



Multilingualism In Tripura: A Study Of Its Scope In Elementary Education

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ABSTRACT: -

India, as a land of diversity and cultural have possess uniqueness and variety in language, amid these monolingualism has little roam and contributes little to the growth and betterment in the domain of language acquisition, learning and teaching although mother tongue has a profound impact on second and other language learning. The primary focus of this paper is to give a summary based analysis of the past findings and research on the field of education for multilingualism in Elementary education as well as highlights the provisions which can be a means to adapt and circulate multiple language use for the sake of better retention, minimize drop out due to language barrier or gap, its consequences, benefits in present educational system and discussion about the other relevant ways and findings on the same for a more holistic development. Moreover, elementary education is considered as the backbone or building blocks for further headway where mother tongue solely not sufficient to meet the changing needs and demands of the professional, corporate and global platforms. In teaching English and other state and local language and dialects like Bengali, Kokborok, Manipuri, Mizo, Mog, Halamete in a monolingual classroom has its own boundaries where mother tongue influence and mindset and outlook towards developing a second language plays a vital role. Multilingualism in classroom ease out some of the factors and not only contributes to the professional growth and development of a learner and the teacher but also it promotes a sense of fulfilment and provides benefits like interpersonal communication, confident, leadership, public speaking, exploring new horizons etc. Indian education system till today gone through numerous changes and aiming for further possibilities to develop classroom and learner friendly surroundings and atmosphere where language related provisions can be successfully implemented and barriers can be surmounted, Indian education commissions like -Kothari commission (1964-1966), NEP 1968, NEP 2020 put enough emphasis on multiple language use in educating students in primary as well as in elementary level. This paper portray light on the scope and possibilities of multilingualism in classrooms specifically for elementary education in Tripura.

KEY WORDS: -

Multilingualism, Education commission, Mother tongue, Kothari Commission, NEP 2020, Elementary education, Tripura.

INTRODUCTION: -

India as a mother figure holding to its diverse culture and linguistic varieties along with multiple dialects of languages spoken in each knock and corner. This opulent veil itself is the proof to the countries rich cultural and language background boasting over 1600 languages and dialects. However, THE OFFICIAL LANGUGES ACT, 1963 (10TH May 1963), “An act to provide for the languages which may be used for the official purpose of the Union, for transaction of business in Parliament, for Central and state Acts and for certain purposes in High Courts. As per the act for the upcoming fifteen years from the commencement of the constitution, the English language may as from the appointed day continue to be used along with Hindi in the works. As per census of India of 2001, India has 122 major languages and 1599 other languages, and the number of Official languages is 22 which is mentioned in the Eight Schedule of the Indian constitution. In India, English is moreover considered as a language used for Global communication which serves and bridge the gap between the communities of different language group. But sole English or Hindi or any other specific language cannot be relevant for example in Northeastern of Southern states in India multiple language group are there who solely rely upon mother tongue or their environment and the surroundings is more suitable for it there it is not so possible to carry out elementary education in any specific language. In Indian education system the utility is not only limited to the educational and professional aspects moreover global exposure and multiple abilities related to language learning, acquisition and adaptation. The Kothari commission in its report 1964-66 also put emphasis on the role of language in education for fostering social and national integration. The influences of mother tongue in elementary is a noticeable phenomenon in our school education and multilingualism as a bridge between mother tongue and learning a second language. The Kothari commission (1964-1966) recommended the use of mother tongue along with Hindi, English and other Foreign languages as a means to circulate teaching learning in educational institutions for the sake of betterment of the system and maintain the inclusiveness, adaptability, retention. Northeastern region along with Tripura possess a spectrum of languages and the mother tongue and dialects of those language groups are so diverse in nature that it is a matter of concern for the policy makers to include all those and facilitate learning based on language group and it is practically not possible to make provisions for each language separately all though there are schools based on medium in Tripura where English or Bengali serves as a means of communication and for curriculum use which sometimes become obstacle for other language groups like Kokborok, Mizo, Garo, Mog, Lushai, Chakma, Manipuri, Bhutia etc. In India elementary education is so much in need to support the changing need of the society where competency is relied not only on skill development like vocational training, but also it has a greater implication which can be ease out pertaining proper language skills to bridge the gap between elementary, secondary, Higher secondary, H.S (+stage) and later Education only be fulfilled where there are means to circulate it in the social, global platforms. Educators, teachers, policy makers and facilitators are trying their level best to meet the expenses and research, and new findings are at run. In Tripura, policy related to elementary education face major setbacks due to language diversity in areas where population is monolingual, and it not only hinder the development but also a concern for the teacher facilitators. In TTAADC no of indigenous speakers faced issues related to language which in term results in drop out and less retention in elementary education. DR. George Abraham Grierson in his book “languages of North-Eastern India: A survey Volume 1 & 2” talks systematically about the language communities in the North-Eastern region. As per 1971 census of India this ethnopolitical region is diverse with approximately 225 tribes and approximately 220 languages in North-East. NEP 2020 restructured and reframes the previous structure which is up to class 10 i.e. secondary and 2 years for higher secondary to (5+3+3+4). So in the NEP 2020, the new structure follows is 3 years (Anganwadi/Pre-school/Balvatika) for students belongs to the age group 3 to 6 years and 2 years i.e. class 1 and 2 for students falls within the age group 6 to 8, then for curriculum use and further progress class 3, 4 and 5 is dedicated to the students belonging to the age group 8 to 11 years, then the mid-section which comprises of class 6, 7 and 8 for the age group of 11 to 14 years and secondary schooling which is again consist of students of the age group 14 to 18 for the class 9, 10, 11 and 12. So as per the new policy elementary education has enough space for creative learning and put emphasis on and multilingualism can be work as a link language for better communication, circulation of pedagogical learning, language learning and for overall implementation of the new policy and do further improvements and changes based upon this. Scope of multilingualism in school education in Tripura specially are vast and problems also arises throughout the process. Now in Tripura not only Bengali but also Manipuri, Mog, Mizo, Chakma etc are some of the languages which secured place in curriculum and mood of interaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: -

The paper particularly aims at finding out answers to the following question mentioned or enclosed below: -

Why should we adapt multilingual approach in elementary education?

What are the barriers or challenges faced by teachers in an inclusive classroom with diverse language groups of students?

How can multilingualism bridge the gap between teacher student interaction in elementary level?

What are the productive and creative ways to facilitate multilingualism in a monolingual or unilingual classroom?

Rabindranath Tagore had said “ In no country of the world, except India, is to be seen this divorce of language of education from the language of pupil...”. Tripura as a land of diverse culture and language groups has its own uniqueness, although Bengali and Kokborok along with English is considered as official languages but there are many other languages and dialects which is practiced in day-to-day life as a means of communication in fields like education, economics and politics. Specially in schools where students from different language group comes together. Multilingualism is a common phenomenon in daily life either in communication or in information transformation. In classroom interaction and in peer learning without multiple language use it is not possible to maintain and communicate. In a classroom where different students with multiple and different abilities hail it is very much crucial for them to interact as well as for inter and intra communication and doubt resolution multiple language become a useful tool. For example in an area where only Kokborok or Bengali community speakers are there for teachers from different language community will face challenges related to curriculum formulate and teaching in his or her own topics and also for proper deliberation and problem resolution and doubt clearing of the students in the class and it will lead to boredom, less motivation, less participation and over all teaching learning process. Multiple language use in those cases will work as a link in between the teacher, curriculum and the students.

OBJECTIVES:

The primary focus or aim of the paper is discussed below: -

To find out the utility of multilingualism in Elementary education in Tripura.

To find out the setbacks faced by teacher and student due to language gap.

To find out creative and productive ways to facilitate multilingualism in classroom learning.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION:

Elementary Education – It is also known as primary education in school level is a traditional age-old system which comprises of pre-primary, and primary sectors where the students from the age group 5 till 13 are welcomed and enrolled for their initial schooling in Indian education system and knowledge and curriculum adapts both formal and informal approaches.

Multilingualism –Multilingualism, talks about multiple language use in imparting education and knowledge keeping in mind the diversity posed by the students of different language community and valuing their culture and fulfilling the aim inclusion in education and circulating effective learning among learners. “Multilingualism” is derived from the Roman terms “multi” means “many”, and “lingua” meaning “language”.

Mother tongue –Mother tongue is nothing, but the language acquired from the family or parents by a child, and it is more acquired phenomenon rather than a learned one. For example, a child acquires Bengali from the parents as his or her mother tongue if parents belong to the same language community and learns Hindi or English as his/ her second language.

METHODS:

The paper relied on the survey which is done in accordance and keeping in mind the changing needs in the field of communication in school education system in India and North- Eastern region where languages diverse is noticed and primary and secondary sources and needful consults like teacher interactions are done. Although secondary source of data is used mainly for this paper. This paper aims future prospect on elementary education and both formal and informal approaches are adapted in it and the qualitative research technique used. Purposive sampling is used for language diversity and for multilingual connotation. The language group of the India and North- Eastern zone along with Tripura is discussed along with present educational structure to put emphasis on the needs of learning for bridge language or link language to facilitate the curriculum affectively. Different scholars in various fields and their studies are included and drawn in this paper and future possibilities are also taken into consideration. Open criticism and more findings on this topic are encouraged through this paper and welcomed. Various journals on education in India, Northeastern region, Tripura and multilingualism is taken consideration for this paper. In this study research questions and objectives based on it as well as results are analysed for further clarification and examples and previous findings are also included periodically along with necessary related explanations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

The paper highlights the key factors which in the field on education contributes to the mass retention and ease out academic failure due to language barriers and cultural diversity which hinders the personal and the process of social development and overall loss of human resources. This paper discussed the utility of or scope of multilingual approach in teaching elementary education in Tripura, secondly barriers faced due to language diversity, thirdly multilingualism and its effectiveness in peer learning and teacher learner interaction and fourthly productive and creative ways to facilitate multilingualism in school education. In schools although Sarvashiksha abhiyan, "No Detention Policy", Samagra Shiksha etc are implemented but all policy must be implemented from the root level and for this medium of communication become the prime factor. Numerous research on the utility of multilingualism in school education is till date conducted and this paper is also a kind. Amid all this in the schools of Tripura peer communication and collaborative learning and teacher student communication has challenges like proper deliberation and communication. Some schools i.e. language-based schools like Bengali medium or English medium also where students are not only for language groups only enrolled in elementary education and the latter miss up its utility if one of the steps are missing in the process. Some students in classroom remain passive due to language gap and some participate but it can be maximized. In monolingual class it has been observed that students hesitate due to lack of language competency. Teacher training programs, seminars, workshops are much needed phenomenon so that active participation can be made, and gaps can be ease out. Schools in rural areas were conducting classes in elementary level if the teacher is from the same language background, then also terminologies and discussion faces language related issues. "Vidyajyoti schools" under MISSION 100 is taken to familiarize students and give them better exposure to global language. For students of different language identity mother tongue (L1) and secondary language (L2) with the help of the former can be a means to promote multilingualism for better retention. Though English serves as a link language in schools but for English too mother tongue of the community should be practiced and targeted teaching based on mother tongue must be formulated. Seminars, child centric classroom activities, wall art, audio visual settings for multilingualism. Peer interaction sessions, group projects, stories from different languages, old manuscripts, resource persons like people from different language groups can be a useful source or can become an assistive source for multiple language learning. In schools where multiple languages practiced it is observed that students are more expressive in nature and able to adapt to the changing needs of the society and their cognitive development is also takes place as compared to the monolingual school children. Federico Fellini, an Italian film director and screenwriter once mentioned that different language helps in developing different perspectives towards life. In his book, "To think: In Language, Learning and Education, Frank Smith quoted that "One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way", taken reference from his book. Open ended learning and approaches towards language learning can be a revolutionary and life changing initiatives for learners in the present days where ICT and artificial intelligence now working side by side. Around 255 million Indian speak at least two languages and 87.5 million speak three or more languages, according to the 2010 census. The percentage of bilingual people varies by region and age group:

In urban regions, 44% of the people are bilingual and 15% are trilingual.

In rural region, 22% of the population is bilingual and only 5% is trilingual.

In the age group of 20-24 bracket, 52% of urban Indians are bilingual.

NEED OF ADAPTING MULTILINGUAL APPROACH IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

A prominent scholar David Graddo explains the necessity for multilingualism which is not only serve for the purpose of language learning but also it has greater implications beyond it. Multilingualism is a cognitive tool, which helps individual to empower in a world which is interconnected and portray its uses and need in flexible learning, problem-solving and igniting critical thinking ability which as a result facilitate higher order thinking abilities in human. Constant findings on multilingualism validates its relevance in present day education system and talks about its benefits like better retention or memory, remain attentive in works, coping skills, doing multiple works side by side which also a key factor for decision making and thinking divergently and critically. For example- a student in Tripura might grow up speaking Kokborok at home, learn Bengali as a second language in school, and acquire English as a medium of instruction. This exposure to multiple languages enhances their ability to multitask, solve problem and think critically. Multilingualism has benefits like greater cultural awareness, improved academic outcomes, promotes inclusivity, ensuring all students regardless of their linguistic background have equal access to education, enhanced cognitive function, building community.

BARRIERS OR CHALLENGES OR SETBACKS FACED BY TEACHERS IN AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM WITH DIVERSE LANGUAGE GROUPS OF STUDENTS

Major barriers faced by teachers are mentioned below:

Lack of adequate training facilities for teachers

Lack of resources related to language teaching learning

Lack of adequate teaching methods.

Curriculum inflexibility

Lack of proper means of communication

Parental or stakeholders concerns and resistance

Lack of community support and awareness

MULTILINGUALISM BRIDGE BETWEEN TEACHING LEARNING IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

By following ways can multilingualism bridge the gap between teaching learning:

Adapting multilingualism can ease the pressure of teacher and student related to curriculum formulation and in classroom interaction.

Thoughts, ideas, feelings can be shared in between teacher and students more deliberately.

Subject knowledge can be efficiently circulated.

Teaching related task and students' performance can be boost up.

Language based understanding can help promote interest among students of elementary stage.

PRODUCTIVE AND CREATIVE WAYS TO FACILITATE MULTILINGUALISM IN A MONOLINGUAL OR UNILINGUAL CLASSROOM

Productive and creative ways to facilitate multilingualism are illustrated below.

Providing training to the teachers in multilingual education techniques.

Encourage teachers to stay updated in the required language and its linguistic variation along with studies.

Research oriented outlook towards language should be developed for the elementary level.

Flexible curriculum can be adapted to support the need of multilingualism.

Language support program and language lab should be arranged, and infrastructure should be developed.

Teaching strategies based on language skills; structure should be formulated.

Concepts in both students native and second language should be adapted in class.

Classroom environment should encourage students in language learning, keeping in mind, required tools like posters, wall art, vocabulary chart should be displayed in classroom.

Stakeholders and parents should support and work together for multilingual use in various factors and in interaction.

Formative assessments to regularly assess students' progress can be a major step towards adapting multilingualism in classroom.

PROFITOUSNESS RELATED TO MULTILINGUALISM IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: -

Below mentioned points are some of the benefits or profits which multilingualism render upon students, teachers and other stakeholder and policy makers

Feeling of oneness in education and inclusiveness of education can be achieved.

Improvements in peer interaction, cultural interchange, peer learning

Better student teacher communication, problem resolution,

Exposure to new language can open and develop new perspectives in life.

Gross enrolment, less drop out due to language factors.

Better classroom environment

Enthusiasm among learners of different age group

Development of cognitive faculties

Resource development

Leadership qualities, communication skill, confidence among students

Real life association, strengthen root learning.

Academic proficiency as well as culturally enriched and global competency can be developed.

Contribution to national integration.

CONSEQUENCES OF MULTILINGUALISM IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION:

David Crystal in his Plenary lecture given to the CILT primary Languages Show, 'From the Word to the World', Liverpool, 4 March 2011, he illustrates and talk about multilingualism making several other references to writers throughout the globe. There he mentioned that multilingualism is quite a handicap for human, and he mentioned that most of the human either uses two or three languages for everyday use and colonised nations for their own purpose mainly for satisfying their ego they hold on to monolingualism. Although for some students to out of their comfort zone seems difficult but later gets better. In the initial stages of schooling use of or adapting multiple languages is very much useful. Multiple language can also help one to understand one's own language better and find out the patterns of individual language. For schedule tribes' other language can become a tool to communicate and present their feeling, thoughts as well as needs. Language bias, language myths and language-based inequalities also can be dismantled and ease out. The elementary school students falls within the age group 6 to 13 and for them education is not just pertaining knowledge and gathering information most of the children at this stage gone through different developmental changes and struggles to meet up the needs either social, emotional or psychomotor and teachers of those learners also struggle to meet the expenses of those age group children and government policies on adolescence learning, sex education, women education all those sensitive issue also can be discussed while there are language provisions for a teacher as well as a learner if he/she is not well adaptive or has less language skills and knows only mother tongue can face challenges regarding thoughts transmission and multiple language use also develops better language communication skills and proper selection of words and vocabulary for self-actualization. Memory develops along with the language development, thinking ability and thinking in other language promote better critical thinking skills among children.

POSSIBILITIES: -

Multiple language use in classroom can have possibilities like academic excellence and it is observed that students become word smart with language development and representation abilities develops. Chances in society to become more productive, accepted, interpersonal communication develops, and he or she might find things in others language which interests, motivates and finally a reality based, and research-based approach should be born out of enthusiasm. not only in the academics in other fields like economy, and in politics also it is a need to be multilingual. They might show interest in different art forms in different language interest towards language can be grown through adapting multilingualism, might show abilities like writing poetry, essays, reciting, signing and multiple other activities related to literature and language. Passion for language can lead to greater developmental changes. The perspective changes

can be a big possibility, thinking out of the box i.e. divergent thinking ability approach towards language groups rather than own language and indulgence in group-based activities rather than own language-based community be developed which not only helps in personal goals but it also aligns with the nation's goals and serve for the ultimate growth.

CONCLUSION: -

Though in India there are twenty-two regional languages and in Tripura there are two official languages excluding English the other language groups of people are there. Practicing multilingualism can open up those old preserved scripts of language groups people like Mizo, Chakma, Manipuri, Mog, Garo, Halam, and so others and can contribute to the inclusiveness and ease out the distance between the people and school curriculum can be made more inclusive along with provisions for language equalities and help to gain a more secular perspective towards education and life. Cultural interchange through multiple language interchange can help in the academic field too where peer learning takes place in a more naturalistic way and students feel motivated and encouraged.

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