



Role Of NEP 2020 In Multi-Lingual Education And The Power Of Language

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ABSTRACT: Education, especially school education, plays a crucial role in the cognitive and overall development of a child. The language, adopted as a medium of instruction, is instrument for the holistic development of the child. In the context of India, it is a difficult task to choose a particular language for that purpose due to the multilingual character of Indian society. Multilingualism is an important dimension of our composite culture. There are hundreds of languages in the country and 22 constitutionally recognized languages. The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), designed by the K Kasturirangan Committee, appears to have considered such issues seriously and pragmatically and articulates some novel ideas regarding language teaching. An important object behind the new policy is to make the learners aware of the rich cultural heritage of the nation and to promote multilingualism as well as national unity. But there are potential challenges in the implementation of such proposals as textbooks are scarce, experienced and skilled language teachers etc. The paper high lights role of NEP 2020 in multi –lingual education and as power of language.

(Key Words: NEP 2020, Multi-lingual Education, & Power of Language)

Education, especially school education, plays a crucial role in the cognitive and overall development of a child. The language, adopted as a medium of instruction, is instrument for the holistic development of the child. In the context of India, it is a difficult task to choose a particular language for that purpose due to the multilingual character of Indian society. Multilingualism is an important dimension of our composite culture. There are hundreds of languages in the country and 22 constitutionally recognized languages. The National Education Policy of India 2020 (NEP 2020), designed by the K Kasturirangan Committee, appears to have considered such issues seriously and pragmatically and articulates some novel ideas regarding language teaching. An important object behind the new policy is to make the learners aware of the rich cultural heritage of the nation and to

promote multilingualism as well as national unity. But there are potential challenges in the implementation of such proposals as textbooks are scarce, experienced and skilled language teachers etc. The paper highlights role of NEP 2020 in multi-lingual education and as power of language.

Policy recognizes that the knowledge of the rich diversity of India should be imbibed first-hand by learners. India is a country of multiculturalism, and it is a national responsibility to preserve the essence of Indian culture and to retain that for future generations. Diversity is felt everywhere from language to food habits, from music, and dance to architecture. The National Education Policy (NEP), approved by the Union Cabinet on 29th July 2020 is supposed to introduce changes in the Indian education system, thereby replacing the 1986 Policy on Education. In the NEP it is clearly stated that language is to be used as a potential tool for furthering the multiculturalism of India and familiarizing the learners with the ethos of our cultural diversity. Additionally, it may be optimally used in enhancing professional efficiency in more than one language for pursuing various careers in the present context of globalization, the confluence of diverse cultures and the emergence of numerous multinational companies expanding their activities to the nook and corner of the country.

NEP 2020 AND MULTILINGUISIM

The NEP 2020 has reconfigured the curriculum and pedagogy of school education to 5 + 3 + 3 + 4 design with an aim to make them responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development. However, it will not be necessary to make any parallel changes to the physical infrastructure. The policy aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution.

Multilingualism

1. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother-tongue/local language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible by both public and private schools.
2. There will be a major effort from both the Central and State governments to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country. Especially states from different regions of India, may enter bilateral agreements to employ teachers in large numbers from each other, to satisfy the three-language formula in their respective states, and also to encourage the study of Indian languages across the country.
3. Students whose medium of instruction is the local/home language will begin to learn science and mathematics, bilingually in Grade 6 so that by the end of Grade 9 they can speak about science and other subjects both in their home language and English.

4. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment. Local sign languages will be respected and taught as well, where possible and relevant.

Multilingualism and the Power of Language

1. It is well-understood that young children learn and grasp more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother-tongue/local language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible. This will be followed by both public and private schools. High-quality textbooks, including in science, will be made available in home languages. In cases where home-language textbook material is not available, the language of the transaction between teachers and students will still remain the home language wherever possible. Teachers will be encouraged to use a bilingual approach, including bilingual teaching-learning materials, with those students whose home language may be different from the medium of instruction. All languages will be taught with high quality; a language does not need to be the medium of instruction for it to be learned well.

2. As research clearly shows that children pick up languages extremely quickly between the ages of 2 and 8 and that multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to young students, children will be exposed to languages early on (but with a particular emphasis on the mother tongue), starting from the Foundational Stage onwards. All languages will be taught in an enjoyable and interactive style, with plenty of interactive conversation, and with plenty of early reading and subsequently writing in the mother tongue in the early years – with skills developed for reading and writing in the other two languages in Grade 3 and beyond.

All language learning will aim to be experiential and enhanced through art, such as music, poetry, and theatre. There will be a major effort from both the Central and State governments to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country,

3. The three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, the need to promote multilingualism and national unity while providing for greater flexibility.

4. Students whose medium of instruction is the local/home language will begin to learn science and mathematics, bilingually in Grade 6 so that by the end of Grade 9 they can speak about science and other subjects both in their home language and English. In this regard, all efforts will be made in preparing high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials.

5. The home/local language and/or the second Indian language will be enhanced with the reading of and analysis of uplifting literature from the Indian subcontinent, ancient to modern, and by authors from all walks of life, as

well as through other arts, such as by playing and discussing music or film excerpts, or engaging in theatre in these languages.

6. As so many developed countries around the world have amply demonstrated, being well educated in one's language, culture, and traditions is indeed a huge benefit to educational, social, and technological advancement. India's languages are among the richest, most scientific, most beautiful, and most expressive in the world, with a huge body of ancient as well as modern literature (both prose and poetry), film, and music written in these languages that help form India's national identity and wealth. For purposes of cultural enrichment as well as national integration, all young Indians should be aware of the rich and vast array of languages of their country, and the treasures that they and their literature contain.

6. Thus, every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India' sometime in Grades 6-8. In this project/activity, students will learn about the remarkable unity of most of the major Indian languages, starting with their common phonetic and scientifically-arranged alphabets and scripts, their common grammatical structures, their origins and sources of vocabularies from Sanskrit and other classical languages, as well as their rich inter-influences and differences. They will also learn what geographical areas speak which languages, get a sense of the nature and structure of tribal languages, and they would learn to say a few lines in every major language of India and a bit about the rich and uplifting literature of each. Such an activity would give them both a sense of the unity and the beautiful cultural heritage and diversity of India and would be a wonderful icebreaker their whole lives as they meet people from other parts of India. This project/activity would be a joyful activity and would not involve any form of assessment.

7. The importance, relevance, and beauty of the classical languages and literature of India also cannot be overlooked. Sanskrit, while also an important modern (Schedule 8) language, possesses a classical literature that is greater in volume than that of Latin and Greek put together, containing vast treasures of mathematics, philosophy, grammar, music, politics, medicine, architecture, metallurgy, drama, poetry, storytelling, and more, written by people of various religions as well as non-religious people, and by people from all walks of life and a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds over thousands of years. Sanskrit will thus be offered at all levels of school and higher education as an important, enriching option for students. It will be taught in ways that are interesting and experiential as well as contemporarily relevant. Sanskrit textbooks at the foundational and middle school level may be rewritten in Simple Standard Sanskrit (SSS) to teach Sanskrit through Sanskrit (STS) and make its study truly enjoyable.

8. India also has an extremely rich literature in other classical languages, including classical Tamil, as well as classical Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia, in addition to Pali, Persian, and Prakrit; these classical languages and their works of literature too must be preserved for their richness and for the pleasure and enrichment of posterity. When India becomes a fully developed country, the next generation will want to be able

to partake in and be enriched as humans by India's extensive and beautiful classical literature which contains great intellectual and cultural treasures.

9. In addition to Sanskrit, the teaching of all other classical languages and literature of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options (possibly as online modules), through experiential and innovative approaches, including by integration of technology, to ensure that these languages and literature stay alive and vibrant, especially in those states where they may be best taught and nurtured.

10. For the enrichment of our children, and for the preservation of these rich languages and their artistic treasures, all students in all schools, public or private, may have the option of learning at least two years of a classical language of India and its associated literature, through experiential and innovative approaches including by integration of technology, in Grades 6-12, with the option to continue from middle level through secondary education and university.

11. In addition to high quality offerings in Indian languages and English, foreign languages, such as Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, or Russian will also be widely offered at the secondary level, for students to learn about the cultures of the world and to increase their global knowledge and mobility according to their own interests and aspirations.

12. The teaching of all languages will be enhanced through innovative and experiential methods, such as gratification and apps, and by weaving in the cultural aspects of the languages, with the teaching-learning of various subjects and with real-life experiences through films, theatre and storytelling, art and music, local literature, etc. Thus, the teaching of languages will also be based on experiential learning pedagogy.

13. Indian Sign Language (ISL) will be standardized across the country and National and State curriculum materials developed, for use by students with hearing impairment. Local sign languages will be respected and taught as well, where possible and relevant.

Conclusion: Language is the unique capacity of human beings. It is a medium through which we gain knowledge and education. It helps us to express our views and thoughts to others. Language also helps in the preservation of the culture and tradition of India, as from ancient times, people passed on their values and rituals through oral or written forms of language. As a multicultural society, India has a great variety of people speaking different languages and dialects. The 8th Schedule of the Constitution also acknowledged 22 languages as the official language of India. NEP-2020 laid down numerous recommendations for the promotion and preservation of Indian languages. Through the integration of vernacular languages in the early stages of learning, up to class 5, students will be able to learn and respect the diversity of India. But attention should be paid so that the combination of native languages won't hinder the learning of other languages in higher classes.

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