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Language policy in education in India and national education policy 2020

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Abstract

To start with Language Policy, it has been defined as "the deliberate choices made by governments or other authorities with regard to the relationship between language and public life". With regards to India Language in education policy derives from the Indian Constitution. Today India is a multilingual society with 22 official languages and over a thousand other languages and also we are significantly influenced by globalization and liberalization in this juncture Language in education has been widely debated from the formative years of India's independence to till date which is clearly reflected in National Education Policy 2020. The National Education Policy is comprehensive Approach towards reforming the Education system from school to higher education level, this policy is designed on the framework of Sustainable Development Goals 2030 of United Nations. This goal of UN was adopted by India in 2015 and it ensures "inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" by 2030. In this direction Central Government has presented a roadmap for the transition from primary education to higher education, accepting the 'National Education Policy' in this policy Indian languages have been considered in a holistic manner and the power of language has been given importance. In this paper we have made an attempt to focus on Need for Language Policy for Education Historical Perspective of Language Policy in Indian Education Present Situation of Language in Education in India National Education Policy 2020 and language in Education.

Keywords: Language, culture, mother tongue, language in education, education policy, local language, multilingualism, three language formula, inclusive education

Introduction

Language policy in India has adapted itself to the changing demands and aspirations of people over the period of time from 1947 to the present. When we look into historical perspective of language policies in India we can find many efforts before independence especially during British period after Independence many language policies were framed and still the process is going on. Based the changes in education requirements, political aspirations, reorganization of states many changes in language policies occurred in India mainly on the issues of National Language, Mother Language, Classical Language, Language in School Education and many such issues. Compare to language policies related to other are its dynamism and diversity with regards to education is very significant and addressed very frequently in India. As Language is a vital part of our education system in our country which plays an important role in strengthening the societal structure in general and imparting inclusive education to the children in particular. As in India being a federal democracy and having diversity in language, no local or regional languages have given importance or supremacy compare to other languages in India. In this regard many efforts were made to bring the three-language formula in the education. Providing a solid policy framework under the protection of law for three-language formula will definitely boost our education system in this direction the initiations taken under National Education Policy 2020 are very appropriate and they are going to bring Inclusive development in education if implemented in a right spirit and direction.

Need for Language Policy for Education

Language is the heart of every strata of education, in this direction the language policy in education provides a legal framework to the dictates the language used in disseminating knowledge at different levels. When we observe the policies related to the language in India

it is clear that the constitution, the authorities and the government are working in favour of multilingualism in Education. Multilingualism, early childhood psychology, language learning at early stage, impact of language on education, socio-economic realities of Indian population, historical implication of British and early British rule and rural, urban and semi-rural school system in India, demonstrates the need of language policy in Education as an instrument for the promotion constructive, creative, practical, value based and child oriented education at all levels of education. Good language policies are always needed inclusiveness of education in a multilingual country like India.

Historical Perspective of Language Policy in Indian Education

There are many evidences that of language policies related to education were existing from Vedic period to till date earlier policies were set of unwritten or informal policies and later the policies were formally implemented in many regimes which can be illustrated in two periods namely Pre-independence period and post Independence period.

1. Pre-independence

- **Vedic Period:** In Vedic period social strata was playing role in education only the upper caste communities especially Brhamins were having opportunity of formal education through Ashramas and Gurukulas. The major language of instruction during Vedic period was Sanskrit. As Sanskrit was the language of upper caste it was considered as the medium of instruction.
- **Budhist Period:** In Vedic period the education was imparted in Sanskrit language for upper class people and people of lower strata were not getting any formal education. This situation caused many revolutionary changes after Vedic period and during the Budhist period as Pali was the language of common people it was considered as the medium of instruction in Budhist period and which extended the opportunity of education to every section of society during Budhist period.
- **Under Muslim Rule:** After the entrance of Muslim rulers into India foreign language entered India for the first time. During Muslim period the Urdu language was used for official communication. In this period Urdu was used in education particularly for Islam people but when it comes education for others Hindi, Sanskrit and other native languages were used as the medium of instruction.
- **During British period:** With regards education there were many revolutionary reforms during British period in India. In British period formal education got much importance then the language of education was decided timely by many committees and initiations some of them are:
 - a. **Christian Missionaries:** In the way of spreading Christian religion Christian Missionaries were established many formal education Institutions. In all these institutions the medium of instruction was English. With this Lord William Bentinck and Lord Macaulay supported the implementation of English in education. During this period government also encouraged the education in English language as government wanted employees with English knowledge.

- b. **Woods Dispatch 1854:** Woods differentiated the students as brilliant and normal students and he recommended the education for brilliant students in English and for others education should be given in Indian languages.
 - c. **Education Commission 1882:** Government of India appointed an Education Commission, with a view to enquiring into the working of the existing system of Public Instruction, and to the further extension of that system on a popular basis. This commission decided that the medium of instruction for secondary schools would be English and for primary schools it would be in Indian Languages.
 - d. **Calcutta University Commission 1917:** This commission recommended the use of English as a medium of Instruction up to higher secondary education.
 - e. **1935 to 1947 period:** By 1935 with many initiations the regional languages became medium of instruction in many levels of education. Only the institutions which were run by Christian Missionaries were providing education in English. During 1930s to 1947 many reformers demanded use of Indian Languages in all levels of education. After 1942 developments the British government in India accepted the Indian language as first compulsory language in education and English as English as second compulsory language for secondary education. But for higher education English was continued as the medium of instruction.
- #### 2. Post-Independence
- **Dr. Rdhkrishnan Commission 1948:** The Radhakrishnan was named chairman of the University Education Commission. After Independence the first action of a great significance to be taken by the Government of India in the field of education was the appointment of the University Education Commission under the Chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. This commission recommended that the study of national language in Devanagari Script and English and regional language both at secondary and University stages.
 - **Secondary Education Commission 1953:** The Government of India established the Secondary Education Commission on 23 September 1952 under the chairmanship of Dr. Lakshmanaswamy Mudaliar. This commission recommended two language formula instead of three language formula recommended by Radhakrishnan Commission. It also recommended the state level facilities should be rendered to state language spoken in every state.
 - **Central Advisory board for Education:** The Central Advisory Board of Education, the oldest and the most important advisory body of the Government of India in education. It recommended the adoption of three-Language formula in education.
 - **Kothari Commission:** The Kothari Commission was appointed by the Government of India to overhaul the Indian Education sector. With regards to Language in Education the Commission recommended adopting a three-language formula at state levels. It intended to promote a language of the Southern States in Hindi speaking states. It intended to promote Hindi, English and a regional language in non-Hindi speaking states. It

also recommended promoting regional languages, Sanskrit as well as international languages, preferably English.

- **Ishwarbhai Patel Committee 1977:** The committee recommended that in determining the pattern of Languages to be taught, and this gave importance for Kothari Commission recommendations and emphasized on implementing three language formula Kothari Commission in education.
- **The National Policy on Education 1979:** According to this policy, the three language formula will be implemented at the secondary stage. It includes the study of a modern Indian language preferably a south Indian Language in addition to Hindi and English in

Hindi speaking states.

Present Situation of Language in Education in India

India is federal system with multilingual nature, every state of India have their own identity in language and culture. There many states which offer education in many languages according to existing population structure of the state. Here we have made an attempt to collect the list of all the languages taught in each state and Union Territory. The language use in education covers all stages of schooling from Primary to Higher Secondary, from Classes I to XII. The languages listed in the below table are taught as first, second, third, classical and elective languages.

Table 1: Shows number of states and languages offered

No.	State	Languages offered
1	Andhra Pradesh	Telugu, Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Oriya, Marathi, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English
2	Arunachal Pradesh	English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Assamese, Butia, Bhoti
3	Assam	Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Garo, Hindi, Khasi, Manipuri, Mizo, Nepali, Urdu, Hmar, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English
4	Bihar	Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, English, Bhojpuri, Arabic, Maithili, Persian, Magahi, Sanskrit
5	Chhattisgarh	Hindi, English, Marathi, Bengali, Gujarati, Tamil, Punjabi, Urdu, Sindhi, Telugu, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Kannada, Oriya
6	Goa	Konkani, Marathi, Hindi, English, Urdu, French, Portuguese, Sanskrit, Arabic
7	Gujarat	Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, English, Urdu, Sindhi, Tamil, Sanskrit
8	Haryana	Hindi, English, Punjabi, Sanskrit, other MILs
9	Himachal Pradesh	Hindi, English, Sanskrit, other MILs
10	Jharkhand	Bengali, English, Hindi, Urdu, others
11	Karnataka	Kannada, English, Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Telugu, Tamil, Sanskrit, Arabic, Konkani, Persian
12	Kerala	Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Sanskrit, Hindi, English, Urdu, Arabic, French, Latin, Syriac, Russian
13	Madhya Pradesh	Hindi, English, Urdu, Marathi, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Sindhi, Malayalam, Persian, Arabic, French, Russian
14	Maharashtra	Marathi, Hindi, Konkani, Kannada, English, Urdu, Sanskrit, Arabic, Bengali, Persian
15	Manipur	Manipuri, Hindi, English, Bengali, Paite, Hmar, Thadou-Kuki, Mizo, Tangkhul, Zou, Nepali, Kom, Vaiphei, Mao
16	Meghalaya	Khasi, Garo, Jaintia, English, Hindi, Bengali, Nepali, Manipuri
17	Mizoram	Mizo, English, Hindi, Bengali, Nepali, Manipuri
18	Nagaland	English, Jenyidie, Sumi, Ao, Lotha, Hindi, Bengali
19	Orissa	Oriya, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi, Telugu, English, Sanskrit, Persian
20	Punjab	Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, English, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Nepalese, Tibetan, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Oriya, Kannada
21	Rajasthan	Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Urdu, Sindhi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Malayalam, Tamil, Rajasthani, Prakrit, Persian
22	Sikkim	English, Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha, Limboo, Newari, Tamang, Sharpa, Gurung, Rai, Manger, Sunuwar, Hindi
23	Tamil Nadu	Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Urdu, English, Hindi, Kannada
24	Telangana	Telugu, Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Kannada, Oriya, Marathi, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, English
25	Tripura	Bengali, Kokbarok, English, Bishnupriya, Chokma, Manipuri, Holam, Kuki, Lakshai, Hindi
26	Uttar Pradesh	Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Urdu, Pali, Arabic, Persian, Latin, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali, Marathi, Assamese, Kannada, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Nepali, French, German, Tibetan, Chinese, Russian
27	Uttarakhand	Hindi, Sanskrit, English, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Nepali,
28	West Bengal	Bengali, English, Hindi, Urdu, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Tibetan, Nepali, Santhali as first language with Alchiki script
	Union Territory	Languages offered
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali
2	Chandigarh	Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, English, Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Nepalese, Tibetan, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Oriya, Kannada
3	Dadra Naagar Haveli	English, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Sanskrit, others
4	Daman and Diu	Gujarati, Hindi, English
5	Delhi	Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, English, Sanskrit; also any modern Indian language as students wish
6	Jammu and Kashmir	Urdu, Kashmiri, English, Dogri, Punjabi, Arabic, Sanskrit, Persian, Gojri, Pahari, Hindi
7	Lakshadweep	
7	Puducherry	Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Urdu, English, Hindi, French, Kannada

National Education Policy 2020 and language in Education

Education is key force in bringing national unity in a multilingual nation like India, and also it is a good way of

maintaining multilingualism and national unity. Education policy is the basic requirement of any nation. Education policy is an important initiative towards ensuring the all-round development of the nation. It aims to promote the

preservation and development of all Indian languages by protecting and promoting their use in various level of education with a legal framework. In this direction the National Education Policy 2020 emphasizes on universal access to quality education for social justice and equality, scientific expansion, national incorporation, and cultural conservation. NEP 2020 emphasized to consider mother tongue as the medium of education at the primary level keeping in mind the interests of the Indian people in education policy. According to this policy the inclusion of vernacular in education will give new life to the endangered languages and will help to keep children connected to their culture. The National Education Policy 2020 proposes early implementation of a three-language formula to promote multilingualism from the school level.

The National Education Policy 2020 emphasized on promoting and protecting indigenous languages by giving special status to those languages in imparting the formal education. There are many provisions added in the National Education Policy 2020 in connection with language in education some important provisions related to Language and Education are mentioned below.

- NEP 2020 focused on promoting multilingualism in teaching and learning and enhancing the power of language
- Widespread use of technology in teaching and learning, removing language barriers, increasing access for Divyang students was considered with high priority
- Special attention will be given to employing local teachers or those with familiarity with local languages to meet the educational needs of the local students.
- Technology will be used to serve as aids to teachers to bridge any language barriers that may exist between teachers and students this will be piloted and implemented
- Enjoyable and inspirational books for students at all levels will be developed, including through high-quality translation in all local and Indian languages, and will be made available extensively in both school and local public libraries which will enhance the knowledge of students.
- A National Book Promotion Policy will be formulated, and it will be ensured the availability, accessibility, quality, and readership of books across geographies, languages, levels, and for all generations.
- The majors will be taken for deploying teachers with knowledge of the local language to areas with high dropout rates, to stop this tendency.
- The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to make it responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively.
- The curricular and pedagogical structure and the curricular framework for school education will therefore be guided by a 5+3+3+4 design, consisting of the Foundational Stage (in two parts, that is, 3 years of Anganwadi/pre-school + 2 years in primary school in Grades 1-2; both together covering ages 3-8), Preparatory Stage (Grades 3-5, covering ages 8-11), Middle Stage (Grades 6-8, covering ages 11-14), and Secondary Stage (Grades 9-12 in two phases, i.e., 9 and 10 in the first and 11 and 12 in the second, covering ages 14-18).
- It is well understood 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 communities. 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/regional 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.
- All efforts will be made early on to ensure that any gaps that exist between the language spoken by the child and the medium of teaching are bridged. In cases 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 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 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 in Grade 3 and beyond. 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, and, in particular, for all languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- States, especially 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.
- 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 (including one language of India at the literature level) by the end of secondary school.
- All efforts will be 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.
- N, 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.

- Thus, every student in the country will participate in a fun project/activity on 'The Languages of India', sometime in Grades 6-8, such as, under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - The teaching of all languages will be 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.
 - 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.
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Conclusion

Language is the heart of every strata of education, in this direction the language policy in education provides a legal framework to the dictates the language used in disseminating knowledge at different levels. After many experiments towards improving the language use in education from Vedic period to till date the new education policy 2020 has been announced in line with public aspirations and according to national needs and challenges. The new education policy will help in contributing to the development of self-reliant India. If it is implemented well with better coordination with other policies then it will be a far-reaching policy and will definitely help in transforming Indian Education and Language system in many perspectives.

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