Minorities, Education and Language

The Case of Urdu

Review of the proceedings of an international conference to undertake a realistic appraisal of Urdu language in the formal system of education in contemporary India and to discuss ways of bringing Urdu education to mainstream educational institutions by overcoming the political discrimination Urdu has suffered as a virtual synonym for religious education.

HASAN ABDULLAH

An International Conference on 'Minorities, Education and Language in 21st Century Indian Democracy: The Case of Urdu with Special Reference to Dr Zakir Husain, Late President of India' was jointly organised by Dr Zakir Husain Study Circle, New Delhi and Modern Education Foundation, New Delhi, in Delhi from February 8 to 10, 2002. The president's message read at the inauguration ceremony noted that "development and promotion of Urdu is of paramount importance, and it is our national responsibility to promote Urdu language, literature and safeguard its glorious heritage which has enriched our culture and civilisation and played a determining role in fashioning the destiny of our nation during freedom struggle".

Salman Khurshid in his welcome address said that "…despite constitutional affirmation of the status of Urdu as a national language, efforts have been made in the past to wipe it out from the social sphere by the activists with different faces." He made a special mention of discriminatory treatment of Urdu by the UP government, which has not made provision for Urdu education even as an elective subject, but offers Sanskrit as a *modern* Indian language. He said that because of the injustices "the [Muslim] community has begun to equate the survival of Urdu and revival of Urdu education with the well being of Muslims as a political, cultural and religious entity".

To quote Khurshid, the aim of the conference was "to undertake a realistic appraisal of Urdu language in the formal system of education in contemporary India…Our conviction is that Urdu cannot survive as a language of cultural expression unless it is included as a subject in the curriculum from the primary to the secondary level…I am not optimistic that the problem will be resolved in one seminar but let us initiate a dialogue".

Ather Farouqui, convener of the conference, in the theme paper, opined that the seminar "should be perceived as an attempt to bring Urdu education to mainstream educational institutions by overcoming the political discrimination Urdu has suffered as a virtual synonym for religious education….It was unjust to impose Urdu on all the Muslims of Pakistan…as to impose Hindi on Urdu speakers…in north India". Farouqui also mentioned that in northern India there was no provision to teach the regional languages – like Rajasthani, Haryanvi, Avadhi, Brij, Maithili, Maghai (which are wrongly termed as *dialects* of Hindi) – which are mother tongues of the people residing in respective geographical areas.

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Most of us know that Urdu has a rich literature and strong progressive culture, traditions and roots. (Obviously that does not mean that reactionary literature is absent in Urdu.) To illustrate my contention, I cite the tradition of popular terminology in Urdu poetry, where 'Zahid' (the religious person) and 'Naseh' (the preacher) are treated with scorn and contempt, if not ridicule, and the mortal ordinary human – with all failings – is kept on the highest pedestal.

The important point to note is that ever since independence, the Urdu language in India has been on the decline – even if Urdu literature, especially poetry, was nevertheless being produced in reasonable measure. The roots of Urdu language were getting dried, and due attention towards the language was not being paid. This conference was an attempt at discussing issues concerning Urdu language and education in India – and to chalk out a strategy to go forward. It is important to realise that without ensuring education *through* Urdu, and education of Urdu – at the primary and secondary levels – leave alone prosper, Urdu cannot even survive as a modern language.

The conference provided a direction – which entails cooperation with all other Indian languages (including the ones not included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution) for the struggle of a rational language policy. It is a good sign that the issues of language and school education are sought to be brought in focus. However, in addition to launching joint struggles with progressive/rational peoples of all other Indian languages – the importance of which cannot be over-stated – the organisers can also consider the proposal of networking with those dealing with Urdu, especially from across the border, i e, in Pakistan. In fact, it was rather surprising that there was no representation of resident Pakistanis in the conference.

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Discussing the legal aspects, Fali S Nariman criticised that "twenty-two consultation papers prepared and released by the [Constitution Review] Commission so far for public comment (on various aspects of the Constitution) are silent on religious and minority rights – rights which had been deliberately inserted (in the Fundamental Rights Chapter, Article 25 to 30) so as to be beyond the reach of legislative majorities". He approvingly quoted justice H R Khanna that "it can indeed be said to be an index of the level of civilisation and catholicity of a nation as to how far their minorities feel secure and are not subject to any discrimination or suppression". Nariman was of the view that judges should "always stretch themselves to uphold minority rights simply because 'minorities' by their very description, cannot call in aid the normal political processes… Many minority educational institutions have abused the privilege given to them under Article 30 of our Constitution…the safeguard against abuse was built into the framework of the Article itself ". Nariman was highly critical of the deafening silence of the Constitutional Review Commission on the issue

of minority rights, and said "silence is the refuge of the shifty folk, not sure of their views or not willing to disclose them".

Soli J Sorabjee was of the opinion that "what matters most to the minorities is their religion, their educational institutions, their language and their culture". Sorabjee cited the case of the Albanian government before the International Court of Justice, wherein the court emphasised that "in addition to equality in law there must be equality in fact which may involve the necessity of different treatment in order to attain a result, which establishes an equilibrium. The equality must be an effective, genuine equality". Sorabjee quoted the UN Human Rights Committee "that for effective protection of minority rights positive measures of protection are required not only against the acts of the state party itself, but also against the acts of … non-state actors. Mere abstention from discriminatory acts is not enough. What is required are positive measures by states to protect the identity of a minority and the rights of its members to enjoy and develop their culture and language and to practise their religion, in community with the other members of the group".

Sorabjee laid special emphasis on the conservation of language, script and culture, guaranteed by Article 29 of the Constitution. Although culture is not defined, "it is generally understood in a broad and comprehensive sense to include language, religion, beliefs, histories, traditions, customs, rituals and ceremonies. Each culture has a dignity and value, which must be preserved...Majority communities should be aware of and be sensitive to the cultural rights of the minority communities. In their turn the minority communities should also respect national legislation and the cultural customs and traditions of the majority community in the state in which they reside…"

Moinuddin A Jinabade quoted from the sub-commission constituted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights for the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of the Minorities. "The term 'minority' includes only those non-document 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." The sub-commission observes that the minorities can be broadly classified into two types – minority by force, and minority by will. The former is the product of exclusion, the violation of its basic human rights – for example, the 'shudra' community in ancient India. Whereas, 'minority by will', "asserts and insists on its distinct identity – defined by its religion, language and culture". Obviously, Indian Muslims would belong to this latter category. Jinabade's contention that "the Constitution of India works on these very strategic lines (i e, the elimination of minorities by absorption into the national community)" has more than a grain of truth, even if it is not 'all right'!

Yogesh Tyagi pointed out that as per Supreme Court of India "the expression 'linguistic minority' refers to a linguistic group that is in a numerical minority in the state/union territory, not in the country as a whole…" Further, according to UNESCO, "basically, any language of a community which is not learned any more by children, or at least by large part of the children of that community (say at least 30 per cent) should be regarded as 'endangered'or at least 'potentially endangered'….For the protection and promotion of Urdu in those areas where this language is in an endangered or potentially endangered situation, one can explore the language protection scheme of UNESCO". He approvingly quoted the suggestion that "if durable peace is to prevail in South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) countries… language should be brought to centre stage".

Discussing 'Educational Perspectives', M Hamidullah Bhat, representing the ministry of human resource development, government of India, justified the aid to the Madrasa system of education (institutes for religious learning) and the 93rd Amendment to the Constitution. He condemned the past discourse on Urdu – by Europeans and Indians both – and said that the discourse has been lapped up by "U P centric Urdu vested interests". In his opinion, the "Urdu speaking community of north India did not think it advisable or purposeful to pursue their education up to the primary, middle or secondary level in Urdu medium". But all other participants disagreed on all these, and offered arguments that appear in the following discussion. And many of the following propositions were made by more than one participant.

Syed Shahabuddin opined that the "central and state governments have to find the financial resources, even if the management and administration are to be decentralised to the panchayats, blocks and municipalities". He said that the minorities have to ensure the framing of appropriate policies and their proper implementation. That is because "a minority with very limited resources cannot make up for the deficiencies of the educational system by availing of its right under Article 350A of the Constitution, far less undertake to run a parallel educational system of its own for its children". Shahabuddin, like most other speakers, demanded an honest implementation of the three-language formula. He also raised the demand for the replacement of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities by a National Commission for Linguistic Minorities (with quasi-judicial powers) and framing of a National Code for Linguistic Minorities.

Hasan Abdullah was of the view that the three-language formula needs to be modified, with the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction at the primary level, and a shift to English as the medium of instruction for higher classes. This transition needs to be case-specific (varying from sixth standard to the university level) depending on the subjects and other circumstances. However, the terminology – in English and the mother tongue/regional language (whatever has been the medium of instruction at the primary level) needs to be introduced from sixth standard, irrespective of the medium of instruction. And Hindi need not be made a link language. The language for higher level discourse and inter-state or international communication needs to be English.

Anil Sadgopal was of the view that "there is so much of commonality in the vocabulary, nuances and the linguistic characteristics of Hindi and Urdu that it would be easy to build up an appropriate pedagogy for teaching both the languages even in the same classroom, despite their different scripts". Sadgopal also noted that "the Common School System and the concept of the neighbourhood school…is a commitment made, but never implemented, by the National Policy on Education (1986, 1992)". He also opined that "even the so-called public and other expensive private schools will have to follow the basic educational principles. If the basic pedagogic principles demand that English, as a third language, may be taught from class VI onwards, it would then be the case with all schools, including the private schools. Of course the mother tongue to be chosen will vary from school to school".

Deepak Kumar noted that "from the Urdu language perspective, the emphasis must shift from literature exclusively to

education…Next, a language must never be allowed religious strings. This may happen, for example, in the name of Madarsa education. In place of Madarsas, the state should strengthen its own educational set-up so that Urdu is taught as an optional or elective subject…U P government ignored two crore people while Kashmiri government banished 'Kashmiri' and chose Urdu! We need to maintain and enrich all the Indian languages in their respective distinctness, flavour and script…"

T K Oommen in 'Language and Nation: Situating Urdu' noted several problems with Article 351 with regard to the topic under discussion, and concludes that "Urdu starts with a 'constitutional disability' insofar as Article 351 ignores the relevance of Persian and highlights only the importance of Sanskrit... Hindi, the projected national language is the mother tongue of only 38 per cent of Indians and as officially defined it incorporates a dozen 'dialects' each of which is the mother tongue of several million people. The 'one-third nation' of Hindi cannot represent the composite culture of India". Oommen approvingly quoted the Radhakrishan Commission on University Education: "Unfortunately, it [Hindi] does not possess any advantages, literary or historical, over other modern languages". He then opined that "if so, the constitutional prescription of Hindi as the link and official language of India is a statist and not a nationalist one, if nation is conceived in inclusive and egalitarian terms".

Oommen explained the rationale behind the Constitution prescribing universal, compulsory education in the mother tongue, by quoting the Radhakrishan Committee. "It is educationally unsound to make a foreign tongue the means of acquiring knowledge, [as children's] minds become split into two water-tight compartments – one for ordinary things expressed in their mother tongue and another for school subjects and the world of ideas expressed in a foreign language." Oommen further said "to deny children the knowledge of their mother tongue is nothing but culturocide (cultural genocide). A section of the Indian children whose mother tongue is Urdu is subjected to this process, in spite of the fact that Urdu is an officially recognised language…[because] Urdu, given its links with Persian, is perceived as a product of Muslim conquest".

Siraj Husain quoted Zakir Husain that "the fundamental principle of education in a democratic society is to respect the individuality of the child…so as the child's abilities are fully developed…If the meaning of education is the right training of mind, then this training can be accomplished only through feeding the mind with the right food and to make arrangements for the right exercise…The children's age demands that they want to do something, to make and unmake, to assemble, to disassemble. It appears that the nature has made some arrangement for the children to think through their hands, to experience, to learn through doing. Therefore, it is essential that at this primary stage, practical work be made the focus, the mode of training of mind. At this stage, hand is more effective than the book in awakening the forces of mind".

In the context of U P, Anwar Pasha noted that "over the last 53 years, three generations have become completely ignorant of the Urdu script, and now, in spite of all efforts, trained teachers of Urdu are impossible to find. For this reason, those schools, which on paper, Uttar Pradesh government has shown as Urdu medium at primary level, are also in practice Hindi-medium schools..." Pasha was categorical that "certainly BJP has reassured RSS that finally all its measures on behalf of Urdu will help to exterminate it"!

Mazhar Mehdi opined that "once in the name of modernisation of religious institutions (Madarsas) some money was doled out, then the ruling parties would misuse taxpayers' money to spread religious hatred and serve their vested interests". M Shahid Husain was of the view that "the agenda for Urdu education in 21st century lies in the establishment of excellent institutions, under Sections 29 and 30 of the Constitution, where Urdu…can harmonise people with the stream of education and culture".

Shakil Ahmad noted that "according the status of second language to Urdu does not provide any space for Urdu education; and Urdu language cannot progress without Urdu education (from primary to secondary level)". He was highly critical of the institution of Urdu University. He opined that English is the only viable medium of instruction at the university level – especially in view of the changing attitudes of the middle class and globalisation.

Imtiaz Ahmad was on dot that "Urdu declined primarily because Urdu-speaking elite abandoned it and the state found itself in a position to eliminate it from the syllabus of secular education". Discussing Madarsa education, he questioned the validity of two assumptions. "The first is that there is a need for enrichment of Madrasa education. The second is that Urdu can be a source or means of that enrichment." It is difficult to completely agree with Ahmad when he says "what appears to be clinging on to traditionalism, conservativeness and narrowness of outlook is the only choice open to a community whose traditions and identity are seriously threatened". He concluded that "one must think of stratagems that, instead of enriching Madarsa education, have the potential for mainstreaming Urdu in secular syllabus rather than rely upon the crutches of the Madarsa whose base is itself being greatly narrowed down by Madarsas opting out of religious education to feed into the stream of secular education".

Habib Zuberi was of the view that "we should make every effort to retain Urdu script but reconcile to use of Devnagiri script in Urdu being unavoidable". He approvingly quoted Rahi Masoom Raza that "unless the classics of Urdu literature were published in Devnagiri script, they would cease to exist for future generations". None is opposed to translating and/or transliterating Urdu classics, but the language Urdu cannot survive if the script is given a good-bye. Zuberi is, however, right that "Urdu's survival and progress should not depend entirely on governmental help".

Pratyush Chandra's paper 'Analysing Linguistic-Communal Politics – Homogeneity, Hegemony and Class Conflicts in India' presented the radical view that situates the issue in a broader perspective. He opined that "like any ideological current we will have to look at the phenomenon of communal mobilisation as an important tool to stabilise the hegemonic interests in the society. It serves two purposes – one it creates a tie between the ruler and the ruled… secondly, it reduces the potency of counter-hegemonic forces by diverting their energy and resources, by dividing them…For any alternative politics, the question is not how a particular community gains concessions in the existing system and how its rights are defined and secured. But, rather, how united action is taken against the system, which breeds community conflicts…" Chandra also criticised the process and machinations whereby several rich popular languages like Maithili, Bhojpuri, Magahi and Marwari were subsumed by Hindi. He concluded, "we will have to hit at the very ideological assumptions that rationalise this (communal/

hegemonistic) politics… in this particular case, if Hindi-Urdu is one language, why cannot both the scripts be taught compulsorily and to everybody like Japanese? …Any other solutions are futile exercises and are based on false assumptions".

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Now, I take up by participants outside the country contributions – there were quite a few, and most of them valuable. However, for many of them, the issues discussed differed from Indian contributions. It is only natural, because for them Urdu is more or less an academic language and/or a component of their culture (past!). They are not – and they need not be – concerned about Urdu as a medium of instruction at the primary level onwards, as it is not the language of their societies.

Kerrin von Schwerin in 'General Importance of Basic Education in Mother Tongue with Special Reference to Urdu and Wardha Education Scheme of Zakir Husain' reminded that "the UNESCO decided 50 years ago that the medium of instruction in elementary school must be the mother tongue… The Wardha scheme applied only to elementary schools! Elementary and basic education of the small child was to be firmly rooted in the child's own culture, including religion… Religion, however, was not included in the Wardha curriculum. It was deliberately omitted….The traditional methods of instruction with its concentration on discipline and intellectual studies were to be replaced by methods more apt to develop the entire personality of the child, mind and body: school meant games, physical activity, festivities, excursions, cooking, theatrical plays, music and handicraft, especially in elementary school…".

Sabir Irshad Usmani from London, taking stock of the situation of Urdu in India, said that "although, according to 1991 Census, Urdu with 4,30,00,000 is at the fifth number, but it gets a grant which is less than that given to Sanskrit (which is not spoken by more than 1,000 people)". He was also of the view that the Urdu people would have to struggle to get their right of Urdu education implemented by the government; and the government schools being the biggest network of education, deserve utmost attention.

Sarwat Iqbal informed that "in Britain, until sometime back, Urdu was considered essentially the cultural language of Muslims from the sub-continent…. But in 1998, Urdu was included in the list of second languages that includes French, Spanish, German and Italian, etc. In the British system, every student has to study a second language up to the secondary level…There are 4 million people – with different mother tongues – from the Indian sub-continent, but their lingua franca is Urdu". An apparently encouraging scenario; but one would like to wait and watch how meaningfully this generation (that would learn its Urdu in Great Britain), would pursue Urdu and produce writers and/or readers of Urdu books and magazines.

Kelly Pemberton said, "National integration in India… has unfolded against a process of forced homogenisation … that has involved the real and perceived subordination of regional languages and dialects to a single language, Hindi". She concluded that "…the role of Urdu in the development of literary and cultural traditions of India… should be emphasised at all levels…for the results would ultimately benefit all those who hold dear the best that Indian culture has to offer".

David J Matthews felt that "genuine fears are also expressed about the future existence of Urdu script…One must… accept the fact that Urdu and its script are really one and the same thing and can in no way be divorced from each other". In his opinion, "Urdu is distinguished from almost every other language of India by having an early literature, which almost from the start made room for secular themes". He rightly complains that "there is no adequate dictionary of Urdu, no accurate history of its literature, no full study of its grammar, and with few exceptions no totally reliable texts of the works of even the best known writers". He suggested that "…in the northern states of India in particular Urdu is as relevant for the Hindi speaking Hindu as Hindi is essential for the Urdu speaking Muslim…It [Urdu] is a language which has its roots in India, and which has contributed as much as any other to Indian culture, society and history…"

Daniel Gold presented about his experience of teaching Urdu in USA and the lessons he had derived. He also said that in India, some pressure and political maneuvering are required for Urdu's good health. "The trick will be to achieve some viable goals without stirring communal passions in the process and thus further branding Urdu as just a communal language…"

Christina Oesterheld's submission was: "…whether Urdu in India will be able to maintain – or to recover – the role of a functional language in a broader, public context, or will it be reduced to a cultural symbol, a language of religious and to some extent literary discourse? …If you intend to maintain a separate cultural identity, then some extra personal effort will have to be made…Would this not also imply for all Urdu-speaking parents to send their children to Urdu-medium schools or at least to schools teaching Urdu as first Indian language once they would be available?…It appears that simultaneous efforts in several directions would be needed to revive Urdu as a language used for practical purposes". Oesterheld pointed out that "it is comparatively easy for a student to acquire both [Urdu and Hindi] scripts (preferably one after the other). Even our German students who are completely ignorant of any Urdu or Hindi are able to master the script within four to six weeks…In advanced science courses English would perhaps be the better choice …In Germany, too, English as the medium of instruction in advanced science courses is currently being discussed. Scientific publications, international conferences and seminars, etc, use English anyway…."

Irtiqa Sheikh from London was unhappy with the terminology Arabicised and Persianised used in Urdu books. He felt that regular updating of books has not been done. And, today, the situation has reached a pass where "we do not have the teachers who can coin new terminology and develop new syllabi". I beg to differ from Sheikh. Certainly, there is always a need for updating; but we still have in our midst those – even if not many – who can coin terminology and develop courses. Also, the work in these areas – even if not wholly satisfactorily – is being done in Pakistan.

Jagdish S Gundara said, "Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) has relevance for most societies and especially for indigenous people…It is more difficult to marginalise children with other languages, cultures and histories from the school and its curriculum if their cultures and languages are used in the mainstream school…[and] linguistic diversity is developed creatively for academic reasons and is seen as a potential for national integration and as an asset… In democratic societies linguistic minorities have a universal human right to maintain their language and it is a governmental responsibility to ensure that they are able to do so".

Barbara D Metcalf traced the historical evolution of Urdu: "…Far from being

'foreign', Urdu represented the enrichment of a local language with the vocabulary and literary forms of Persian. It gradually displaced a language based outside the sub-continent (even though after half a millennium of use Persian was thoroughly part of the governing and intellectual life of the cosmopolitan classes)…In this period (in 19th century, with English replacing Persian at the official level) Urdu became a modern prose language, undergoing a transition common to regional languages across the country… Urdu was used for new genres of the new intelligentsia, like journalism and the novel, which typically communicated new values and images of the person and the society, and in old genres associated with traditional learning, everything from Quranic translation to medicine". Barbara also said that "Urdu and Hindi are legally two languages but linguistically one…Overall the challenges to effective schooling go far beyond the issue of language, entailing as they do the old negative colonial education of preferred investment in the higher levels of education, and, …of rigidity and rote learning".

Amina Yaqin quoted David Lelyveld: "…remember that when we talk about language we are not only dealing with a label or symbolic abstraction, but with the actualities of communication – who gets to speak, who is allowed to listen, which topics and settings are appropriate to which linguistic codes". Yaqin's paper 'The Comunalisation and Disintegration of Urdu in Anita Desai's *In Custody*' quoted extensively from the novel. The editor is concerned that "Where are the readers? Where are the subscriptions? Who reads Urdu anymore?" These questions of the editor have a catastrophic resonance with today's reality. And the 'Statement of Consensus' issued at the end of the conference by Ather Farouqui, indicates the direction, movement along which can change the scenario, where these questions would no longer be relevant.

Statement of Consensus

(1) The people residing in the state where the principal language is different from their mother tongue constitute linguistic minority in that state. Hence, all Schedule 8 languages, including Hindi, have a minority status outside the respective states, where they are not the principal languages. And, given the increasing social mobility in the country, practically every state and district is multi-lingual, and there is a clear need for evolving a National Policy on Languages in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Constitution.

(2) While Urdu deserves special attention at the national level, as it is spoken all over the country, at the state level, the problem it faces are the same as those faced by other minority languages, and can be resolved only within the framework of a National Policy on Languages.

(3) In this context, several languages (that are claimed as mother tongue by millions of people in the Hindi region) should be included in 8th schedule, and given due place in the educational system.

(4) Evaluation of public policies and monitoring of the state of Urdu – including an assessment of the facilities available for instruction of Urdu – and teaching of Urdu from primary to senior secondary level should be a regular process to ensure Urdu's propagation and development.

(5) The educational backwardness of any region or community can only be remedied by maximising its access to modern education, which is, and should be, in the Indian context, almost wholly, the responsibility of the state. The state governments should provide adequate facilities to every recognised language within the educational system.

(6) In all the schools getting any concession/ aid from the government, Urdu must be included as the medium of instruction at the primary level for all those who declare it as their mother tongue.

To promote universalisation of elementary education, Urdu medium primary schools must be opened in Urdu-concentration localities in accordance with the national norm of one school for 300 Urdu-speaking families.

In Urdu-medium schools, regional or principal language should be introduced from 3rd standard.

From 6th standards onward, the medium of secondary education should be either the regional language or the mother tongue. In Hindi states, Urdu must be taught as a compulsory first language to the children with Urdu as mother tongue, and for non-Urdu students, Urdu may be included as an optional second language.

For non-Hindi states, Urdu-Hindi composite course should be offered as an optional to Urdu/Hindi as a second language.

The students should learn English from 6th standards onward as the third language.

The conference recognises the role of Sanskrit as a classical language, but it should not displace any modern Indian language in the school curriculum.

(7) Funding of religious instruction at the expense of public exchequer is unconstitutional. Hence, the Madarsa system, which serves the purpose of imparting religious knowledge to Muslim children, should be left entirely to the community.

(8) Age limit for compulsory elementary education needs to be raised from 14 to 15 years, which is the minimum age limit for appearing at secondary examination.

The recent constitutional amendment (93rd) making education a fundamental right should be supplemented by statutory provision covering the medium of instruction, educational uniformity, national norms for establishment of primary and secondary schools, and establishment of schools on demand.

Also, Article 350-A, pertaining to medium of instruction at the primary level through mother tongue, needs to be made mandatory.

The term 'substantial population' in Article 347, in connection with special provision for a linguistic minority of a state should be clarified by an explanation that 'substantial' means 'not negligible'. And, in any case, due facilities should be provided at every administrative level for any language spoken by at least 5 per cent of the population at that level.

The Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (CLM) despite the status of a Constitutional Authority enjoys no real authority in practice. The conference proposes that the post be abolished and replaced by a National Commission for Languages with quasi-judicial authority.

(9) Survival of democracy in a plural society lies in the survival of minority languages and cultures. Urdu is par excellence a symbol of our composite culture, and deserves special attention.

In order to protect and promote Urdu in its land of birth, a national movement for Urdu's resurgence is the need of the hour. Such a movement should struggle for the educational and cultural rights of all linguistic and cultural minorities in all states of the country and for the establishment and implementation of the National Policy on Languages, as enumerated above.

The conference appeals to all the peoples, irrespective of their mother tongues, to extend their support to this movement. EPW

The Indian Institute of Bankers

Correction in Advertisement

In the advertisement of the Indian Institute of Bankers appearing on page 2306 of this issue, the last date for submission of Research Proposals should read 31st July, 2002 instead of 15th July, 2002 as printed.