger public-political sphere (Orsini 2002: 8). The public and political history of Goa is intrinsically connected with language dynamics in its various avatars.

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE, AND NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF GOA

Works such as Jose Pereira's Literary Konkani (1992) that reconstructs literary and other uses of Konkani prior to the arrival of the Portuguese indicate that though Konkani was used in land records and for devotional purposes, it did not have steady official patronage by most rulers prior to the Portuguese. Instead Marathi, Kannada, or Persian were the official languages of different feudatories that had ruled Goa before the Portuguese, and Marathi had subsequently been adopted as the language of devotional verse among upper caste Goans. The entry of the Church set off a series of linguistic changes that aided the development of Konkani, while ensuring that it would not contribute to a common literary or linguistic medium for Goan people (Pinto 2007: 83). Most literary histories of Goa acknowledge that aside from the initial publications of the missionaries, the first few centuries of Portuguese rule had a destructive impact on the development of the Konkani language (Pereira 1973 cited in Pinto 2007: 82). In 1684, the Viceroy prohibited the use of Konkani altogether as the Inquisition complained that people were clandestinely drawn back to Hindu religious practices and attributed this to
the failure to suppress Konkani. Subsequently, printing was formally banned from AD 1754 to AD 1821 in Goa.

Linguistic politics continued to be conflicted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries until the entry of Shri Vaman Varde Valaulikar, popularly called Shenoi Goembab on the literary scene in Goa. His entry heralded the so-called Konkani enlightenment. A large number of Hindu youth, inspired by Shri Goembab, set themselves out to serve the cause of Konkani, with the sole aim of giving the language it’s ‘rightful’ place in Goa (Nagvenkar 2002: 24).

Post liberation Goa has been dominated by the language controversy, which has been taking new avatars every now and then. Initially the moot questions in the realm of language use were: What is the language of the people of Goa, Konkani or Marathi? Is Konkani an independent language or is it a dialect of Marathi? Should Marathi be considered an associate official language? These and other related questions are the moot questions that have been the axial problem for ideological struggle and political praxis in more ways than one. These questions have divided the people of Goa into two ideological camps: one Konkaniivada, promoting the cause of Konkani, and the other Marathivada wanting to retain the status quo and perceived superiority of Marathi. With the declaration of Konkani as the Official Language on 4 February 1987, one phase of language movements ended. Though the movement did, in some ways reach the stage of institutionalisation, language-related contestations continued. While in the 1960s, the language movement inspired political mobilisations, the language dynamics of the 2000s were more inclined towards cultural mobilisation and conscious attempt at language development. Literary figures, editors, theatre artistes, religious leaders, and lay people alike, have
contributed towards shaping the relationship between language and the public sphere in Goa.

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The process of the constitution and consolidation of language ideology necessarily entails shifting configurations between language, identity, ideology, and politics. Language becomes a contested site where larger politics of identity unfolds itself (Thakur 2002: 6). The socially mobile and politically ambitious social groups see to it that hybrid, heteroglot and plural cultural resources of a given language are used to serve their political ends better. Thus when the non-linguistic uses of a language become widespread and open in a given socio-cultural milieu, they become issues and play categorical roles in the formation of the collective self-consciousness and political identity of the people of that milieu.

This study focussed on the nature and politics of language use in Goa after 1987. It examined the attempts at politicisation of Konkani language in the public sphere of Goa during this period. The specific research objectives of this study are:

1. to trace the development of the Konkani literary sphere in Goa especially after the Official Language Act of 1987;
2. to understand how the political management of multilingualism in India has led to the consolidation of different public spheres;
3. to examine the various nuances that the language movement assumes in the public sphere in the period after 1987; and
4. to discuss the dialectical relationship among religion, language and polity in the formation of multiple public spheres in Goa.
METHODOLOGY

I conceive of this study as an interpretive study. As is well known the methodology of social science is characterised by two distinct approaches: positivism and interpretivism. According to positivism, reality is constituted of phenomena which are causally linked to one another. What is real can only be demonstrated to be ‘real’ by reference to empirical evidence of its existence (Jayaram 1988:4). Alexander (1982: 9) opines that the positivistic persuasion has had an impoverishing effect on the sociological imagination, in both its empirical and theoretical modes. As a counter to the positivsit approach, are a range of approaches, the most common of which is the interpretive approach. At the heart of the interpretivist paradigm is the recognised necessity of attending to reflective and intersubjective nature of human experience. Sociologists like Weber, Park, Blumer and Mead as well as schools of social scientific thought such as ethnomethodology and phenomenology have benefited and contributed to the interpretive paradigm. For Weber the method of Verstehen is key to interpretive sociology. (Heap 2005: 177)

This research is influenced by the interpretive tradition. The crux of Weber’s interpretive methodology of social science is the theory of concept formation in history. A concept for Weber is a formed image of empirical reality in the mind. The formation of individual is crucial to an understanding of Verstehen. In my research, I have attempted to understand the language dynamics in Goa through the conceptualisation of the ‘public sphere.’ Habermas’ notion of public sphere is a sensitising concept whose usage has enabled me to understand the politicisation of language in post colonial Goa. In keeping with the centrality accorded to history in interpretivism, for Weber,
the main task of sociology is to provide generalisations which historians need for their explanations (1968:19-20). This emphasis on the historical component of empirical reality has guided my research as well. Though my focus of attention is the period after 1987, the different avatars of the language movements in Goa are like various points on the continuum of language politics. The colonial dictations of language policies are reflected in the post colonial linguistic practices and articulations in Goa. Hence, a mere description of the phenomena will not enable one to fully appreciate the varying nuances of the language polemics in Goa. It is only by placing the events in a complex of meanings and by linking the present movement with various other factors, will I be able to fully grasp the language situation in contemporary Goa.

In keeping with the pluralism advocated by interpretivism, I have made use of the case study method and the interview method to collect data. By using interview guides, I have gathered the narratives of the Konkani literary elite. These elite included writers, theatre artistes, language activists, as well as members of Konkani language associations. Hence by using the interpretive methodology, I have sought to understand the relationship between language and the public sphere in Goa after 1987.

My analysis has also been guided by critical theory. Critical theory, includes works of various critical thinkers like Bourdieu (1992), Foucault (1972, 1979), and Habermas (1979, 1985, 1987). Critical theory generally investigates the processes by which social inequality is produced and sustained, and the struggle to reduce inequality to bring about greater forms of social justice (Ricento 2006: 44). My study has incorporated key ideas from
critical theory like power, struggle, hegemony, ideology, resistance, colonisation and public sphere.

CHAPTERISATION SCHEME

In the first chapter, I have attempted to give an introduction to the research study. I have first attempted a conceptual clarification of the public sphere. I have problematised the public sphere to reiterate how I have used Habermas' ideas only as a sensitising concept to illuminate my research. After giving a brief background of the language politics being played out in Goa, I have enumerated the objectives of the study. I have also clarified the methodology used in my thesis.

India is a multilingual giant. Unlike some countries like the U.S., India is both demographically as well as functionally multilingual. The magnitude of multilingualism in India has made scholars wonder how communication happens and how social cohesion is maintained. But this linguistic diversity itself is not a problem, it is what we intend to do with this diversity that could be a problem. Considering the centrality of multilingualism in the varied sociolinguistic articulations, in Chapter Two, I have sought to delineate some aspects of this phenomenon. Keeping the theme of my thesis as an orientation, I have tried to delineate the context of multilingualism. I have undertaken an analysis of the shift from functional to contested multilingualism in India. I have also highlighted some of the major theoretical perspectives on contested or what Khubchandani (1983) refers to as assertive multilingualism in India. I have thus tried to link my review of literature on multilingualism to attempts at managing multilingualism in the public sphere.

One feature of the multilingual heritage of India has been the addition of languages rather than the reduction. A recurring factor in the emergence of new languages is the challenge to the existing socio political order by an emerging social
group that seeks a separate cultural, social and political identity and power. Situating itself in this context, in Chapter Three I have examined the relation between the changing nuances of the Konkani language and society of Goa. This phenomenon is a characteristic feature of linguistic plurality, not only in Goa, but India as a whole. In Chapter Three, I have also discussed the shift from functional linguistic plurality to contested multilingualism.

The literary sphere and its transformation mirrored more general processes of expansion, institutionalisation and consolidation in the larger public-political domain (Orsini 2002: 8). The object of my study is not Konkani literature in its strict sense, but the literary sphere as a whole, especially what sociologists of language call ‘institutional arrangements’, i.e. the places and mechanisms of production, transmission and fruition (Orsini 2001: 7). Institutions also create actors. The institutional spaces like press, publishing houses, literary associations direct and define the activities and positions of the linguistic elite. It is a symbiotic relation as the actors also come to the institutions bringing their own diverse background, attitude and beliefs. This two way relationship is reflected in the way in which they articulate and move about in the public sphere.

In Chapter Four, I have analysed the developments in Konkani literary sphere by explicating the various genres of Konkani print media such as film, theatre and literary associations. I have also examined the life worlds of the literary elite and the language ideologues. In this chapter, I have sought to understand how the growth, development and transformation of the various components of the literary sphere have chartered the course of Konkani language in Goa. I have also tried to look at whether Konkani’s attempts at dominance has led to subordination and contestations of other language variants.
In Chapter Five, I have examined the various issues pertaining to OLA and its implementation. Beginning by asserting the importance of language for the project of nation building, I have then tried to show how language issues in administration and governance form an integral aspect of nationism. I have then briefly sketched the official languages that have dominated the public sphere in India right since ancient times. I have argued that though in the West, the notion of official language is associated with modernity and the rise of the nation state, in India it was a necessity since millennia. This is because it was a consequence of plurilingualism. Specifically focusing on Goa, I have shown how interlinkages between the State, public sphere and civil society have contributed in addressing the questions relating to the implementation of the OLA in Goa.

Chapter Six is on the script question in Goa. The Official Language Act of Goa passed in 1987 opened up a Pandora’s Box. It made manifest, the latent script question in Goa. In Goa, Konkani is written in two scripts, Devnagari and Roman. As we have observed in Chapter Five, the Official Language Act (OLA) recognises only Konkani in Devnagari script as the official language of Goa. This decision has led to conflict among the latently factional Konkani community. Chapter Six has thus tried to understand the script controversy and its myriad implications. I have first delineated the language script relationship from various perspectives. Locating my analysis in the sociological perspective, I have then examined the script conflict that is being enacted in Goa. This controversy is in the danger of taking on a communal hue, as Hindus are usually associated with the Devnagari script and Catholics by and large identify with the Roman script, though of course there can be no strict categorisation. Is the script conflict in Goa, communal like the Hindi-Urdu controversy of North India? This is the primary point of analysis in this chapter. To substantiate my
arguments, I have taken into consideration both the actors and institutions that are involved in this controversy.

In Chapter Seven, I have sought to understand how, attempts at hegemony notwithstanding; there have been attempts at consolidation of the Konkani public sphere. This consolidation is a step towards institutionalisation of Konkani. Institutionalisation also carries questions of whether there is one public sphere or is there a presence of multiple public spheres.

The Konkani public sphere encompasses a variety of dimensions. It can be political sociological, historical and sociolinguistic. Attempts at consolidation of the Konkani public sphere have been made in each domain. Beginning with the political sociological domain, I will enumerate the efforts undertaken in each domain to consolidate the Konkani public sphere. Issues that have been discussed in this chapter include the various fallouts of standardisation, the inclusion of Konkani in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 1992, the developments of the Konkani cultural sphere in the Konkani diaspora and the movement to merge Konkani speaking areas of North coastal Karnataka with Goa. In this chapter I have thus focussed on various dimensions of language use.

The thesis concludes with Chapter Eight which attempts to summarise the central arguments of the previous seven chapters. This chapter seeks to capture systematically and comprehensively, the crucial arguments and significant nuances of the relationship between language and the public sphere in Goa.

NOTE

1. The Inquisition was established in Goa by King Joao III of Portugal in the sixteenth century on the recommendation of the Jesuit Francis Xavier who is today popularly revered as the patron saint of Goa. Introduced in 1546,
it was officially withdrawn in 1812. The writ of the inquisition was limited to only to those territories conquered in the first phase of Portuguese colonial rule.

Aimed at sharpening the distinction between converts and non converts, it sought to segregate the converts from the rest of the populace. Equating religion with culture, it tried to lusitanise the converts in Goa. One important tool of lusitanisation was language. Through various edicts, the inquisition discouraged the use of Konkani in Goa.