CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION
Language being a component of the whole complex of factors that together constitute the primordial collectivities there is a close connection between language and identity. This identification, along with the concept of the right to self-determination has gained wide acceptance as the basis for region and state formation especially in the years following the French Revolution till almost the middle of the present century. If the break-up of the erstwhile Soviet Union into its component nationalities as also the unification of Germany is taken into account, then sounds it sound to be an ongoing process.

Though linguistic nationalism may be a cherished ideal, it must be accepted that it is not always possible or practicable for every small linguistic group to have a separate nation or administrative unit to itself. This would give rise to very small nation states, which would neither be capable of their own defense, nor be economically viable. Thus, they often form parts of a larger territorial-administrative set up. The course of history, conquests and migrations have often caused the formation of pockets
within larger more homogeneous linguistic areas. Moreover, this is a continuous process and thus requires a system flexible enough to accommodate the changing demographic picture of any given area.

Multilingualism is a fact in the life of most nations, though the degree of heterogeneity may vary from one nation to another. Strictly speaking, there is no unilingual nation. The germs of linguistic conflict are inherent in most multilingual situations. A study of the spatial complexities of individual cases brings out the specific factors responsible, the background, the magnitude and the effects of such conflict. In the case of a conflict situation which has been effectively contained, an insight into the policy decisions would help in estimating the use of similar measures in other conflict situations and would also enrich the sphere of conflict management.

The concepts of 'nationalism' and 'nationinism' are useful in analysing the genesis of conflict. Nationalism is a complex combination of all those factors that finally results in group identification. Apart from the primordial collectivities of shared history, common beliefs, race, religion and of course language as also common aspirations, there might be a consciousness of difference from other
groups, or a professed distinctiveness. Such a group may or may not be in possession of a specified territory. In the event of their non-possession of a separate territorial unit, there always remains the potential for demand of the same and thus the seeds of conflict are present. Moreover, it is expected that the dominant group is the existing setup is most likely to oppose such a demand.

Nationism or the other hand, is concerned with the more pragmatic aspects of governing. A nation may be constituted of multiple 'nationalities' with differing aspirations, but it is the politico-administrative setup which holds them together by means of a workable formula.

It is in this context that language policy needs to be studied. Language policy at the national level may overlook the literary merits of any given language and focus more attention on its communicative capability, its learnability as also its acceptance among a sizable majority of the population. The other field in which language policy plays a significant role is in the choice of medium for educational purposes. Moreover for an effective human resources development programme, steps must be taken for effective coordination of the local policy, the regional policy the national policy and the language policy.
There are three major features of any successful language policy. These are the basic nature which would include representativeness, distinctiveness, competitiveness, cohesiveness, dynamism, pragmatism and innovativeness. The basic objectives include, communication, administration, education and training, creativity and enrichment. For the effective implementation of any given language policy, measures must be taken for its promotion. Concessions may be required in certain cases.

In analysing, instances of multilingualism from different continents, it was seen that spatial and demographic complexities have given rise to conflict situations all over the world, irrespective of country size or level of development. The causal factors may be different and the magnitude may vary, but their existence cannot be denied.

In Europe, the course of history, break-up of large empires comprised of various nationalities, arbitrary awards of territory following major wars etc. have all been responsible for a complex linguistic and social mosaic which holds within itself the seeds of conflict. In Belgium, the precarious balance between the Dutch speaking Flemish in the
northern part and the French speaking wallons in the southern part is painstakingly maintained. They have almost divided the country into two halves. Brussels is a French dominated city in the Dutch region. Whereas the French have pride of linguistic and cultural superiority, the Dutch have strength of numbers. The fact that these linguistic groups have affinities across the border, complicates the situation. In Spain, the conflict is between the speakers of Catalan, Castilian and the militant Basque.

The break-up of the erstwhile Soviet Union has been attributed at least in part of the existence of numerous language based nationalities, who had been clubbed together without any homogeneous feeling. The professed Soviet policy of equal status to all languages petered out in the face of administrative difficulties.

The situations encountered in the North American continent are consequences of migrations of a large number of people from different countries of Europe who spoke different languages. In Canada, the main protagonists of the language conflict are the French who are settled in and around Quebec and the English who far outnumber them in the whole of Canada. The French resist assimilation and choose to maintain their separate identity with the help of
stringent language legislation against the onslaught of economic and political domination by the English. Thus bilingualism is entrenched in the Canadian political and social structure.

In most of the African countries which have attained independence at a comparatively recent date, the conflict derives from the idealistic aims of promoting the native language (which often suffers from lack of standardization) and the pragmatic benefits of continuing the colonial language for wider communication. In this case the conflict is in the sphere of policy formulation.

In Asia, history and the colonial legacy have in many cases resulted in the forced co-existence of different linguistic and ethnic groups. This is observed in India, Pakistan and also some of the countries of South East Asia. Separation resulted when the Bengali speaking Bangladesh (erstwhile East Pakistan) refused to acknowledge the overlordship of their Urdu speaking masters in Islamabad. India has witnessed intense linguistic tensions in the pre and post-independence periods.
Linguistic Conflict in India

It is seen that linguistic conflict in India is a comparatively recent phenomenon and does not go back to more than 100 to 125 years in history. A large number of them have only been manifest after independence. The controversy regarding the medium of instruction in school education in the first half of the nineteenth century can also be perceived as an Oriental versus Occidental controversy. It died with Macaulay's overwhelming support for English over the vernacular or classical languages of India in 1835. The Hindi-Urdu problem too was more or less solved with the partitioning of the country into Pakistan and India.

Though the roots of Bengali dominance in Assam can be traced back to the 1830s, the problem acquired major dimensions only after independence, in the late fifties and early sixties as also the early eighties of the present century. The language problem in the Punjab was more or less solved by the formation of a separate Punjab state.

The genesis of the anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu can be found in the social history of the region, further back in history, when the Aryans from the north, especially the Brahmins, settled in the south and started dominating
the social and cultural fabric of the region. This later culminated in the emergence of separate Aryan and Dravidian identities and of Aryan-Brahmin domination of the Dravidians.

Certain causal factors have been identified which have given rise to situations of conflict. The Linguistic Reorganization of States, paved the way for language based regionalism demands. A pertinent example would be that of Gorkhaland with Nepali as the language. Over the years, migrations have been responsible for the formation of sizable minorities in many states. And this has at times given rise to conflict. The migrants have often dominated the economic and cultural landscape of the region and appropriated a major share of the regional resources at their disposal. The result has often been a nativist movement as was seen in the case of Assam. Arbitrary divisions created during the Reorganization of States on a linguistic basis holds the potential for conflict. The region identified as Jharkhand with it distinctive linguistic, cultural, social and economic structure forms parts of four different states, namely Bihar, Orissa, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh.
The Brahmin domination of the Dravidians in the socio-cultural set up of Tamil Nadu had been an accepted fact for centuries. Under the impact of western ideas and learning a social-consciousness dawned in the early decades of the twentieth century which questioned the ritual and social hegemony of the Brahmins. The anti-Hindi agitations of 1937 and 1965 were direct outcomes of this changed attitude.

Economic factors also play an important role in conflict generation, especially when language proficiency gets linked to employment opportunities in the public sector. The anti-Hindi agitations in Tamil Nadu in 1965 and the anti-Bengali stand of the Assamese in the 1950s prior to Assamese gaining sole official language status are notable examples. The economic domination of the Tamils in Bombay city gave rise to a nativist movement in the form of the Shiv-Sena.

The religious factor has been responsible for the Hindi-Urdu conflicts prior to independence. It has been pointed out that Hindi and Urdu are two versions of the same language, one Sanskritized and the other Persianized. Their basic syntax and grammar is the same. It was the religious/communal colouring that attributed separate status
to these languages for religious-linguistic identification. Similarly Sikhism played a major role in the formation of Punjab. In the 1994, linguistic riots in Karnataka, Urdu again acquired a communal colouring.

Linguistic chauvinism during the late forties was responsible for the imposition of Hindi as sole official language on the non-Hindi speaking regions of the country. This later gave rise to protests chiefly from the southern states as also from West Bengal when the time of changeover to Hindi came in 1965.

Lack of dominance of a particular language in it specified territory has also generated tensions. The Gokak Movement in Karnataka aimed at giving sole-first language status to Kannada in school education. Even the violence in 1994 over the newscast in Urdu was seen as an usurpation of the prime time allotted for Kannada programmes.

Non-inclusion of any language in the Eighth Schedule means lack of privileges. Thus many groups seek recognition of their language though listing in the Eighth Schedule. This was one of the demands of the Gorkhaland agitation.

The magnitude of these conflicts have varied. Whereas those of Assam, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka had resulted in
violence and widespread destruction, the demands for the recognition of Bhojpuri have been comparatively mild.

The effects of linguistic conflict in India have been manifold. An extreme case would be that of secession. Though as yet there is no example of language-based secession in the Indian context, the cause of 'Dravidnad' had been espoused during the anti-Hindi agitations of 1937 in Tamil Nadu. Dravidnad would be a sovereign state comprising of the four southern states. A petition to this effect had also been submitted to Sir Stafford Cripps.

Of a slightly lesser magnitude is balkanization and disruption of the existing territorial-administrative set up. It is felt that the Asamese opposition to Bengali domination, triggered off a chain reaction where the different ethnic groups of the north-east questioned the hegemony of the Assamese themselves. The final outcome was disintegration of the region into a number of small states.

Peripheral tensions have been rife when linguistic groups in the peripheral areas have perceived their aspirations to be different from the language group that constitutes the core. This results in a disturbance of the existing balance. The case of Gorkhaland is representative of this.
Inter-state tensions occur when linguistic pockets are found near the border of two states. Both these states consider it their right to have control over these. This situation is met with, along the Karnataka-Maharashtra border.

Linguistic groups resident in one state may retain their loyalties for their home states, thus resisting proper assimilation. Moreover, at times, economic, political, communal and other interests get legitimacy if language can be fitted into the overall picture.

**Linguistic Conflict in Switzerland**

The nature of linguistic conflicts met with in Switzerland is very different from those of India. To begin with, the roots of these conflicts go deep in history. The German-French divide is older than the Confederation itself. The slow death that Romansch has been undergoing can be traced back to more than 500 years. It has always shown signs of structural weakness and could not stand up to the onslaught of more compact and modern languages like German or Italian. The Jura case has been a prickly question right since the time the region was given to Berne as an award by
the Congress of Vienna in 1815. The Ticino problem is more contemporary as migration into this region is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The factors responsible for these conflicts are more easily identifiable. In the Jura, the conflict was along linguistic and religious lines. Jura is mainly French speaking and Catholic, whereas Berne is German speaking and Protestant. However the linguistic and religious/sectarian lines do not exactly coincide. This complicated the problem. In the case of Ticino it was rampant foreign immigration and economic domination that threatened the traditional culture and position of the Italians in their designated canton.

Romansch has been fighting a losing battle because of its very low numerical strength. It also suffers from lack of standardization.

The French dislike of learning German has been attributed to traditional, cultural and linguistic chauvinism of the French. However in full fairness it should be accepted that as there are quite a few varieties of Swiss-German one is at a loss to decide which variety needs to be learnt.

The magnitude of these conflicts vary between moderate and weak. Jura may be considered moderate in intensity as
compared to India. While the cases of German-French and Romansch are definitely weak, Ticino comes in somewhere between moderate and weak.

The steps for solution of these problems were also immediate. Thus they did not acquire major dimensions. Referendum, plebiscite and goodwill on the part of the German majority solved the Jura problem. Romansch was given national language status and land legislation in Ticino checked the further deterioration of the situation.

**Language Policies - India**

As in the case of genesis of language conflicts, so also in the case of language policy certain developments in the pre-independence period, were responsible for the shaping of this policy. The basic features of the language policy can be found in the Indian Constitution. Articles 343-351 deal specifically with the languages to be used for administrative and official purposes. Apart from mentioning that Hindi will be the sole official language of India for centre-state and inter-state communications, it delineates measures for its promotion. The use of regional languages for inter-state communications is also mentioned. There is provision for the appointment of an Official Language
Commission and Parliamentary Committees to make suggestions for the promotion of the official language after ascertaining its current status. To safeguard the rights of linguistic minorities there will be a Special Officer who will report to the President in this regard.

The Eighth Schedule was initially a list of 14 languages which have been called regional languages elsewhere. Sindhi was included in 1967 and Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali in 1992. The final tally is 18. However, there are certain discrepancies in the choice of languages.

Articles 29 and 30 of the constitution deal with special provisions for linguistic & religious minorities, for the upkeep of their language, culture etc. by which they are allowed to set up schools and other institutions.

Initially English was supposed to be totally replaced by Hindi within a period of 15 years from the date of commencement of the Constitution. This provision had to be modified in the wake of anti-Hindi agitations in the south around 1965 and as it now stands, English can go on indefinitely as the language for official communication alongside Hindi.
In the sphere of education, the 'three language formula' was espoused. By this, the languages to be the learnt would be regional language, English, and Hindi or any other modern Indian language.

Language Policies - Switzerland

The language policy of Switzerland reflects the basic nature of the Confederation, especially its decentralized structure. Article 116 of the Federal Constitution states that German, French, Italian and Romansch are the national languages of Switzerland and German, French and Italian are the official languages of the country. Article 107 mentions the languages to be used in the Federal Tribunal.

The principle of cantonal autonomy is exhibited in the spheres of languages planning, choice of official language/languages of the canton, medium of instruction in education, etc. The territorial principle is applied for both educational and administrative purposes. Instruction in the cantonal schools is in the official language of the canton. Thus, children of migrants get assimilated into the cultural and linguistic milieu of the region. For administrative purposes, residents generally communicate
with cantonal authorities in the official language of the canton.

Multilingualism is encouraged in Switzerland. Most of the middle-level government jobs in the Federal administration require proficiency in at least two of the official languages. The top posts in the army and Federal administration require proficiency in all the official languages. The Constitution puts a three language proficiency requirement for judges of the Federal Tribunal. In the Federal Legislative Assembly there is a system of linguistic representation also. Thus for every five representatives of German, there will be generally two, at least one of French and one of Italian. The Federal Government communicates with the cantons in the official language of the canton.

Thus it may be said that in language planning Switzerland follows a policy of non-imposition (except through the principle of territoriality), but encourages multilingualism. Equal status is accorded to all its languages (except Romansch which is spoken by only 0.9% of the population).
Switzerland and India - A Comparative Estimate

In comparing two multilingual countries, Switzerland and India some major differences were found in the types of conflict, the means of their resolution and the overall considerations guiding the language policies. An estimate is attempted here of comparable situations.

Perhaps in no other country in the world is the territory divided into administrative units on the basis of language as a conscious endeavour or to give shape to a professed policy. In such countries where language based division exists, it is generally an outcome of historical factors. Switzerland has unilingual and bilingual cantons, these cantons consciously protect their language rights, but their creation was never conscious. Switzerland took final shape with different unilingual cantons joining at different periods of history. Moreover no attempt was ever made to separate the bilingual cantons into unilingual ones though the dividing line between linguistic groups in these cantons is quite sharp and well-defined in most cases.

Theoretically, in a situation like the one encountered in India, the possibility of further division is ever present. With a variety of push and pull factors leading to
further migrations, the danger of nativist movements always lurk. In Switzerland, people may migrate from one canton to another but their languages do not migrate with them, at least not for educational and administrative purposes. Migrants must learn the language of their canton of domicile.

In attempting to protect and uphold the rights of linguistic minorities, the Indian Constitution allows schools and other educational institutions to be set up by these groups. Apart from coming in the way of linguistic assimilation, the heterogeneity is sought to be perpetuated. Moreover, educational standards are likely to vary. For example, most of the schools run by missionaries are affiliated to the CBSE or the ICSE, while the regional language schools are generally affiliated to the State Education Boards. In Switzerland, most of the schools are run by the cantonal authorities. The medium of instruction is generally the official language of the canton. Thus, there is a certain uniformity. Thus, the children of migrants get assimilated even if the first-generation migrants may find it difficult to do so.

In Switzerland, education is solely under cantonal jurisdiction whereas in India it is a subject in the
Concurrent List. Thus both Union and states may legislate. Despite a commendable flexibility, confusion may result in certain cases.

Linguistic proficiency in at least two languages is a prerequisite for certain jobs in Switzerland. A three language proficiency is required for higher posts in the Federal Tribunal. There is no language imposition in the shape of a sole official language, but incentives are given for acquiring linguistic proficiency. In India, the southern states saw the changeover to Hindi as a definite imposition.

Though all the official languages of Switzerland, German, French and Italian are international languages the learning of other international languages is encouraged. English is fast becoming popular. In India due to colonial prejudice the attempt is to consciously ignore its importance, at least as far as policy matters is concerned. Though it has been retained as an associate, language it does not find listing in the Eighth Schedule. The case for linguistic regionalization was espoused in India for mass-participation in the democratic process but the masses from the non-Hindi regions have not even today become proficient in the official variety of the language which aimed at
becoming the sole official language. In states like Tamil Nadu it is openly denounced. Instead of promoting integration, its imposition triggered of an opposite reaction.

Romansch which has only 0.9 per cent of speakers, has been given the status of a national language in Switzerland. Special steps have been taken for its promotion. In India, a language like Santhali with a large number of speakers has not found place in the Eighth Schedule.

Switzerland gives equal official language status to German French and Italian, though their speakers are in the proportion 73.6 : 20 : 4.5. In India, Hindi was declared as the sole official language only on the basis of its numerical strength (that too incorrectly projected) regardless of the wishes of sizable non-Hindi speaking minorities.

Even in the case of a separatist conflict as evidenced in the Jura, neither the whole country nor the Federal Government could participate in the referendum. Only the affected regions went through the plebiscites. The result was separation yet the dominant German majority never came in the way. In India, the Central and State Governments
mediate and a partial solution is arrived at through concessions. Generally no equivalent of a referendum or plebiscite takes place.

The Specific Problems of India

There are certain problems typical of the Indian situation which do not find a parallel in Switzerland. Nevertheless they are analysed here to give a clearer picture of what gives rise to situations of conflict.

English in the Constitution was retained only as a transitional language, yet its importance contrary to expectations has increased, perhaps not at the mass literacy level, but in educational, commercial and elite circles. The chances that it can be replaced in these fields by Hindi remains a distant dream if not an impossibility. Given an option, people from non-Hindi regions would prefer to learn English as compared to Hindi as a symbol of status and for economic gains.

The fact that two Commissions (the Dar Commission and the JVP Committee) were set up to go into the question of feasibility of linguistic states and despite a negative verdict in both cases linguistic reorganisation was carried out. This makes a farce of expert bodies!
Most linguists are of the opinion that Urdu and Hindi are two versions of the same language, one Persianised, the other Sanskritized. In depicting them as separate languages in the Eighth Schedule, it will leave the ground open for more language based communal tensions.

The listing of languages in the Eighth Schedule is arbitrary. Urdu and Sindhi though gives as regional language status have no corresponding territory, whereas Kashmiri spoken extensively in Kashmir does not have official language status in that state. Urdu was closed as a official language for Kashmir for political reasons. A widely understood language like English is not included! As a policy of appeasement is favoured on very many occasions, this list is liable to perpetual increase. There is no well-defined criteria for inclusion or non-inclusion of any language.

In education, the 'three language formula' was attempted. However if the case of the tribals is considered, their mother tongue is rarely the same as the regional language. For higher education they must learn four languages-mother tongue, regional language, Hindi and English. On the other hand, in the case of the Hindi
speaking region, the third prescribed language—a modern Indian language is rarely studied as it has minimal benefits. Another deficiency in the system is that foreign languages are rarely taught except in some elite schools.

This account is not to portray that everything related to language planning in Switzerland is better and can be an object lesson to planners and policy makers in India. Though both the countries are multilingual, there are inherent differences.

The course of history has been different for both the countries. The units that joined the Swiss Confederation were already full-fledged territorial-cultural units, India prior to British rule was a congregation of numerous small and big kingdoms, hardly a nation. The language based division seemed the most viable option for the full flowering of a homogeneous groups' ideals and aspirations. Moreover in the democratic set up, mass participation was envisaged and this could be possible only when the common man also understood and participated in the process. This, was exactly the perception of the Indian leadership in the 1950's.

India has nearly two hundred languages as projected by many studies. Even if only the regional, languages were
sought to be given equal official status as is encountered in Switzerland, it would hinder communication and smooth administration, besides draining the exchequer, with extensive translations. A satisfactory and idealistic situation could be a far cry.

The smoothness with which the multilingual situation in Switzerland functions, must also be greatly attributed to majority goodwill where there is no form of any imposition on the minority. Such a situation is distant dream in a nation like India, which is still passing through the traumatic experiences of development and social change.