A REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON LINGUISTIC MINORITIES

Prof. Rajesh Sachdeva

The workshop on Linguistic Minorities was organized by the **Government of India, National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs** in collaboration with **Central Institute of Indian Languages, Ministry of Human Resource Development** at Mysore on the 27th and 28th March 2006. While the members of the commission and its team were present on the first day, several invited speakers and members of the CIIL faculty also met on the 28th to dwell further on the issues that had surfaced on the 27th and also provide an opportunity to others to table their own viewpoints and experience. This report is not an attempt to resurrect the entire event with its varied discourses, although some record is maintained of chronology of speakers. It focuses more on comments /observations made in response to the **terms of reference of the commission** and only partly on some of the other views expressed. It also places for consideration some recommendations related to the possible follow up.

82 people participated in the event (See Appendix – 1 for the list of participants and programme)

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

The terms of reference of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities were:

(a) *To suggest criteria for identification of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities.*
(b) *To recommend measures for welfare of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities, including reservation in education and government employment.*
(c) *To suggest the necessary constitutional, legal and administrative modalities, as required for the implementation of their recommendations:*
(d) *To give their views in respect of status/ case for reservation for those who were converts among the Scheduled Caste to other Religions*

Since the linguistic minorities rather than religious minorities were the focus, the objectives of the workshop were related to those issues and spelt out as:

1. *To present the status of linguistic minorities in the country as a whole and in different states and policies of the Central and State governments towards them.*
2. *The problems of linguistic minorities e.g. ethnic movements, migration etc.,*
3. *To explore the Relationship between language and socio-economic backwardness and state if language could be a determinant of socio-economic backwardness*
4. *To consider the need for evolving a criteria for identifying backwards amongst linguistic minorities.*
5. *To prepare a brief report on the recommendations to be included for initiating action.*

To meet some of these objectives, a set of background papers was prepared and circulated which gave detailed information about the minor and minority languages of India and their status, besides providing materials on other issues related to linguistic minorities.

Although most of the speakers were expected to keep the spirit of dialogue in their mind and direct their discourse on the terms of reference, some of them chose to debate the issue in their own terms, questioned the ideas implicit in the terms and made some comments /observations on them. Even while writing down the report, one has experienced a dilemma: should one remain true to the text and spirit of the multidimensional discourse as it was, admittedly, tangential at times? Or, should one prune it down to suit only the terms of reference even at the risk of inviting a back-lash from participants on distortion of views - using the content of one to suit the intent of the other! We don't think everyone will be fully satisfied for the report has adopted a sort of middle path and not made much effort to remain focused only on the terms of reference. Instead we have let freedom of expression with diversity of views to remain the guiding principle. However, everyone agreed the exercise was well-intentioned and bound to be of use to the public at large.

Proceedings of the day 1:

Right at the outset **Prof. R. Sachdeva**, CIIL, Coordinator for the programme welcomed the esteemed members of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities and all the distinguished participants that

included representatives of minority communities from different parts of the country, special invitees, faculty members from CIIL and scholars from the University of Mysore and Regional Institute of Education. He also introduced the distinguished speakers who were to make their presentations on that day and briefly dwelt on some of the issues/themes that were likely to crop up keeping in mind the terms of reference of the commission. He reaffirmed that the workshop was not a discourse on language per se but an exercise in the quest for social justice, where the sociolinguistic contexts of minorities do figure, so that the more deserving cases from among the linguistic minorities could be considered in the scheme of affirmative welfare measures spelt out by the commission. He reiterated CIIL was committed to the cause of smaller and lesser known speech communities as equal partners in nation building for which decisions of language policy and planning could have a real impact.

Smt. Asha Das, Member Secretary, **National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities [NCRLM],** spelt out the terms of reference of the commission [listed above] and also pointed out that the primary objective of this exercise was to ensure that the efforts of the government directed at provision of opportunities actually reached all those sections of the society that are socially and economically backward among the linguistic and religious minorities and who may feel left out of the mainstream. She wanted the different experts who were aware of the plight of the linguistic minorities to present their views on whether language could be used as a determining factor in identifying backward sections. She emphasized that the primary objective was the development of people rather than development of their languages, and the issue of developing languages could only be indirectly linked to it.

Sri Ranganath Misra, Honorable Chairman, NCRLM, expressed that the commission had come to observe and to listen to the voices of the minorities rather than to speak to them. He hoped different panelists/speakers would keep in mind the terms of reference spelt out by the Commission and also the constitutional vision of **one state and many languages in which social justice will be meted out to all groups and sections of the people for the creation of an egalitarian society**.

Dr. Anil Wilson, Member, NCRLM, felt that the entire endeavour was an exercise in empowerment of the lesser-known people of this country who were presently deprived and marginalized. He felt that each Indian had the right to express in his or her own language and to expect communication and information as a pre-requisite for empowerment.

Prof. Ram Dayal Munda, Former Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University was invited to initiate the discourse on behalf of the Linguistic Minorities. He

began in the spirit of dialogue by questioning the way a minority speaker was being figured out in public discourse as an object of pity- *bechara*- partly because of paucity of numbers, where as the populations involved were rather sizable and had land holdings and territorial rights right across the map of the country. He felt that the term Linguistic Minority was a construct, a fall out of the reorganization of states on linguistic lines He pointed out that all the states were carved out for the majorities and no small language had been given the same territorial rights. He felt that the celebration of diversity was not so much a matter of awakening or soul stirring but of surfacing of guilt and also a matter of political expediency. He seriously questioned the pragmatic agenda of the NCRLM and the concept of mainstream which implicitly encouraged the minorities to abandon their own cultural roots. He advised down flow of opportunities in to side streams-the tributaries- that will not disrupt traditional life. He questioned the scheme of categorization in dealing with tribal communities as far as their belief systems were concerned. He gave the example of several tribal communities being labeled as Hindu although they were rather different in their orientation to origins and history and claimed no linkages with the great Hindu mythologies or caste system. He was against both conversion and subversion of the tribal people's history and culture. He felt that the Hindu majority instead of accepting and respecting the distinctness of the others wanted to convert the tribes as castes and relegate them to the lowest rung of social hierarchy. He rejected this form of mainstreaming which had become a possible cause of widespread unrest among many of the tribals and led to conversion to Christianity. He also felt that the education system which did not accord central role to the child's tribal mother tongue and had no room for learner-centered communication was bound to alienate the child further. He cautioned the people that neglecting the tribals and their aspirations would only result in further violent ethnic movements, some of which had already gathered steam in many parts of the country. He felt that the discontent was spreading at the very base of the political order for the people with perennial rights –the *adivasi*- were being taken for granted, rather than as partners, and inequity was being created and perpetuated in the emerging order. Minorities must become an area of major concern in conscientious nation building or else the whole effort would become an exercise in futility.

Dr. Tabu Taid, Former Director, School Education of Assam dwelt on the plight of linguistic minorities in Assam with special reference to the tribal communities. He pointed out that as many as 23 tribal communities had been recognized in Assam, but some societal debate was still on regarding the nomenclature and categorization. There was also a problem about the same community being recognized in one state but not in the other [as for example Mising is recognized in Assam but not in neighbouring contiguous belt in Arunachal]. He stressed the fact that the safeguards provided for the minorities

in the constitution were extremely important and aimed at building a welfare society with a just egalitarian order. However, in implementation, there was still plenty of scope for improvement. There was also a huge backlog in the filling up of posts earmarked for these communities and special drives were launched every now and then for filling up the same, often with no fruitful results. The main thing was to ensure that the communities are made worthy and the people prepared for the task, which was possible only through quality education. He felt that the English medium schools were viewed as providing better quality and therefore the policy of providing mother tongue education should be not merely on emotional grounds but be better contextualized. While there was a need to nurture the tribal child in his or her language, the quality issue must remain in focus as also the issue of empowerment in terms of making the community competent to take up the jobs marked for them. Pedagogy should be socially realistic and economically rewarding. He pointed out that Assam was experimenting with provision of mother tongue as a subject in primary level and some 8 or 9 languages had figured in that list but most of the schools continued to remain backward and failed to provide quality education. His feeling was that many Bodo medium schools had not produced encouraging results and the English medium schools were much more in public demand.

Prof. Mohd. Zaman Azurdah, Kashmir University, fellow with CIIL, congratulated Prof. Munda and Prof. Taid for raising substantive issues in their presentations. He felt that languages should not be associated with religion for the same language is spoken by different religious communities. He also felt that quality of education is the supreme issue and sentimental ideas of mother tongue education would prevent social mobility and would hinder growth. Mother tongue education should only be restricted to teaching of language as a subject where as the more useful language[s] should also be more used as medium.

Prof. Imtiaz Hasnain, of Aligrah Muslim University presented the complex case of Urdu speech community.

"The Urdu speaking population is spread all over the country, and like any other minority it epitomizes an essence of collective discrimination and suffers from the sense of victimization on account of language. I speak about Urdu not just because it is my mother tongue, but also because it occupies unique position, decidedly unusual, in the linguistic scenario. Even if Urdu is looked at in isolation, there is always a metaphysical presence of Hindi, which inevitably makes any discussion on Urdu to be looked at in relation with each other".

He said that although language may not be a determinant of socio-economic backwardness or there may not be direct correlation between

religiousness backwardness and corresponding linguistic backwardness, States' discriminatory policies vis a vis Urdu language had been one of the major reasons for Muslim educational backwardness, particularly in North India.

He pointed out that over two decades ago Dr. Gopal Singh's report on the status of religious minorities had clearly stated that the Muslim population was among the most backward in socio-economic terms. He felt the root cause was poor education. One of the factors could be traced to the neglect of the Urdu language too, for even in states like Uttar Pradesh, Urdu was not the preferred medium. The lack of support from the majority led government had also led to lack of support from the community in a way. The association of Urdu as a language, primarily of the Muslims alone, rather than as the symbol of a secular composite culture was an unfortunate political construct. Urdu had also become a stateless MINORITY language and the sole official language of only Jammu and Kashmir, where it was actually not the mother tongue. In Bihar and U.P it was the associate official language as also in parts of Andhra Pradesh. He made several recommendations for minorities in general and Urdu in particular.

Shri Kiremwati Ao, former Pro- Vice- Chancellor of NEHU at Nagaland campus, Kohima presented the case from the view point of Nagaland, where all communities are linguistic minorities for there is no principal language and English is the sole official state language [the only state to have *legislated* the official status of English although in *de facto* terms it is also the official language in some others]. He pointed out that the Nagas had become socially forward with a fair amount of literacy but had not grown economically to the same extent. He pointed out that the state policy had been egalitarian in spirit and all communities irrespective of size had access to their own languages in written form in the domain of literacy, church and formal education. However many of the languages were still underdeveloped and the choice of English as the official language had resulted in greater attention to its acquisition. There was need to strengthen education along the lines of three language formula where Hindi and English are taught along with the tribal mother tongues. Opportunity for linguistic minorities to develop their languages must be given for presently only Tenyidie [literary Angami] was moving towards that path with Ao, Sema and Lotha trailing behind and the other were even more removed. The issue of script reform along scientific lines, as recommended at times by linguists-including CIIL, would work only if the community was consulted and convinced that it would not disrupt existing literacy practices that had worked successfully in the past. Language-which is the essence of human spirit- should be delinked from religion and seen in its own terms.

Prof. S.S. Bhattacharya [retired], **Language Division of the Census of India**, Kolkata gave a detailed account of the census operations in collection of

information on languages spoken, the definitions of mother tongue, the process of rationalization of returns and the final categorization. He stated that since community is defined in terms of language/tribe/caste it is important to understand the basic processes in naming for this is an important part of identification of linguistic minorities. It should be known that over 10,400 names were returned as mother tongues but after rigorous scrutiny and rationalization a master list of 3,372 languages was prepared of which 1576 are more or less classified but 1796 [belonging to a very small population] remain unclassified. Out of the 1576 classified mother tongues, as decided in 1971, only those mother tongues spoken by more than 10,000 were listed resulting in 216 such mother tongues, which were further classified as belonging to 114 languages. Thus the 18 scheduled languages of 1991 [which are now 22] represented 85 mother tongues with Hindi having over half of them under its fold. The modus operandi involved in transition from raw returns to rationalized mother tongues and classified langues points out that along with scientific linguistic criteria of classification, social and political pressures are also at work and some people may rightly feel that they have been wrongly classified. We need to keep the state profile as well as the national profile in mind while dealing with minority matters. He also presented multilingual profiles of different states. He pointed out that since census also had some indices of development and since economic surveys and educational surveys were conducted, research projects relating languages with socio-economic backwardness could be prepared in time to come.

Dr. Mohan Pai presented the case of Konkani as a linguistic minority which is not socially or economically backward nor is it seeking reservations in any government jobs on account of minority status, but which has had problems of lack of support from the state government in matters of language education. He felt that the state recognized only religious minorities and offered them help but not to linguistic minorities. Also the demand to use devnagari script in texts favored by one of the sections was resented by the government which stipulated the use of Kannada script only. The result was a division of the linguistic minority and promotion of language had suffered. He appealed to the NCRLM to sensitize the state governments to treat linguistic minorities with dignity and not to discriminate.

Dr. Gananath Shetty presented the case of harmony between majority Kannada and minority Tulu, where the Tulu community had whole heartedly accepted the Kannada language as its cultural language and accepted Kannada script for its development but was still seeking recognition as a separate language in the eighth schedule as it was developed enough to be taught in University level. However he admitted that no move was on to teach Tulu at primary level.

Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri spelt out the line of affirmative action in the domain of education that could be taken in addressing the problems of linguistic minorities. He felt that although several participants had presented their view-points and experiences as minority speakers in different contexts, and without always sticking to the terms of reference, they had not deviated from the coordinates of the grand discourse on justice for the cause of minorities and that in contemplating affirmative action we had to listen to these voices as our own. He strongly felt that we need to understand the nature of language, the difficulties involved in separating varieties, and their role in constructing the knowledge that we have. He stressed that we need to appreciate the multilinguality in our every day life by virtue of which many of our children may have acquired several languages as their mother tongue [s]—the seeds of separatism or identity politics and division may not have been sown then. To understand minority matters we need to have sound theories of language, of pedagogy and of classroom interaction in all its complexity. He informed that the position paper prepared by the NCERT *On the Teaching of Indian Languages* [of which Prof. Agnihotri was the chairman and Prof. Sachdeva a member] covered many of these issues. There was a growing realization in informed circles that the children's languages are resources and we need to involve them rather than exclude and insult those languages.

He emphasized that language could be a variable in determining backwardness if it is a subject of collective discrimination. Language could also be related to one's growth for there is ample evidence to show how multilingualism helps cognitive growth and raises scholastic achievements. There was need to promote multilingualism and support all languages so that they are in a position to benefit from technological advancements that have reached their doorstep. The commission could recommend creation of more such opportunities.

The second day's proceedings-28th March:

Prof. R. Sachdeva again welcomed the participants and briefly dwelt on the terms of reference. He also thanked the Commission for providing the participants an opportunity for meaningful interaction on socially relevant issues. He invited Prof. Agnihotri to chair the session, who in turn asked different people to feel free to speak out and articulate their own view-points.

Shri R.P. Deuri presented the case of the Deuri tribe in Assam. He felt it was an endangered language and the community was awaiting affirmative action from all quarters. He was worried about the steps taken by the

government in identification of the tribe and categorization of the Deuri people along with Sutiya. The two communities were not one-as made out even in the Census- for the Deuri spoke and maintained their Tibeto –Burman language to a large extent where as the Sutiya spoke only Assamese and had no tribal cultural features too. He saw in this move a sinister design to pass off the benefits ear marked for Deuri to the Sutiya and warned of serious consequences. He therefore drove home the point that identification of communities is the job of professionally trained social scientists rather than census enumerating agency. As far as the development of the language in the domain of education was concerned, he felt that Assamese and English were more valuable in that role but the community must be supported in strengthening the Deuri language for intra-tribal communication. He was somewhat worried about the way bilingualism may grow and inter-group communication patterns extended for in-group as well and endanger the mother tongue. He therefore advocated separation of functions for different languages to ensure maintenance with growth.

Shri N.H. Itagi, of CIIL reminded the house that although languages did not exist independent of their speakers, the concern of the commission was directed at the speakers of the language rather than language per se, and on the identification of socially and economically backwards among them using, if possible, language or linguistic information as a diagnostic tool. He felt that no linguistic community could be viewed as monolithic, cohesive or uniform, nor does it have to be based in one territorial space. Minorities, which were to be defined at the state rather than national level, were brought into sharp relief as a result of linguistically formed states. But since subsequent formations of new states have ignored language as the sole basis of state formation, the definition of minority had also changed. He felt it may now be sufficient to *define linguistic minorities as those who spoke a language that was different from the official language of the state rather than a non-existent Principal language.* In the absence of cross-tabulated data on language and other socio-economic parameters, one could use other indicators like rural vs. urban distribution of linguistic communities to state their backwardness. The working assumption could be that those communities that are primarily rural are more backward than the urban dwelling communities. Thus English, Sindhi and Saurashtri are primarily urban communities even at national level and may not be considered backward at state level. The case of Urdu is more challenging for that too is seen as more urban than many other communities but the living conditions of its speakers in cities-as per observation-are far from being the best. In any case, for operational purposes we need state level profiles. Illustrating the case of Karnataka, he pointed over half of the linguistic minorities were based in well to do parts of urban areas and deserved no special economic rewards, with the result that at times the majority community felt it was not the economically dominant group and framed policies asserting its presence. However the tribal communities that

were more in rural areas/forests were marginalized and deserved special attention.

Prof. B.N.Patnaik of IIT Kanpur, and Senior fellow, CIIL began by asking- 'could language be a barrier for some people for their social and economic uplift?' He wondered if one could use the backwardness of the living conditions of speakers to say that their languages were also backward and lamented the absence of such information. He stated that although Indian policy makers had consulted language specialists in specifying criteria for languages to be included in the eighth schedule- which may be then declared as developed or privileged- the reverse task of identifying the backward had not been done. He suggested the criteria for identifying backwardness could be the *poverty, the smallness of size, the remoteness of their locale, the absence of literacy traditions etc.*

If such a task were done, the government could initiate affirmative action for there is no doubt that such action was needed for the poor and the marginalized. He also felt that affirmative action need not await clarity of definition if there was clarity of intention. He agreed that affirmative action was an exercise in empowerment, which in turn meant provision of opportunities and creation of educational means to enhance the competence of the community. Those advocating the cause of mother tongue education seemed to have placed the cause of language above the cause of people with the hope of changing the order of things in future. While linguists may keep the long term perspective in mind, the existing order of opportunities in the present socio-economic order must be made accessible by providing for existing languages of opportunity.

Shri R.S. Rangila, CIIL felt that the terms of reference of the Commission could be questioned in the right spirit. For instance, the separation of social backwardness from economic backwardness in the discourse by Shri Kiremwati from Nagaland was to be welcomed even as one planned to provide for the well being of the poor. He felt poverty was the major issue, which was linked directly to the issue of fair share of allocation of national resources. Also, on the same lines linguistic backwardness could be treated differently for there was a feeling that the major languages were trying to grab the lion's share of funds marked for development of languages and the minorities were being ignored. The practice of not recognizing communities which were below 10,000 in numbers only exacerbated the issue. He also pointed out the pace of technological advancement had changed the pace of social development and all linguistic communities irrespective of their size need to be strengthened in ways that will enable them to proceed in that direction too. There was need for openness of policy and genuine attitudinal change, where the size of the community was not to be perceived as a handicap.

Dr. Kakoli Mukherjee from the Census of India office pointed to the need for better documentation and data gathering which could be used by planners. This profile would make comparative statements about the plight of linguistic minorities on all fronts-social, cultural, educational and economic. The survey of non-scheduled language spoken by communities whose size is less than 10,000 could be done on priority basis too for some of them may be endangered.

She informed that although many linguists were in agreement that around 12,000 languages was the highest number of living languages at any point of time in human history, presently there may be 6912 languages in the world [as per the *Ethnologue* 2005, report]. But it was generally agreed among linguists that *"over half of world's languages are moribund, i.e. not effectively being passed on to the next generation----and that we and our children, then are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out"*

She said that languages could be classified as *Viable, Endangered or Nearly Extinct;* and the last two types would exemplify situations in which smaller languages and their speakers are fighting a losing battle. Responsible societal planning was required for arming the smaller groups with all means if we, as a responsible pluralistic nation, are not to squander our diverse heritage in the pursuit of economic well-being.

Dr. Manoharan from the **Anthroplogical Survey of India** shared his experiences from the work done in the monumental **People of India** project. Over 6000 communities based on caste/tribe/language/ethnic names/folklore etc have been listed but the number of languages is only around 325. It is obvious that many different communities may be classified together as speakers of the same language and there may be also a few cases of the same community speaking different languages. He pointed out the role of Indian National Congress in recognition of territorial rights of languages including the formation of linguistic states which also brought to focus different minorities. The setting up of the NCLM for safe guarding the rights of linguistic minorities was also the recognition of the fact that problems were bound to crop up and the need to redress them. He felt that different languages had developed differently because they were allocated different functions and all languages were not provided with equal opportunity for growth. The minorities had a right to develop their languages and seek technological, economic and educational support.

Dr. Prema Raghvan, Regional Institute of Education felt that the issue of empowerment of people could not be dissociated from the empowerment of languages. Also the concept of multilingual education and multiplicity of mother tongues was indicative of how different languages could grow together rather than one at the cost of other. She gave a detailed account of the multilingualism

in her own family where the husband and wife spoke different languages and had moved from one state to the other with their children proficient in the regional languages as well.

She felt that quality education had not been made accessible despite the launching of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The goals of language planning had not coincided with goals of educational planning. The goal of preserving languages was different from revitalization of languages which was the need of the hour for minority languages. Also the oral tradition was an essential part of our culture and the advent of literacy must not weaken that base. She stated that the role of translation in teaching of science had to be understood for all scientific terms did not warrant the search for native equivalents and coinages when borrowing could suffice.

Shri B.D. Jayaram, CIIL tabled his views by stating that from all accounts there was no evidence of direct correlation between being a linguistic minority and being socio-economically backward nor had such studies been done. The linkage of factors could be indirect and worthy of empirical study. The criteria suggested by Prof. Patnaik regarding the smallness of size, remoteness of location, absence of literacy tradition were important and we could use these in conjunction with rural vs. urban so that the parameters become adequate. Also provision of education using the minority languages may be built into quality education as perceived by the minorities.

Dr. K. Kapfo, CIIL provided an account of the work undertaken in Nagaland over two decades ago, where the problem was the failure of tribal children in mathematics. It was felt that use of mother tongue in education instead of official language English, which was hardly understood, would improve the quality. It was then found that though private school children where English was given preference were better in English, they were not better in mathematics which required proper thinking and best achieved in government schools where there was more support for mother tongue. That is why if we want to ensure better cognitive growth of children and have quality education, mother tongue must be used for instruction and government schools should be improved. Our objective may not be language development but educational development.

Shri R. Elangaiyan, CIIL pointed out the importance of being in a position to advise the government on matters of far reaching consequence. The issue of linguistic minorities being such an issue deserved to be treated with seriousness and respect. He wondered why the entire machinery involved with the decision-making had decided not to table the information about communities that were smaller in size- below 10,000. He also wondered why all linguists in the

country had chosen to remain silent and become party to the violation of rights to existence for this suppression of facts was indeed denial of right to meaningful existence and reflected a bias against minorities. Every individual was as important as any other and passive spectator's role by other citizens would not be helpful. He also regretted that people posed questions about cost only when smaller languages were brought in to focus as though that would drain the resources. He also emphasized that the task of providing authentic materials for schools in tribal and minor languages was very challenging and could encounter resistance even from the native speakers themselves. However, it would be unwise to abandon the task on that count.

Dr. Malli Gandhi, RIE recounted his experience as a member of the minority group and the sense of isolation / exclusion by the majority. He pointed out how he experienced the indifference in Andhra Pradesh and failed to make the state authorities to open up schools for tribal children in keeping with their specific needs. He pointed to the research work undertaken by him wherein he could clearly point out that the educational backwardness was a result of the apathetic attitude of the machinery in dealing with the communities that were different from the main stream types and refusal to use the tribal language in education.

Prof. Agnihotri in his chairman's remarks thanked the participants for raising several important issues that were related to the welfare of the linguistic minorities and helped in contextualizing the complexities. He pointed out that in his opinion the purpose of the Commission was *to work out a legislation that could be applied to some well defined set of people in well defined ways*. There was no room for ambiguity in law. However the discourse may not have been able to do that for it had only dug up the ground and perhaps sensitized the decision makers. The only definitive line of action -with some consensus- which emerged was about the need to provide quality multilingual education with inclusion of mother tongue in the school curriculum without denying the minorities access to languages of opportunity. There was some evidence that minority languges were subject to collective discrimination and there was need to remedy the situation. He also appealed to the participants to come out of the world of percentages for small percentages may create an impression that something was statistically- and hence socially too- insignificant. Therefore for the educational planner for minorities there was also the need to understand inherent variability of all languages, and examine multilinguality in psycho-linguistic and socio-cultural terms for that brought to surface different forms of life and could provide for changing the very way we conceive pedagogy. The need to situate the children and their discourse in the centre-stage, of treating the minority languges as potentially equal to the majority and treating their differences with dignity are not small matters.

Prof. R.Sachdeva, CIIL in his concluding remarks thanked all the participants and requested them to send their recommendations in writing. He also thanked the NCRLM for choosing the Institute to stage this event and reposing faith in its ability to have dialogues by involving people with diverse views. He hoped the academic courses that dealt with sociolinguistics and language planning in the country would make it mandatory for all to look at the social context(s) of minority communities and encourage researchers to undertake developmental work with them in keeping with the frame-work of empowerment. He hoped the discourses would move beyond the confines of the workshop and raise issues for responsible societal debate that would then continue to engage the public mind. He also hoped the communities – both majority and minority-would be willing to re-examine their own stand(s) about education and participate whole heartedly without fear but with hope in bringing about a just and equitable social order. He also encouraged the representatives of minority communities to send their representations, if any, directly to the commission.

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Discussion/Observations on the term '*linguistic minority*'

There is an assumption in the terms of reference that the term linguistic minority is unambiguous and well understood that can be easily applied for diagnosing who belongs to that category. But this is not really the case.

The term **linguistic minority** has been defined differently at different places and is viewed as a relative or contextual term that presupposes the term majority which is assumed to be all powerful and dominant. We need to study these definitions closely, many of which have useful content but may be used with different intent and may not capture the varied reality of India.

'Any group of people whose mother tongue is different from the principal language of the state' – *National Commission for Linguistic Minorities*

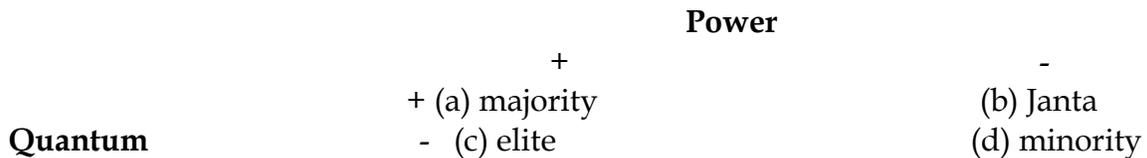*'Any group of people whose mother tongue is different from the official language [which is often but not always the Principal language] of the state'* __ *A CIIL, Report*

'The term minority includes only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable, ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population.' __ *United Nations*

The establishment of majority/minority language hierarchies is neither a natural process nor primarily even a linguistic one. Rather, it is a historically, socially and politically *constructed* process, and one that is deeply imbued in wider (unequal) power relations.

What actually distinguishes a majority language from a minority language or a dialect? This distinction is not a straightforwardly linguistic one. For example, we cannot always distinguish easily between a language and a dialect on linguistic grounds, since some languages are mutually intelligible, such as Danish, Swedish and Norwegian, while some dialects of the same language are not. Similarly, the majority/minority status ascribed to particular language varieties may well change over time, depending on wider social and political events. *[Stephen May]*

Srivastava (1984) **provides a new approach towards defining minority-majority languages based on two principles, "quantum" and "power", as shown in the diagram, wherein, the linguistic minorities are those that lack both quantum and power and majority as having them.**

	Power	
	+	-
	+ (a) majority	(b) Janta
Quantum	- (c) elite	(d) minority

Linguistic minorities are speakers of minority languages. Minority languages are typically those which carry relatively less or marginal functional load and functional transparency__ *R. Pandharipande, a renowned Indian sociolinguist*

Pandharipande proposes that for understanding the linguistic minorities a different framework needs to be formulated which will take into account **the multilingual profile of India, the functional distribution of languages across domains, the size of the speech community and the notion of dominance**. Moreover, the framework should be able to explain various types of minority in the country, and why the same language can have the status of minority as well as dominant language simultaneously (in different states). For example, minority languages can be divided into three groups: (a) **those which have "minority (nondominant)" status in their native state;** (b) **those which are reduced to "minority status" in their non-native states;** and (c**) languages which do not have a native state but are distributed across states (e.g. Sindhi and Konkani).** This framework clearly shows that a language acquires minority status when its functional load is reduced (in a non-native state where the dominant language of that state is different and used in many public domains), while it continues to enjoy the status of a dominant (non-minority language) in its native state.

Discussion/Observations on *Affirmative Action*

While Indian society is beginning to accept that reservations based on **caste** and **tribe** as mandated by the Constitution and periodically reinforced by the government have come to stay, any proposal that seeks to bring **language** or **religion** also in to the same fold must be treated with utmost caution for it may raise new issues and charter the course of our destiny along unpredictable pathways, besides reminding people of partition in the past. While many religious discourses may claim to create a sense of oneness and virtue that transcends societal divisions, we are also aware that some of the social and political strife has invaded this 'sacred' realm of existence too, and may provide scope for identity politics in the garb of religious strife that negates our constitutional vision as well. Although language has also been used for demarcation of territories, especially in the carving of states, it has been perhaps less emotive of the two and may be less understood. For those who are willing to set aside their fears of linguistic strife, languages too are to be viewed as instruments of communication and social cohesion. Languages transcend social barriers even as they help demarcate group boundaries and social identities of its speakers through the varieties that abound, and perhaps get created because of such needs, in the inherently creative but variable systems of communication that they all are. It is only because social hierarchy is so deeply imbued in our social system- caste is the most glaring example of inequity- that speakers of diverse languages and varieties, may become victims of the same process by which some languages and their speakers may be elevated even as others are demoted. It is these changes in external conditions of communication that often affect the internal state of languages, leading to their attrition, decay and death at times. The equality of human beings, as evidenced in the *potential equality* of every language as infinitely expressive, is negated in the social system that privileges one over the other and creates *actual social inequality*. It is under such conditions when against the very nature of language society chooses to discriminate that affirmative action may be considered. It is also then that work on the planned development of languages assumes great importance. Language development leads to greater social cohesion for it involves various sections of the society including the literate and the illiterate, men, women and their children and thereby maximizes the spread of information and also helps in better socio-economic development of the community as a whole rather than of some individuals.

The process of privileging languages commences with allocation of functions with resources and declaration of some languges as – *official*; *associate official*;[eighth] *scheduled;* recognized by Sahitya Academy and hence *literary*;

School languages-as medium or subject- functioning at various levels of education: primary-secondary-college and university, languages of *mass-media* etc. Not many would want to argue that all languages must be allocated all the possible functions for that would set aside the complementary roles that languages play as parts of the dynamic *verbal repertoire* of the multilingual. But in the domain of education there is a growing concern that all languages must be provided the opportunity to grow and to realize the potential of each language so that in time to come all may be able to do things in their own languages that are being done in other languages. The task is far from easy and will call for considerable efforts from the native speakers working with others but decision makers must create conditions that are conducive for it. Linguistic minorities need to be supported in the domain of education for that is not merely a matter of their right but because that is right for all others too.

If, however, in an effort to make our economic order more representative of our social character language does become a basis of reservation, then we will have to develop a scale of eligibility as well. If one were to define the **most deserving** set of linguistic minorities as those *who are speakers of non-scheduled languages that have no official status and only marginal presence, if any, in the domain of education,* then we may be dealing with around 2% of the total population, which is still substantial. If we also recognize that many of these listed languages belong to tribes who are otherwise eligible for affirmative action and may not be included again for more welfare as linguistic minorities too, we will be left with an indefinable set of left-over or marginalized people that are even smaller in size. We may therefore look into all types of linguistic minorities, especially those who are not eligible for reservation benefits on other grounds, and draw up plans for these **other deserving** cases keeping the social context in mind.

Some Unanswered Questions

The two worrisome but related questions, which remained unanswered and proved inconclusive in debate, revolved around the possibility of defining/identifying *linguistically backward* speakers, on the one hand, and the possible causal role of language in making its speakers *socio-economically backward* on the other hand. Linguists are quick to point out that *while we may have primitive [and backward] people, there are no primitive languages as such.* It is only in certain social contexts where differential social treatment results in shift of choices [often in favor of major dominant languages] that 'minoritized' languages experience decay, attrition and even death. One may therefore claim that the notion linguistically backward speaker is a social construct, and while the mainstreaming type of activity may provide an opportunity for minorities to acquire dominant majority languages to advance forward socio-economically, it may also [not necessarily though] retard the speaker in the native language. It is

for this reason that all participants reiterated the need for educational planning that will be truly multilingual with healthy mother tongue component and yet not curtail social mobility. Only then can we ensure that we don't squander our diversity too. There is also the related question of empowering the monolingual minority speakers over which the workshop did not reflect much but which language development activity must address.

It was observed that there is no clear cut data related to socio-economic backwardness and the language used by the speakers, nor is there a causal link that has been established; often there is a perception that the less literate monolingual types among the minority who speak no language other than their mother tongue may be declared as linguistically most backward. The only difficulty is that those declared most backward may also be least suitable for mainstream jobs that may be on offer and presuppose knowledge of mainstream language. Therefore those among such groups who have acquired bilingual skills against all odds may be rewarded with the hope that they will bridge the gap and allow for down flow of economic funds even though it may be on terms set by the mainstream. Language background therefore must remain a matter of consideration in employment and could be in contention as criterion for reservation.

Sensitizing the state government

The state governments have generally, and perhaps with good reason too, been more concerned with the growth of the regional languages that are symbols of the collective identity-transcending the majority-minority divide. But, we feel, the time has come to attend to the diverse heritage and to ensure the participation of all in the emerging social order. There is concern that our growth has also accentuated disparity and may develop new fault lines that coincide with diversity. It is important therefore to listen to the voices of diverse groups who feel that they all deserve equal attention irrespective of their size. The challenge before us is to sensitize the governments to ensure that in all vital decision making bodies, care is taken to include the minorities so that the pluralistic order of society is represented at all levels. In keeping with the agenda of a welfare state, the deserving among the weaker sections of the linguistic minorities must be considered for employment and in deciding the size of allocation the size of the group must be a matter of consideration as also its state of development.

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Recommendations/Suggestions:

1. The term **linguistic minority** should be defined clearly for operational purposes with illustrative examples of **possible types of linguistic minorities.** Such definitions should be considered adequate for the purpose of framing legislation, if required, and with stand scrutiny in law for undertaking affirmative action.

2. Each state should provide a **comprehensive multilingual profile** that lists different types of linguistic minorities with information on their size and territorial spread including settings-pockets/villages, if any, in which they may be dominant and cease to be minority. It must also include a report on the status of different languages specifying the domains [family, education, mass-media etc.] in which they function and mentioning steps taken, if any, to maintain or change their status

While preliminary profiles can be prepared based on census data, trained social scientists and linguists should be involved in survey rather than census enumerating agencies.

3. Each state should present a status report on the socio-economic profiles of different linguistic communities especially minorities [with attested information on occupation, education, income, housing and assets or other criteria used for identification of backward classes]

While educational surveys and economic surveys are conducted periodically by the National sample survey, community based data may be gathered for planning.

4. For each state, the census of India must be asked to table the data on smaller communities whose population is below 10,000- so that affirmative action can commence irrespective of size. *Since such data is already available, the right to information must be exercised over all returns of mother tongue.*

5. Linguistic minorities must be listed by each state and declared to be so. All of them must be provided generous support in the domain of education, especially with opportunities to learn their languages. Teachers employed in schools with sizable minority populations must know the minority language and preference be given to minority language speakers in such jobs. Majority communities must be provided an opportunity to be acquainted with minority languges and cultures.

6. In deciding on cases for affirmative action we need to ensure that those who are eligible for reservation on other basis like belonging to the **SC/ST/OBC** do not automatically become eligible for possible quota of minority as well. Care must be taken that deserving cases are covered under one or the other category rather than more than one so that no one secures double benefits. There is also a grievance that some communities are recognized as belonging to the scheduled tribe by one state but not the other and in such cases they must have some possibility of inclusion under the minority category at least.

7. Indigenous linguistic minorities who are not migrant types and whose languages are confined to in-group oral communication must be encouraged to develop their languages for other purposes as well. This activity must receive government support in the form of allocation of resources- material and human with creation of responsible well-paid jobs for long term sustained work.

8. Linguistic minorities that move to urban areas from other states often settle down to create their own niche and need no special support subsequently in terms of job reservation. Many of them are better off than their majority counterparts. However, after a certain period of residence and on the acquisition of state official language, they must not be discriminated against for employment in state government jobs on the grounds of being outsiders.

9. Those concerned with social welfare must have some room for consideration of inter-state labour migrants that create special groups of minorities, and educational opportunities be provided to them to facilitate social mobility with economic stability.

APPENDIX-I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

1. Sri Ranganath Misra, Honorable Chairman
2. Smt. Asha Das, Member Secretary
3. Dr. Anil Wilson, Member
4. Sri M.C. Joshi, Joint Secretary
5. Sri M.S. Popli, Under Secretary

Speakers for 27th:

1. Prof. R.Sachdeva, CIIL, Mysore – Co-ordinator
2. Prof. Ram Dayal Munda, Former Vice-Chancellor, Ranchi University, Ranchi
3. Dr. Tabu Taid, Guwahati, Assam
4. Prof. Imtiaz Hasnain, Aligarh Muslim University
5. Shri Kiremwati Ao, Former Vice Chancellor, Kohima, Nagaland
6. Prof. S.S. Bhattacharya, Kolkata
7. Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri, Delhi University, Delhi

OTHER Resource Persons/Special Invitees

Sl. No.	Name & Address	Sl. No.	Name & Address
1	Dr. A.K. Basu CIIL, Mysore	2	Dr. B. Mallikarjun CIIL, Mysore
3	Dr. B.A. Sharada CIIL, Mysore	4	Dr. C.V. Sivaramakrishna CIIL, Mysore
5	Dr. Devaki CIIL, Mysore	6	Sri K.K. Bagai Anthropological Association of India, Mysore – 26
7	Dr. Gananatha Shetty Yekkar Member, Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy, Mangalore	8	Dr. H.M. Ganesh Reader, DOS in Anthropology, Manasagangotri, Mysore
9	Dr. K. Mohan Pai Konkani Educational Institute, V.T. Road, Mangalore	10	Dr. K. Rajasekhara Reddy Reader, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Mysore, Mysore

11	Dr. Kakali Mukherjee O/o the RGI, Language Division, Kolkata – 20.	12	Dr. Kedutso Kapfo CIIL, Mysore
13	Dr. Kalachanne Gowda Professor of Sociology, Maharaja's College, Mysore	14	Dr. Malli Gandhi Faculty, Dept of DEUH, RIE, NCERT, Mysore
15	Dr. Panduranga Murthy Dept. of Biotechnology, Mysore	16	Dr. S. Manoharan Anthropological Survey of India
17	Dr. Pon Subbiah CIIL, Mysore	18	Dr. R. Subbakrishna CIIL, Mysore
19	Dr. Ramprasad Deuri Dibrugarh, Assam	20	Sri Ranjit Singh Rangila CIIL, Mysore
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29	Sri R. Elangaiyan CIIL, Mysore	30	Prof. H.R. Dua 1759, Hebbal 2nd Stage, Mysore
31	Prof. P.N. Dutta Baruah CIIL, Mysore	32	Prof. Mohd. Zaman Azurdah CIIL, Mysore
33	Sri Eric Ozario President, Karnataka Konkani Academy, Mangalore	34	Sri Gururaj Bidekar DoS in Sociology, Univ. of Mysore, Mysore
35	Prof. K. Ramasamy CIIL, Mysore	36	Sri S.S. Yadurajan CIIL, Mysore
37	Sri Jayaram CIIL, Mysore	38	Sri G.D.P. Sastry CIIL, Mysore
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41	Sri L. Halemane CIIL, Mysore	42	Sri N.H. Itagi CIIL, Mysore
43	Sri P. Manjunath University of Mysore	44	Sri P.K. Misra E 583, J.P. Nagar, Mysore

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9	Ms. Prafulla, University of Mysore	10	Ms. Veena. R. DoS in Anthropology, Mysore
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15	Sri S. Winston Cruz, CIIL, Mysore	16	Sri Prem Sagar. C.A. CIIL, Mysore
17	Sri S.C. Jaiprabhakar CIIL, Mysore	18	Sri Shivanand Dept. of History, University of Mysore, Mysore
19	Sri Michael Suantak B17, 107 – 109, New Delhi – 110 018.	20	Ms. Sandhya. G. CIIL, Mysore

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5	Sri K.A. Rahman CIIL, Mysore	6	Dr. Sandhya Naik CIIL, Mysore

27th March 2006

Timings	Subject	Resource Person
	Inaugural Session	
10.15 – 11.00	Welcome	Prof. Rajesh Sachdeva, Director in charge, CIIL
	Inaugural Remarks	Hon'ble Sri Ranganath Misra – Chairperson and Smt. Asha Das, Member Secretary, NCRLM
11.00 – 11.15	**Tea Break**	
Timings	**Subject**	**Resource Person**
	Session – I	
11.15 – 1.00	Presentation and Discussions on Linguistic Minorities	i. Prof. Ram Dayal Munda ii. Prof. Ganesh Devy iii. Dr. Tabu Taid iv. Sri Kiremwati Ao
1.00 – 2.00	**Lunch Break**	
	Session – II	
2.00 – 3.30	Presentation and Discussion on Linguistic Minorities and Census Perspective	i. Prof. Imtiaz Hasnain (Tribal Communities from Orissa and elsewhere) ii. Sri S.S. Bhattacharya and Language Division.
3.30 – 3.45	**Tea Break**	
	Session - III	
3.45 – 5.00	**Affirmative Action**	Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri (Educationist's Perspective), NCERT, Language Academies.
	Final Session	
5.15 – 6.00	Summary of deliberations and recommendations.	Director in charge, CIIL

28th March 2006

भारतीय भाषा संस्थान
(मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय, माध्यमिक और उच्च शिक्षा विभाग, भारत सरकार)
मानसगंगोत्री, मैसूर - 570 006

CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF INDIAN LANGUAGES
(Ministry of Human Resources Development, Dept. of Secondary & Higher Education, Govt. of India)
Manasagangotri, Mysore- 570 006

F.No.6/8-25/2005-06/RSD/NCRLM   **June 19, 2006**

Prof. Rajesh Sachdeva   **Speed post/FAX: 011-24367794**
Professor cum Deputy Director

Dear Madam,

We have received your letter dated 5th of June addressed to our Director, Prof. U.N. Singh [who is presently on leave] asking us to send the report of the **Workshop on Linguistic Minorities** held at CIIL on the 27th and 28th of March. Accordingly enclosed herewith please find a copy of the report that is also being sent by speed post. We are aware that there has been some delay in its submission, and while some of it was due to inevitable factors, it was also largely due to the fact that it has taken us some time to think of minority matters in a rather different perspective.

Even while writing down the report, one has experienced a dilemma: should one remain true to the text and spirit of the multidimensional discourse as it was, admittedly tangential at times? Or, should one prune it down to suit only the terms of reference even at the risk of inviting a back-lash from participants on distortion of views - using the content of one to suit the intent of the other! We don't think everyone will be fully satisfied for the report has adopted a sort of middle path and not made much effort to remain focused only on the terms of reference. Instead we have let freedom of speech with diversity of views to remain the guiding principle. Even if the Commission's interest may be more in the final recommendations, we do hope it will closely examine what was said by different participants while articulating their own concern. It is also possible some comments made in passing may provide useful leads to meaningful action from your front.

There is no denying that all the participants were convinced that the event was much needed and well-intentioned and we at CIIL felt privileged to host it on your behalf. There was also a sort of consensus that Linguistic Minorities deserved serious attention and some affirmative action was needed. If one were to define the **most deserving** set of linguistic minorities as those *who are speakers of non-scheduled languages that have no official status and only marginal presence, if any, in the domain of education,* then we may be dealing with around 2% of the total population, which is still substantial. If we also recognize that many of these listed languages belong to tribes who are otherwise eligible for affirmative action and may not be included again for more welfare as linguistic minorities too, we will be left with an indefinable set of left-over or marginalized people that are even smaller in size. We may therefore look into all types of linguistic minorities, especially those who are not eligible for reservation benefits on other grounds, and draw up plans for these **other deserving** cases keeping the social context in mind.

The two worrisome but related questions, which remained unanswered and proved inconclusive in debate, revolved around the possibility of defining/identifying *linguistically backward* speakers, on the one hand, and the possible causal role of language in making its speakers *socio-economically backward* on the other hand. Linguists are quick to point out that while we may have primitive [and backward] people, there are no primitive languages as such. It is only in certain social contexts where differential social treatment results in shift of choices [often in favor of major dominant languages] that 'minoritized' languages experience decay, attrition and even death. One may therefore claim that the notion linguistically backward speaker is a social construct and while mainstreaming type of activity may provide an opportunity for minorities to acquire dominant majority languages to advance forward socio-economically, it may also [not necessarily though] retard the speaker in the native language. It is for this reason that all participants reiterated the need for educational planning that will be truly multilingual with healthy mother tongue component and yet not curtail social mobility. Only then can we ensure that we don't squander our diversity too. There is also the related question of empowering the monolingual minority speaker over which the workshop did not reflect much but which language development activity must address.

In the realm of social planning, if reservations are to be exercised, then the majority of one state who are minority in the other need not figure in some special list for employment. What the commission can safeguard is that they are not discriminated on that ground. The affirmative action must remain confined only to the domain of education where steps to provide access to mother tongue, if need be even as a medium, may be considered. The NCLM has stressed on this

issue in all its reports but to no avail for in its own terms it is regarded as a toothless body. We hope the NCRLM will provide some teeth in pursuit of justice on that front.

Finally, let me draw the attention of the NCRLM to all our earlier correspondence. We had presented the status of different languages with a multilingual profile of the country and briefly acquainted the commission with the kinds of language policies in practice. The state governments have generally, and perhaps with good reason too, been more concerned with the growth of the regional languages that are symbols of the collective identity-transcending the majority-minority divide. But, we feel, the time has come to attend to the diverse heritage and to ensure the participation of all in the emerging social order. There are growing areas of concern that our growth has also accentuated disparity and may develop new fault lines that coincide with diversity. It is important therefore to listen to the voices of diverse groups who feel that they all deserve equal attention irrespective of their size. Thinking is a social process and we feel encouraged by the discourse so far.

If in the framing of the Commission's final recommendations, this report will have any role to play, we will feel the entire effort was rewarded. We also look forward to the Commission's own remarks/suggestions on the report so that we may then even consider it for publication and larger circulation.

We do hope you will remain in touch with us and continue to involve us in this most important exercise.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely

(R. SACHDEVA)

Ms. ASHA DAS
Member Secretary, Government of India,
National Commission for Religious & Linguistic Minorities,
Ministry of Minority Affairs
2nd Floor, Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium,
NEW DELHI – 110 003.

A Report of the Workshop on Linguistic Minorities

The event and the participants

The workshop on Linguistic Minorities was organized by the **National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, Ministry of Minority Affairs** in collaboration with **Central Institute of Indian Languages, Ministry of Human Resource Development** at Mysore on the 27th and 28th March 2006. While the members of the commission and its team were present on the first day, several invited speakers and members of the CIIL faculty also met on the 28th to dwell further on the issues that had surfaced on the 27th and also provide an opportunity to others to table their own viewpoints and experience. This report is not an attempt to resurrect the entire event with its varied discourses, although some record is maintained of chronology of speakers. It focuses more on comments /observations made in response to the **terms of reference of the commission** and only partly on some of the other views expressed. It also places for consideration some recommendations related to the possible follow up.

81 people participated in the event:

National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities:

6. **Sri Ranganath Misra, Honorable Chairman**
7. **Smt. Asha Das, Honorable Member Secretary**
8. **Dr. Anil Wilson, Member**
9. **Sri M.C. Joshi, Joint Secretary**
10. **Sri M.S. Popli, Under Secretary**

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31	Prof. P.N. Dutta Baruah CIIL, Mysore	32	Prof. Mohd. Zaman Azurdah CIIL, Mysore
33	Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri Delhi University, Delhi	34	Prof. Tabu Taid Guwahati, Assam
35	Prof. K. Ramasamy CIIL, Mysore	36	Sri S.S. Yadurajan CIIL, Mysore
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1	Sri K.M. Venugopal CIIL, Mysore	2	Sri G.S. Unnithan CIIL, Mysore
3	Ms. L. Anasuya CIIL, Mysore	4	Smt. T.V. Vani CIIL, Mysore
5	Sri K.A. Rahman CIIL, Mysore	6	Dr. Sandhya Naik CIIL, Mysore

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMISSION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

At this point of time it will be important to recapitulate all the terms of reference of the commission and some comments and observations on them. Although most of the speakers were expected to keep the spirit of dialogue in their mind and direct their discourse on the terms of reference, some of them chose to debate the issue in their own terms and even questioned some of the ideas implicit in the terms. However, everyone agreed the exercise was well-intentioned and bound to be of use to the public at large.

The terms of reference of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities were:

(e) *To suggest criteria for identification of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities.*
(f) *To recommend measures for welfare of socially and economically backward sections among religious and linguistic minorities, including reservation in education and government employment.*
(g) *To suggest the necessary constitutional, legal and administrative modalities, as required for the implementation of their recommendations:*
(h) *To give their views in respect of status/ case for reservation for those who were converts among the Scheduled Caste to other Religions*

Since the issue of linguistic minorities was in focus, the objectives of the workshop were:

6. *To present the status of linguistic minorities in the country as a whole and in different states and policies of the Central and State governments towards them.*

7. *The problems of linguistic minorities e.g. ethnic movements, migration etc.,*
8. *To explore the Relationship between language and socio-economic backwardness and state if language could be a determinant of socio-economic backwardness*
9. *To consider the need for evolving a criteria for identifying backwards amongst linguistic minorities.*
10. *To prepare a brief report on the recommendations to be included for initiating action.*

 To meet some of these objectives, a set of background papers was prepared and circulated which gave detailed information about the minor and minority languages of India and their status, besides providing materials on other issues related to linguistic minorities.

Proceedings of the day 1:

Right at the outset **Prof. R. Sachdeva**, Coordinator for the programme welcomed the esteemed members of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities and all the distinguished participants that included eminent representatives of minority communities from different parts of the country, special invitees, faculty members from CIIL and scholars from the University of Mysore and Regional Institute of Education. He also introduced the distinguished speakers who were to make their presentations on that day and briefly dwelt on some of the issues/themes that were likely to crop up keeping in mind the terms of reference of the commission. He reaffirmed that the workshop was not a discourse on language but an exercise in the quest for social justice, so that the more deserving cases from among the linguistic minorities could be considered in the scheme of affirmative welfare measures spelt out by the commission. He reiterated CIIL was committed to the cause of smaller and lesser known speech communities as equal partners in nation building for which decisions of language policy and planning could have a real impact.

Smt. Asha Das, Member Secretary of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities spelt out the terms of reference of the commission [listed above] and also pointed out that the primary objective of this exercise was to ensure that the efforts of the government directed at provision of opportunities reach all those sections of the society that are socially and economically backward among the linguistic and religious minorities and who feel left out of the mainstream. She wanted the different experts who were aware of the plight of the linguistic minorities to present their views on whether language could be used as a determining factor in identifying backward sections. She emphasized that the primary objective was the development of people rather

than development of their languages, and the issue of developing languages could only be indirectly linked to it.

The **Honorable Chairman Sri Ranganath Misra** expressed that the commission had come to observe and listen to the voices of the minorities rather than to speak to them. He hoped different panelists/speakers would keep in mind the terms of reference spelt out by the Commission and also the constitutional vision of **one state and many languages in which social justice will be meted out to all groups and sections of the people for the creation of an egalitarian society**.

Dr. Anil Wilson, Member of the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities felt that the entire endeavour was an exercise in empowerment of the lesser-known people of this country who were presently deprived and marginalized. He felt that each Indian had the right to express in his or her own language and expect communication and information as a pre-requisite for empowerment.

Prof. Ram Dayal Munda, Former Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University was invited to initiate the discourse on behalf of the Linguistic Minorities. He began in the spirit of dialogue by questioning the way a minority speaker was being figured out in public discourse as an object of pity because of paucity of numbers, where as the populations involved were rather sizable and had land holdings and territorial rights right across the map of the country. He felt that the term Linguistic Minority was a construct, a fall out of the reorganization of states on linguistic lines He pointed out that all the states were carved out for the majorities and no small language had been given the same territorial rights. He felt that the celebration of diversity was not so much a matter of awakening or soul stirring but of surfacing of guilt and also a matter of political expediency. He seriously questioned the pragmatic agenda of the NCRLM and the concept of mainstream which implicitly encouraged the minorities to abandon their own cultural roots. He advised down flow of opportunities in to side streams-the tributaries- that will not disrupt traditional life. He questioned the scheme of categorization in dealing with tribal communities as far as their belief systems were concerned. He gave the example of several tribal communities being labeled as Hindu although they were rather different in their orientation to origins and history and claimed no linkages with the great Hindu mythologies or caste system. He was against both conversion and subversion of the tribal people's history and culture. He felt that the Hindu majority instead of respecting the distinctness of the others wanted to convert the tribes as castes and relegate them to the lowest rung of social hierarchy. He rejected this form of mainstreaming which had become a possible cause of widespread unrest among many of the tribals and led to conversion to Christianity. He also felt that the education system which did not accord central role to the child's tribal mother

tongue and had no room for learner-centered communication was bound to alienate the child further. He cautioned the people that neglecting the tribals and their aspirations would only result in further violent ethnic movements some of which had already gathered steam. He felt that the discontent was spreading at the very base of the political order for the people with perennial rights were not being taken for granted rather than as partners and that inequity was being thrust in the emerging order. Minorities must become an area of major concern for conscientious nation building or else the whole effort would become an exercise in futility.

Dr. Tabu Taid, Former Director, School Education of Assam dwelt on the plight of linguistic minorities in Assam with special reference to the tribal communities. He pointed out that as many as 23 tribal communities had been recognized in Assam, but some societaldebate was still on regarding the nomenclature and categorization. There was also a problem about the same community being recognized in one state but not in the other [as for example Mising is recognized in Assam but not in Arunachal]. He stressed the fact that the safeguards provided for the minorities in the constitution were extremely important and aimed at building a welfare society with a just egalitarian order. However, in implementation, there was still plenty of scope for improvement. There was also a huge backlog in the filling up of posts earmarked for these communities and special drives were launched every now and then for filling up the same, often with no fruitful results. The main thing was to ensure that the communities are made worthy with the individuals prepared for the task and that was possible only through quality education. He felt that the English medium schools were viewed as providing better quality and therefore the policy of providing mother tongue education should be not merely on emotional grounds but be better contextualized. While there was a need to nurture the tribal child in his or her language, the quality issue must remain in focus as also the issue of empowerment in terms of making the community competent to take up the jobs marked for them. Pedagogy should be socially realistic and economically rewarding. He pointed out that Assam was experimenting with provision of mother tongue as a subject in primary level and some 8 or 9 languages had figured in that list but most of the schools continued to remain backward and failed to provide quality education. His feeling was that many Bodo medium schools had not produced encouraging results and the English medium schools were more in public demand.

Prof. Mohd. Zaman Azurdah, Kashmir University, fellow with CIIL, congratulated Prof. Munda and Prof. Taid for raising substantive issues in their presentations. He felt that languages should not be associated with religion for the same language is spoken by different communities. He also felt that quality of education is the supreme issue and sentimental ideas of mother tongue

education would prevent social mobility and would hinder growth. Mother tongue education should only be restricted to teaching of language as a subject where as the more useful language[s] should also be more used as medium.

Prof. Imtiaz Hasnain, of Aligrah Muslim University presented the complex case of Urdu speech community.

"The Urdu speaking population is spread all over the country, and like any other minority it epitomizes an essence of collective discrimination and suffers from the sense of victimization on account of language. I speak about Urdu not just because it is my mother tongue, but also because it occupies unique position, decidedly unusual, in the linguistic scenario. Even if Urdu is looked at in isolation, there is always a metaphysical presence of Hindi, which inevitably makes any discussion on Urdu to be looked at in relation with each other".

He said that although language may not be a determinant of socio-economic backwardness or there may not be direct correlation between religiousness backwardness and corresponding linguistic backwardness, States' discriminatory policies vis a vis Urdu language had been one of the major reasons for Muslim educational backwardness, particularly in North India

He pointed out that over two decades ago Dr. Gopal Singh's report on the status of religious minorities had clearly stated that the Muslim population was among the most backward in socio-economic terms. He felt the root cause was poor education. One of the factors could be traced to the neglect of the Urdu language too, for even in states like Uttar Pradesh, Urdu was not the preferred medium. The lack of support from the government had also led to lack of support from the community in a way. The association of Urdu as a language, primarily of the Muslims alone, rather than as the symbol of a secular composite culture was an unfortunate political construct. It had also become a stateless MINORITY language and the sole official language of only Jammu and Kashmir, where it was actually not the mother tongue. In Bihar and U.P it was the associate official language as also in parts of Andhra Pradesh. He made several recommendations for minorities in general and Urdu in particular.

Shri Kiremwati Ao, former Pro- Vice- Chancellor of NEHU at Nagaland campus, Kohima presented the case from the view point of Nagaland, where all communities are linguistic minorities for there is no principal language and English is the sole official state language [the only state to have *legislated* the official status of English although in *de facto* terms it is also the official language in some others]. He pointed out that the Nagas had become socially forward with a fair amount of literacy but had not grown economically to the same extent. He pointed out that the state policy had been egalitarian in spirit and all communities irrespective of size had access to their own languages in written form in the domain of literacy, church and formal education. However many of the languages were still underdeveloped and the choice of English as the official

language had resulted in greater attention to its acquisition. There was need to strengthen education along the lines of three language formula where Hindi and English are taught along with the tribal mother tongues. Opportunity for linguistic minorities to develop their languages must be given for presently only Tenyidie [literary Angami] was moving towards that path with Ao, Sema and Lotha trailing behind and the other were even more removed. Language should also be delinked from religion and seen in its own terms.

Prof. S.S. Bhattacharya [retired] from Language Division of the Census of India at Kolkata gave a detailed account of the census operations in collection of information on languages spoken, the definitions of mother tongue, the process of rationalization of returns and the final categorization. Since community is defined in terms of language/tribe/caste it is important to understand the basic processes for this is an important part of identification of linguistic minorities. It should be known that over 10,400 names were returned as mother tongues but after rigorous scrutiny and rationalization a master list of 3,372 languages was prepared of which 1576 are more or less classified but 1796 [belonging to a very small population] remain unclassified. Out of the 1576 classified mother tongues, as decided in 1971, only those spoken by more than 10,000 were listed resulting in 216 such mother tongues which were further classified as belonging to 114 languages. Thus the 18 scheduled languages of 1991 [which are now 22] represented 85 mother tongues with Hindi having over half of them under its fold. The modus operandi involved points out that along with scientific linguistic criteria of classification, social and political pressures are also at work and some people may rightly feel that they have been wrongly classified. We need to keep the state profile as well as the national profile in mind while dealing with minority matters. He also presented multilingual profiles of different states. He pointed out that since census also had some indices of development and since economic surveys were conducted research projects relating languages with socio-economic backwardness could be prepared in time to come.

 Dr Mohan Pai presented the case of Konkani as a linguistic minority which is not socially or economically backward nor is seeking reservations in any government jobs on account of its minority status, but which has had problems of lack of support from the state government in matters of language education. He felt that the state recognized only religious minorities and offered them help but not to linguistic minorities. Also the demand to use devnagari script in texts favored by one of the sections was resented for the government stipulated the use of Kannada script only. The result was a division of the linguistic minority and the promotion of language had suffered. He appealed to the NCRLM to sensitize the state governments to treat linguistic minorities with dignity and not to discriminate.

Dr Gananath Shetty presented the case of harmony between majority Kannada and minority Tulu, where the Tulu community had whole heartedly accepted Kannada script for its development but was still seeking recognition as a separate language in the eighth schedule as it was developed enough to be taught in University level. However he admitted that no move was on to teach the same at primary level.

Prof. Ramakant Agnihotri spelt out the line of affirmative action in the domain of education that could be taken in addressing the problems of linguistic minorities. He felt that although several participants had presented their view-points and experiences as minority speakers in different contexts, without always keeping the terms of reference in the centre of their performance, they had not deviated from the coordinates of the grand discourse on justice and that we had to listen to these voices as our own. He strongly felt that we need to understand the nature of language, the difficulties involved in separating varieties, their role in constructing the knowledge that we have. He stressed that we need to appreciate the multilinguality in our every day life by virtue of which many of our children may have acquired several languages as their mother tongue [s]—the seeds of identity politics and division may not have been sown then. To understand minority matters we need to have sound theories of language, of pedagogy and of classroom interaction in all its complexity. He informed that he position paper prepared by the NCERT *On the Teaching of Indian Languages* [of which Prof. Agnihotri was the chairman and Prof. Sachdeva was a member] covered many of these issues. There was a growing realization in all circles that the children's languages are resources and we need to involve them rather than exclude and insult their languages.

He emphasized that language could be a variable in determining backwardness if it is a subject of collective discrimination. Language could be related to one's growth for there is ample evidence to show how multilingualism helps cognitive growth and raises scholastic achievements. There was need to promote multilingualism and support for all languages so that they are all in a position to benefit from technological advancements that have reached their doorstep. The commission could recommend creation of more such opportunities.

The second day's proceedings-28th March:

Prof. R.Sachdeva again welcomed the participants and briefly dwelt on the terms of reference. He also thanked the Commission for providing the participants an opportunity for meaningful interaction on socially relevant issues. He invited Prof. Agnihotri to chair the session, who in turn asked different people to feel free to speak out and articulate their own view-points.

Shri R.P.Deuri presented the case of the Deuri tribe in Assam. He felt it was an endangered language and the community was awaiting affirmative action from all quarters. He was worried about the steps taken by the government in identification of the tribe and categorization of the Deuri people along with Sutiya. The two communities were not one-as made out even in the Census- for the Deuri spoke and maintained their Tibeto –Burman language to a large extent where as the Sutiya spoke only Assamese and had no tribal cultural features too. He saw in this move a sinister design to pass off the benefits ear marked for Deuri to the Sutiya and warned of serious consequences. He therefore drove home the point that identification of communities is the job of professionally trained social scientists rather than census enumerating agency. As far as the development of the language in the domain of education was concerned, he felt that Assamese and English were more valuable in that role but the community must be supported in strengthening the Deuri language for intra-tribal communication. He was somewhat worried about the way bilingualism may grow and inter-group communication patterns extended for in-group as well. He therefore advocated separation of functions for different languages.

Shri N.H.Itagi, of CIIL reminded the house that although languages did not exist independent of their speakers, the concern of the commission was the speakers of the language rather than language, and the identification of the socially and economically backwards among them using, if possible, language or linguistic information as a diagnostic tool. He felt that no linguistic community could be viewed as monolithic, cohesive or uniform, nor does it have to be based in one territorial space. Minorities, which were to be defined at the state rather than national level, were brought into sharp relief as a result of linguistically based states. But since subsequent formations of new states have ignored language as the sole basis of state formation, the definition of minority has also changed. He felt it may now be sufficient to define linguistic minorities as those who spoke a language that was different from the official language of the state rather than a non-existent Principal language. In the absence of cross-tabulated data on language and other socio-economic parameters, one could use other indicators like rural vs. urban distribution of linguistic communities to state their backwardness. The working assumption could be that those communities that are primarily rural may be more backward than the urban dwelling communities. Thus English, Sindhi and Saurashtri are primarily urban communities even at national level and may not be considered backward. The case of Urdu is more challenging for that too is seen as more urban than many other communities but the living conditions of its speakers in cities are far from being the best. In any case, for operational purposes we need state level profiles. Illustrating the case of Karnataka, he pointed over half of the linguistic minorities were based in [well to do and deserved no special economic rewards] parts of urban areas] with the result that at times the majority community felt it was not

the economically dominant group and framed policies asserting its presence. However the tribal communities that were more in rural areas/forests were marginalized and deserved attention.

Prof. B.N.Patnaik of IIT Kanpur, and Senior fellow, CIIL began by asking- 'could language be a barrier for some people for their social and economic uplift?' He wondered if one could use the backwardness of the living conditions of speakers to say that their languages were also backward and lamented the absence of such information. He stated that although Indian policy makers had consulted language specialists in specifying criteria for languages to be included in the eighth schedule- which may be then declared as developed or privileged- the reverse task of identifying the backward had not been done. He suggested the criteria for identifying backwardness could be the poverty, the smallness of size, the remoteness of their locale, the absence of literacy traditions etc.
If such a task were done, the government could initiate affirmative action for there is no doubt that such action was needed for the poor and the marginalized. He also felt that affirmative action need not await clarity of definition if there is clarity of intention. He agreed that affirmative action was an exercise in empowerment, which in turn meant provision of opportunities and creation of educational means to enhance the competence of the community. Those advocating the cause of mother tongue education seemed to have placed the cause of language above the cause of people with the hope of changing the order of things in future. While linguists may keep the long term perspective in mind, the existing order of opportunities in the present socio-economic order must be made accessible by providing for existing languages of opportunity.

Shri R.S. Rangila, CIIL felt that the terms of reference of the Commission could be questioned in the right spirit. For instance the separation of the social backwardness from economic backwardness in the discourse by Shri Kiremwati from Nagaland was to be welcomed even as one planned to provide for the well being of the poor. He felt poverty was the major issue, which was linked directly to the issue of fair share of allocation of national resources. Also, on the same lines linguistic backwardness could be treated differently for there was a feeling that the major languages were trying to grab the lion's share of funds marked for development of languages and the minorities were being ignored. The practice of not recognizing communities which were below 10,000 in numbers only exacerbated the issue. He also pointed out the pace of technological advancement had changed the pace of social development and all linguistic communities irrespective of their size need to be strengthened in ways that will enable them to proceed in that direction too. There was need for openness of policy and genuine attitudinal change, where the size was not to be perceived as a handicap.

Dr Kakoli Mukherjee from the Census of India office pointed to the need for better documentation and data gathering which could be used by planners. This profile would make comparative statements about the plight of linguistic minorities on all fronts-social, cultural, educational and economic. The survey of non-scheduled language spoken by communities whose size is less than 10,000 could be done on priority basis too for some of them may be endangered. She informed that although many linguists were in agreement that around 12,000

languages was the highest number of living languages at any point of time, presently there may be 6912 languages [as per the *Ethnologue* 2005, report]. But it was generally agreed that *"over half of world's languages are moribund, i.e. not effectively being passed on to the next generation----and that we and our children, then are living at the point in human history where, within perhaps two generations, most languages in the world will die out"*

She pointed out that languages could be classified as *Viable, Endangered or Nearly Extinct*; and the last two types would exemplify situations in which smaller languages and their speakers are fighting a losing battle. Responsible societal planning was required for arming the smaller groups if we are not to squander our diverse heritage in the pursuit of economic well-being.

Dr Manoharan from the **Anthroplogical Survey of India,** shared his experiences from the work done in the People of India project. Over 6000 communities based on caste/tribe/language/ethnic names/folklore etc have been listed but the number of languages is only around 325. It is obvious that many different communities may be classified together as speakers of the same language and there may be also a few cases of the same community speaking different languages. He pointed out the role of Indian National Congress in recognition of territorial rights of languages including the formation of linguistic states which also created different minorities. The setting up of the NCLM for safe guarding the rights of linguistic minorities was also the recognition of the fact that problems were bound to crop up and the need to redress them. He felt that different languages had developed differently because they were allocated different functions and all languages were not provided with equal opportunity for growth. The minorities had a right to develop their languages and seek technological, economic and educational support.

Dr Prema Raghvan, Regional Institute of Education felt that the issue of empowerment of people could not be dissociated from the empowerment of languages. Also the concept of multilingual education and multiplicity of mother tongues was indicative of how different languages could grow together rather than one at the cost of other. She gave a detailed account of the multilingualism in her own family where the husband and wife spoke different languages and had moved from one state to the other with their children proficient in the regional languages as well.

.She felt that quality education had not been made possible despite the launching of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. The goals of language planning had not coincided with goals of educational planning. The goal of preserving languages was different from revitalization of languages which was the need of the hour for minority languages. Also the oral tradition was an essential part of our culture and the advent of literacy must not weaken that base. Also the role of translation

in teaching of science had to be understood for all terms did not warrant the search for native equivalents and coinages when borrowing could suffice.

Shri B.D.Jayaram, CIIL tabled his views by stating that from all accounts there was no evidence of direct correlation between being a linguistic minority and being socio-economically backward. The linkage of factors could be indirect and worthy of empirical study. The criteria suggested by Prof. Patnaik regarding the smallness of size, remoteness of location, absence of literacy tradition were important and we could use these in conjunction with rural vs. urban so that the parameters become adequate. Also provision of education using the minority languages may be built into quality education as perceived by the minorities.

Dr. K.Kapfo, CIIL provided an account of the work undertaken in Nagaland where the problem was the failure of tribal children in mathematics. It was felt that use of mother tongue in education instead of official language English, which was hardly understood, would improve the quality. It was also found that though private school children where English was given preference were better in English they were not better in mathematics which required proper thinking and best achieved in government schools where there was more support for mother tongue. That is why if we want to ensure better cognitive growth of children and have quality education, mother tongue must be used for instruction and government schools should be improved. Our objective may not be language development but educational development.

Shri R.Elangaiyan, CIIL pointed out the importance of being in a position to advise the government on matters of far reaching consequence. The issue of linguistic minorities being such an issue deserved to be treated with seriousness and respect. He wondered why the entire machinery involved with the decision-making had decided not to table the information about communities that were smaller in size- below 10,000. He also wondered why all linguists in the country had chosen to remain silent and become party to the violation of rights to existence for this indeed was denial of right to meaningful existence and reflected a bias against minorities. Every individual was as important any other and passive spectator's role would not be helpful. He also felt that people posed questions about cost only when smaller languages were brought in to focus as though that would drain the resources. He also emphasized that the task of providing authentic materials for schools in tribal and minor languages was very challenging and could encounter resistance even from the native speakers themselves. However, it would be unwise to abandon the task on that count.

Dr Malli Gandhi, RIE recounted his experience as a member of the minority group and the sense of isolation / exclusion by the majority. He pointed out how he experienced the indifference and failed to make the state authorities in

Andhra Pradesh to open up schools for tribal children in keeping with their specific needs. He pointed to the research work undertaken by him wherein he could clearly point out that the educational backwardness was a result of the apathetic attitude of the machinery in dealing with the communities that were different from the main stream types.

Prof. Agnihotri in his concluding remarks thanked the participants for raising several important issues that were related to the welfare of the linguistic minorities and also helped in contextualizing the complexities. He pointed out that the purpose of the Commission was to work out a legislation that could be applied to some well defined set of people in well defined ways. There was no room for ambiguity in law. However the discourse had not been able to attend to that for it had only dug up the ground. The only definitive line of action -with some consensus- which emerged was about the need to provide quality education with inclusion of mother tongue in the school curriculum. There was also the need to understand inherent variability of languges, and multilinguality in psycho-linguistic and socio-cultural terms for it brought to surface different forms of life and could provide for changing the very way we conceive pedagogy. The need to situate the children and their discourse in the centre-stage, of treating the minority as potentially equal to the majority and treating their differences with dignity are not small matters.

OBSERVATIONS

There is an assumption in the terms of reference that the term linguistic minority is unambiguous and well understood that can be easily applied for diagnosing who belongs to that category. But this not really the case.

The term **linguistic minority** has been defined differently at different places and is viewed as a relative or contextual term that presupposes the term majority. We need to study some of these definitions closely all of which have useful content but may be used with different intent.

'Any group of people whose mother tongue is different from the principal language of the state'— National Commission for Linguistic Minorities

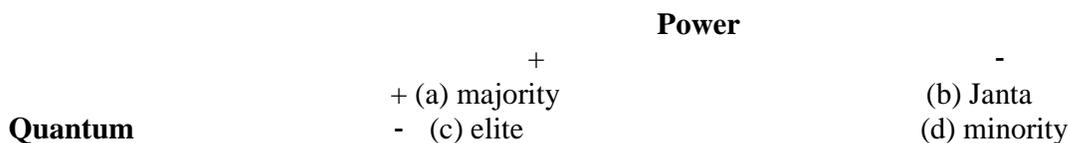*'Any group of people whose mother tongue is different from the official language [which is often but not always the Principal language] of the state'* __ A *CIIL, Report*

*'The term minority includes only those non-dominant groups in a population which possess and wish to preserve stable, ethnic, religious or linguistic traditions or characteristics markedly different from those of the rest of the population.'*__ *United Nations*

The establishment of majority/minority language hierarchies is neither a natural process nor primarily even a linguistic one. Rather, it is a historically, socially and politically *constructed* process, and one that is deeply imbued in wider (unequal) power relations.

What actually distinguishes a majority language from a minority language or a dialect. This distinction is not a straightforwardly linguistic one. For example, we cannot always distinguish easily between a language and a dialect on linguistic grounds, since some languages are mutually intelligible, such as Danish, Swedish and Norwegian, while some dialects of the same language are not. Similarly, the majority/minority status ascribed to particular language varieties may well change over time, depending on wider social and political events. *[Stephen May]*

Srivastava (1984) **provides a new approach towards defining minority-majority languages based on two principles, "quantum" and "power", as shown in the diagram, wherein, the linguistic minorities are those that lack both quantum and power and majority as having them.**

	Power	
	+	-
	+ (a) majority	(b) Janta
Quantum	- (c) elite	(d) minority

Linguistic minorities are speakers of minority languages. Minority languages are typically those which carry relatively less or marginal functional load and functional transparency__ *R. Pandharipande, a renowned Indian sociolinguist*

Pandharipande proposes that for understanding the linguistic minorities a different framework needs to be formulated which will take into account **the multilingual profile of India, the functional distribution of languages across domains, the size of the speech community and the notion of dominance**. Moreover, the framework should be able to explain various types of minority in the country, and why the same language can have the status of minority as well as dominant language simultaneously (in different states). For example, minority languages can be divided into three groups: (a) **those which have "minority (nondominant)" status in their native state;** (b) **those which are reduced to "minority status" in their non-native states;** and (c) **languages which do not have a native state but are distributed across states (e.g. Sindhi and Konkani).** This framework clearly shows that a language acquires minority status when its functional load is reduced (in a non-native state where the dominant language of that state is different and used in many public domains), while it continues to enjoy the status of a dominant (non-minority language) in its native state.

 Brief discussion:

OBSERVATION

There is no clear cut data related to socio-economic backwardness and the language used; often there is a perception that the less literate monolingual types who speak

Recommendations:

10. the term linguistic minority should be defined clearly for operational purposes keeping the context in mind and then different types of linguistic minorities be listed in each state with information on their size and territorial spread including settings-pockets/villages in which they may be dominant and cease to be minority
11. each state must be asked to present a status report on the socio-economic profiles [with occupation, education, income, housing and assets] of different linguistic communities especially minorities
12. each state must also present a report on the status of different languages specifying the **domains** [family, education, mass-media etc.] in which they function and mentioning steps taken, if any, to maintain or change their status
13. the census of India must be asked to table the data on smaller communities whose population is below 10,000- so that multilingual profiles can be drawn for all states capturing all individuals and their linguistic affiliations

Workshop on Linguistic Minorites

March 27, 2006

CIIL, Mysore.

List of Resource persons/special invitees/ Academic Staff

Sl. No.	Name & Address	Sl. No.	Name & Address
1	Dr. A.K. Basu CIIL, Mysore	2	Dr. B. Mallikarjun CIIL, Mysore
3	Dr. B.A. Sharada CIIL, Mysore	4	Dr. C.V. Sivaramakrishna CIIL, Mysore
5	Dr. Devaki CIIL, Mysore	6	Dr. Imtiaz Hasnain, Aligarh Muslim University
7	Dr. Gananatha Shetty Yekkar Member, Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy, Mangalore	8	Dr. H.M. Ganesh Reader, DOS in Anthropology, Manasagangotri, Mysore
9	Dr. K. Mohan Pai Konkani Educational Institute, V.T. Road, Mangalore	10	Dr. K. Rajasekhara Reddy Reader, Dept. of Anthropology, University of Mysore, Mysore
11	Dr. Kakali Mukherjee O/o the RGI, Language Division, Kolkata – 20.	12	Dr. Kedutso Kapfo CIIL, Mysore
13	Dr. Kalachanne Gowda Professor of Sociology, Maharaja's College, Mysore	14	Dr. Malli Gandhi Faculty, Dept of DEUH, RIE, NCERT, Mysore
15	Dr. Panduranga Murthy Dept. of Biotechnology, Mysore	16	Dr. S. Manoharan Anthropological Survey of India
17	Dr. Pon Subbiah CIIL, Mysore	18	Dr. R. Subbakrishna CIIL, Mysore
19	Dr. Ramprasad Deuri Dibrugarh, Assam	20	Dr. S.S. Bhattacharya Kolkata - 8
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23	Ms. Prema Raghavan RIE, Mysore	24	Prof. H.K. Bhat Dept of Anthropology, University of Mysore, Mysore
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49	Prof. H.R. Dua 1759, Hebbal 2nd Stage, Mysore	50	Sri K.K. Bagai Anthropological Association of India, Mysore – 26
51	Sri Tek Chand HTS, CIIL, Mysore		

List of Research Scholars

Sl. No.	Name & Address	Sl. No.	Name & Address
1	Mr. Konchok Tashi CIIL, Mysore	2	Mr. Shahzad Alam CIIL, Mysore
3	Mr. Wanglit Mongchan CIIL, Mysore	4	Ms. B.A. Mahalakshmi Prasad CIIL, Mysore
5	Ms. Bharathi Devi. P CIIL, Mysore	6	Ms. Bobita Sarangthem Research Scholar, Manipur University, Manipur

7	Ms. Elish Vaiphei Manipur	8	Ms. L. Kalita Devi Manipur
9	Ms. Prafulla, University of Mysore	10	Ms. Veena. R. DoS in Anthropology, Mysore
11	Sri B.M. Srinivasa DoS in Anthropology, Mysore	12	Sri Doreraj. M.L Research Scholar, DOS in Anthropology, Mysore
13	Sri Kantharaju. C.K. Research Scholar, DoS in Anthropology, University of Mysore	14	Sri L. Anand Singh Manipur University, Manipur
15	Sri S. Winston Cruz, CIIL, Mysore	16	Sri Prem Sagar. C.A. CIIL, Mysore
17	Sri S.C. Jaiprabhakar CIIL, Mysore	18	Sri Shivanand Dept. of History, University of Mysore, Mysore
19	Sri Michael Suantak B17, 107 – 109, New Delhi – 110 018.		

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