

CHAPTER XIV

AGENCIES ETC. FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMME

1. In this chapter we propose to consider the question of agencies for the implementation of the different aspects of the National Programme for languages.

So far as the change-over in the linguistic medium of the Administration is concerned, there are certain lessons to learn from the experience of some of the Hindi-speaking States, in which, more than in any others, deliberate and progressive measures have been taken for replacement of the English by the Hindi language. Some of these State Governments have found it convenient for the implementation of their language policies to establish special departments or wings of departments in the Secretariat for handling all matters arising out of the language policy of the State. Any such change in the linguistic medium necessarily involves many administrative measures and expedients: *e.g.*, arrangements for training personnel in Hindi, standardization of shorthand and typewriting systems, training the staff therein and procuring of typewriters and other mechanical aids adjusted to the new linguistic medium; preparation of technical, administrative and legal terminology and translations of departmental manuals, rules, regulations etc. Lastly, it is necessary to organise an Agency for resolving any difficulties that the other departments of Government might experience in changing over to the new linguistic medium and, in the ultimate analysis, for enforcing compliance with Government policies laid down in this behalf.

In the change-over of the linguistic medium of the Union Government all these varieties of tasks would similarly arise. In addition thereto, the Union Government will be expected to give a lead, as indeed it alone would be in a position to do, for co-ordinating all such work to the extent to which such co-ordination is necessary, with reference to similar or corresponding language policies being followed in the different States. Thus, for instance, in the matter of establishing systems of shorthand, in finalising the typewriter keyboard, in adopting standardized administrative terminology, in evolving standard forms of noting, address, correspondence etc., in respect of all of which it is absolutely necessary to have co-ordination as between the State Governments and the Union, the lead will have to be coming forth from the Centre. Apart from the task of co-ordination, the amount of work involved in bringing about the change of the linguistic medium smoothly in the affairs of the Union is itself going to be quite large and complicated having regard to the size of the administrative machinery of the Centre and its complexity. A large amount of literature connected with the day-to-day business of the Government—rules, orders, manuals and other procedural publications in accordance with which the business of the

Government is conducted—will have to be translated; and while the first draft of the translations might be prepared by different Ministries and administrative units, for the purpose of ensuring that words and expressions (even when *not* fresh technical terms), are used in the same sense, it will be necessary to have them 'vetted' by a single agency before final adoption.

Then in the allied field of introduction of the new linguistic medium in legislation and in law courts, a good deal of preparatory work will fall to be done: *e.g.*, preparation of a legal lexicon; the rendering into the Union language for the purposes of enactment of the Hindi version, of the unrepealed laws of the Centre; similar rendering into the Hindi language of the Statute books of the various States, unless this work is delegated to be done by the States under a suitable system of co-ordination to ensure identical language; the rendering of statutory rules, regulations etc. into the new linguistic medium and so forth. Two other categories of work would require to be done under the auspices or the lead of the Centre; namely, work relating to the educational field and work relating to the development of the Union language, as well as, we suggest, the regional languages.

So far as the educational system of the country is concerned, State Governments, Universities and other authorities will of course have to take decisions in their respective fields of authority. Moreover, in exercise of the powers vested in the Centre and in discharge of its duties with reference to the item in the Union list in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution, namely, 'co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions', the Union Government will have to hold a continuous watching, supervisory brief over the progress of the national policy for languages in this important sector. Then again, if there is to be the maximum degree of identity in the fresh terminology to be evolved for use in the different regional languages, the subject must be handled under Central auspices. A change-over in the educational system at the university level will imply a large effort in the preparation of textbooks and other supporting literature: in regard to this also it would certainly be of great help to all concerned to obtain a lead from Union authorities and achieve co-ordination under Central auspices.

Lastly, there is the work regarding the propagation of Hindi in non-Hindi areas and of other regional languages in the Hindi areas; development of Hindi and regional languages in the different ways suggested in the last chapter; and the work arising out of the provisions of Article 351 of the Constitution.

2. So far as the work relating to the administrative field is concerned, in view of its difficulty, complexity and the articulation of various activities of different departments and agencies which would be involved, it is obviously essential that there should be a definite organ of Government operating under a sufficiently high authority which would be charged with all such responsibility. We have had suggestions made to us that we may recommend the constitution

of a separate Ministry, to be called the 'Ministry for the Union language' or more widely 'Ministry for Indian languages', to be specifically put in charge of the implementation of the Government's language policy. While we would emphasise the need for locating the responsibility specifically in a designated administrative organ of Government, we would leave it to the Government themselves to decide the detailed administrative mechanics; namely, whether there should be a separate Ministry or a department within a Ministry or merely a wing or division of a Ministry for the adequate and efficient carrying out of the purposes already recited above. It is a matter for Government themselves to decide what number of Ministries should be constituted and the allotment and distribution of work amongst them; and provided the responsibility for the formulation and implementation of these policies is unmistakably on a specific administrative unit and that unit is headed by an officer of the requisite status, the exact nature of that unit is a matter that we would prefer to leave to Government themselves to determine.

So far as implementation of measures touching upon the judicial field are concerned, it is for the consideration of Government whether a suitable modus for consultation with the Supreme Court, and some of the High Courts in a representative way, should not be evolved.

As regards propagation of Hindi in non-Hindi areas, the Education Ministry of the Government of India has already an advisory agency in the Hindi Shiksha Samiti recently re-organised on a broader basis. As regards the propagation of other languages in the Hindi areas, this would have to be promoted principally through the educational system and it would be for the Union Ministry of Education to give a lead in the matter.

3. Would it be an advantage organisationally to set up at the Centre an Advisory Board, with representatives of States, to co-ordinate the activities so far as implementation of language policies in the fields of law and administration are concerned? The Hindi Shiksha Samiti with representatives principally from non-Hindi States seems a suitable agency for the specialised field of Hindi propagation. For the general co-ordination of all inter-connected language activities to other aspects within the important fields of administration and law, it would still be necessary to secure a continuous, unbroken stream of organised consultation. It appears to us that such an Advisory Board at the Centre with States' representation on it will serve a useful purpose. The need for such an agency is not in any way diminished by the other semi-autonomous, semi-academic Agency that we would presently be recommending for looking after, *inter alia*, the developmental and terminological work.

So far as the educational field is concerned, there is the Inter-University Board for consultations with the Universities and there are other established methods for taking counsel with the State Governments.

4. So far as the terminological work is concerned, the general trend of opinion, it seems to us, is that the actual fixation of technical

words is better carried out by an autonomous body rather than as a departmental activity of the Central Government. Under the procedure at present followed, we understand that terms prepared by the Board of Scientific Terminology actually go as far as the Cabinet before adoption! Also, if, as we envisage hereafter, there is to be an attempt to secure more effective co-ordination than hitherto with the evolution of similar terminology in the regional languages, we imagine, it would be all the more preferable to remove the work from the field of departmental activity by a Ministry of the Union Government. It is our duty to mention, and we do so without comment, that we have had criticism voiced to us as to the absence or paucity of scientists, teachers, professors of different faculties and practitioners of different professions and persons representing all the regional languages involved, within the expert committees of the Board of Scientific Terminology where the terms are initially evolved. It would be for the Government to consider whether the composition of units evolving these terms requires to be widened. Apart from any such improvement in the composition of the Agency, it may be worth considering whether it would not be best to have a single Authority for evolving new technical terms for Hindi as well as the other languages, so that there may be co-ordination in this work throughout the process. Apart from terminological work, the various items of developmental work, of which in the last chapter we have suggested a few instances illustratively and not exhaustively, would also seem more suitable for being done in a semi-autonomous, semi-academic body rather than in the normal processes of the departmental machinery of a Government Ministry.

For this terminological work as well as the work arising out of Article 351 of the Constitution as well as the work relating to the development of the Union and the regional languages, we feel that would be best if a new single Agency, which may be called an 'Academy of Indian Languages', was set up. On the governing body of the Academy representation should be accorded to the Union Government, the State Governments, Universities and perhaps also to certain recognised professional and literary associations drawn from all regions of the country and working in the different languages. So far as the terminological work is concerned, it should be carried out in one wing of the Academy; for different subjects, different Committees will have to be appointed, comprising linguists and scholars as well as representatives of the concerned professions and representatives of different regional languages, so that a terminology may be evolved which takes into account all these pertinent points of view and is identical for the Union and all the regional languages to the maximum possible extent. Thus, for the evolving of the law lexicon, lawyers and judges may be associated with linguists and others in the Committee, same as in the case of the special terminologies for other specialised faculties. The other activities of such a body would relate to the promotion and development of Hindi as well as the other regional languages. It may be that this Agency may be found convenient, in addition, for watching the progress in the production of text-books and their availability in different languages for university education whenever this may be necessary, the Academy may itself organise the preparation and publication of text-books in the different languages, enlisting in the task the

assistance of different Universities. It may also be that such an institution would be found to be a useful agency for organising the publication of scientific literature and reference books in Hindi and the different regional languages. Of course, we do not mean to suggest that all this work should be done directly by the Academy itself. No doubt a good deal of it could be 'farmed out' to Universities or other academic bodies and the Academy might only extend its auspices to it; some other work may have to be merely sponsored by the Academy. The available talent and institutional facilities are all too few as it is; they must be fully pressed into service for these purposes.

To the extent to which the Hindi language is to be the instrumentality for the business of the Centre, the Centre has a special interest in the development of that language; at the same time the States have an interest in the development of the Hindi language as it is to be the language not only of the Union but for purposes of all-India official communication as well. Each State has likewise an interest in the development of its own regional language as an instrumentality for the conduct of its administration. From a cultural point of view, for the same reasons for which the Centre has an interest in the literatures in all languages of the country, it has also an interest, we suggest, in the development of all the regional languages. A part of the difficulty in the handling of linguistic issues, we submit, has been arising so far owing to an imaginary confrontation between the Union as the sponsor of the Hindi and the States as the sponsors of their respective regional languages. Actually, each is and should be interested in both, as is demonstrated, among other things, by the interest of the Centre in the literatures of the different languages and the responsibility that has been accepted by the States for initiating and organising facilities for the propagation of Hindi and for the provision of teaching Hindi at the secondary stage of education. The location of the developmental work in all languages including the Union language under the auspices of a single institution, in the management of which the Union and the State Governments would be participating, would also have the advantage that these imaginary antithetical alignments, as between the Union Government on the side of Hindi and the State Governments on the side of regional languages, would be removed; and an expression will be given through a *'National Academy of Indian Languages'* to the co-partnership between the States and the Union in the task of organising measures for implementing the overall national language policy of the country. Whether, apart from participation in the governance of the Academy, the State Governments should be called upon to make financial contribution also towards its expenses, is a matter of detail which it is not necessary for us to consider.

While academic and literary opinion should be allowed to have full say in the evolution of new terminology and of schemes for development of the languages of the country, in order to resolve insoluble differences, should they arise, it would be necessary to provide reserve powers with the Central Government for giving directives to the National Academy on matters of policy and as regards the tasks to be carried out by it from time to time.

Once such an Academy comes into being, it will be a convenient forum for consultation with academic opinion in all matters of language policy in which Government may wish to be advised by such opinion. The exact details of the constitution of such an academy would be for the Government to work out if they approve of the idea. We would however permit ourselves to make a couple of suggestions. For the carrying out of the important tasks assigned to such an institution within appointed time schedules, it would be necessary to provide it with sufficient stipendiary staff attached to the 'Academy' itself for doing the initial work on the basis of which, men drawn from Universities, literary fields and the professions, with jobs of their own to do, would be consulted. We have also a suggestion to make as regards the suitable location for the Academy. We would suggest, if that is practicable, that the Academy be located somewhere in the non-Hindi-speaking areas of the country. Hyderabad, which is a meeting ground for five or six important regional languages, suggests itself as a very suitable venue for the location of the National Academy of Indian languages. It may also have possibilities worth exploring in the way of spare buildings and premises.

5. Along with such a National Academy of Indian Languages it has been suggested to us that two more institutions touching the same field require to be established. A Central Library for the literatures of all the languages specified in the Eighth Schedule is, we are informed, badly needed and that none of the present agencies answers anything like the purposes such a Library should. It has also been suggested that a National Institute for Training of Language Teachers, with reference to teaching Hindi, English as well as the other Indian languages, needs to be established. The importance of training in the methodology of teaching languages with maximum efficiency in minimum time is obvious in India where national interest requires that instruction in three or more languages may have to form a part of the curriculum at the secondary stage of education for large numbers of children. Whether there would be any advantage in establishing these institutions alongside of the National Academy of Indian Languages or whether the venue for their establishment could with advantage be somewhere else, are matters which obviously must be decided by the administrative authorities.

6. We also think that it would be advisable for the Central Government to institute a practice of rendering annually to the Parliament a report on the general progress made during the previous year in regard to the implementation of the language policy laid down in the Constitution and connected matters so far as they appertain to the Central field of authority. The language issue touches manifold aspects of national life and, having regard to the need for a steady and unremitting pursuit of a well-conceived course of action during the transitional period, we think it would be of distinct advantage if the Central Government were to render to the country's highest democratic forum an annual report on their **stewardship** during the preceding twelve months.

EDUCATING PUBLIC OPINION ON THE NATIONAL POLICY ABOUT LANGUAGES

7. We would like to make herein a suggestion which though small in itself is, in our opinion, of the highest significance. We have reason to believe that a proper understanding of the constitutional settlement of the language question and the implications thereof is not sufficiently widespread. Large numbers of people appear to entertain misapprehensions as to the position of the regional languages under the constitutional arrangements when Hindi becomes the language of the Union. The fact that the interests of all Indian languages march abreast of each other is not sufficiently realised. It is also not realised that in the linguistic pattern the regional languages will have just as important a role to play in their respective regions as the Union language will have in the administration of the Union and for purposes of official intercourse between the units of the Union. The situation is not helped by the lack of sufficient appreciation of the precise place appointed for Hindi in the country's linguistic scene, which sometimes characterises the utterances even at responsible levels. It is not the purport of the constitutional provision, either overt or implied, proximate or eventual, that Hindi should displace the regional languages within their regions and in the appropriate fields. The constitutional settlement envisages for all time the Hindi language and the regional languages subsisting alongside and beneficially to each other in their appropriate fields. Some of the greatest harm to the cause of Hindi is probably done by its indiscriminating zealots. The implications of the national policy about languages with reference to the English language are also the subject of frequent and persistent misconception. It is not appreciated that even after its displacement as a general medium of instruction, of administration, of legislation and of the judiciary, a knowledge of the English language will survive, and in fact be fostered, amongst all persons who would need such knowledge for the proper discharge of their functions. It is necessary to give wide publicity to the fact that the displacement of English by the Indian languages is sought not as a measure of revivalism or as an earnest of breaking away from Western science and knowledge and 'harking back to ancient India' whatever that may mean, but for the adequate fulfilment of those very democratic urges which have been generated in the Indian community partly as the result of the impact of English political ideas and the Western civilisation on Indian society in the last couple of centuries. It is not a case of any kind of animus against the English language; nor is the selection of the Hindi language as the language of the Union a recognition of any claim that this language is more developed than any other of the Indian languages or is a better medium of expression than they are, or is richer in its literary inheritance. The choice and the implications thereof are purely a matter of convenience viewed objectively as we have explained elsewhere. We would suggest to the concerned authorities, both at the Centre and in the States, that the widest publicity may be given to all aspects underlying the national language policy of India, in order to inculcate a proper perspective amongst the people at large in this regard. In what manner this message may be carried to the Indian people,

e.g. by means of suitable documentary films, by organising the celebration of *Antar Bharati* or Indian languages *melas*, by production of suitable leaflets and other literature, etc. are matters which the Information Services of the Central and the State Governments would be best able to judge.
