A STUDY OF AN ETHNOLINGUISTIC PARASTATAL ORGANIZATION IN MAURITIUS: THE CASE OF TAMIL SPEAKING UNION

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ABSTRACT

Mauritius is a multiethnic country where a number of organizations have been set up by different ethnic groups and the government of Mauritius to maintain and promote different linguistic, cultural and religious practices. To promote linguistic issues, eight speaking unions have been set up by the government of Mauritius in the interest of Bhojpuri, Chinese, Creole, English, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and Urdu languages. Some of these unions exist for almost two decades. This paper attempts to understand the functions of these unions by studying in depth one specific speaking union, namely the Tamil speaking union, from 2011 to 2015. Document analysis and interviews have been mainly used to carry out this study. The results are presented in the form of literature, tables and figures.

Keywords: Socio cultural organizations, spoken Tamil, organizational structure, organizational culture, ethnic group.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Mauritius is a multiethnic country, where the different ethnic groups embrace they are respective religious and cultural practices. Although 'Creole' is the lingua franca of almost all the people of Mauritius, irrespective of their ethnic appurtenances, and English, the language of medium of instruction in the curriculum and French, the main written and audiovisual media language, there is a constant attempt by the different ethnic groups to maintain their respective ethnic languages. As a result, a number of socio cultural organizations have been set up by different ethnic groups to maintain and promote their respective religious, cultural and linguistic issues. Even the government of Mauritius has set up a few organizations for the above causes. Such organizations in Mauritius could be categorized as follows:

(i)   Organizations run solely by ethnic groups without Government subsidy
(ii)   Organizations that are partly subsidized by the Government of Mauritius
(iii)   Organizations that are set up and financed by the Government of Mauritius.

The first two categories could be referred to as socio cultural organizations and the third type fall under the category of parastatal bodies. A number of cultural centers and speaking unions have been set up by the government to promote the cultural and linguistic practices of

Chinese, Creole, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu speaking ethnic groups. Following are the different speaking unions set up and financed by the government. All these unions function under the aegis of the ministry of arts and culture.

(i)   Bhojpuri Speaking Union (Act 14 of 2011 and repealed Act 16 of 2015)
(ii)   Chinese Speaking Union Act 15 of 2011 and repealed Act 17 of 2015
(iii)   Creole Speaking Union (Act 16 of 2011 and repealed Act 18 of 2015)
(iv)   English Speaking Union (Act 17 of 2013 and repealed Act 20 of 2015)
(v)   Hindi Speaking Union (Act 33 of 1994 and repealed Act 1 of 2015)
(vi)   Marathi Speaking Union (Act 23 of 2008 and repealed Act 22 of 2015)
(vii)   Tamil Speaking Union (Act 24 of 2008 and repealed Act 23 of 2015)
(viii) Telugu Speaking Union (Act 25 of 2008 and repealed Act 24 of 2015)
(ix)   Urdu Speaking Union (Act 39 of 2002 and repealed Act 28 of 2015)

The opinions of the public on the performance of these speaking unions are diverse. Although most of the people do not expect much from such speaking unions, yet some are of the opinion that the government is not supporting them adequately to achieve their objectives; they are regarded as symbolic creations of the government.

It is on this backdrop that this paper attempts to study one specific speaking union, namely the Tamil speaking union (tsu), to understand in depth the ways such unions operate in a multi-ethnic context. The study has been focused on the activities of Tamil speaking union during the period 2011 to 2015.

2.0 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Aim

This study aims at understanding the ways 'ethnolinguistic' parastatal bodies' function in a multiethnic context such as Mauritius.

2.2 Objectives

Following are the main objectives of this study:

(i) To make an assessment of the objectives and activities of their union
(ii) To make an evaluation of the internal environments of the Union
(iii)To assess the external factors affecting the Union

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Document analysis has been mainly used to carry out this study. A number of documents such acts, advertisements, correspondences, annual reports, articles have been studied to obtain relevant data for this study. Members, teachers, coordinators and students of the union have been interviewed to elicit appropriate information. Classes and events conducted by Tamil speaking union have also been observed, recorded and analyzed. The experience of the present researcher who is an important member in the union since its inception has also

been very useful. Both the qualitative and quantitative data have been presented in the form of argumentation, tables and figures, interalia. Pestel and swot analysis have been found useful to assess the internal and external factors the organization that effect.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Mission, Vision and Objectives

4.1.1 Vision
The Tamil Speaking Union will be the main platform par excellence to ensure that all Mauritians of Tamil origin and an increasing number of other Mauritians have a sound knowledge of Tamil language

4.1.2 Mission

(i)   To be the main driver in the promotion of Tamil language in its spoken and written   forms in Mauritius

(ii)   To create an international network for the interaction of Tamil speakers across the world

(iii)   To restore the rightful place of Tamil language in the linguistic panorama of Mauritius

(iv)   To promote intercultural and interlinguistic understanding and harmony in Mauritius

4.1.3 Objectives

(i)   To play an active role in the teaching/learning of Tamil language of pre-primary, secondary, tertiary levels, in evening schools and among adults.
(ii)   To create the ability to use the Tamil language in its spoken form by primary, secondary and tertiary students.
(iii)   To promote exchange, friendship and understanding among Tamil language speakers.
(iv)   To develop the cultural, artistic, economic and social perspectives of the Tamil language.
(v)   To create a vibrant Tamil language community.
(vi)   To provide the Tamil language speakers and those interested in the language with maximum access to materials related to Tamil language, literature and culture.
(vii)   To promote research and publications on topics related to Tamil.
(viii)   To promote joint activities with other speaking unions and institutions.

4.2 The main activities of TSU

During the period 2011 to 2015, the union was involved in a number of activities with the focus on the following

(i)   Spoken Tamil courses
(ii)   Spoken Tamil Day
(iii)   Publication of books
(iv)   Production of CDs
(v)   Organization of seminars, workshop and lectures
(vi)   Joint activities with other Tamil and non-Tamil organizations

Table 1

| Years	Levels	No of Students	No of Teachers	No of Coordinators
2011	Basic Level	637	19	20
2012	Basic Level	393	14	14
	Lower Intermediate Level	446	12	15
2013	Basic Level	63	3	3
	Lower Intermediate Level	211	11	11
	Upper Intermediate Level	328	8	12
2014	Basic Level	46	2	2
	Lower Intermediate Level	29	2	2
	Upper Intermediate Level	160	8	9
	Advanced Level 1	175	6	9
2015	Basic Level	89	3	3
	Lower Intermediate Level	37	2	2
	Upper Intermediate Level	10	1	1
	Advanced Level 1	152	8	9
	Advanced Level 2	126	8	8

Number of courses and students at different levels

Source (TSU, 2016)

4.2.1 Spoken Tamil Courses

The spoken Tamil course project initiated in 2011 aimed at empowering the Mauritian population, particularly the Tamil community, with the ability to converse fluently in the Tamil language. The course, based on the concept 'language is primarily a set of habits' (skinner,) aimed at enabling the learners to understand and speak the language. The course was supplemented by textbooks and audio materials. The learners who were mainly adults were exposed to the spoken language forms used in the different contexts through teachers and audio materials. In the classroom, the students mainly listened to the different language structures several times, repeated them while the trainers assisted them in understanding the forms and in getting the correct pronunciation. The course was a 5-level course. The following table gives more details on the course:

The following figure 1 gives a clearer picture of the evolution of students in the spoken Tamil courses run by Tamil speaking Union during the period 2011 to 2015.

Figure 1
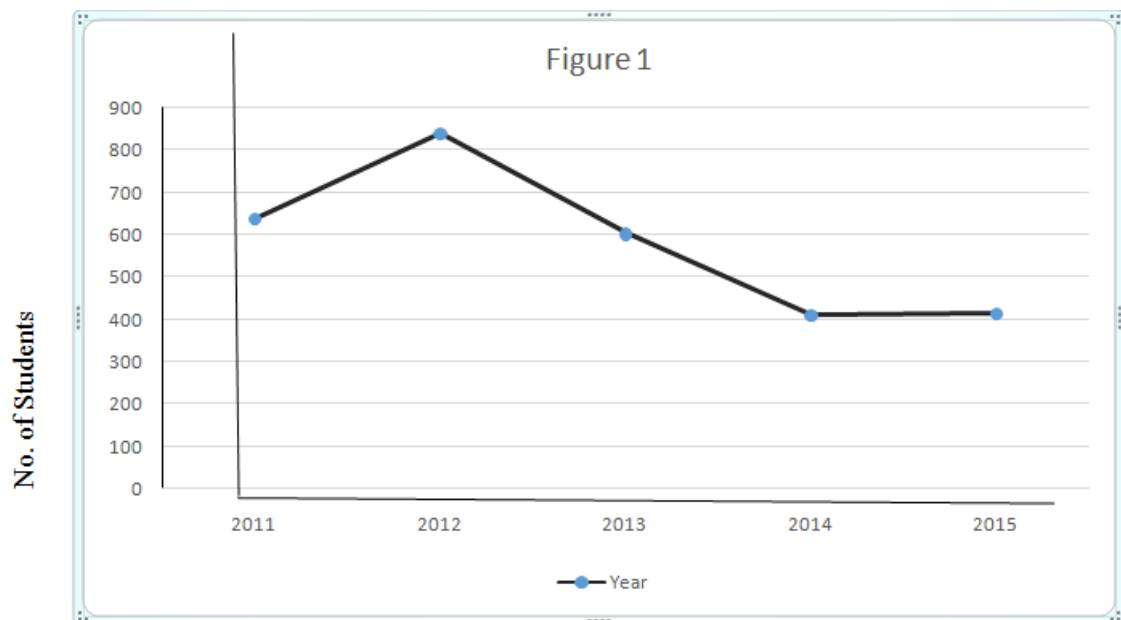
(Source, TSU 2016)

4.2.2 Publication of Books and Production of CDs

From 2011 to 2015, the Tamil speaking union published the following three books:

(i)   Spoken Tamil: The Easy Way – Book 1
(ii)   Spoken Tamil: The Easy Way – Book 2
(iii)   Spoken Tamil: The Easy Way – Book 3

The following table shows the different themes dealt with in the above books:

Table 2

Themes in Book 1	Themes in Book 2	Themes in Book 3
Meeting a friend	Buying a saree	Buying vegetables
Tamil class	Tamil New Year	Tamil class
Meal time	Enquire about education	A visit to Tamil Naidu
Birthday Party invitation	Family	*Bajanam group*
Welcoming someone from Tamil Naidu	Place of residence and work	*Dipavali*
Enquiry about health	Kavadi festival	Prayer
	Cooking	
	Tamil classes	

Source: Spoken Tamil: The Easy Way, Vol 1,2 and 3

Each lesson in the above textbooks is divided into five steps (1 to 5) and each step consists of a conversation, model sentences and vocabulary section. The conversational part is carried forward to the next step with the additional conversational part highlighted. The objective of this approach is to allow the readers to acquire the structures naturally by repetition and exposure. Two more sections, namely 'language point' and 'supplement' have been included at the end of each lesson of the books.

All the three books are accompanied by CDs where the learners can listen to the language again and again at their own place and time. Three different types of activities are available in the CDs: the learners can listen carefully the full conversations that have been well articulated by native speakers. The translation of the different lexical items and syntactical structures are also given in the cd. As an exercise, the learner would be expected to give either the Tamil or English equivalences for a number of structures.

4.2.3 Spoken Tamil Day

Spoken Tamil day was an annual event of the union from 2013 to 2017. The learners of the different centers would meet on one particular day at a place decided by the union. They would interact in Tamil with different learners from different centers for more than three hours. They would be expected to hold one-to-one conversations in Tamil with the learners of different centers for at least three minutes with each learner. Arrangements were made in classrooms so that participants could communicate among themselves. They would be expected to note the names of the learners they conversed with along with their respective centers. A teacher in the role of a facilitator would also be present in each classroom for any assistance if so needed. By the end of the day, the teacher would collect all the sheets of all the students. The participation of the students would be counted in the final assessment of the spoken Tamil course.

4.2.4 Organization of lectures, workshops, conferences and seminars
The following table shows some the different lectures, workshops and seminars organized by TSU

Table 3

List of events

Events	Number	Topics of event
Lectures		- Greatness of Lord Muruga - Renganaden Seeneevassen Birth Anniversary -
Workshops		- Teaching/learning of spoken Tamil - Teaching/learning of Tamil at secondary level
Seminars		- Residential seminar (Tamil language in Mauritius: Challenges)
Other events		-Award ceremonies (3) -Launching ceremonies (2)

Source: TSU 2016

4.2.5 Collaboration with other organizations

From 2011 to 2015, Tamil speaking union collaborated with a number of local, national and international organizations. The following table shows the collaboration tsu with a few local organizations from 2011 to 2015.

Table 4

Year	Organizations collaborated with	Events of collaboration
2011	Savanne Tamil Association	Seminar on Tamil Education
	Ministry of Arts and Culture	'Festival Mauricien'
	Thiruvalluvar circle	Tamil New year
	Vacoas Phoenix Tamil Federation	Tamil New year
2012	Ministry of Arts and Culture	Festival Mauricien
	Union Tamoule De Maurice	Aadi Celebration
2013	Ministry of Arts and Culture	Mother Tongue Day
	Mauritius Tamil Culture Centre Trust	Tamil New Year
	Vacoas Phoenix Tamil Federation	Tamil New Year
	Mahatma Gandhi Institute	Carnatic Recital in Veena and Flute

Source: TSU 2016

Most of the above-mentioned organizations are socio cultural organizations, except the Ministry of Arts and Culture and Mahatma Gandhi Institute. Mahatma Gandhi Institute is a parastatal educational organization which caters for higher learning in Asian languages and culture.

4.3 Assessment of the internal environment of the union

4.3.1 Organizational Structure of Tamil Speaking Union

It is very essential for an organization to have an established structure. The success of the organization depends on how structured the organization is. Berwyn Clayton et al (2008) quote mc Milan to suggest 'if the structure of an organization and the underlying design principle which construct it are not in tune with the core purpose of the organization and its many environments then it is unlikely to successfully survive.'

Organizations can be classified in a number of structure system. Simple structure (Mintzberg, 1979) is an organization that is low in specialization and formalization but very high in centralization. The chief executive often takes the central directive role. It has a simple managerial hierarchy with very few support staff. Communication is informal and vertical and decision making is based on the organization. Such an organization remains static as it depends solely on the personal skills, knowledge and experience of the chief executive.

The functional structure (hunter, 2012) is structured in which similar and related specialists one grouped together. A sharp division of labour is the major distinguishing characteristic of this type of organization.

The divisional structure (hunter, 2012) is made up of self-contained units. Hunter defines the following characteristics of a divisional structure:

(i)   Authoritative, deterministic, autonomous
(ii)   Large material hierarchy, centralized staff of experts
(iii)   Manage implement strategy
(iv)   Standardization of outputs is the primary coordinating mechanism
(v)   Decision making is guided by financial objectives
(vi)   Communication is regulated along formal lines
(vii)   Complexity in the diversity of the market and products

Team-based structure (banner, 1995) is an organization that consists only of work groups or teams. According to him, such an organization will become a highly decentralized and autonomous organization like a matrix structure organization.

Based on the above theoretical concepts, it is clear that the Tamil speaking union is a simple structure organization with a simple managerial hierarchy and a very few support staff. Human resources could be summarized as shown in the following table 5

Table 5

Level	Staff/Resource
Strategic	Chairman/Part-time Director Secretary; Treasurer and the board member
Middle Management	No. staff at this level. This is being taken course by the part time Director.
Operational	Clerical Officer, an Attendant,Teachers and coordinators

Source, TSU 2016

4.3.2 Financial situation of the TSU

TSU received income from the following sources during the period 2011 to 2015

- Grants from the Government of Mauritius
- Fees from the students of the spoken Tamil courses
- Sale of books mainly the "Spoken Tamil: The Easy Way books"

- Contribution from sponsors
- Donations from volunteers
- Others

The table gives an idea of income received during the period 2011 to 2015 in Mauritian rupees. (One US dollar is equivalent to approximately 35.50 Mauritian rupees)

Table 6

Financial Income of TSU

Years	Grant from Ministry	Spoken Tamil Course fees	Sponsors /Donation	Book Sales	Membership fees	Others	Total
2011	1,000,000	229,075	41,000	-	28,400	-	1,298.475.00
2012	1,000,000	310,250	235,550	-	15,000	-	1,560,800.00
2013	1,000,000	598,893	92,750	32,450	15,000	-	1,739,093.00
2014	1,100,00	432,930	85,000	29,500	19,000	-	1,666,430.00
2015	1,135,200	316,750	114,595	66,300	7,000	50,000 (PFCW GRANT)	1,689,845.00

Source: TSU, 2016

As the above table shows, the income was mainly from the Government grants. The spoken Tamil course also yielded a reasonable income for the union.

4.3.3 The organization culture of TSU

Several researchers have highlighted the relevance of culture in the organization. Schein (1992) defines culture as 'a pattern of basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive think and feel in relation to these problems'. Martin (2002) admits that people of an organization cannot learn everything about the organization by studying only the culture, but it gives opportunities for broad areas of enquiry. Schein (2004) asserts that understanding an organizational culture will enable an organization to manage effectively, to deal with growth and diversity, to cope with change and to lead effectively. Alvesson (2002)believes that a 'cultural focus offers an inspiring and potentially creative way of understanding organization, management and working life.' he sees cultural management not as an engineering of minds, but as interactive and interpretive enterprise aimed at eliminating contention.

Tsu was based on a kind of power culture (handy, 1976) where power was based at the centre with the ag. Director holding all powers and who gave instructions to all the staffs. Even

communication from external stakeholders came through him before being channeled to other staff for any action.

Moreover, tsu shared many characteristics of an 'Eiffel tower corporate culture' (hofstede, 1984) where the relationship among employees was very specific and mechanical. All the powers were concentrated at the top where the employees were expected to report directly to the executive director.

Given that tsu was a small organization with four administrative staff and around 15 teaching staffs, it was inevitable to have a power culture. The ag. Director found no difficulty in centralizing the power on him for the good functioning of the organization. The fact that presently there was no one at the tactical level of the organization, it was normal that all the power was centered at the strategic level to which the operational staff should report. The fact that the director is on a part-time basis, the power culture posed some kind of problems. Sometimes the director was not available when an urgent decision had to be taken.

Such an Eiffel tower culture does not usually empower the people at a low level to take decisions which result in a lack of confidence. It also prevents the staff to have a good sense of belonging with the organizational products and services. Very often when students or teachers required some specific information, the personnel at the operational level had to refer the matter to the director. This often affected the smooth running of the organization. The existing culture was not proper for the organization but given the size of the organization and the shortage of staff, there was no better alternative than on 'power culture' for that period.

4.4 External Factors affecting the Tamil Speaking Union

An external analysis of TSU has been carried out to find out the external factors that affected the organization from attaining its set goals and objectives for the period from 2011 to 2015 using the PESTEL Analysis. The following results show how far the political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors affected the organization.

4.4.1 Political impact

The fact TSU is a parastatal body that falls under the responsibility of the Government of Mauritius through the Ministry of Arts and Culture, it is automatically affected by political issues. The act is drafted by the government and approved by the parliament. The board is appointed by the Government and with a change in the government; it is bound to be changed. The government in place usually expects from the management of the TSU to be politically supportive of its cultural policies and sometimes to its political agendas. The minister of the parent ministry has to be invited to almost all the major events of the organization. Very often when addressing the audience during an event, the minister uses the platform for political propaganda. The organization cannot go out of the framework of the act. Hence, TSU is an organization which is highly influenced by political issues.

4.4.2 Economic impact

There is no doubt that economic factors of the country affected the economic and other related issues of the organization during the period from 2011 to 2015. The organization relied solely on the government grant, the fees paid by the students and donation by the sponsors. The rise and fall in the number of students registering for the courses, the

reluctance to settle the fees by them, the dropouts among them before settling the fees, are some of the factors that affected the financial income of the union on the other hand. For the past five years, the government had hardly increased the grants for the organization. The sponsorship by the companies depended on the economic situations of the country and their respective business.

4.4.3 Social factor

TSU is highly affected by social issues. In the mind of the public, both Tamils and non-Tamils was regarded TSU as a socio-cultural organization rather than an academic parastatal institution that was mandated to promote Tamil as a 'Language' among the people of Mauritius, irrespective of their ethnic appurtenances. People, especially the Tamil speaking ones, expected the organization to position itself on social, cultural and even ethnic issues related to the community. When there was an issue the possibility of having a public holiday on the Tamil New Year day for 2016 regarding the issue of Sri Lanka. There were pressures from the Tamil community to have the TSU position itself and to voice its opinions. There were also expectations from the public that TSU participates in the cultural and religious festivals such as 'kavadi' and 'Tamil New Year' and to collaborate with other religious, political and socio-cultural organizations.

4.4.4 Technological Factor

Technological development affected the TSU to a great extent. TSU had very basic technological support such as the computer, laptop, digital printers, just to mention a few. There was a need for TSU to adopt social media strategies such as twitter, facebook, Linked In so as to be more effective at all levels; TSU needs to align its courses online systems to be more effective and efficient. There was a mismatch between the available human resources and the application of modern technological tools in the projects of the organization.

4.4.5 Environmental factor

As such there was no much impact on the environmental factors of the organization. The organization could also move to a more paperless approach and take part in the protection of environmental issues.

4.4.6 Legal factor

As mentioned above TSU is ultimately governed by the government. The latter often comes with amendments in its action which seriously impact on its functioning. Due to the recent change in government, there has been a change in the act which resulted in a change in the constitution of the board. Previously the board was constituted by the election every two years among the members of the organization, but as from the new act, the members are being appointed by the Minister.

4.5 SWOT ANALYSIS of the union

4.5.1Strengths

1. A sizeable number of qualified teachers who could speak the language very well.
2. Some of the teachers were very dynamic.
3. There was a trust among the public about the commitment of TSU towards the teaching and learning of language.
4. 3 books and 3 CDs for the Spoken Tamil Courses have already been produced.
5. Unlike the other Speaking Unions TSU has already established itself in terms of its activities.
6. There was a collective conviction among the teachers, board member's coordinators and students regarding the vision and mission of TSU.

4.5.2 Weaknesses
1. Lack of proper administrative and financial staff
2. Lack of a staff with curriculum, ICT and multimedia knowledge
3. Lack of a proper building with proper investments
4. Lack of training to the teachers and other staffs
5. Lack of supervision of the teaching/learning in centers
6. Lack of financial resources

4.5.3 Opportunities
1. Eagerness to learn Spoken Tamil in Mauritius.
2. Eagerness to know about the Tamil culture by Tamil and Non-Tamil speakers
3. The gap in the teaching/ learning of spoken Tamil in government schools.
4. The new 9-year schooling curriculum lays emphasis on the spoken forms of language.
5. Eagerness to know the rich Tamil literary traditions of the language.
6. A sizeable number of people from Tamil Nadu who are in Mauritius and who create a need for the language to be understood and spoken.

5.0 DISCUSSION

The mission and vision of the Tamil Speaking Union were very appropriate for a Tamil Diasporic country like Mauritius. However, strategic goals along with their respective measurable performance indicators were missing. The union concentrated mainly on the first mission 'to be the main driver in the promotion of Tamil language in spoken and written forms in Mauritius and even the written part of this very first mission did not receive much attention. The objectives were indeed very ambitious.

Running of Spoken Tamil Courses at five levels, organizations of the Spoken Tamil Day annually, publication of Spoken Tamil books and materials, production of CDs for spoken Tamil courses, organization of lectures, workshops and seminars and joint collaborations with other Tamil and non-Tamil socio cultural organizations and parastatal bodies were the main activities of the Union during the period 2011 to 2015. From figure 1 it was clear that the number of learners of spoken Tamil course at different levels from 2011 to 2015 dropped down consequently.

Although it is usually expected to have a fall in number students in most the Adult courses, yet the union should have looked into the reasons for such a fall. Table 1s show that the

number of enrolment a Basic level from 2011 to 2015 has decreased. However, it is interesting to note that the number of learners who ultimately continued the course up to higher levels is quite high. Out of 637 enrolments at Basic level in 2011, 126 completed (20%) the 5 level course in 2015, out of 393 learners who enrolled at Basic level in 2012, 152 (37%) reached the upper immediate level. The following factors, interalia. might have been the reasons for the subsequent low enrolment rate at a Basic level from 2013 to 2015.

(i)   Financial constraints
(ii)   Lack of teaching resources
(iii)   Lack of motivation
(iv)   Lack of marketing strategies
(v)   The inability of the learner to speak the language

The publication of the three books entitled 'spoken Tamil: The Easy Way' along with the CDs have been very useful in dispensing the spoken Tamil courses. The mismatch of course levels and the number of books has also been noted. There were only three books to be used at 5 levels of the course. Since most of the learners were adults, and where one could expect an average level of literacy and numeracy, the focus on the use of written materials could have been somewhat ineffective and which should be further probed into. The course lacked more audiovisual materials and interaction among the students and other speakers of the language, both native and non-native ones. As the main aim of the course was to enable the learners to ultimately communicate with native speakers, more emphasis should have laid upon role and drama activities. The course has completely undermined the role of culture in the learning of a language, especially the spoken form. (Kramsch, 1993)

The 'Spoken Tamil Day' event has been a very innovative one, which attempted to not only put the learning experiences into practice, but also to create a platform to use the language in a multilingual context such as Mauritius where the use of spoken Tamil in the day-to-day life of almost all the Tamils of Mauritius has almost disappeared. Such events could have been organized more frequently and for a longer duration. Even events such as weekend camps could have been introduced with a view to giving more opportunities for the use of the language. Other activities such as role play, drama, viewing of movies could have been plugged into this event to make it more effective and interacting. The fact the participation of the learners in their overall performance of the course might have compelled the students to attend the event.

The number of lectures, workshops and seminars organized by the union did not tally with the objective (V) 'to create a vibrant Tamil Community'. To achieve this objective, the union should have organized more such events not only to create the vibrancy but also to bring the community close to the Tamil language, culture, history, literature and civilization. These elements are equally important in creating a healthy attitude toward the use of the language. Very few of the people of Mauritius, both Tamil and non-Tamils are aware of the ingredients of the rich and old Tamil traditions. The Tamil Speaking Union could have avoided lectures on topics related to religious matters as this might exclude a category of the population from the participation.

No doubt, the union had a good number of collaborative events with local organizations, mainly with Tamil organizations. However, the absence of collaboration with overseas

organizations has not been noted. Thus, the mission of 'creating an international network for the interaction of Tamil speakers 'have not been addressed. There are a few Tamil Diasporiccountries such as Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka that are very vibrant in terms of language and culture and the union could have sought collaboration with organizations from those countries.

Both the structure and culture of the organization had to be revisited. Culture and communication have become so important (Samovar et al., 2009) that such organizations should take into consideration. Power seemed to be more concentrated on the Chairman/Ag. Director. More staffs should have to be recruited and teacher, members and coordinators should be more involved in the decision of the union. It is clear that the budget has been of great concern for the union. The government Grant was very meagre and there were not enough contributions and sponsorships from other stakeholders. The union should have sought other means to increase its income.

The external factors such as politics, economy and society did affect the union to some extent. The union could have minimized their impact. Politically, the union should be very neutral, without showing any bias to any political party or political persons. The speeches and interventions of the Chairman and other members should be very apolitical. Socially, the union needs to be very clear with its secular approach. The emphasis should be more on language and culture issues. The union should cater to all layers of the society, rich or poor, rural or urban, educated and uneducated. The decentralization of the spoken Tamil courses to a number of centres across the country in both urban and rural areas was a very laudable attempt to fill the gap between the rich and poor, the rural and the urban, and the educated and uneducated.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The vision and mission of the union were well set and a strategic plan to achieve the objectives was missing. The union seems to be a symbolic institution for the government, given the amount grant allocated to it to achieve its mission and the number of staff employed by the union.

However, based on the number of activities held during the period of 2011 to 2015, it could be concluded that the union performed beyond the expectations within the very meager means it had. The introduction of the spoken Tamil Courses and the publication of spoken Tamil books and the production of relevant CDs were milestones in the achievement of the union. Given the proper financial and other supports, this union could emerge as a very committed institution to impact on the language and cultural issues of the country.

The union has to work on its marketing and communication strategies. One of the reasons for low number of enrolment in its courses and events was lack of a proper communication strategy. There is need for the union to come with a training development plan for its administrative and teaching staff.

No doubt, this study gives an indication of the general performance of speaking unions in Mauritius. The fact that most of the unions, except for Hindi and Urdu Speaking unions, receives more or less the same amount of grants from the government and operates more or less in the similar manner, the same results could be applied to them to a large extent.

However, it is important to study of all the unions so as to have a fair assessment of their respective performances to come up with proposals for improvements.

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