

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

1. In Article 344 of the Constitution of India it is provided that 'The President shall, at the expiration of five years from the commencement of this Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of ten years from such commencement, by order constitute a Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and such other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule as the President may appoint,'. It is further provided in the same Article that 'there shall be constituted a Committee consisting of thirty members of whom twenty shall be members of the House of the People and ten shall be members of the Council of States to be elected respectively by the members of the House of the People and the members of the Council of States in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote'. It shall be the duty of this Committee to examine the recommendations of the Commission constituted as above and to report to the President their opinion thereon. The President may, after consideration of such report, issue directions in accordance with the whole or any part of that report notwithstanding anything in Article 343 of the Constitution wherein the provisions relating to the official language of the Union have been laid down.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 344, this Commission was appointed by the President under the style and designation of 'The Official Language Commission' on the 7th June 1955 by his Order contained in the Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs Notification No. 43/9/55-Public-I (Appendix II). The terms of reference of the Commission and the procedure to be followed by them were laid down in this Order as under:—

TERMS OF REFERENCE

It shall be the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to—

- (a) the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union;
- (b) restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the Union;
- (c) the language to be used for all or any of the purposes mentioned in Article 348 of the Constitution;
- (d) the form of numerals to be used for any one or more specified purposes of the Union;
- (e) the preparation of a time schedule according to which and the manner in which Hindi may gradually replace English as the official language of the Union and as a language for communication between the Union and State Governments and between one State Government and another.

In making their recommendations, the Commission shall have due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India, and the just claims and the interests of persons belonging to the non-Hindi-speaking areas in regard to the public services.

The Commission may—

- (a) obtain such information as they may consider useful for or relevant to any matter under their consideration whether by asking for written memoranda or by examining witnesses, or in such form and in such manner as they may consider appropriate, from the Central Government, the State Governments, the Supreme Court, the High Courts, the Legislatures and such other authorities, organisations or individuals as may, in the opinion of the Commission, be of assistance to them;
- (b) regulate their own procedure, including the fixing of places and time of their sittings and deciding whether to sit in public or in private;
- (c) appoint such and so many Sub-Committees from amongst their members to exercise such powers and perform such duties as may be delegated to them by the Commission;
- (d) visit or depute any of their Sub-Committees to visit such parts of the territory of India as they consider necessary or expedient;
- (e) act, notwithstanding the temporary absence of any member or the existence of any vacancy among the members.

The Commission shall consider the evidence obtained by them and make their recommendations to the President as soon as may be practicable but not later than the 30th of April 1956.

The Commission comprised the following Members at the time of its appointment:—

MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

1. Shri B. G. Kher, Chairman.
2. Dr. Birinchi Kumar Barua, Head of the Assamese Department, Gauhati University, Gauhati—Assam.
3. Dr. S. K. Chatterji, Chairman, West Bengal Legislative Council, Calcutta—West Bengal.
4. Shri Maganbhai Desai, Gujerat Vidyapitha, Ahmedabad—Bombay.
5. Shri D. C. Pavate, Vice-Chancellor, Karnatak University—Bombay.
6. Professor P. N. Pushp, Amar Singh College, Srinagar—Kashmir.
7. Shri M. K. Raja, Editor, 'Dinabandhu', Ernakulam—Travancore-Cochin.
8. Dr. P. Subbarayan, Member, Rajya Sabha, Madras—Madras.

9. Shri G. P. Nene, Rashtrabhasha Bhavan, Poona—Bombay.
10. Dr. P. K. Parija, Pro-Chancellor, Utkal University, Cuttack—Orissa.
11. Sardar Teja Singh, Ex-Chief Justice, PEPSU, Patiala—PEPSU.
12. Shri M. Satyanarayana, Member, Rajya Sabha, Madras—Madras.
13. Dr. Babu Ram Saksena, Head of the Department of Sanskrit, Allahabad University, Allahabad—Uttar Pradesh.
14. Dr. Abid Hussain, Jamia Millia, Delhi—Delhi.
15. Dr. Amar Nath Jha, Chairman, Public Service Commission, Patna—Bihar.
16. Dr. R. P. Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor, Saugor University, Saugor—Madhya Pradesh.
17. Shri Balkrishna Sharma, M.P., Delhi—Delhi.
18. Shri Mauli Chander Sharma, Delhi—Delhi.
19. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Head of the Department of Hindi, Banaras Hindu University, Banaras—Uttar Pradesh.
20. Shri Jai Narain Vyas, Jaipur—Rajasthan.
21. Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha, Delhi—Madras.

We regret to record the sad demise of Dr. Amar Nath Jha, Chairman, Bihar Public Service Commission, on 2nd September 1955. The Commission suffered a great loss in the deprivation of the services of Dr. Jha, who, by his long experience and the distinguished place that he occupied in the field of education, literary activities and public administration, was eminently equipped for assisting the Commission in their complex and delicate task. On the 25th November 1955, the President appointed Prof. Ramdhari Sinha 'Dinkar', Member Rajya Sabha, in the vacancy caused by the death of Dr. Jha (Appendix II).

On his elevation to the distinguished office of the Speaker, Lok Sabha, Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar resigned membership of the Commission with effect from the 8th March 1956 considering such continued membership inappropriate with reference to the office which he was called upon to fill. The Commission are grateful to Shri Ayyangar for the help and co-operation rendered by him during the period that he worked as a Member of the Commission.

It was originally provided that the Commission shall consider the evidence obtained by them and make their recommendations to the President not later than the 30th day of April 1956. Since however the work of the Commission could not commence until July 1955, on the motion of the Chairman made immediately after assumption of office this period was extended to the 31st July 1956 (Appendix II). We are glad that it has been possible for us to adhere to this time-table and submit our Report by the appointed date.

2. The first meeting of the Commission was held on the 15th and 16th July 1955. The Commission issued a questionnaire soon thereafter (Appendix III). This questionnaire was widely distributed

and copies of the questionnaire were addressed to Governments, governmental authorities, and a large number of public and private institutions and individuals. A total of 1094 written replies or memoranda were received. These include replies from all the Ministries of the Government of India, all the Parts 'A' and 'B' State Governments and most of the part 'C' State Governments, the Supreme Court, the Union Public Service Commission, practically all the State Public Service Commissions, Universities, High Courts and a large number of institutions and societies working in literary and educational fields and other walks of life. Apart from public authorities and institutions, a very large number of individuals including several members of the Cabinet and other ministers of the Central Government and Governors of States in their individual capacity, Chief Ministers and ministers of State Governments, Vice-Chancellors, High Court Judges in their individual capacity, members of Parliament, members of Legislatures, Government officials, persons distinguished in literary and professional pursuits, lawyers, scientists, technicians, professors and businessmen tendered evidence to the Commission.

Apart from the written memoranda received, the Commission undertook extensive tours covering all the major States of the country for the purpose of gathering oral evidence. The Commission's visits were widely publicised in the local press and apart from lists of witnesses drawn up after consultation with the State Governments so as to get the widest cross-section of opinion, the Commission used to invite views generally from anybody else who might be interested in tendering them. A total of 930 individuals or representatives of public authorities and private institutions tendered oral evidence before the Commission.

The issue of language concerns almost every individual intimately and the lively interest evoked by the investigations of the Commission was therefore quite natural and only to be expected. Apart from the abiding interest of the subject-matter at all times, the fact that during this period other circumstances had converged to focus attention on the place of language in the national life of the country, further intensified the widespread interest in the Commission's deliberations. The publication of the Report of the States Reorganization Commission in October 1955 and the enormous canvassing of the issue of reorganization of States on linguistic lines which has taken place over the subsequent months in legislative bodies, the Press and on the public platform, and the incidents attendant thereupon in the meantime, have further highlighted the significance of a proper understanding and treatment of the question of languages especially in the conditions of multi-lingualism obtaining in our country. It has been the Commission's deliberate endeavour to seek the widest and most uninhibited expression of opinion on this issue which touches so deeply every citizen of the country.

3. A word is necessary right at the commencement as to the field covered by the Commission's Report. It will be noticed that the terms of reference of the Commission, literally construed, are somewhat restricted. Thus, for instance, important basic issues such

as the media of instruction in the educational system, the steps to be taken for the development of the Hindi language and literature including such development of the language in terms of the directives of Article 351 of the Constitution, the development of regional languages *pari passu* and harmoniously with the development of Hindi, the place of English in the educational system and in national life generally, are not matters directly within the terms of reference of the Commission. However, all these matters and several others are involved indirectly and by necessary implication in the consideration of the issues specifically charged on the Commission for their recommendations. The language problem of the country has its ramifications in numerous fields of national activity and endeavour and it is impossible to consider, in view of the close inter-relationship of the various facets, any individual issues in isolation. The Commission therefore necessarily had to allow their enquiries to relate to a larger field than that strictly covered by the terms of reference. Right at the commencement, having regard to this, the Commission's questionnaire was issued on the wider canvass and the discussions of the Commission with witnesses have been held all along against this wider background. However the Commission's findings on matters not strictly covered by their terms of reference have been recorded separately as 'conclusions' and distinguished from their 'recommendations' in the 'Summary of conclusions and recommendations' printed as Appendix I to this Report. While making specific recommendations, the Commission have confined themselves to the terms of reference which they were appointed to report upon. The Commission have, however, necessarily had to consider, and have therefore recorded their findings on, these other aspects of the language question which do not fall strictly within their terms of reference, but are necessarily relatable to them. The specific recommendations can be understood only against the background of the view that the Commission take of the entire language problem as delineated in all their findings including 'the conclusions'.

4. The subject-matter of the Commission's enquiry does not lend itself easily to consideration by compartments. Each aspect of it has a bearing on almost every other aspect and several specific issues admit of being considered only against the context of the related general background. The language problem in the sphere of public administration, the problem with reference to legislation and law courts, the place of language studies in the educational system, the linguistic media of competitive examinations for entry into public services, are all issues which touch and bear upon each other in numerous ways: and the whole congeries of these specific issues has to be considered against the general foundation underlying them all, namely, the evolution of terminologies and the developing of the Union and regional languages. In the background of all these issues would lie the general view that one would take of the Indian linguistic scene: the similarities amongst its components and the prospective relationship of the Union and regional languages. While all these add up to a single complex, each issue must, for convenience of handling, be discussed separately. This has made it necessary to recapitulate in different places in the chapters the context as it emerges from other chapters of the Report. In the concluding chapter the threads of the argument are gathered up and a general

synthetic view presented of the problem as a whole and our general approach to its solution.

Supplementary to the main Report of the Commission a supplementary volume* has been prepared in which some of the basic data collected in the Commission's office by their research unit has been compiled in the form of papers. It is hoped that this material will be of use for any subsequent inquiry into this subject-matter. Some facet or other of the complex issue of the country's linguistic media for the various purposes seems likely to be of public interest for a considerable time to come until the linguistic pattern of the future is finally established.

The Constitution contemplates a similar enquiry by a President's Commission at the expiration of ten years from the commencement of the Constitution, that is in 1960, followed by consideration of its recommendations by a Committee of both Houses of Parliament similarly as in the case of this Commission. Having regard to all this, it was felt that it might be of advantage if this Commission, apart from their recommendations, left for future use, all the data and material collected in the course of their enquiries by way of systematic and exhaustive documentation. It is not considered necessary to print the material other than what is included in the supplementary volume*; the rest has however been arranged in a readily available form and submitted to the appropriate authorities together with the Commission's records for possible future use.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

5. The Commission have pleasure in recording their thanks to various authorities and individuals who facilitated the Commission's work or assisted in their labours. A very high proportion of the witnesses, who gave evidence to the Commission, whether in writing or orally, had taken great pains to think out and express elaborately on the various issues arising out of the questionnaire. The Commission were fortunate in receiving exhaustive memoranda from numerous authorities, institutions and individuals notably the State Governments, Universities, High Courts and Public Service Commissions. The Commission are greatly beholden to all these authorities and individuals for their valuable assistance.

The Commission are grateful to the State Governments who had to make during their tours rather elaborate arrangements for the Commission's sittings and for the accommodation of the Members and the staff of the Commission. With a total membership of twenty-one (twenty, since the resignation of Shri Aanthasayanam Ayyangar) including the Chairman, this Commission must have been one of the largest and we have pleasure in recording that, despite the strain on their resources of accommodation which was sometimes involved, all the State Governments made uniformly satisfactory arrangements for the holding of the Commission's sessions on tour.

*Not printed.

Shri D. S. Joshi, I.C.S., Secretary, Home Department of the Government of Bombay, held charge as Secretary of the Commission for about 2½ months prior to the joining of the whole-time Secretary, and we wish to record our deep sense of appreciation of the services rendered by him in the initial stage.

We also desire to place on record our gratitude to the Secretary of the Commission, Shri S. G. Barve, I.C.S., for the splendid work done by him in all aspects of the work of the Commission. The countrywide itinerary of this unusually large Commission and its programme of work were very thoughtfully planned and competently executed. Apart from these normal duties of a Secretary, Shri Barve placed unreservedly at our disposal his large administrative experience as a senior member of the Indian Civil Service and his outstanding abilities. His versatile genius, very quick grasp of the complex issues involved and his uniform courtesy have made a deep impression on all the Members of the Commission. These were invaluable to us in focussing and analysing the complex issues with the consideration of which we were concerned. He was of very great help to us in evolving the conclusions and recommendations and in reconciling diverse points of view to the maximum extent. His work has indeed been very strenuous and exacting. But for Mr. Barve's efficient discharge of his duties we would not have been able to finish our work in the time and manner we have been able to do.

The staff of the Commission carried out their duties competently under the Secretary's guidance and we also record our best thanks to them. We are grateful to the Universities of Andhra and Allahabad and the High Court of Bombay, for kindly sparing the services of Prof. G. J. Somayaji, Dr. Mata Prasad Gupta and Shri V. R. Talasikar, respectively. These officers rendered valuable services as members of the Research staff of the Commission.