

THE NEED OF MULTILINGUALISM AND NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY

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Abstract: *Multilingualism is an identity of India. India is leading through from cultural diversity to national integrity. But while framing the education policy for national level, it is too difficult to manage the diversity in one thread. There are various theories existed, for to medium of teaching. The ground reality of 21st century is, the English language has become the academic language and Hindi has become the language of media, while regional mother tongues have become the language of communication. Student in India is inevitably passing through the multi-language communication. In fact it is too beneficiary for the student also, provided that balance in between various languages should be maintained and taught properly. The present research paper throws a light on the need of multilingualism with reference to national Educational Policy 2020.*

Keywords: *Multilingualism, National Education Policy (NEP), Language*

Introduction:

Indian scenario of education is completely different. In India, except few Northern States, almost all remaining states have their own regional language. The students get their primary education in regional languages as per the policy of states. Simultaneously, Hindi and English are introduced. Thus, although quite complicated but student learns with at least two different languages. If they are able to cope with at least two or three languages, they become comparatively different than other students. But the same formula became more complicated for those who prefer only regional language and not able to keep pace with Hindi and English. In that case his/her development is not considered competitive and gradually they remains behind in study.

It is well taken that young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Home language is usually the same language as the mother tongue or that which is spoken by local level. The medium of instruction at primary level is home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language. As per new National Education Policy (NEP) Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible. It is suggested in NEP that High-quality textbooks, including in science, will be made available in home languages/mother tongue. All efforts have been taken to ensure that any gaps that exist between the language spoken by the child and the

medium of teaching are bridged. Where home language/mother tongue textbook material is not available, the language of transaction between teachers and students will still remain the home language/mother tongue wherever possible. Teachers have been 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 to all students; a language does not need to be the medium of instruction for it to be taught and learned well.

It is being observed 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 have been exposed to different languages early on starting from the Foundational Stage onwards. Languages should be taught in an enjoyable and interactive style, with plenty of interactive conversation, and with early reading and subsequently writing in the mother tongue in the early years, and with skills developed for reading and writing in other languages. The Central and State governments will take efforts to invest in large numbers of language teachers in all regional languages around the country, and, in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. States, States from different regions of India, may enter into bilateral agreements to hire 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. It has been assured, the use of technology will be made for teaching and learning of different languages and to popularize language learning.

National Education Policy is in support for three language formula, to quote

“The three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions, and the Union, and the need to promote multilingualism as well as promote national unity. However, there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any State. The three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India. In particular, students who wish to change one or more of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6 or 7, as long as they are able to demonstrate basic proficiency in three languages by the end of secondary school.” (4.13.page No. 14)

The frame maker are clearly in the support of three language formula and providing better choices comparatively than earlier. To make the policy successful all efforts has been made in preparing high-quality bilingual textbooks and teaching-learning materials for science and mathematics, so that students are enabled to think and speak about the two subjects both in their home language/mother tongue and in English.

It is being noticed that being well educated in one's language, culture, and traditions is not a detriment but indeed a huge benefit to educational, social, and technological advancement. The policy states that:

“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 literatures contain.” (4.15 Page No 14)

Acknowledging the importance of regional language, cultural heritage, policy provides more broader outlook towards education in regional languages.

Sanskrit has been highlighted as the language of knowledge, it is stated that,

“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.” (4.16 Page No 14)

Emphasis has been given to teach geographical areas speak which languages, get a sense of the nature and structure of tribal languages, and learn to say commonly spoken phrases and sentences in every major language of India and also learn a bit about the rich and uplifting literature of each. It will bring 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.

The importance, relevance, and beauty of the classical languages and literature of India also cannot be overlooked. Sanskrit, while also an important modern language mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, 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 (known as ‘Sanskrit Knowledge Systems’), 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, including as an option in the three-language formula. It will be taught in ways that are interesting and experiential as well as contemporarily relevant, including through the use of Sanskrit Knowledge Systems, and in particular through phonetics and pronunciation. Sanskrit textbooks at the foundational and middle school level may be written in Simple Standard Sanskrit (SSS) to teach Sanskrit through Sanskrit (STS) and make its study truly enjoyable.

The National Education Policy enhances the importance of classical regional languages and suggesting new parameter to implement in education. It remarks,

“India also has an extremely rich literature in other classical languages, including classical Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia. In addition to these classical languages Pali, Persian, and Prakrit; and their works of literature too must be preserved for their richness and for the pleasure and enrichment of posterity. As India becomes a fully developed country, the next generation will want partake in and be enriched by India’s extensive and beautiful classical literature. In addition to Sanskrit, other classical languages and literatures of India, including Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Pali, Persian, and Prakrit, will also be widely available in schools as options for students, possibly as online modules, through experiential and innovative approaches, to ensure that these languages and literature stay alive and vibrant. Similar efforts will be made for all Indian languages having rich oral and written literatures, cultural traditions, and knowledge.” (4.18 Page No 15)

The new provision has been made for the enrichment of the children, and for the preservation of these rich languages and their artistic treasures, all students in all schools, public or private, will 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 the integration of technology, in Grades 6-12, with the option to continue from the middle stage through the secondary stage and beyond.

It does not mean that the policy ignores the learning of foreign languages, the equal importance has been given to the overseas languages also. It is stated that,

“In addition to high quality offerings in Indian languages and English, foreign languages, such as Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian, will also be offered at the secondary level, for students to learn about the cultures of the world and to enrich their global knowledge and mobility according to their own interests and aspirations.” (4.21 page No 15)

The main purpose is, the teaching of all languages is to enhanced through innovative and experiential methods, including through gamification and apps, by weaving in the cultural aspects of the languages - such as films, theatre, storytelling, poetry, and music - and by drawing connections with various relevant subjects and with real-life experiences. Thus, the teaching of languages will also be based on experiential-learning pedagogy.

Conclusion:

It is concluded that the National Education Policy has given the fair weightage on the language development. The multilingualism is need of hour. Up till now, only focus was on academic development through English language, but the New National Education Policy

acknowledged the importance of regional languages and cultural heritage through multilingualism. There is need to set aside the traditional format of education only through English language. We need to develop the potential through our regional and local languages. At the end Local language will also become the rich source of knowledge and information. As any student who completes his education even in the regional language should feel competitive and employable. In fact the present policy will develop the sense of pride among the students after completing the education through regional languages. This will be the real outcome of New national Education Policy.

References:

- National Education Policy 2020 Document