



Research Paper

## Challenges in Multilanguage Education

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### ABSTRACT

Post-independence education in India developed very fast but with sustained British influence. The development was mainly quantitative and not qualitative. This was more so because of multi-linguistic nature of the country. Although language is a means of communication, in education the home language and school language being different were creating hurdles in learners' progress. For quality development, many innovative ideas are being used and Multi-language Education-popularly known as MLE is one of them that is progressing fast, although it is a big challenge, thus adding qualitative differences to education, especially in tribal areas. The involvement of parents for bridging mother tongue to learn standard state language is proving useful. The authors are of the opinion that such parental involvement in their children's education would help raise confidence of students as well as teachers. In this direction a step ahead was seen in the form of MSCERT's efforts on class 3, 4, 5 in tribal areas to incept reading with understanding or, "SamajpurvakWaachan." The authors also feel that the classroom transactions should be more meaningful in order for students to translate their understanding in their mother tongue so as to develop meaningful learning or learning with understanding.

**KEY WORDS:** Tribal education, mother tongue, standard state language, MLE

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### I. INTRODUCTION

After independence education sector in India developed very fast. Many schools and educational institutes were established. But the impact of British educational method remained sustained. The development in education sector seems to be only quantitative not qualitative. The urban and rural areas education is quality wise different and issues are also different.

As per the RTE Act 2009 primary schools are to exist in one kilometre area. Government provides the entire physical amenity in schools. But the educational quality is not improved. In tribal areas also the education developed quantity wise. Students in tribal areas are not able to achieve fluency in basic reading and writing. Because the mother tongue and the learning language are different. The NCF 2005 in chapter 3 explains the importance of mother tongue in early education and recommends mother tongue as a medium of primary education. RTE Act 2009 rule 29 suggests primary education should be in mother tongue.

### RATIONALE

Generally a research problem refers to some difficulty which is experienced by a researcher in the context of a theoretical or a practical situation and needs to have a solution for it. The researchers noticed a problem while working in rural areas.

While working at DIET- District Institute of Education and Training - a government of Maharashtra's academic unit under MSCERT, one of the researchers got a chance to work in tribal areas. While working as HOD- language department the researcher got a chance to study the conduction of language education in tribal areas. In the light of Government of Maharashtra running a program called Pragat Shaikshanik Maharashtra (PSM) from 2015, the analysis of baseline and summative assessment of 2016 -17 shows that the achievement of fifty blocks is low and forty three blocks of them are tribal. The reason for low achievement, as guessed by the researcher was that the language of learning and mother tongue are different. Students face many problems

in teaching learning processes because of different medium or different language in primary level at home and school, thus their achievement quality wise is low. To create interest in learning if the appropriate language development is infused decisively in education, it becomes easy for students to learn other subjects. It might as well develop their confidence and lead to social development also. For quality Education students' physical, emotional & mental development is important. The researchers thought that through MLE, it may lead to students' all round development, behaviour and confidence. Thus, it was felt necessary to further research in this area.

### **HYPOTHESIS**

H01: Primary teachers in tribal areas do not have competencies for language teaching.

H02: Influence of tribal language on teaching would not prove to be effective in enhancing quality of primary education.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1: To develop module for competencies development workshop for teachers teaching in tribal areas

2: To develop supportive material in mother tongue (tribal language)

### **LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

Language is medium to express thoughts and emotions and to understand each other. Because of language human has accomplished the spectacular progress. Other creatures are not that developed due to absence of language. Descartes - a philosopher says, "I experience therefore I live". It means our life is dependent on experiences and the language is a medium to save the experiences. Humans like to become expressive. This struggle of expression gives birth to language.

Human is a social creature. Living in society and their relegations are consistent. These all are happened because of language. Human being has to accomplish the intimacy with the help of mother tongue. Human can express their thoughts, emotions, desire, aspirations, happiness and sorrows. This means that language has congruency in human life. Literature has a number of examples where language as mother tongue has been given importance. For example-

**M.K. Gandhi:-**Mother tongue is so much important for human development like MOTHERS MILK. Child takes a first lesson in mother tongue from its mother. So for the mental development entail the other language apart from mother tongue it's a treachery.

**Hertzog Committee:-**Many people tell us that, 'the students who learn in English they are backward in English but they learn other subject in their mother tongue so their progress in other subject is better. At last the student who learns in mother tongue surpasses the Anglo Vernacular school students.

**Jorge Samson:-**Education in mother tongue is not a medium of knowledge attainment but it is a medium to give a direction to child's life.

**Zakir Husen Committee Report:-**It is a means of introducing the child to the rich heritage of his people's ideas, emotions and aspirations.

This enables us realize the importance of mother tongue. There is no doubt that the medium of learning should be mother tongue in early childhood.

### **CONCEPT OF MLE**

The concept of MLE-**Multi Language Education** program is that the starting of child's learning is inherited from own or home language. The home language of tribal students is different such that they face problem while learning school language. Conceptual learning does not happen, so that they are always under-developed or back in education. To avoid the low achievement in tribal areas and to utilize their mother tongue as a medium of education in early years is a way to make a bridge to learn other language/s. The concept of MLE begins with mother tongue (home language) as a medium of instruction and builds good bridge with other language/s. It begins with the known and moves to the unknown by building on the child's previous knowledge using their world or real knowledge and moving to new knowledge. In educational process the tribal students face the issue of language gap. DIET arranged a 'learning level survey' on January 2018. The reading level of tribal areas was found to be very low. Only 25% students were able to read in tribal areas of Chikhaldara and Dharni block. Their proficiency of learning new/other language was not developed, as education was not provided in their mother tongue. All these students' home language is Korku- a language of aadiwaasi community. In fact it is an Austro-Asiatic language of tribal people living in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh of India.

### **POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

Based on these observations, the researcher decided to go further in order to check the status of language learning in these two talukas, viz. Chikhaldara and Dharni. The population of the tribal students (3<sup>rd</sup> to

5<sup>th</sup> std) in Amravati district then was around 9528. All of these were not included in this study. Only 1395 tribal students in five clusters from Chikhaldara talukas constituting sample of present research work were included. Thus it was an inclusive or purposive sample, in this survey.

### **TOOLS USED**

The data was collected from these schools on the basis of personal observations and asking few questions to the teachers and students. Since the schedule of surprise visit to these schools was not pre-planned, it was not possible for the researcher to use standardized tool/s. However, the past experience enabled the researcher to collect requisite information through observations and questioning.

### **PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS AND EXPERIENCE**

While supervising the classes in one of the schools in tribal areas, it was observed that all the teachers in these schools were not knowing or understanding their students' mother tongue, hence were finding difficulty in raising students' interest in learning. This was proved by low achievement of students. This also supported hypothesis **H01 that teachers in tribal schools do not have competencies for teaching in home language.** Only one of the teachers of the said school was using students' Korku language. She made a lot of efforts to convert standard Marathi poems into Korku language and in class she started uttering the poem in standard Marathi while students were singing the poem in Korku language. Slowly the students replaced Korku words into standard Marathi, thus enabling them to understand and use standard Marathi words in place of Korku. This practice was followed for few months and in learning other subjects also such as Mathematics or Environmental science. It was observed after a few months that these students were representing Multi-language education as they used Korku, Hindi and standard Marathi in early levels of learning, use of mother tongue in tribal area was found to increase the speed of learning and they learned other language easily. Also the percentage of learning of tribal students was increased. This supported the second hypothesis H02 that: **Influence of tribal language on teaching would not prove to be effective in enhancing quality of primary education.**

Based on these personal experiences, it was decided to motivate the same teacher using Korku language to translate some words to develop module for competencies development workshop for teachers teaching in tribal areas and To develop supportive material in mother tongue (tribal language) thus keeping focus on objective 1 and 2 which were-

- 1: To develop module for competencies development workshop for teachers teaching in tribal areas
- 2: To develop supportive material in mother tongue (tribal language)

## **II. DISCUSSION**

From these personal observations and experiences, it was noticed that in early level of learning, use of mother tongue in tribal area also helped increase the speed of learning and they learned other language easily. This also helped improve results of the class in tests/examination. This seems in congruence with a research and results from one of the Philippine studies. The study indicated that teachers' and parents' views of MTB-MLE focused on the short-term benefits of the policy and the long-term disadvantages (Burton, 2013). Parents' involvement in their child's education is unparalleled. Later the same teacher knowing Korku was motivated to influence parents of students speaking Korku and enabled to increase parents' involvement and participation in their children's learning. The same teacher was also involved in preparing the text books on various primary school subjects having translations of standard Marathi words into Korku language. The Government of Maharashtra has also increased its contribution in preparation and publication of such books.

### **MSCERT'S EFFORTS**

Based on these experiences,

In language learning, Listening, reading, speaking and writing skills are involved. The basic abilities of primary school students in reading have been observed as meagrely developed. Whether they read without understanding or with understanding. Only identification or recognition of words in reading a script is not enough. Reading with understanding of what is being read is essential to develop language skills. This invites teachers to be competent and expert and to take the students to the expected level of outcome. For this the teachers need to be well prepared and trained so that an anticipated change in the classroom interactions would be possible. Especially in students whose home language or mother tongue is different than the standard state language, special efforts are expected. For this MSCERT has run a pilot project in seven different districts of Maharashtra state. Of these Chikhaldara taluka of Amravati district where mother tongue of majority of students is Korku, was selected for pilot project. Forty-five schools from five villages/settlements of the taluka and students of class 3, 4 and 5 were selected for the project. The objectives of this pilot project were

1. To read stories, poems, tales with proper understanding and to express self opinion,
2. To discuss on the matter read and answer the questions or ask questions orally or in written form,

3. To read and speak with proper tone and voice modulations and
4. To read properly by using punctuation marks.

To achieve these objectives, workshops were organized at state level, unit sets were prepared considering the requirements of the district and changes were made accordingly. Forty sets of forty books were made available that were prepared in Hindi by BARKHA of NCERT-Delhi. These were translated in Korku language with the financial support of MSCERT and Eight supporting videos. The comparative results of pre- and post-tests were reflected in the graphical presentations.

These enabled to infer that-

1. There seems to be a rise of 15.75 %, in class 3, 4, 5 students, although the percentage has been reduced in script identification.
2. The percentage in reading without understanding has also been gone down from 48.51 % to 40.86 % in post-test.
3. Percentage of reading with understanding was increased in post -test to 38.17 % from pre-test count of 21.07 %.
4. This percentage also increased in Expression from 0.79 % in pre-test to 3.33 5 in post- test. This means students having different mother tongue and standard language faced difficulty in expression, but were benefitted in reading with understanding by this pilot project, although it was run for a short period of four months from December 2018 to April 2019.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

MLE is not really a new concept on Indian education scenario, India being multi-linguistic country. Students with different mother languages and learning standard state language face problems especially in content learning, hence a big challenge. In such situations, translation of communicative words in their mother tongue and with the help of interpreter or parents would prove to be fruitful. This will also help raise the confidence of teachers and students as well; the teachers' confidence would be raised with the satisfaction that they helped the learners and students' confidence would be raised with the satisfaction of learning new concepts/contents.

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