TAMIL EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND: PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KANDASAMY PARTHIPAN

UNIVERSITI PENDIDIKAN SULTAN IDRIS

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TAMIL EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND: PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KANDASAMY PARTHIPAN

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ABSTRACT

Objective of this study is to identify the system, explain the process, analyze the challenges of Tamil Education and to recommend guidelines for the improvement of Tamil Education in Switzerland. This study conducted based on the Offer-and-Use Model, introduced by Andreas Helmke. Case study design is used in this study. This study was conducted among 56 teachers, 36 school administrators, 40 former students and 28 parents in 107 Tamil schools in Switzerland. Interviews, observations, focus group discussions and document analysis as research instruments were analyzed qualitatively. Thematic analysis approach is used in this qualitative study. The results of the study show that 107 formal Tamil schools with 4305 students and 412 teachers are functioning under Tamil Education Service Switzerland. Instructions in the classes are done for two to three hours per week by using their own syllabus and textbooks for Tamil Education throughout the country. The researcher has also identified that teaching and learning in Tamil schools is based on traditional teacher-centered method. Most of the students attend the Tamil classes due to parental pressure rather than of their own volition, particularly at the secondary level. The main challenges are; most of the Tamil teachers are not competent enough to select suitable methods of teaching for they are untrained teachers. Income from teaching of Tamil Language is insufficient and due to that these teachers look for other jobs. Moreover, the opportunities for higher studies and professional development in Tamil education are unavailable for Tamil teachers in Switzerland. Finally, a guideline is recommended to explain the linkage between the elements, such as teaching, learning, outcomes and contexts, that are necessary for the improvement of Tamil education in Switzerland. In conclusion, in terms of solving challenges such as lack of student interest and teacher incompetence in teaching should be given due attention and emphasis in order to improve Tamil education in Switzerland. The implication of this study is that the guidelines produced would help in improving Tamil education especially in Switzerland and generally in other European countries.

PENDIDIKAN TAMIL DI SWITZERLAND: AMALAN, CABARAN DAN CADANGAN

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti sistem, menerangkan proses, menganalisis cabaran pendidikan Tamil dan mencadangkan garis panduan dalam peningkatan Pendidikan Tamil di Switzerland. Kajian ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan model Penawaran dan Penggunaan yang diperkenalkan oleh Andreas Helmke. Reka bentuk kajian kes digunakan dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini dijalankan dalam kalangan 56 orang guru, 36 orang pentadbir sekolah dan 40 orang bekas pelajar dan 28 orang ibu bapa daripada 107 sekolah Tamil di Switzerland. Temu bual, pemerhatian serta analisis dokumen sebagai instrumen kajian dianalisis secara kualitatif. Pendekatan analisis tematik digunakan dalam kajian kualitatif ini. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa 107 sekolah Tamil formal dengan 4305 orang pelajar dan 412 orang guru berfungsi di bawah Tamil Education Service Switzerland. Pengajaran di kelas berlangsung selama dua hingga tiga jam seminggu dengan menggunakan sukatan pelajaran dan buku teks sendiri di seluruh negara. Pengkaji juga mengenal pasti bahawa pengajaran di sekolah Tamil lebih merupakan kaedah berpusatkan guru tradisional. Sebilangan besar pelajar mengikuti kelas bahasa Tamil kerana tekanan ibu bapa dan bukannya atas keinginan mereka sendiri, terutama di peringkat menengah. Cabaran utama adalah; sebilangan besar guru Bahasa Tamil tidak cukup kompeten untuk memilih kaedah pengajaran yang sesuai kerana mereka tidak terlatih. Pendapatan mereka dari pengajaran bahasa Tamil tidak mencukupi dan mereka harus mencari pekerjaan yang lain. Di samping itu, peluang guru bahasa Tamil untuk mengembangan profesional dalam pendidikan bahasa Tamil tidak tersedia di Switzerland. Akhirnya, sebuah garis panduan telah disyorkan untuk menjelaskan hubungan antara elemen seperti pengajaran, pembelajaran, hasil dan konteks yang diperlukan untuk peningkatan pendidikan Tamil di Switzerland. Kesimpulannya, dalam aspek penyelesaian cabaran seperti kekurangan minat pelajar dan ketidak kompeten guru dalam pengajaran harus diberi perhatian dan penekanan yang sewajarnya demi meningkatkan pendidikan Tamil di Switzerland. Implikasinya, garis panduan yang dihasilkan dapat membantu dalam meningkatkan pendidikan Tamil khususnya di Switzerland dan umumnya di negara-negara Eropah yang lain.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

Tamils in Europe countries are migrants from India and Sri Lanka. The first generation of Tamils settled here wanted to maintain their mother language. Due to this, the parents wanted to teach their mother language to their children. They planned to have part time Tamil schools in their cities. The government and education departments of the respective countries recognized the importance of the mother language education and supported them to have Tamil schools. At present, the Tamil schools in the Europe countries are well planned and well established. The present study entitled, 'Tamil Education in Switzerland: Practices, Challenges and Recommendations' is based on the Europe country, Switzerland.

In this study, the researcher intends to analyze the practice and challenges of Tamil education in Switzerland and recommend guidelines for improving the Tamil education. This chapter explains, research background, statement of problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of research, limitation of the study, research sources, operational definitions and summary.

1.2   Research Background

Tamils are the origins of India and Sri Lanka. During the 18th century, the British and the French colonial rulers took Tamils to various parts of Asian and African countries. Hence, many of these countries have a number of Tamil speakers with significant cultural impact. Moreover, Tamils migrated to countries like Burma and East Africa which were under the British Empire for business. In the 19th century, Tamils from India and Sri Lanka migrated to some English speaking western countries under the skill migration category. Over seventy million Tamils spread in more than fifty countries of the world (Sivasupramaniam, V, 1998). Due to the civil war in Sri Lanka, a huge number of Tamils displaced from Sri Lanka in the later part of the 20th century, and sought asylum in European countries, Canada, Australia, USA etc. More than 650,000 Tamils are in European countries (TESS, 2016).

Tamil language is largely spoken by the Tamil people of India and Sri Lanka, Sri Lankan Moors, Burghers, and by the Tamil diaspora. Tamil is an official language in Sri Lanka and Singapore. Moreover, it has an official status in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and the Indian Union Territory of Puducherry. It is also spoken by significant minorities in some other South Indian states such as Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Michael Ray, 2017). It is one of the languages of education in Malaysia (Ministry of Education of Malaysia, 2016).

Tamil is declared as one of the Classical Languages in 2004 and it is stated as 18th in the Ethnologies list of most-spoken languages worldwide (Paul Anthony Jones, 2015).

The Tamils who are living in Europe, migrated from India and Sri Lanka in the early 20th century for business purposes, in the mid of 20th century as skill migration and largely in 1980s as political refugees due to Sri Lanka ethnic conflict. A considerable number of Tamils from Pondicherry migrated to France, as the Pondicherry was the one of the French Colony (TESS, 2016). The Tamil population in European countries is as follows:

Table 1.1

Tamil Population in European Countries (Source: TESS, 2016)

Country	Tamil Population
United Kingdom	300,000
France	130,000
Germany	60,000
Switzerland	60,000
Italy	30,000
Netherlands	20,000
Denmark	10,000
Norway	10,000
Sweden	3,000
Others	25,000

Sivasupramaniam (1998) says that, 'The migrated/ displaced Tamils are keen on preserving and passing their mother language down from generation to generation.' In the beginning, some individuals, well-wishers and organizations established Tamil schools and provided primary Tamil education for their children and for their neighbors. Gradually, they grew and brought under formal structured organizations in order to handle the education process more efficiently. The Governments have recognized most of these organizations, and provide guidance and support.

Mother language (migrant) education (it is also called Heritage Language Education) in Europe came to exist since the beginning of the 20th century, when many industrial nations recruited foreign workers and followed by the subsequent immigration of their family members. In France, it has been since 1925 and in Switzerland since 1930 (Giudici Anja and Regina Bühlmann, 2014). With the new rise of the Western industrial nations after World War II, countries like Germany, Switzerland and Austria recruited workers from Southern and South Eastern Europe. Many of workers brought their families, although the intent was to earn money. Mother language education was organized for them in order to ensure the re-integration of the particular students into the school system of their country of origin. Political refugees have created Mother Language Education offerings on their own initiative. In Europe, apart from the labor migration, migration of political and war refugees started during the second half of the 20th century. This was with the Albanians from Kosovo and the Tamils from Sri Lanka in the mid and late 1980's. With globalization and free movement of labour in Europe, the immigration of well-qualified persons increased. The immigrants demonstrate an interest in education of their mother language for their children (Basil Schader, 2016).

Mother language classes are offered by three types of organizations;

(a) By the educational institutions of the host countries,

(b) By the consulates or embassies of the countries of origin and

(c) By non-governmental entities.

Anyhow, last two are subject to the legal provision of the immigration country.

The European Council by its strategy for Multilingualism ensures that the impotence of teaching mother language (European Commission: Resolution 596/2005). Moreover, the European Union has mentioned 24 official languages and about 175 immigrant Nationalities speak their mother languages in Europe countries.

Mother language education is offered as supplementary or additional to regular instruction of learning. It aims to strengthen the native language ability of the student, introducing the culture of origin and to support the process of integration. It is taught two or three hours per week, mostly, in the regular public schools. A specific curriculum and teaching materials (text books, etc.) are developed and used for these classes (Giudici Anja and Regina Bühlmann, 2014).

The students with immigrant background are systematically taught in the language of the host country and in which they speak in their surroundings because the mother language education is recognized as important as other subjects. In mother language education classes, not only the mother language is taught but also the child acquires knowledge about geography, history, arts and culture of the countries of origin. The child is growing up bilingually and bi-culturally to serve as a valuable personal social resourced child. It is well accepted that a child has fluency in his / her mother language, easily learn other additional languages (Jessica Ball, 2010). It is also found that fully mastering one`s

mother tongue or first language has not only value in itself, but also helps in the acquisition of any further language. It is highly probable that participation in mother language classes has a positive effect on the students' educational success in the host county (Basil Schader, 2016).

This present study focuses on Tamil language education in Europe countries which have different mother languages. The researcher has studied the process of Tamil education in Europe and focused particularly on Switzerland. Also, the researcher found out how Tamil language education works within the overall education system in Switzerland. There are many positive aspects that promote mother language education in Switzerland, but the progress of Tamil education differs from other Europe countries where it is very poor. This might be because of the weakness of the institutions, which are responsible for Tamil education in the Europe countries.

A considerable number of Tamils are living in 10 European countries such as Germany, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Belgium. In addition, there is a small number of Tamil population in some other Europe countries (TESS, 2016). Even though, Tamil language is taught in all these 10 countries, number of Tamil students are very low compare to the size of the Tamil population in some countries. Tamil children have very good knowledge on their mother language in some Europe countries where as it is very poor in the remaining Europe

countries. Hence, a detailed study is need to trace out the Tamil education practices in Europe and challenges faced to improve.

The education system in Switzerland is under the control of the government (cantonal and/or federal) from the primary level and compulsory education is provided up to the tertiary level (universities and professional education and training). The 26 cantons in the country have equal responsibilities to provide education for the children. Moreover, the cantons and the federal government are responsible for post-compulsory education (general education schools, vocational and professional education and training, universities) and thus bear responsibility for these levels of education together. The cantons and their local municipalities finance 90% of public expenditure on education (Department of Education of the Canton of Zurich, 2013).

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) is the federal body administration for education in Switzerland, but each of the 26 individual cantons have primary responsibility for the education and effectively run their own education organizations. Each canton has its own education department, school calendar, education structure, methods of teaching and curricula. Responsibility for post compulsory education is shared between the Swiss confederation (federal government) and the cantons (Giudici Anja, Regina Bühlmann, 2014).

The total compulsory school period is upto eleven years. Primary level including two years of kindergarten comprises eight years. Lower secondary level takes three years. In the canton of Ticino, lower secondary level lasts for four years. Generally, compulsory education sets in for children at the age of four. In a few cantons of German-speaking Switzerland, there is no obligation to send children to kindergarten or only an obligation of one year. Nevertheless, the vast majority of children in these cantons appear kindergarten for two years (Department of Education of the Canton of Zurich, 2013).

The language (medium) of instruction is German, French, Italian or Romansh, depending on the language region, though Romansh-language municipalities represent a special case (Giudici Anja and Regina Bühlmann, 2014). Traditionally, language learning has an important role in Switzerland. Students learn a second official language of Switzerland as well as English during their compulsory school years.

After the end of their compulsory school years, approximately two-thirds of adolescents in Switzerland switch to a form of education which combines classroom instruction at a vocational school with an apprenticeship in a training company (dual-track system). This provides them with a VET (vocational education and training) diploma and can also be determined with a federal vocational baccalaureate. Around one-third opts for continuing school education at an upper secondary specialized or a baccalaureate school, which prepare them for tertiary education at a university (Giudici Anja, Regina Bühlmann, 2014). The tertiary level comprises universities (incl. universities of applied sciences and universities of teacher education) and, as a second important pillar, institutions providing

professional education. The latter is aimed at people with professional experience, enabling them to gain specialist education and additional qualifications. It comprises diplomas from a college of higher education and federal or advanced federal diplomas of higher education. Tamil education in Switzerland starts from kindergarten at the age of 4 and ends with grade 12 which is upper secondary level.

1.3   Problem Statement

Even though Tamil education in Europe is taking place for almost three decades, limitation of these classes, time to time, has been pointed out. At global level, teaching Tamil to the diaspora children is a subject that has been discussed at several forums, in a number of seminars and workshops. However, no detailed study has been done so far to point out such limitations and make useful recommendations to overcome the issues faced. Progress of the education system, the strengths and the weaknesses of curriculum, qualifications of the teachers, the genuine teaching carried out and the facilities available. Moreover, the administrations of the whole Tamil education system in Switzerland have to be analyzed.

Tamil education in Europe, particularly Switzerland has a history of approximately 25-30 years. In the initial years, Tamils themselves organized the mother language classes, and at present the classes are well coordinated and institutionalized. The first generation, who migrated from India and Sri Lanka is very keen on preserving their mother language

and their culture. However, the second and third generations who are growing in multilingual and multicultural environments, do not have the same feeling of first generation to preserve their mother language and culture. The second generation immigrants in particular without a clear direction are finding difficult to approach their cultural identity. Researchers have found that, psychosocial changes of immigrants adapt to the majority or host culture and value system, and individual's cultural identity may be lost during the assimilation process as he or she moves within the host society' (Dinesh Bhugra and Matthew A. Becker, 2005).

Tamil education in the countries other than Europe differs according to their countries' environment. Tamil language in Singapore has an official language status and it is one of the important languages in Malaysia. Children can study in Tamil medium in government schools and it is a subject up to secondary education (Janakey Raman, 2012). However, Tamil education in countries like Mauritius, Reunion, Fuji, South Africa and Cambodia is weak and most of the Tamils lost their identity as Tamils in these countries. Moreover, various institutions in different countries are involved in Tamil education but their approaches are different.

The situations in English speaking countries are different. From the available sources, it is observed that Tamil education activity is progressing well in non-English speaking countries. Tamil children born in non-English speaking countries speak Tamil at home, learn to speak Tamil language easily and eager to learn it from Tamil schools. In

English speaking countries like Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, USA, etc., most of the Tamil children do not speak Tamil language at home and hence they do not show much interest in learning Tamil language at schools to learn their mother language.

About 700,000 Tamils live in Europe countries including Switzerland. The number of students attending Tamil schools of the selected institutions in Europe countries are about 27, 000 only (TESS, 2016). It is a fact that only a few Tamil children are attending the Tamil schools. The dropout rate is also highly significant in most of the Tamil schools in Switzerland especially after grade 5 and a very less number of students complete their studies up to grade 12 (TESS, 2019). Most of the Tamil children do not attend Tamil schools happily but they attend due to parents` pressure. When the students have time constraint due to the studies of regular schools and other activities, they choose the Tamil class first to quit. Some parents do not show much interest in mother language studies of their children. This may be the result of various factors. It should be clearly analyzed in order to find out the problems and challenges and to make recommendations including guidelines for improvements.

1.4   Research Objectives

The present study focuses on the following objectives:

1. To identify current Tamil Education system in Switzerland.

2. To explain the process of Tamil education in Switzerland.

3. To analyze the challenges of Tamil Education in Switzerland.

4. To recommend guidelines for improvement of Tamil Education in Switzerland.

1.5 Research Questions

The study is based up on the following research questions:

1. How is current Tamil Education system in Switzerland?

2. How is the process of Tamil education in Switzerland?

3. What are the challenges of Tamil education in Switzerland?

4. What are the guidelines for improvement of Tamil education in Switzerland?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The researcher has found out the efficiency of the Tamil education system in Switzerland through this study. Moreover, the researcher has recommended guidelines which can be utilized for strengthening the Tamil education in Switzerland. The findings are beneficial to the Tamil community in Europe and to the entire diaspora Tamil community of the globe.

Moreover, it is useful to other communities and institutions involved mother language education in Europe.

The present study demonstrates the importance of learning mother language and culture. Through this, the study creates awareness on importance of learning mother language among Tamils and for the future generations. The benefits and obligation of maintaining their identification and safeguarding their oldest and richest language are stressed in this study.

This is the first comprehensive study on the title, 'Tamil Education in Switzerland: Practices, Challenges and Recommendations'. Moreover, it will be guidance for the forthcoming studies on Tamil education in Europe diaspora countries. The institutions involved in Tamil education process in these countries will also receive a set of guidelines to adopt in future. The guidelines will help the authorities to assess their progress and improve further.

The output of this study will serve as a feedback to the state education authorities of the countries in Europe in planning and improving their roles on the mother language education in future. Further, it will assist the education departments to review their guidelines on mother language education.

Furthermore, the findings will be a contribution to the UNESCO's policy of mother language education promotion and contribute to safeguard Tamil language from its disappearance in diaspora countries.

1.7   Limitations of the Study

The present study focuses on analyzing of practices and challenges of Tamil Education in Switzerland and recommending a set of guidelines for improvement. Switzerland is one of the fifty one countries of European continent. Many Tamils are living in about 10 counties in Europe. This study is limited to only Switzerland, an Europe country. Switzerland has a long history and a formal culture of mother language education when compared to other Europe countries. Moreover, the situation of Tamil education in Switzerland is different from other Europe countries. Switzerland has Tamil education schools governed by TESS but supported by the federal government.

Approximately, 15% percentage of the Tamil students study Tamil language in institutes other than schools governed by TESS in Switzerland. But data collection is limited to only TESS Tamil language students for this study. Significant numbers of students learn Tamil from their parents and sit for the common Tamil examinations. Collecting information from this group is also limited.

The researcher had limited ability to gain access to parents of the Tamil students in all Cantons due to geographical distance. Further, open-ended questionnaire is used for collection of data. Time spent to complete interviews was more than what was initially planned.

Although, research papers and articles were written and presented in various forums, no comprehensive study has been done so far on the title for this study. Hence, it is a need for the researcher to examine wide range of raw data for analyses in order to achieve the objectives of this study. It was initially difficult to identify an appropriate theory for the research.

Moreover, apart from Tamil as mother language, 29 other migrant mother languages are taught as a part of education system in Switzerland. Due to the time constraint, comparisons among these languages are not included.

1.8   Sources of the Research

Researches, research ideas, findings, etc. are found in books, chapter in books, research articles in journals, conferences and proceedings, in media can be considered as sources for a study. Primary and secondary sources are used as sources for this study.

1.8.1. Primary Sources

Primary sources include data and documents from the Tamil Education Service Switzerland, Education authorities and other relevant organizations in Switzerland. Moreover, data and information are collected through interviews and the focus group discussions from teachers, parents, students, former students, board of directors and administrators of Tamil Education Service Switzerland.

Data collected from the selected target groups include data on curriculum, textbooks, teaching materials, teaching, evaluation, promotion, administration, intervention of state regulations, relationship with the staff and teachers of state schools and department of education etc.

1.8.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources consist of research articles, research papers, articles in journals, books, magazines, thesis and dissertations, which are related to this study. The secondary sources are used to gather information and evidences to strengthen the analysis of the research.

1.9 Operational Definitions

The title of the research is 'Tamil Education in Switzerland: Practices, Challenges and Recommendations'. The following are the meaning of the key terms used in the research:

1.9.1 Tamil

Tamil is one of the ancient languages in the world and it has the classical language status. It belongs to Dravidian language family. It is spoken by more than 76 million Tamils in southern India (Tamilnadu), Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia, and several other countries in the world (TESS, 2016). It is an official language in the one of the states in India, Tamil Nadu and the union territory of Pondicherry. It is also official language in Sri Lanka and Singapore. Tamil is taught as subject(s) in many countries from the primary school education. In countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia and in Tamil Nadu etc. it is a medium of instruction and offers degrees such as MA and PhD in Tamil language. Tholkappiyam is considered as the ancient Tamil grammar book in Tamil language. Tamil literature has existed for more than 2000 years. Tamil survived by sangam periods and many literatures came to exit through the sangam periods. Thirukkural is a classic Tamil text which deals with the everyday virtues of an individual. It is one of the most widely translated non-religious works in the world. Translations made in about 82 world languages and at least 57 versions available in the English language alone (www.technoenterworld.tk).

1.9.2 Education

'Education is the process of receipting or providing systematic instruction, particularly at a school or university levels. Education shapes a human with discipline and knowledge. Education is bounded with academic and non-academic activities within a classroom in an institution or educational society.' (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com) Teaching and learning processes play a vital role in education. Education started in prehistory, as elders particularly scholars trained the youngsters in the knowledge and skills considered essential in their society. Moreover, education is commonly divided formally into stages as, preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school and then college, university or apprenticeship.

1.9.3 Europe

Europe is an unique continent, which is not surrounded by water from all directions, and has an overland border with the neighboring Asia continent. Physiographically, it occupies the northwestern part of the large landmass known as Eurasia and surrounded from the north by the Arctic Ocean, from the west by the Atlantic Ocean, from the south by the Mediterranean Sea, and from the southeast by the Black Sea. Totally, Europe includes 51 independent states. Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey are transcontinental countries, partially located in Europe and Asia. Armenia and Cyprus are

politically considered European countries, though geographically they are located in the West Asia territory (www.countries-ofthe-world.com). Europe plays a predominant role in global affairs. From the beginning of 16th to 20th centuries, European powers controlled the world including Africa, Asia and America. The European Union (EU) was created in 1993 for political and economic corporation of Europe countries and it consists of 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe. Europe countries have pro mother language education policies and encourage it.

1.9.4 Tamil Education

Tamil Education in motherlands i.e. in Tamil Nadu and in Sri Lanka, the medium of instruction and the language of main studies, spoken language of the schools. It is entirely different in diaspora countries. Tamil education process in diaspora countries is different country to country and it mostly depends on the policies and support of the host countries. Many host countries encourage the mother language culture and culture education under their 'Multiculturalism' policy and provide support. Tamil is the medium of instruction, in some diaspora countries like Malaysia. It is one of the main subjects up to secondary education in Singapore and Mauritius. It is optional and part time process in Western countries including Switzerland. Tamil is taught as mother language 2-3 hours per week in Switzerland and other European countries.

1.9.5 Switzerland

Switzerland is a mountainous Central European country, and consists of numerous lakes, villages and the high peaks of the Alps. Banking and finance are key industries, and Swiss watches and chocolates are world renowned. Switzerland's independence and neutrality have long been honored by the major European powers. The political and economic integration of Europe over the past half-century, as well as Switzerland's role in many UN and international organizations has strengthened Switzerland's ties with its neighbors. Switzerland remains active in many UN and international organizations, but retains a strong commitment to neutrality.

Switzerland has four national languages such as German, French, Italian and Romansh. All maintain equal status as official languages at the national level within the Federal Administration of the Swiss Confederation. The population of Switzerland is about 8.4 Million in the year 2018. Of these, about 62% are native speakers of German, 23% French, 8 % Italian, and 0.5% Romansh and the rest is of other language speakers. Besides the national languages, various varieties of Swiss German, several regional Romance languages are spoken as native languages in Switzerland. Switzerland is the land of International Committee Red Cross (ICRC) and it maintains friendly policy with migrants. In Switzerland, more than 30 languages including Tamil language are spoken among the migrants. About 60,000 Tamils are living in Switzerland and they are about 0.7% of the population of the country. Most of them are from Sri Lanka, migrated during 1980s and

1990s. The government of Switzerland encourages the mother language education and cultural diversity in the country.

1.9.6 Mother Language and Culture Education

In Switzerland, the mother language courses are provided under a category \mother language and culture| education (it is called ~Heimatlicher Sprache und Kultur (HSK)| in German language in Switzerland). The courses are provided in each Cantons by the recognized organizations for each foreign languages.

1.10   Summary

Tamil language is considered as one of the oldest and richest languages in the world. A considerable number of Tamils migrated and are living in Europe countries. Tamil education in Europe takes place approximately for 25 to 30 years. Moreover, Tamil children in the Europe countries don't go to Tamil schools to learn Tamil. Hence, a detailed study is needed and no researches have been done so far on Tamil education in Europe, especially in Switzerland.

Therefore, the researcher finds that it is important to study the practices and challenges of Tamil education in Switzerland and recommend guidelines which could be used to improve the Tamil education in Europe, especially in Switzerland. The study will be beneficial to the diaspora Tamil community in Europe and in worldwide.