Official Language, State and Civil Society: Issues Concerning the Implementation of the 'The Official Language Act' in Goa

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Abstract: When Goa joined the Indian Union in 1961, India was already independent for over fifteen years. Various policies, including language policies were already in place in the Union. These included the policy of having linguistic states, whereby. though all languages need not have a separate state. every state would have a dominant language. This language would then be recognised as official language of the State.

Accordingly. in the move to make Goa a state of India. it was imperative to recognise Konkani as the Official language. Though in 1967, the people of Goa rejected Goan identity with Maharashtra and by default, Marathi language, getting the people to recognise Konkani as official language was not an easy task. After a lot of mobilising, lobbying and compromise. Konkani was made the Official Language of Goa on 4 February 1987. But there have been complaints about the implementation of the Act.

In this paper, I have examined the various issues pertaining to OLA and its implementation. Beginning by asserting the importance of language for the project of nation building, I have then tried to show how language issues in administration and governance form an integral aspect of nationism. I have then briefly sketched the Official languages that have dominated the public sphere in India right since ancient times. Specifically focussing on Goa, I have shown how inter-linkages between the state, public sphere and civil society have contributed in addressing the questions relating to the implementation of the OLA in Goa.

Apart from using secondary sources like an examination of books, pamphlets and government documents, I have had extensive interviews with various players involved-government officials. language protagonists and members of the civil society.

Introduction

Goa got liberated on 19 December 1961 and joined the Indian Union. Post liberation Goa has been dominated by the language controversy, which has been taking new avatars every now and then. Initially the moot questions in the realm of language use were: What is the language of the people of Goa, Konkani or Marathi? Is Konkani an independent language or is it a dialect of Marathi? These and other related questions are the moot questions that have been the axial problem for ideological struggle and political praxis in more ways than one. These questions have divided the people of Goa into two ideological camps: one Konkanivada, promoting the cause of Konkani, and the other Marathivada wanting to retain the status quo and perceived superiority of Marathi.

The first language related controversy that erupted in Goa was the question on whether Goa should remain a separate entity or be merged with Maharashtra. In keeping with the principle of linguistic states, language became a deciding factor in settling this question. In the Opinion Poll that was held on 16 January 1967, over fifty three percent of the population voted for Goa to be kept a separate entity. This implied that Konkani and not Marathi was the language of Goa.

The next milestone was achieving statehood. In keeping with the linguistic basis for State formation, the declaration of the Official language became a prerequisite to conferring statehood to Goa. The Official Language Act (OLA) was passed on 4 February 1987 and accordingly. Goa became a State on 30 May 1987. But ever since then, the State has been charged with allegations of non implementation of the OLA. The common grouse is that letters to the Government written in Konkani are replied to in English or Marathi. In this paper, I have examined the various issues pertaining to OLA and its implementation. Beginning by asserting the importance of language for the project of nation building, I have then tried to show how language issues in administration and governance form an integral aspect of nationism. I have then briefly sketched the Official languages that have dominated the public sphere in India right since ancient times. I have argued that though in the West the notion of Official language is associated with modernity and the rise of the

nation-state, in India it was a necessity since millennia. This was a consequence of plurilingualism that has been part of the Indian heritage since centuries. Specifically focussing on Goa, I have shown how inter-linkages between the state, public sphere and civil society have contributed in addressing the questions relating to the implementation of the OLA in Goa.

Language and Nation: Western Imagination and Eastern Reality

There are very few terms in political sociological discourse today that presents more conceptual complexity and ambiguity than 'nation'. Even its very definition invokes no unanimity. Some scholars subscribe that a nation need not be circumscribed within a single state (Gellner 1983: 7). This conceptual variation is in part a consequence of its historical moorings. A Western import, the compulsion for conceptualising an Indian nation was largely an outcome of British colonial presence and its articulations (Oomenn 2004: 23). Originally denoting mono-cultural entities of Europe, the concept underwent a paradigm shift when transplanted to the Indian subcontinent. Questions like 'Is India a Nation?' and 'Does India Exist?' are recurrent themes in the analysis of state and society in India (Mukherji 1994: 21).

For most scholars, the concept of nation is applicable to the Indian subcontinent, albeit, in a form and structure modified from its western conception. For Oomenn (2004: 9), South Asian states like India and Pakistan are collectivities of nations coexisting within federal states.

The Role of Language for Nationism

This distinction given by Fasold (1987: 3) between nationalism or the feelings that develop from and support nationalities, and nationism, i.e. the more pragmatic problems of governing gets accentuated when the role of language is considered. Language becomes an important component in the conceptualisation of nationalism and nationism, especially in post-colonial entities like India, where it forms a viable basis for nation formation. Fasold (1987: 3) shows how the requirements of nationalism and nationism can be in conflict where language is concerned. Though an integral part of nationality formation, language plays a subtle role in the process.

This refers to the feeling among the members of a nationality that they are united and identified with others who speak the same language and are separated from others who do not.

The role of language in nationism, on the other hand, is clearer cut. There are two arenas in which language becomes a problem for nationism: general government administration and medium of instruction (Fasold 1987: 3). While education involves transmitting knowledge to students in a language that is efficient, the process of governance requires communication both within the governing institutions and between the government and the people. For governance, usually whatever language best serves the purpose is used. Since the problems of nationism are often pragmatic, the solutions pose nationalist problems. Fasold (1987: 4) gives the example of a newly independent colony where for practical purposes, the best immediate choice for the language of governance would be the colonial language. But this clinging on to the colonial language would affront the nationalist sensibilities of the newly independent nation-state which is in the process of asserting itself. Very often, in the face of pressing nationalist purposes, the nationalist needs have to be postponed. This situation, which is commonly a feature of post-colonial societies, has consequences for the nature of multilingualism and the functional and symbolic relationship between different languages. The negotiations worked out by different post colonial nation-states depend on the cultural and linguistic histories of the region concerned.

Nationalism and Language Issues in India

In India, language played a crucial role in the development of nationism in the early years of Independence. The Constitution reflected the multiplicity of Indian culture, including linguistic plurality. Under the Fundamental Rights, for instance, Article 29 (a) provides the right for the linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions. The Constitution also specifically prescribes the language of administration, legislature and judiciary. Though the choice of some languages for use in the domains of power based on the size of their population creates a hierarchy among the Indian languages, the Constitution does not give any language symbolic

superiority to symbolise the nation (Annamalai 2001: 131). By not declaring any language as the national language, the Constitution does not link nationhood to loyalty to any specific language. Annamalai (2001: 131) refers to this as the indirect Constitutional prescription of linguistic secularism for India.

While upholding linguistic secularism, it was nevertheless felt imperative to try to streamline this plurality at least for the sake of administration. The smooth functioning of the new plurilingual nation-state sought some linguistic commonality. Indian nationism involved two major language-related issues: The official language issue and the creation of linguistic states. Both these are interrelated: the creation of linguistic states makes convenient the presence of an official language. Both implied the language of governance. The dealt with the question of language for federal government and the latter concerned the state Government.

Official Language and Federal Governance in India

With regard to federal governance, the question revolved around the national language for the new plurilingual nation-state. The colonial language, English, despite having practical advantages could not be allowed to be a contender. A strong sense of nationalism meant that one could not be really free as long as the language of the coloniser was given a place of pre-eminence. Mahatma Gandhi, even prior to Independence, had been advocating for Hindustani-a kind of reconciliation between the Hindi Urdu divide. But in the aftermath of Partition, not many were willing to accommodate Urdu. Hindi was posed as the next alternative. It had more native speakers than any other Indian language and was the most widely used for inter-ethnic communication. Hindi was named as the national language in the Constitution and a fifteen year deadline was set for a complete replacement of English by Hindi. But this did not happen. Vociferously opposing what they saw as aggressive attempts to impose Hindi imperialism, the anti-Hindi lobby, especially from Tamil Nadu, even resorted to violent protests. A law was passed in 1967, allowing the use of both Hindi and English for all official purposes .The same situation stands till today.

Official Language and State Formation

The next issue dealt with the language to be used at the level of state administration. India was characterised by linguistic states. This did not mean that every language had a State; rather every State had an official language. The linguistic states themselves were a product of a virulent conflict. Though the Indian National Congress in the years before independence promised the creation of linguistic states, it later backtracked as it thought that this move would hinder national security. But giving in to violent protests, the States Reorganisation Committee recommended the reorganisation of states on linguistic basis.

The creation of linguistic states then gave rise to questions of official language. The States and Union Territories were given freedom to decide their own Official language. Most chose the language of their linguistic majorities as official language, but some chose English. In this Chapter, I have demonstrated how Goa negotiated the process of selecting its official language. I have focussed on the role that Official Language plays in the promotion of nationism.

Official Language: A Consequence of Linguistic Plurality

For Bourdieu (1992: 45):

"...an Official Language is one which. within the territorial limits of that unit, imposes itself on the whole population as the only legitimate language. It is bound up in the state both in its genesis and its social uses. It is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language."

Bourdieu's views could lead one to assume that official language is a by-product of the modern conception of nation state and nationism. But India has dealt with official language since millennia. The prime reason for this is that the Indian polity has always been multilingual. In such polities, questions pertaining to language use gain significance- in what language will the government operate and keep its records? What language will the court use for its proceedings? Can the mother tongue be used for administrative purposes? Because

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language is a distinctive property of most ethnic communities and is at the core of ethnic identities and ethnic pride, the relative status of language can assume enormous symbolic importance in ethnically-divided societies (Esman 1992: 381).

Official Language through the Centuries

Since ancient times in Indian history, a single kingdom extended over many linguistic areas. Information on how these kingdoms dealt with administrative communication, in what language did the kings speak to their subjects, all demonstrated not simply the practical uses of a language, but also reflected the symbolic status of a language. The recognition of one language as "national" or "official" is not a mere matter of convenience or of facilitating communication; it symbolises respect for the community it represents (Esman 1992: 381). In the fourth century, the Natya Sastra of Sage Bharata, for the first time in recorded history, laid down rules for language use in a society. Here, language is an identity- a marker of social position (Bayer 1986, cited in Krishna 1991:45). It details the various languages that are to be used during drama performances. Depending on the role being performed the language varies, with basically a distinction being drawn between Sanskrit and Prakrit. Sanskrit was generally considered the high language and Prakrit the low one. During Ashoka's time though, the court language was Prakrit, the language which a majority people spoke. The Satavanhas used Prakrit and local script variations of Brahmi; the Cholas began with Sanskrit but soon switched to Tamil; the Cheras used the languages of the areas they ruled, Tamil or Kannada, but both in Kannada script (Krishna 1991: 46). In the Vijayanagar kingdom, Tamil and Telugu were used in their respective areas and it was necessary to learn several different scripts to join government service (Mallikarjun: 1986, cited in Krishna 1991: 46). The Kadambas of present day Goa started by giving Prakrit official status, but soon shifted to Sanskrit.

Thus local languages were widely used in administration, although Sanskrit was retained as the language of religion and elite culture. Also, more than one language was used for conducting the administration. In medieval times, the Mughals made Persian their official language, but had to speak the local language to communicate

with the people. With the arrival of the British, the pre-eminent position of Persian was appropriated by English, although Urdu continued to be used.

British Colonialism and Change in the Nature of Multilingualism

The British colonialism brought in a change in the nature of usage of official language. Earlier, it was usually the language of the masses that was the official language. Even if the official language was that of the rulers, the local languages were also incorporated for the purpose of administration. Hence, plurilingualism did not create a situation of conflict over language loyalty.

It was with the British that for the first time a discernable hierarchy was created with regard to language use for official purposes. Lord Macauly's minutes and the subsequent changes in the education system bifurcated the Indian subjects. The subjects were now categorised into English speaking elite, an articulate section that were incorporated in the colonial mainstream and the non-English speaking masses who were excluded from the framework of colonial public life. English dominated Indian bourgeoisie thinking to such an extent that even the nationalist struggle was compelled to make use of English.

It was this dependence on English that Mahatma Gandhi protested. For him, freedom meant deliverance from the shackles of the English language, as much as social, economic, and political freedom (Gandhi 1921). He advocated the use of Hindustani as national language. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, this could not be materialised and English along with Hindi continued as the official languages of the Union.

Official Langı   ᵉ in Post-Independence India

The Linguistic Reorganisation of States resulted in various other languages being used in the administration. Language now became a key to statehood. With the formation of linguistic states, the recognised regional language has achieved the "exclusive territorial rights" that could guarantee their survival in their own states (Krishna 1991: 69). This has changed the nature of multilingualism in India which is characterised by the emergence of the regional language as the official language, which are then used to provide social and

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economic mobility through government employment and positions of political patronage (Annamalai 2001: 141). With their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule and their designation as the official language of the State, the development of these languages then flourished, especially at the lower levels of administration. Thus Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, Kannada, and all other official languages progressed with standardised form and improved vocabulary, thanks to their use in administration.

While all these developments were taking place, Goa was still under colonial rule. Until their last day, the Portuguese insisted on Goa being a part of Portugal. Indigenous languages, especially Konkani, did not record much development. It was only after Liberation in 1961, and specifically two decades later, that thoughts on official language began to be articulated in the public sphere in Goa.

Official Language in Colonial Goa: Economic Concerns and Political Expediency

Reconstruction of literary and other uses of Konkani prior to the arrival of the Portuguese indicate that though Konkani was used in land records and for devotional purposes, it did not have steady official patronage (Pinto 2007: 83). Instead Marathi, Kannada, or Persian was the official languages of the varying kingdoms that ruled Goa before the Portuguese rule. But through most of this time, Marathi had established itself as the language of devotional verse among upper caste Goans. When the Portuguese established their rule over these territories in Goa in 1543, Marathi retained its dominance in official spheres, but was subordinated to Portuguese as a language from which land documents would have to be translated (Pinto 2007: 83). In fact between the sixteenth and nineteenth century, Portuguese colonialism had produced a band of Marathi or Portuguese speaking Goans through which administration was carried out. With regard to the linguistic policy to be followed, the State was primarily concerned with setting the ground rules in the sphere of religion and formation of national identity. The choice of nurturing a language for administration and the development of a literary language were less consciously pursued. At the same time, the English language began gaining popularity in Goa ever since the early nineteenth century when the British posted troops in Goa during the Napoleonic wars. English

was now a source capital for Goans who migrated in large numbers to British India in search o employment. Thus influenced by economic, political and literary concerns that went beyond Portuguese religious policy, English and Marathi began to increase in dominance since the nineteenth century. This dichotomous situation persisted for more than a century, right until the Liberation of Goa, and even after.

The Making of the Official Language in Post-Liberation Goa

The Liberation of Goa and the early years of self governance were under the shadow of the dominance of Marathi. Governed by the MGP (a party that owed its existence to the cause of Marathi in Goa) for nearly two decades, this two-pronged Marathi English hegemony continued. A change could only be initiated after the decline of the MGP in the political sphere. After the Congress won the 1979 Assembly elections, efforts to consolidate the position of Konkani began in the public sphere in Goa.

In 1985, Shri Luizinho Faleiro, a Congress MLA, brought a resolution for the creation of a Konkani Akademi. The Goa Legislative Assembly accepted this resolution. This encouraged him to submit on 19 July, 1985, a Private Member's Bill in the Legislative Assembly to make Konkani the Official Language of Goa. The Congress government in Goa (which comprised of some former MGP leaders) rejected the Bill without even introducing it. The usual practice was to at least introduce the Private Member's Bill. But, Dr Harishchandra Nagvenkar, a Konkani protagonist informs that not only did they not introduce the Bill, they even made some disparaging remarks about Konkani while doing so. Reading about this incident, Shri Babli Naik, a news reporter, got incensed. He approached Konkani protagonists and within ten days, the Konkani Porjecho Awaz (KPA) was formed, on 29 July 1985. This group comprised of Konkani writers, artistes, and activists.

The Konkani Porjecho Awaz: The Movement for Official Language

The Konkani Porjecho Awaz (KPA) remained a non-political organisation throughout its tenure. It had a three-fold goal: to make Konkani the Official Language of Goa, to obtain Statehood to Goa, and to see that Konkani is included in the Eighth Schedule of the

Constitution. All through 1986, there were rallies held to pressurise the government into accepting Konkani as the official language of Goa. The agitation grew fierce and violent, especially in the Christian dominated area of Salcette, which was the bastion of Konkani (There was a Margao bandh for over ten days). To counter the KPA, the Marathivadis formed the Marathi Rajya Bhasha Prastaphan Samiti (MRBPS). This movement demanded that Marathi should be the Official language of Goa. The ruling Congress, made up as it were of a number of Marathi ideologues, was divided on this issue. The Marathi camp within the Government joined the MRBPS while the Konkani supporters in the Government used the platform of the KPA.

The then Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi, had promised the Konkani protagonists that he would see to it that Goa was given statehood after the Official language issue was settled. This was a requirement given the linguistic basis of State formation in India. Prime Minister Gandhi's concern was not the official language issue as it came under the jurisdiction of the State Government. His concern was Statehood. He felt that as long as Goa remained a Union Territory, there was a fear that it would one day be merged with Maharashtra. This possibility persisted because though the pro-mergers' ideology had lost vigour since the Opinion Poll, it had not been extinguished.

As the language issue refused to settle down and when the Congress High command in Delhi realised that the ruling Congress was divided on the issue, it sent the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Sri C. Panigrahi and Party Official Sri R. L. Bhatia to Goa. Over the next few days, these officials held a series of meetings and discussions with various groups from the government, opposition as well as members of the KPA and the MRBPS. This group then prepared the draft Official Language Bill. This Bill was then presented before the Assembly where it was passed and became a law on 4 February 1987. The notification of the Goa, Daman and Diu Official Language Act, 1987 (Act 5 of 1987) reads:

"The Goa, Daman and Diu Official Language Act, 1987 makes Konkani in the Devanagarii script the sole official language of Goa, for all or any of the official purposes and different dates may be appointed for different official purposes. Provided that the administrator

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may, by a like notification, direct that in the case of Goa district the Marathi langauge and in the case of Daman and Diu, the Gujarati language, shall also be used for all or any official purpose and different dates may be appointed for different official purposes."

The protagonists of Konkani in Roman Script were upset that Devanagari script was mentioned in the Act. On the eve of the passing of the Act, around three hundred of them led by MLA Sri Churchill Alemao gheraoed the office of the Herald, a local English daily, which played a prominent pro-Konkani role in the agitation. But Sri Rajan Narayan, the then editor of the Herald explains that if Devanagari script had not been mentioned, the Act may not have been passed as the influential pro-Marathi camp would have vehemently opposed it. Sri S. M. Borges, a member of the group 'Catholics for Devanagari,' also explains that as per the Constitution, whenever there is a situation where in more than one script is used, the script for the official language is mentioned. He gives the example of Manipuri and Haryanvi to substantiate his point. He also argues that if both scripts are considered then it will hamper the process of implementation. He opines:

> "If different scripts are allowed, the notings will be in different scripts. Then will not the file take long time to move? It will remain pending. But, as now only Devanagari script is mentioned, at least in another ten years, everyone who takes up government jobs will be familiar with Devanagari, and it will help the administrative purpose."

Sri Uday Bhembre, staunch proponent for Konkani in Devanagiri script informs that he and Sri Luizinho Faleiro walked out of the Assembly to register their protest over the inclusion of Marathi in the Act. Sri Bhembre says that the Official language should refer to the spoken language of the people. He nonetheless opines that this law helped the Konkanivadis achieve three things: establish the identity of Goa as a Konkani state in the Indian Union, helped Goa attain statehood, and helped Konkani to be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

The next step after passing of the OLA was its implementation. There has been a common grouse among all sections of the people,

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that the OLA is not being implemented. On this count, all the opposing language camps are in agreement.

Implementation of the OLA as Institutionalisation of an Ideology

There are different experiences in India with regard to the implementation of the OLA. Of these we can identify two models. One thought has been followed in Karnataka and the other in Maharashtra.

When Dr Patnaik was the Director of the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, (CIIL) he mentioned to Sri Bhembre that at that time, Sri DevrajUras was the Chief Minister of Karnataka in the mid-1970s. He approached Dr Patnaik seeking his help as he wanted to implement the Official Language Act of Karnataka.

Assured of the Chief Minister's commitment (earlier a number of Governments were not serious about implementation), Dr Patnaik asked that the State Government officers, beginning with the lower level officers, be sent in batches to the Centre. As it was the lower level officers who took notings, it was felt that it was imperative that they be trained first. So, beginning with the lower level, officers of different grades were sent to the CIIL. Dr Patnaik recalls that when these officers came to him, he found that all of them had had their initial education in Kannada. He told them that they had nothing more to learn, but once they went back, they were to read and translate all their work into Kannada. And so ultimately the OLA was implemented in Karnataka.

In the case of Karnataka, implementation became easier as most of the government officials had had at least their early education in Kannada. The problem arose in those states in which the basic education was in a language different from the official language. In this model, terminologies had to be prepared and everyone had to be trained in the official language. Maharashtra followed this second model, as not everyone had had their education in Marathi. Hence, terminologies had to be prepared. Rules were prepared and notification issued for the purpose of implementation. The Government of Maharastra prepared 50 terminology books for different subjects, including themes like law, administration, Local Self Government. Slowly Maharashtra began to implement the OLA even in courts.

Thus, the administration communicates with the people, especially at the district and lower levels, exclusively in the regional language, and the administration functions internally to a greater extent in the regional language (Krishna 1991: 69). One reason for this is that at this level, most officials are drawn from the state itself, so no problems usually arise. But as one moves up throughout the administrative ladder, the use of English increases. An IAS officer, for instance, might not belong to the State. These officers are expected to pass an oral and written exam in the language of their assigned states at the very beginning of their careers, and their increments are held up till the language examination is cleared (Krishna 1991: 70). But while officers in the field speak the local language, English is still predominant in the State headquarters. This has the constitutional bac king of the courts. In the High Court of a State, the local language does not play a significant role. Even in matters of legislature, there has been a tendency to classify languages as high and low, with the official language used to document routine matters and English being made use of when the matter is of some importance. Krishna (1991) says that there is a much more pro-English attitude in the states than the technical problems faced by administrators.

Implementation of the official language thus is not "instant coffee". It involves more than just technical problems associated with a shift in language use for administration. It also encompasses an attitudinal shift which involves transfer of language use from private sphere to public sphere to the sphere of the state. The problem of usage of official language for the purpose of the state administration gets even more confounded when the language in question is Konkani. Apart from the historical neglect of the language, Konkani has also to negotiate the dominant presence of Marathi, another indigenous language. As we have observed earlier, the OLA itself sought to compromise between the two language camps. In such a situation, Konkani naturally has had to struggle to assert itself as the official language of Goa. With the conflicting pulls from both the English and Marathi ideological camps, the implementation of Konkani as the official language of Goa involved making Konkani the language of communication in both the political as well as public sphere. It involved the institutionalisation of the dominant Konkani ideology.

Reluctance, Activism and an Agenda for Implementation

Sri Bhembre informs that the character of the OLA is different from other Acts. For instance, unlike other Acts, it is not dated. For every use the Government has to issue fresh notification for the particular purpose. Thus, the implementation of the OLA has to be done in phases. So far, only two notifications have been issued: 1) If you write to the Government in Konkani, then the Government has to reply in Konkani and 2) if you write to the Government in Marathi, then you have to get your reply in Marathi. The Official Language Cell was created under the control of the General Administration Department, Secretariat to undertake the works of language development. But, Sri Bhembre alleges that the Cell, which comprised of four members, was ineffective. Sri Damodar Mauzo, Sri Uday Bhembre, Sri Tomazinho Cardoso and Sri N. Shivdas are among some of those who were on the Advisory Committee of the Official Language Cell. Sri Mauzo complains:

> "For ten consecutive years, the Cell had not called for a single meeting. Even when it started meeting, there was no seriousness. We have made a number of recommendations, but it has not been followed upon. So we felt that attending those meetings and being associated with the Official Language Cell were simply a waste of our energies and money. Hence we resigned en masse from the Committee."

The Official Language Cell was upgraded into the Directorate of Official Language in the year 1997. However, a full time Director with provisions for a separate budget head was appointed only from the year 2004-05. Functioning under it is an Advisory Board under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister/ Minister for Official Language. The Advisory Board comprises of eminent personalities in the field of literature, education and art. The Board includes members of both Devanagari and Roman Konkani camp, as well as Marathi protagonists. Language associations belonging to all three ideologies- Devanagari Konkani, Roman Konkani and Marathi-are represented in the Board. The Director of CIIL, as well as the Chairman of the SSCE Board, are also included in the Advisory Board. The duty of the committee is to advise the Government on the proper implementation of the official language.

The Directorate sent a delegation to Mumbai to understand how the Maharashtra Government implemented the Maharashtra Official Language Act. This delegation consisted of three members - Sri Chandrakant Keni, Sri Damodar Mauzo and Sri Jayant Dhume. While the former two were Konkani literary figures, Sri Jayant Dhume was a government official familiar with government terminology. Despite the efforts of the delegation, no terminology book has been published as yet.

The OLA and the Court

For a number of years the development of the official language vacillated. Issues concerning official language have been used in the court on two occasions. One case involved the mining company, Sesa Goa. The government, under the House Acquisition Act wanted to acquire some property of the company, and accordingly sent them a notice. The company chose to ignore the notice. When the case came before the court, Sesa Goa argued that the notice was given to them in Marathi. And as Marathi was not the Official Language of Goa, the notice stood null and void. The court countered this argument by saying that the notice for house acquisition is part of House Acquisition Act which is a Regional Act. As per the Regional Act, any language which is in use in the region can be applied. And hence the usage of Marathi was valid as it is a regional language in use in Goa. Thus for the first time the issue of official language entered the domain of the court, though the purpose was not language per se, but to evade legal action.

The second instance when the official language was discussed in the court was when the issue of employment arose. According to the OLA, knowledge of Konkani was essential for government jobs. Article 309 of the Constitution gave the State Government the power to frame their own employment rules. The Marathivadis went to court stating that Marathi should also be made essential for employment. Justice Khandeparkar ruled that under the Official Language Act, only Konkani is the Official Language.

The OLA was implemented only for the purpose of employment and that too partially, when Sri Luizinho Faleiro became the Industries Minister. But, Sri Bhembre says:

"It was a partial implementation. What was tested was knowledge of Konkani and not use of Konkani. This was done to safeguard the interest of locals and not for the development of Konkani. As per Article 309. the State Government could frame employment rules pertaining to age, educational qualifications, and language to safeguard local culture."

Towards Implementation: From Cell to Directorate

Sri N. Shivdas though is optimistic about the future implementation of the Official Language Act. With the appointment of a full time Director for the Directorate of Official Language, and with Sri Digambar Kamat as the Chief Minister, Konkani protagonists feel that a small beginning has been made with respect to implementation of the OLA. As per the suggestions made by the new Advisory Board that was reconstituted in February 2008, a number of schemes have been chalked out and activities identified. Two of the more prominent schemes are the Rajbhas Prashikhan Evzonn 2008, and the Scheme of publication in the Official Language 2008. The Rajbhas Prashikshan Evzonn 2008 scheme is formulated by the Directorate to provide in-service training in Konkani to all employees of the Government undertakings, Cooperative banks, Financial Institutions, Autonomous Organisations, owned or controlled by the Government. The Directorate has visualised that under this scheme, Konkani language training is obligatory for all such employees/officers whose knowledge of Konkani is below the prescribed level. The syllabus for training has been framed and the Directorate is now in the process of eliciting interest from NGOs and Educational Institutions for conducting the training classes.

The Directorate also plans a scheme whereby unpublished manuscripts from Goan writers in the Official language will be given a maximum honorarium of Rs. one lakh for the publication of his/her manuscript. Surprisingly though, according to the Citizen's Charter brought out by the Directorate, it is mentioned "…to give boost to Official Language i.e. Konkani, Marathi and English." This perhaps reflects the ambiguity with which the OLA has been conceptualised and executed. Given Goa's linguistic history wherein Marathi always played a dominant role in matters concerning the state as well as the public sphere. English too because of its global appeal and nativisation occupies a dominant place, especially in

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post colonial societies. This perhaps explains why the administration is reluctant to let go of these two languages.

Negotiating Nationalism and Contesting Nationalism through the Directorate of Official Languages

The ambiguity concerning which a language is to be considered as the official language governs every aspect of the functioning of the Directorate. A cursory perusal of the Citizen's Charter issued by the Directorate gives one the impression that both Konkani and Marathi are the official languages. An important activity of the Directorate is the translation of official documents and the publication of State Acts and Rules in the official language. The translations and publications are done in both Konkani and Marathi. Both Konkani and Marathi language associations are to be bestowed with grants-in-aid. Representatives of both the language groups are members of the various committees appointed by the Directorate. Since the conflict between Devanagari and Roman script supporters of Konkani surfaced on the public sphere, the Directorate has to accommodate this group as well. So now, Dalgado Konkani Akademi (DKA), the representative association of Konkani in Roman script is also given grants by the Directorate, and its members are incorporated in various committees. The Government has probably adopted this 'please all' stance, as it is wary of the divisive potential of language. Conscious of the sensitive nature of the language negotiations in Goa, the Government and accordingly the Directorate perhaps does not want to disturb the status quo. While the Marathivadis and supporters of Konkani in Roman script approve of this stance taken by the Directorate, some supporters of the Devanagari Konkani camp are not happy. They pose the question that if Konkani in Devanagari script is the official language, then the Directorate of Official Language should work primarily for the cause and development of Konkani in Devanagari script. At the same time, there are a number of Devanagarivadis who do not see a problem in grants being given to organisations of other languages and language varieties. This in turn is reflective of the lack of rigidity demarcating one ideology from another. Many of the Devanagari Konkani protagonists do write in Marathi, and there are also writers who use both Devanagari and

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Roman script for writing Konkani. All these ideologies also operate in the same public sphere. Due to the intermeshing of identity-related boundaries among the members of conflicting groups, there is resilience in managing linguistic polarity.

The state, thus, through the workings of the Directorate of Official Languages, attempts at negotiating these subtle and not-so-subtle currents and cross currents pertaining to language use in the official domain. These negotiations are integral to the building of nationism. The management of the issues relating to official language involves a negotiation of different language ideologies. In addition, it also has to negotiate, the at times contradictory pulls of nationalism and nationism. In its endeavour of nation building, the nation-state endeavours to attain a complementarity between the two. The passing of the OLA in Goa, and recent attempts at its implementation, is a way of linking the practical concerns of governance with the symbolic importance that language has in nurturing ethno-cultural and primordial identities. The recent efforts of the Directorate of Official Languages, and the various schemes that have been visualised and executed, are in some ways, attempts to use in administration and governance, a language that only five decades ago was considered by many to be dialect.

Not everyone though is optimistic about the intentions and seriousness with which the state manages implementation. The Konkani protagonist especially the Devanagari vadis, are cautious about this zeal towards implementation. They feel that the state has never acted on the implementation of the OLA on its own accord. The Konkani vadis and the various language groups that they represent have had to exert sustained pressure on the state to seek the implementation. The civil society thus had an integral role to play not only in the movement for declaration of Konkani as official language, but also in its implementation.

Implementation of the OLA in Goa: A Case of State-Civil Society Partnership

Issues concerning the OLA and its implementation in Goa are an example of the association between state and civil society, where civil society in its role as the 'good society' as given by Edwards (2005) assists the state in fulfilling its duties. As the government had

both Konkani and Marathi supporters it did not show much keenness either in passing the OLA (as seen earlier, one MLA was even ridiculed for bringing up the issue in the House), nor in its implementation. Sri Bhembre attributes this lack of initiative on the part of the successive governments to two reasons: division on the basis on language (first Konkani Marathi, and now Konkani Devanagari and Roman Script), and the second, the belief that English is more than capable of continuing as the official language. As opposed to the practical considerations of nationism put forth by the state, civil society comprised of the various language ideologues, and the various voluntary associations they represent, sought to give nationalistic character to the question of language use in administration. In its role as the 'public sphere', civil society becomes the arena for argument and deliberation as well as for association and institutional collaboration (Edwards 2005). By putting pressure on the state, by collaborating with it whenever needed and joining various committees set up by the Directorate, civil society through the language ideologues and voluntary associations seeks to help the state implement the OLA.

The most important institutional component of civil society comprises voluntary groups of various hues (Mohan 2004: 194). The Directorate of Official Languages is in many ways a monitoring body that relies on the language associations, namely the Goa Konkani Akademi, Gomantak Marathi Akademi and Dalgado Konkani Akademi, for implementation of its various schemes (The Goa Konkani Akademi, though a Government body established in 1987, is voluntary and part of civil society in its orientation).

Conclusion

Imagining the Indian subcontinent as a nation required some conceptual modifications in the Western import. One crucial difference in the two conceptualisations involved cultural hetero-geneity. 'Project homogenisation' that characterises most Western models of nations, has not yet been successful in the Indian context. Oomenn (2004: 11) writes that the least problematic basis for the formation of democratic polity is language. Language is vital in imagining the Indian nation. One important role of language concerns general government administration. The process of governance

requires communication both within the governing institutions and between the government and the people. This is where the official language moves in. The conventional view among political elite, scholars, and observers, is that the political community normally requires a common language and that anything less represents a poor and unstable compromise (Mill 1904, cited in Esman 1992: 383). Language, being a core of ethnic identity, the choice of official language has symbolic aspects in ethnically divided societies. Esman (1992: 392) even goes as far as to say, 'Unilingual where possible, multilingual only if necessary, but not necessarily multilingual.'

But in many plurilingual polities like India, diversity is not something to be ashamed of, or swept under the carpet. The Constitution of India, through its various provisions, aims at conserving this plurality. In keeping with this principle, the Indian nation-state went for linguistic states, whereby the organising principle for state formation would be language. This subsequently gave rise to the concept of official language, by which the major language of each State would be used for the purpose of official communication and administration. In keeping with this formulation, Goa had to decide its Official language as a precursor to Statehood.

The Official Language Act of Goa was passed on 4 February 1987 and Goa became the 25th State of the Indian Union on 30 May 1987. Given a variety of historical, social and political factors, Goa has had a prolonged teething problem with regard to implementation. In fact one of the main grouse of most language protagonists is that the OLA is not being implemented properly. In this chapter, I have attempted to show how the state has dealt with issues pertaining to implementation of the OLA. The civil society aids in the negotiation of the OLA. To conclude, civil society is simultaneously a goal to aim for, a means to achieve it, and a framework for engaging with each-other about ends and means (Edwards 2005). When these three 'faces' turn towards each-other and integrate their different perspectives into a mutually-supportive framework, the idea of civil society can explain a great deal about the course of politics and social change, and serve as a practical framework for organising both resistance and alternative solutions to social, economic and political problems (ibid).

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