



Importance of Mother Tongue in Education with Special Reference to New Education Policy-2020.

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Abstract:

The rapid expansion of information technology and internet in a global order is reduced to expansion of mother tongue or home languages in education. The similar phenomenon is prevailing at national level also. Different national and international organizations and agencies opine and suggest in favour of English instead of regional languages at different level of education. Similarly, the policy makers of our country have given their vows in favour of Hindi for the same purpose. The later suggest it in view to maintain national unity and integrity. Different previous educational policies and commissions of India such as National Education Policy-1968 and National Education Policy -1986 have recommended three language formulas at different stages of education. Keeping the same, the New National Education Policy-2020 strongly recommends the using of mother tongue or home language in school education. Thus this paper is purposively taken to study the language policies of previous educational commissions and the recommendations of National Education Policy-2020 in particular. It also finds out the importance of mother-tongue in education and makes its suggestions.

Key Words: New Education Policy, Constitutional Provisions, Three-Language Formula, National Curriculum Framework

Introduction:

Research indicates that having a strong mother tongue foundation leads to a much better understanding of the curriculum as well as a more positive attitude towards school, so it's vital that children maintain their first language when they begin schooling in a different language.

It is revealed that most of the developing and under-developed countries used national or international language at school level instead of using mother tongue of the students. Even, a good number of teachers are also given their teaching in non-mother tongue languages. Thus, students who are competent in their own language keep silent and gained zero knowledge in that position.

Student who are competent to use their own mother tongue, failed to complete the works like examinations, game and sports, etc. in other languages. Poor quality of education and low rate of literacy etc. are the products of this condition. World Bank study pointed out: "Fifty percent of the world's out of school children live in communities where the language of the schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition". Lin, García and May

A recent survey on primary education in Jharkhand revealed that most of the student i.e. almost 96% has failed to attend the classes attentively as the medium of instruction in the state is Hindi whereas most of the students speak in their home of tribal languages.

A significant proportion of students in developing and under-develop countries enter schools where their mother tongue are absent. The text books and other teaching materials are made with the international language like English and teachers are also preferred to use the same language. Hence, students' community by and large suffers a lot in learning process.

Objectives:

The study discusses the advantages and disadvantages of mother tongue education. It also discusses the different education commission and national education policies including NEP-2020 regarding the relevance of mother tongue in education. The purpose of the study is to give different aspects of mother tongue education and to find out challenges of it by making conclusions.

Methodology:

The main objective of this study is to find out the importance of mother tongue in education. This study is solely based on secondary data collected from the available sources such as books, journals, newspapers, websites etc. and it is also based on descriptive method.

Discussion:

The idea of introducing mother tongue in primary level of education in India is not a new concept. Article 350A of the Constitution states that every state and local authority should endeavor to provide "adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups".

The report of the Kothari Commission (1964-66) suggested that in tribal areas, for the first two years of school, the medium of instruction and preparation of books should be their local tribal language. The regional language should be taught separately and should become the medium of instruction by the third year.

The Right to Education Act, 2009, also said that as far as possible, the medium of instruction in school should be the mother tongue of the students.

The Three –language formula was first advocated and recommended by the Kothari Commission (1966-68) and implemented by the Government of India in the year 1968. According to it,

- i. The first language was mother tongue or regional language.
- ii. The second language for Hindi speaking region was any modern Indian language and in non-Hindi speaking region it was Hindi or English; and
- iii. In Hindi speaking region, it was English or any modern Indian language and for non-Indian states, it was English or any modern Indian language.

The Commission' understood the importance of mother language for the cognitive development of the students. The said three-language formula would bring the language gap between the states of Indian Union and promote the national unity and integrity through multi-linguism.

The National Education Policy-1986 reiterated the implementation of three-language formula in true spirit and recommended to solve the existing doubts about it.

The National Curriculum Framework (2005) made recommendations to use multi-lingual classrooms for the secondary level students and mother tongue or regional language as the medium of learning to them. The NCF also suggested using mother tongue at minimum primary level where infrastructures were unable for using in higher level of studiers.

The National Education Policy -2020 is one of important steps of the Government of India which gives positive directions in this regard. It suggests the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction up to grade –five and if possible up to grade eight. There after the home or regional language shall be continued as a medium of instruction wherever and whenever is possible. It also suggested to implement proper training to the

teachers for teaching through their mother tongue. There is a proposal to use bilingual method in case where student's language differs from the instructional language. This policy aims to promote multilingualism after giving priority of mother tongue of the students.

NEP-2020 on teaching in multi-languages says that high quality textbooks in all streams including science will be used to teach the students. In case of text books and reference books etc. are not available in any home languages then at least interactions and transaction between students and teachers will be made in their home languages. Teachers will be encouraged to use bilingual approach while in teaching and using of teaching-learning materials in those cases where students are not competent with existing medium of instruction.

Advantages:


- It is evident that child who learns mother tongue in a proper way, he or she will do better after coming in touch with any other foreign languages. There would be fewer obstacles to accept other languages including his or her mother languages. (Yadav, 2014)
- Use of mother tongue at primary level helps to engage parents actively and provide a platform to those parents who have a little knowledge and education in foreign languages like English. Parents feel comfortable to assist their kids in their own mother languages.
- Learning in mother tongue boost the self-confidence of the students as they have enjoyed a better and suitable environment to express their view and solve their problem in a perfect manner.
- It is found that children with a strong mother tongue background can easily pick up a second language and develop their literacy skills. Knowledge and skills of children can transfers across languages. It is a healthy approach to familiarize children in their mother tongue and then help to acquire second or more languages.
- Mother tongue develops a child's personal, social and cultural identity. It gives a foundation to understand their family and societal values, norms, customs and traditions.
- Using mother tongue helps a child develop their critical thinking and literacy skills. These skills can be easily transfers to the adoption of other languages.
- Research shows that children learning in mother tongue adopt a better understanding of the curriculum. It provides opportunity to understand concepts, ideas, real life experiences for a better understanding of their curriculum.
- The interaction between students and parents, students and teachers increases more swiftly if they learn their mother tongue.
- Knowledge and skills transmission in mother tongue enable students to understand their subject matters better and improve their overall learning experience.
- Learning through mother tongue increases students' participation and attention in teaching-learning process and enhances quality education.
- It decreases the chance of drop out rate in education that is very common in developing and under-developed countries.
- Literacy learning is easier when a child get instruction through mother tongue or first language. Such instruction helps to build sound and better understanding to different unfamiliar vocabularies and skills.
- Learning through mother tongue in initial stages increases sense of well being and motivate students to adjust with any unknown conditions.
- Restricted students to learn other language instead of first or mother language is a violation of human rights as their cognitive and intellectual developments hampers through this attempt.
- Finally, mother tongue based education gives better understanding of the concepts and thoughts and gives emotional and mental strength.
- Learning through mother tongue will boost pride and confidence among the students. They can easily understand and cope up with all type of existing problems and issues. Mother tongue learning also boost their confidence to solve the existing problems.
- "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language that goes to his heart"- Nelson Mandela.

- Different studies reveal that cognitive development as well as intellectual development occurs faster when a student who is fluent in his mother tongue. His or her educational achievements and successes also increase more than the others.
- Creative self –expression is very much possible through mother tongue education. Most of the writers have created their work in their own language.
- Original ideas and thinking are created faster while using mother tongue in learning process.

Disadvantages

- To a great extent, books and other study materials are not sufficient or easily available. Hence, students learning disrupted due to lack of these materials.
- There is a lack of quality and trained teachers and other official in most of the areas of the world. Hence, quality education hampers.
- In the era of globalization, the demand for international language is increased very rapidly. For getting better job and other opportunities parents prefer English instead of their mother tongue.
- There is a scope of cultural isolation when students solely focus on their mother tongue. Hence, the students have to face the problem of adjustment and communication while dealing with any unknown situation or work experience.
- It is very challenging job to make a comprehensive and detailed curriculum in regional languages. Thus, there is a crisis of quality education and students may not get benefit from it.
- In some families, where parents are not fluent in their mother tongue and influenced by any dominant language, they may not insist or prefer their children to enroll in mother tongue based education.
- If students do not acquaint with other languages in their earlier days, then they will face serious trouble in handling with other languages in future.
- In the era of globalization, the process of knowledge of transfer is happened very rapidly and in most of the cases in international languages. Hence, students having knowledge in mother tongue only will face problem in learning process.
- Expertise in mother tongue only open scope in limited space. If any student wants to contest and apply for jobs or other related works then they may get limited scope. So, depend on mother tongue or regional language only gives limited mobility.
- In this competitive world, it is very difficult to compete with mother tongue only as it provides limited scope. So, learning of second or other languages are very essential for the very existence.
- Students who are dependent only on mother tongue will get less scope to communicate with outer world. Hence, at global level, international languages are gaining their popularity among the educational level.

Challenges:

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- Firstly, there is a huge challenge in many countries of the world where teaching-learning process is maintained in national or international languages instead of mother tongue or regional language. It is mainly happened due to the growing influence of international languages and organizational support for national or international languages instead of local languages in the learning process of the students.
 - Secondly, due to lack of adequate financial support and monitoring, mother tongue based education loses its relevance among the urban as well as rural students. Hence, adequate funding is needed to remove such challenge.
 - Thirdly, there is a mindset among the people that mother tongue or local languages have no utilities and they prefer English or other international languages. Such type of mindset changing is very much essential to recover from this problem.
 - Fourthly, Proper academic supports, study materials and curriculum planning etc. are found very poor quality in most of the areas. Hence, such infrastructural development is very much needed to remove such challenges.
 - Fifthly, there is a lack of proper and adequate trained teachers in regional languages or minority languages.

- Sixthly, in the present context parents and teaching community also having doubt about the career building of the students in their mother tongue.

Suggestions and Conclusions:

The study reveals that using of mother tongue in education has various merits as well as limitations. Mother tongue leads to sense of belongingness and brotherhood among the students. Such environment makes the teacher to deliver in a prompt manner in front of them. Learning their local language, they have acquired adequate skills and knowledge about their culture, tradition and other important moral values. This small step helps them to prepare for future citizen of a country. A good number of studies reveal that students having sound knowledge in their mother tongue or their first language are easily capable to learn second or other language. Hence, prioritizes mother tongue based education at an early stage is very much needed for the students at global level as well as national level. A positive mindset in this regard is needed from the side of government, parents and other state holders.

There is an urgent need to provide adequate infrastructure, text books, study materials and trained teachers for encountering such challenges. The NEP-2020 is also given due respect for mother tongue education at primary level in India. Hope in near future students irrespective of all types of differences benefitted by the recommendations of the NEP and help to open a golden era in education in the country.

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