

are between 5% to 10 % of the population; there are districts in the country where they are in a majority and there are many others in which they constitute large, though not the majority, elements of the district totals.¹⁶ Christians predominate in Nagaland (90.0%) and Mizoram (87%) and Sikhs are the majority in Punjab (59.9%). Buddhists are most prevalent in Sikkim (28.1%) and Jains in Maharashtra (1.3%). The Indian multicultural mosaic is interwoven in such a manner that the religious or linguistic minorities do not feel threatened as because the state in India has managed to integrate them without any process of forceful assimilation.

4.3 LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION

India is not only a multi- ethnic and multi-religious state but also a polyglot society.¹⁷ Linguists are not unanimous about the total languages spoken in India. Dr. George Grierson in the *Linguistic Survey of India* lists 179 major languages and 544 dialects.¹⁸ The *Linguistic Survey of India* conducted in the first decade of this century recorded that “language change every 20 miles in India”.¹⁹ While the 1931 census listed more than 2000 languages/ dialects, in 1961 census registered 1652 spoken languages of which 1549 were indigenous to India. Of these latter 572 covered almost 99% of the total population.²⁰

¹⁶T.C.A.Srinivasavaradan, “Pluralistic Problems in the Federal System” in Nirmal Mukherjee & Balveer Arora (eds.), *Federalism in India—Origins and Development*, Vikas Publishing House, Delhi, 1992, p.131.

¹⁷ Rasheeduddin Khan, *Bewildered India—Identity, Pluralism and Discord*, Har-Anand Publication, Delhi, 1994, p. 38.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 39.

**Table 4.6 LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION OF INDIA'S POPULATION
(1991)**

Languages spoken	Number	Percentage
Hindi	337,272,114	40.22%
Bengali	69,595,738	8.30%
Telugu	66,017,615	7.87%
Marathi	62,481,681	7.45%
Tamil	53,006,368	6.32%
Urdu	43,406,932	5.18%
Gujarati	40,673,814	4.85%
Kannada	32,753,676	3.91%
Malayalam	30,377,176	3.62%
Oriya	28,061,313	3.35%
Punjabi	23,378,744	2.79%
Assamese	13,079,696	1.56%
Sindhi	2,122,848	0.25%
Nepali	2,076,645	0.25%
Konkani	1,760,607	0.21%
Manipuri	1,270,216	0.15%
Kashmiri	56,693	0.01%
Sanskrit	49,736	0.01%
Other Languages	31,142,376	3.71%
Total	838,583,988	100%

Census Reports of India, 1991.

The Constitution of India listed 14 languages, Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu into its Eighth Schedule in 1950. Since then this has been expended thrice, once to include Sindhi, another time to include Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali and third time to include Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri. Besides the Scheduled languages, the India Census did record 1576 rationalized languages as

well as 1796 other mother tongues.²¹ India's languages can be grouped into 4 different families, each of which has its own evolutionary history and distinctiveness. These are the Sino-Tibetan, the Austro-Asiatic, the Dravidian and the Indo-Aryan. The languages of the early inhabitants of India, who are believed to have spread across the whole country, belong to the Austro-Asiatic group.²² These now survive in the Munda languages of central and eastern India, Nicobarese and the Mon Khmer language Khasi. The Sino-Tibetan languages are those that came with the Mongoloid races who migrated from the north and spread southwards into the Himalayan region and North-eastern India.²³ These include Bhotia, the Naga languages, Manipuri, Khamti and other languages of Arunachal Pradesh. The Dravidian languages came to India between the fourth and third century B.C. with the people who established the Indus Valley Civilization; but were later confined mainly to southern India. Today, this is the second largest family of languages in India and includes Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Tulu, Gondi and Koddagu.²⁴ The Indo-Aryan languages are those of the Nordic-Aryan race who migrated to India in the second century B.C., overran the Indus Valley and eventually settled in the Gangetic plains.²⁵ This is India's largest language family, with its roots in Sanskrit and including Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Konkani, Oriya, Bengali, Assamese, Kashmiri, Hindi and the languages of Bihar, Rajasthan and eastern U.P. In fact there are a number of mother tongues whose genesis is unclear.²⁶

Each of the Indian states happens to be pluri-cultural besides exhibiting a great degree of multilingualism, as the following table would show.

²¹ http://www.education.nic.in/language-new/lg_Bur_website.pdf.

²² Sumi Krishna, "The Language Situation in India: Mosaic or Melting Pot?" In Nirmal Mukherjee & Balveer Arora (ed.), *Federalism in India—Origins and Development*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1992, p. 67.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Table 4.7 LINGUISTIC COMPOSITION BY STATES, 2001

STATES	MAJOR LANGUAGE	OTHER LANGUAGES WITH SIGNIFICANT POPULATION
KERALA	Malayalam (96.6%)	Tamil, Kannada
PUNJAB	Punjabi (92.2%)	Hindi, Urdu
GUJARAT	Gujarati (91.5%)	Hindi, Sindhi
HARYANA	Hindi (91.0%)	Punjabi, Urdu
UTTAR PRADESH	Hindi (90.1%)	Urdu, Punjabi
RAJASTHAN	Hindi (89.6%)	Urdu, Bhili
HIMACHAL PRADESH	Hindi (88.9%)	Punjabi, Kinnauri
TAMIL NADU	Tamil (86.7%)	Kannada, Telugu
WEST BENGAL	Bengali (86.0%)	Urdu, Hindi
ANDHRA PRADESH	Telugu (84.8%)	Urdu, Hindi
MADHYA PRADESH	Hindi (85.6%)	Bhili, Gondi
BIHAR	Hindi (80.9%)	Urdu, Santali
ORISSA	Oriya (82.8%)	Hindi, Telugu
MIZORAM	Lushai (75.1%)	Bengali, Lakher
MAHARASHTRA	Marathi (73.3%)	Hindi, Urdu
GOA	Konkani (51.5%)	Marathi, Kannada
MEGHALAYA	Khasi (49.5%)	Garo, Bengali
TRIPURA	Bengali (68.9%)	Tripuri, Hindi
KARNATAKA	Kannada (66.2%)	Urdu, Telugu
SIKKIM	Nepali (63.1%)	Bhotia, Lepcha
MANIPUR	Manipuri (60.4%)	Thadou, Tangkhul
ASSAM	Assamese (57.8%)	Bengali, Boro
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	Nissi (19.9%)	Nepali, Bengali
NAGALAND	Ao (14.0%)	Sema, Konyak

Source: http://www.education.nic.in/language-new/lg_Bur_website.pdf.

Indian multilingualism dates back historically to ancient times when ethnic groups and races came in contact with one another through migration from one region to another.²⁷ Although political compulsions and social restructuring might have contributed a little to its growth, multilingualism in India was largely a product of close contact between four language families from the earliest recorded history.²⁸ And this tradition continues even today so that presently there is not a single state that can be said to be monolingual. Yet another reason for the predominance of multilingualism may be the fact that since the last 1000 years the country has witnessed fragmentation and unification at the hands of invaders. This has helped spread many common linguistic features among Indian languages without allowing any particular language to become overwhelmingly dominant.²⁹

4.4 LINGUISTIC STATES AND MINORITY LANGUAGES

Our linguistic variety is the outcome of both environment and history. Today, when we consider the language situation in India, it is the politicization of language as a token of regional identities that stands out as the most striking characteristic. The organization of federal India into linguistic states is apparently recognition of the socio-political power of different language groups.³⁰ For the language groups, statehood means greater socio-economic security and access to employment.

In spite of linguistic reorganization of states, no state is linguistically homogeneous. India could well be described as a country of linguistic minorities, because even Hindi-Urdu (the language amalgam spoken by 46% of the

²⁷ J.C.Sharma, "Multilingualism in India", *Language in India*, Vol 1:8 December 2001.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Jason Baldrige, "Reconciling linguistic diversity: The history and the future of language policy in India", *Language in India*, Vol 2:3, May 2002.

³⁰ Sumi Krishna, "The Language Situation in India: Mosaic or Melting Pot?" In Nirmal Mukherjee and Balveer Arora (eds.), *Federalism in India—Origins and Development* .Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 1992, p. 74.

population) is a minority language in the context of India as a whole. (*Pattanayak, 1973*). Sindhi, Urdu, Sanskrit are also minority languages.³¹

Table 4.8: STATELESS LINGUISTIC MINORITIES IN INDIA (1971)

Stateless linguistic minorities	Number(in Million)
Bhili	3.4
Boro	0.5
Dogri	1.3
Gondi	1.7
Nepali*	1.4
Ho	0.8
Konkani*	1.5
Kurukh/Oraon	1.2
Mundari	0.8
Sindhi	1.7
Santali	3.8
Tulu	1.2

Source: Weiner Myron (1989), Pg, 45. Note*: Konkans have got their statehood (Goa), and the Nepalis have got a sub-state (DGHC in 1988) within West Bengal. Both the languages have got constitutional recognition.

Sometimes, minorities speaking 'unrecognized' languages have demanded statehood and these types of demands have been made by linguistic communities inhabiting a particular region of a state where these groups have a strong sense of distinctive identity.

It is not that in every state dominant language is not spoken. Between 85% and 95% of the population speak the dominant language in Andhra Pradesh (Telugu), Goa(Konkani), Gujarat (Gujarati), Kerala(Malayalam), Uttar Pradesh (Hindi) and West Bengal (Bengali). But the pattern is different in other states, such as Assam,

³¹ Ibid., p. 74.

Bihar, Punjab and Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, for example, Hindi is spoken by 33% of the population as compared to 57% who speak the various Rajasthani dialects, but Hindi is the dominant state language. In Himachal Pradesh and some of the north-eastern states, the numerically major language is spoken by a very small minority--only 15% speak Konyak in Nagaland, 17% speak Mandeali in Himachal Pradesh.

Table 4.9: LINGUISTIC MINORITY BY STATES IN INDIA (1971)

State	Population	Official Language Speakers	Linguistic Minority	Percentage of Linguistic minority
Andhra Pradesh	43.5	37.1	6.4	14.7 %
Assam	14.6	8.9	5.7	39 %
Bihar	56.4	44.9	11.5	20.4 %
Delhi	4.1	3.1	1.0	33.3 %
Gujarat	26.7	23.9	2.8	10.5 %
Haryana	10	9.0	1.0	10 %
Himachal Pradesh	3.5	3.0	0.5	14.3 %
Jammu & Kashmir	4.6	2.4	2.2	47.8 %
Karnataka	29.3	19.3	10.0	34.1 %
Kerala	21.4	20.5	0.9	4 %
Madhya Pradesh	41.7	34.7	7.0	16.8 %
Maharastra	50.4	38.6	11.8	23.4 %
Orissa	21.9	18.5	3.4	15.5 %
Punjab	13.6	10.8	2.8	20.5 %
Rajasthan	25.8	23.5	2.3	8.9 %
TamilNadu	41.2	34.8	6.4	15.5 %
Tripura	1.6	1.1	0.5	31.2 %

Uttar Pradesh	88.3	78.2	10.1	11.4 %
West Bengal	44.3	37.8	6.5	14.7 %
Total	542.9	450.1	92.8	17.1 %

Source: Myron Weiner, *The Indian Paradox Essays on Indian Politics*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1989, p. 44.

From the above statistical data, it can be said that though a number of states have been formed after independence on the basis of the recommendation of the States Reorganisation Commission, but no state of the Indian union is linguistically homogeneous. A considerable amount of linguistic minorities is found in more or less all the states of the Indian Union. That is to say, all the states contain people belonging to different languages. Another interesting fact is that a linguistic majority is not only confined to its own home state but can simultaneously be found in small measures in the other states also. For instance, the Tamils are not just confined to Tamil Nadu, their homeland. In 1971, there were significant Tamil speakers in other states --- 0.85 million in Karnataka, 0.5 million in Andhra Pradesh and 0.16 million in West Bengal. (The Times of India, 16th December, 1998.)³²

Again, in Tamil Nadu itself though the dominant linguistic group is Tamil yet considerable number of other language speakers coexist. For instance, in 1971, there were 3.36 million Telugu speakers, 0.9 million Kannada speakers, 0.4 million Malayalam speakers, 0.1 million home state speakers, besides those speaking other Indian languages. Furthermore, the number of bilinguals is on the increase from census to census. The national average is: 1961---9.70 %; 1971---13.04 %; 1981—13.34 %; 1991—19.44 %.

Moreover, some of the linguistic minority groups considered minority within a state or union territory may be a majority group in another state or union territory (for example, the Telugu speakers settled in Maharashtra are treated as a minority

³² http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/sas/papers/panel14_bhattacharyya.rtf.

group in Maharashtra, but they are the majority group within Andhra Pradesh. There are also minority groups that are found only within a single state and thus always occupy a minority position (for example, Tulu speakers of Karnataka, whose native state is Karnataka).³³

Table 4.10: LINGUISTIC DISPERSAL (1961)

Language	Number of Speakers Not residing in home state	Percent speakers in Home state	Percent speakers In other states
Assamese	19,000	99.7 %	0.3 %
Kashmiri	18,000	99.0 %	1.0 %
Bihari	364,000	97.8 %	2.3 %
Hindi	4,187, 000	96.6 %	3.4 %
Malayalam	929, 000	94.5 %	5.5 %
Tamil	2,129, 000	93.0 %	7.0 %
Gujarati	1,434, 000	92.9 %	7.1 %
Marwari	460, 000	92.6 %	7.4 %
Oriya	1,175, 000	92.5 %	7.4 %
Marathi	2,534, 000	92.3 %	7.7 %
Bengali	3,624, 000	89.2 %	10.8 %
Kannada	1,944, 000	88.8 %	11.2 %
Punjabi	1,531, 000	84.5 %	15.5 %
Telugu	6,710, 000	82.2 %	17.8 %
Rajasthani	3,547, 000	76.2 %	23.8 %
Total	30,605, 000		

(Source: Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil—Migration and Ethnic Conflict in India*; OUP, 1978.)

³³ B. Mallikarjun, *Indian Multilingualism, Language Policy and the Digital Divide*, Scalla 2004 Working Conference, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The above data shows how the official language speakers are distributed in different states in varying degrees. For purposes of occupation, education and for other reasons, the people migrate from their home State to other states in which they are a minority. However, in such cases there is no apparent conflict. According to a recent data, about 9 million Bengalees live outside Bengal and Tripura, 1.4 million Malayalis are outside Kerala, 2 million Gujaratis outside of Gujarat, 3 million Maharashtrians outside of Maharashtra and Goa, 1.4 million Oriyas outside of Orissa, 3.3 million Punjabis outside of Punjab, 2.5 million Tamils outside of Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry, 7.7 million Telegus outside of Andhra Pradesh, and 11 million Hindi speakers outside of India's Hindi belt.¹

Again, there are a number of cities in which speakers of the state language are a minority. To quote Myron Weiner----

“The Maratha speaking population constitutes only 42.8% of Bombay. Kannada speakers in Bangalore (23.7%) are outnumbered by Tamils(31.7%) . The Assamese lack a majority in Gauhati and in several other towns along the Brahmaputra. It is no surprise, therefore, that these towns have active ‘sons of the soil’ movements.”²

So it can be said that the linguistic mosaic is highly diverse but not chaotic. The above assessment shows the multicultural nature of the Indian population. Though so far only 22 languages have been recognized by the Constitution, many more will get constitutional sanction in the years to come. The incorporation of different languages to the Eighth Schedule proves that accommodative nature of the Indian state.

4.5 ETHNO-TRIBAL IDENTITIES

The tribes are presumed to be the oldest ethnological sector of the national population, popularly designated as *adivasis* (original inhabitants). In fact India has

¹ Harihar Bhattacharyya, *Indian Federalism, Minorities and Statehood: Accommodation of Diversity and Political Order*, http://www.sociology.ed.ac.uk/sas/papers/panel14_bhattacharyya.rtf.

² Myron Weiner, “Minority Identities” in Sudipta Kaviraj (ed.), *Politics in India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 2002, p. 244.

the largest tribal population in the whole world. The demographic distribution of tribes can be divided into four main regions---South, Central, East and North-East. The concentration of tribal population stretch along the Himalayas, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in the north western part to Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland in the north east. Another stretch of tribal zone can be found in central India in Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and to a large extent in Bihar, Jharkhand and in the southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh Tribes are also found to be concentrated in significant proportion in the Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep. The Constitution Order, 1950, declared 212 tribes as 'Scheduled Tribes'. According to the *Draft of the National Policy on Tribals* there are 67.8 million Scheduled Tribe people, constituting 8.08 per cent of India's population. There are 698 Scheduled Tribes spread all over the country barring States and Union Territories like Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Pondicherry and Punjab.

In the *South* some of the world's most primitive tribes are found. The *Aranadans* of Nilambur forests of Kerala, who till last century did not know how to make a hut, and being rejected by the caste Hindus as 'impure', found their patrons among the Muslims with whom despite being exploited they prefer to work with.³⁶ In the interiors of Tamil Nadu the *Mudugas* are found. They earn their living by carrying out 'slash and burn' cultivation. Apart from the *Mudugas* there is the *Adi, Naga, Juang* tribes who live by cultivating crops in the valley. The *Saoras* of *Parlakimidi* not only produce crops for sale in the valley, but also work as agricultural labourers and municipal sweepers.³⁷ In Andhra Pradesh the *Chenchus* earn their living by working for the forest contractors. Andhra Pradesh is also famous for the heroism of the *Konda, Dokas* and *Kurichivas* of Wynad. Each of these tribes has their own culture-pattern, dialect and beliefs.

Among the tribal people of Madhya Pradesh, the *Raj Gonds, Bhil, Bhilala* and *Meo- Mina* have been successful in climbing the social ladder, in adopting

³⁶ Ibid., p. 34.

³⁷ Ibid., p.35

Hinduism and in becoming owners of land but at the same time retaining their 'social rules and taboos with anxious correctness'.

North-East The north east posits itself as a mosaic of different identities---tribes, castes, languages, religions etc, a typical multicultural society yet so distinct from mainstream India. The Northeast is a region that encompasses tremendous social heterogeneity and complex (traditional) political organization, despite its peculiar geographical, historical, social, cultural and political features. It is composed of seven states of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Mizoram. Sociologically speaking, these tribal groups belong to different racial stocks, speak different languages and have their own cultural traditions. This plurality is largely due to the settlement of Mongoloid people as well as migration of people from various directions to north east India. There are 145 tribal communities of which 78 are large each with a population of more than 5000.³⁸ They constitute about 12 percent of the total tribal population of India and 25.81 percent of the total population of North East India. Many of these groups were granted statehood at various moments of post independent history in deference to claims for (ethnic) autonomy and difference.³⁹

In the post-colonial Northeast, we can recognize five different parameters of identity consolidation. These are tribe, caste, language, territory and religion. They often work in combination with one another. Emergence of tribal social formations often with demand for specified territories as politico administrative units are features common enough in north-east India and these are proof that multiculturalism as a policy and as a principle is a well accepted fact in India.

³⁸ A.N.M. Irshad Ali and Insdranoshee Das, *Tribal Situation in North-East India*, Stud. Tribes Tribals, 1(2), 2003 in <http://www.krepublishers.com/02-journals>

³⁹ Rajesh Dev, "Human Rights, Relativism & Minorities in North East India" *Economic and Political Weekly*, Oct 23, 2004, p. 47.

Table 4.11: TRIBAL POPULATION OF NORTH EAST INDIA, 2001

STATES	TOTAL POPULATION	SCHEDULED TRIBES(ST) POPULATION	PROPORTION OF SCHEDULED TRIBES(ST)POPULATION
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	1097968	705158	64.2 %
ASSAM	26655528	3308570	12.4 %
MANIPUR	2166788	741141	34.2 %
MEGHALAYA	2318822	1992862	85.9 %
MIZORAM	888573	839310	94.5 %
NAGALAND	1990036	1774026	89.1 %
SIKKIM	540851	111405	20.6 %
TRIPURA	3199203	993426	31.1 %

Excludes Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur .

Source: http://www.censusindia.net/t_00_005.html

All the north-east states have a rich variety of ethnic groups. For instance, in Assam there are tribal groups such as *Bodos*, *Koch Rajbangshis*, *Kacaharis*, *Mishing*, *Mishimi* etc exhibit variety in culture and traditions; similarly *Tangkhum*, *Kabui*, *Thado* and *Hmars*; in Manipur, there are the *Kukis*, *Paites*, *Vaipheis*, *Hmars*; in Tripura, the *Reangs*, *Chakma*, *Deobarma*, *Halam* and *Usai* communities predominate; in Meghalaya the *Garos*, *Khasis* and *Jayantias*; in Manipur the major tribal communities are *Meities*, *Naga* and *Kuki-Chin-Mizo* groups; in Arunachal Pradesh tribal communities include the *Adis*, *Mishmis*, *Nishi*, *Sulung*, *Monpa* and in Nagaland the main tribes are the *Konyak*, *Ao*, *Sema* and *Angamis*. These tribes are sometimes widely spread and some where concentrated in a relatively small territory. These ethnic identities have their 'distinct culture' as reflected in their folk art, folk literature, traditional crafts and ethos.

4.6 CULTURAL SYNCRETISM

The Indian multicultural mosaic is truly unique in the sense that the distinct cultural communities cannot be strictly compartmentalized within their distinct cultural boundaries. Over the years different processes of social transformations have led to the creation of a syncretic culture in India. The composite cultural tradition was the result of protracted interactions between the diverse religious communities. During the Middle Ages India witnessed the synthesis of Hindu and Islamic civilizations leading to 'interfaith convergence'. In the People of India Study (1985-1992), a large number of communities have identified themselves in terms of dual religious configuration, such as Hindu-Sikh, Hindu-Muslim and Hindu-Buddhist. There are certain communities such as the Khasi Muslim of Meghalaya and the Nicobarese of Andaman and Nicobar islands which have segments professing three or sometimes four religions, such as Islam, Christianity and tribal religions. There are certain communities inhabiting the north east where some segments profess Buddhism and tribal religions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it can be said that the highly complex cultural unity, thus, is the result of protracted interaction and interrelationship of the diverse cultural traditions nurtured over thousands of years, truly reflecting not unity *in* diversity but unity *through* diversity. It is these religious, cultural and linguistic linkages that ultimately define India's peculiar multiculturalism. India's diversities are not merely numerous, but also alive and assertive. All have their respective culture; history, traditions and the Indian state had respected these identities and had never forced them to be assimilated with the majority.

Nonetheless, the diversities are to be accommodated though the structured mechanisms consciously pursued by the state. Bhikhu Parekh---"Every multicultural society needs to devise its own appropriate political structure to suit its history, cultural traditions, and range and depth of diversity".

To protect the rich diversity of our composite culture, what is necessary is a multi-tier dialogue, accompanied with participatory political processes and institutions. In terms of political arrangements, what is essential is adoption and implementation of institutions and structures that meet the aspirations of the different ethnic nationalities in terms of “meaningful internal self-determination and control over their own affairs in a manner that is not inconsistent with ultimate sovereignty”.⁴⁰

It is a well-accepted fact that the Indian state is a mosaic of many segments--- ethnic, regions, caste, tribes, linguistic, regional and cultural. The unique fact is that these diverse segments have their own distinctive characteristics and the identities are very much self-conscious of their rights. Naturally the question arises is how to reconcile the different identities into a harmonious whole. In the words of Rasheduddin Khan:

“Autonomy and respect for segments have to go hand in hand with political unity, federal integration, and pan- Indian solidarity and fraternity. This is one of the biggest and the most creative challenge facing the Republic of India, at a time when established federal politics like the erstwhile Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia have collapsed in their federal experimentation.”⁴¹

In the process of providing autonomy, institutional arrangements and structures should not be restricted to the state level but should be extended below the state level to accommodate those ethnic identities who cannot be contained or given recognition within the framework of federalism. It is only through the process of multicultural decentralization that the grand co-existence of different identities under the same “political roof” can be lawfully maintained.

⁴⁰ A.S. Narang, *Ethnic Identities and Federalism*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, 1995, p. 67.

⁴¹ Rasheeduddin Khan, *Bewildered India — Identity, pluralism and Discord*, Har-Anand Publication, Delhi, 1994, p. 23.