A STUDY ON IMPLEMENTING MOTHER TONGUE AS THE MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AT PRIMARY LEVEL UNDER NEP-2020 IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to understand the scope of implementing mother tongue as the medium of instruction at primary level of education system in Pasighat Educational Block under East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. Mother tongue based multilingual- education positively promotes toward educational foundation to enhance the child's language, culture and context. Further, the study approached with a descriptive method of research and surveyed fifteen primary schools by collecting data through a self-designed questionnaire and in-depth semi-structured interviews seeking response from school administration, teachers and parents through simple random sampling method. The study emphasizes to understand the issues faced by both students and teachers in fruitful communication and the study results revealed that lack of understanding of parents, heterogeneity, dominance of traditional English medium teaching process, lack of resources and infrastructure, shortage of labor are the prime factors opposing implementing mother tongue as medium of instruction. Parents should be motivated and encouraged to stress on their own native language as first option for their children, teachers and school practitioners should pay attention to students' attitude towards medium of instruction for better academic performance, administrators should prepare for a concrete design facilitating with enough resources.

1. Introduction

Education is the universal tool for bringing social, economic and political transformation for building an equitable society. A well- educated society equipped with relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is the need of the hour for economic and social development. Mother tongue is the first language, a person grows-up with from his early childhood. Therefore, mother tongue is the best option for communication that a person is familiar with. Across the globe, we can see the use of either a major commercial language or a colonial language as the medium of instruction in educational institutes. The government of India introduced the NEP-2020; the biggest reform in the field of education since the National Education Policy-1986.

Under the NEP-2020 reforms, medium of instruction is one of the major changes to be executed in which education in primary schools facilitated the mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Article 350A of the Constitution states that "state shall endeavour to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to minority groups" (Constitution of India, 2008). The Three-Language Formula-1957 (TLF) was proposed for using mother tongue or regional language, Hindi or English at different levels of education across the country (Mohanty, 2008). The NEP-2020 broadens the definition of 'Medium of Instruction' (MOI) to include local and regional language at least until primary education, preferably till Grade VIII (Ministry of Human Resource Development, GoI, 2020).

Many educationalists, linguistics, early childhood education experts, and cognitive psychologists suggested that an instruction in mother tongue is the most appropriate for cognition and comprehension in the early years of development (Ball, 2010; Khaitan, 2020; Daniyal, 2020). The Global Education Monitoring Report-2016 emphasized that children taught in a language other than their own can affect their learning abilities. The

imposition of a single dominant language as MOI in educational institutes can lead to wider issues of social and cultural inequalities (UNESCO, 2016). Mother tongue based bilingual education system significantly enhances the learning outcomes of children belonging to minority language communities (Ball, 2010; Bühmann & Trudel, 2008). NEP-2020 stresses on attaining foundational literacy and numeracy for all children. The reason behind the crisis of foundational learning is the detachment between the language of the child at home and the medium of language used in school curriculum. The term mother tongue has been widely used but on the other hand it is also critiqued, referring to a various situations like the language one identifies with, knows best, or uses the most and understood as one's first language (L1). Mother tongue based multilingual- education (MTB-MLE) is described by Diane Dekker (2010) as being more than just using the learner's first language to explain curriculum content. It emphasizes the importance of curriculum rooted in the local culture, as well as teaching methodology that promotes cognitive development and higher order thinking skills. The North East Regional Institute of Education (NERIE) conducted a programme related to implementing mother tongue education in Arunachal Pradesh (2007), and found that the parents are not willing to promote mother tongue as the medium of instruction, instead pressurized to keep either Hindi or English as MOI where they considered mother tongue lessons are not purposeful, just a formality to learn.

2.   Review of Related Literature

Norouzi & Movahedian (2021) in their study emphasized language rights, split into two approaches based on acceptance which denies any interruption with the choice of words and its use by government agencies, and an extension-based method, which aims to protect the right for using language in various fields like education, court, public realm, and government bodies.

Tumlos-Castillo & Baylon (2015) discovered that native language has an impact on evaluation and comprehension, emphasizing the importance of delivering quality training by ensuring that students comprehend and use the medium of instruction appropriately in the learning experience. Jami, A. M. & Keturah, L. (2022) states that The NEP-2020 is a landmark change in the education system introduced with a vision of creating quality institutions, a culture of innovation, and a highly skilled workforce making revolutionary reforms in the Indian education paradigm. Further, stated that the introduction of mother tongue language as a medium of instruction up to primary stage will aid to remove language barrier. Sarma & Ritwiz (2022) made an attempt through their study to analyse the cultural impact of language loss in Tai-Khamti speakers in North-Eastern India relating through language maintenance, indigenous knowledge and documentation, linguistic cultural markers, and narrative forms. The researcher provides an insight into culture loss through language endangerment in North- Eastern India and the broader intersection of language and culture. Saikia & Pranjal (2020) in their study highlighted the problems of teaching learning outcomes in the secondary level schools of Assam and provided some workable suggestions to improve it. And found that the teaching learning outcome is not satisfactory in the secondary level Assamese medium schools. The investigator realizes the most essential fact that instead of blaming the students for their failure to learn, the teachers must ensure teaching to be a great challenge.

3.   Theoretical Background of the Study

India is a linguistically diverse country, ranking 4th in terms of the number of languages spoken (Ethnologue, 2019), representing multi-lingualism, with 22 distinct official languages and several hundred of recognized and unrecognized regional dialects broadly classified under four major language families i.e. Indo-European, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burmese, and Austro- Asiatic family (Grierson, 1927; Census India C-16, 2011). The East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh comprises of a large number of tribal groups divided into various subgroups; the Minyongs, Padams, Shimongs, Milangs, Pasis, Karkos, Ashings, Pangis, Tangams and Boris. The Adi tribe belong to the Astro- Mongoloid race. As per Griession's linguistic classification, the language spoken in East Siang District is put together under the North-Assam group of the Tibeto-Burmese group. An analysis of the data by Universal District Information System of Education (UDISE) 2017-18 reveals that only 23 languages are used as the main medium of instruction (MOI-1), with Pan- Indian languages with Hindi and English medium being among the top two, followed by regional languages such as Bengali and Marathi used by the Indian states (UDISE- Ministry of Education, Government of India, 2017–2018). States like Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim have adopted English as the main MOI mostly in all schools.

4.   Statement of the Problem

Since independence, India is lagging behind in the primary goal of education i.e. Optimum learning outcome facing a foundational learning crisis. According to NEP-2020, once children fall behind the foundational literacy and numeracy, their learning curves will be flat for years and will perpetually unable to catch-up. The Right to Education Act asserts that the MOI shall be the child's mother tongue so far as possible. Linguistic diversity is a prominent characteristic of Arunachal Pradesh as inhabited by 26 major tribes and 110 sub-tribes speaking different dialects. Mother tongue education is yet to be introduced in the primary schools under Pasighat

Educational Block, East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh; because of diverse background in classroom situation, implementation of single mother tongue as uniform medium of teaching is a challenge for the administrators, teachers as well as the students.

Objectives of Study
To identify the factors that hinders the introduction of mother tongue as MOI in primary schools under Pasighat Educational Block, East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh.
To understand the prospects of implementing mother tongue as MOI in primary schools under Pasighat Educational Block, East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh.
To analyse the present scenario in implementing mother tongue as MOI in primary schools under Pasighat Educational Block, East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh.

5.   Research Methodology
A descriptive study was adopted with questionnaires, interviews and document analysis to collect qualitative and quantitative data from teachers, parents and administrators. To know the attitude, motivation and achievement of teachers, parents and administrators the study was carried out in 15 Government Primary schools of Pasighat Educational Block, East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh.

Table 6.1: Showing the Primary Schools of Pasighat Educational Block under East Siang District, Arunachal Pradesh

Sl. No.	Name of the School	Affiliation	Year of Estd.	No. of Teachers	No. of Students
1.	Government Primary School, 3 Mile	APSBE	2014	10	53
2.	Government Primary School, 7 Mile	APSBE	2007	10	62
3.	Government Primary School, Darang Eda	APSBE	2005	06	20
4.	Government Primary School, Doying Bote	APSBE	2006	18	58
5.	Government Primary School, Gobo Tode	APSBE	2006	06	56
6.	Government Primary School, Mariyom	APSBE	2010	02	27
7.	Government Primary School, Mongku	APSBE	1992	07	50
8.	Government Primary School, Rasam	APSBE	1986	09	43
9.	Government Primary School, Rengging	APSBE	1948	05	13
10.	Government Primary School, Roing	APSBE	2010	08	60
11.	Government Primary School, Sibut	APSBE	2005	06	27
12.	Government Primary School, Tebo	APSBE	2013	15	79
13.	Government Primary School, Tekang	APSBE	2007	06	64
14.	Government Primary School, Tulap	APSBE	2014	11	30
15.	Government Primary School, WRC Yagrung	APSBE	2005	03	09

Interpretation of Data and Findings Demographic Profile of Respondents
Table 7.1: Showing the demographic profile of the respondents

Gender	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Male	72	50	50
Female	72	50	100
Age Group	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
18 to 25 years	2	1.39	1.39
25 to 40 years	59	40.97	42.36
40 to 60 years	80	55.56	97.92
Above 60	3	2.08	100.00
Types of Respondents	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Teacher	60	41.67	41.67

Administrator	40	27.78	69.44
Parent	31	21.53	90.97
Others	13	9.03	100.00

Table 7.2: Showing the respondents mother tongue

Respondent's Mother Tongue	No. of Respondent	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Adi	115	79.86	79.86
Assamese	3	2.08	81.94
Galo	20	13.89	95.83
Idu	1	0.69	96.53
Malayalam	1	0.69	97.22
Nepali	3	2.08	99.31
Nyishi	1	0.69	100.00

Table 7.3: Showing Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.713	.721	21

The above table no. 7.3 shows that the Cronbach's alpha for 21 items is 0.713, which means that the internal consistency of the items is acceptable and they may measure the same underlying concept.

Lack of Training

Table 7.4: Showing lack of training as a challenge in introducing mother tongue?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	1.5	1.5	1.5
	2	28	14.1	14.1	15.6
	3	55	27.6	27.6	43.2
	4	54	27.1	27.1	70.4
	5	59	29.6	29.6	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

The majority of respondents (54.3%) rated lack of training as a challenge in introducing mother tongue. A significant proportion of participants recognize the importance of training to effectively implementing mother tongue as MOI.

Lack of Resources

Table 7.5: Showing lack of resources as a challenge in introducing mother tongue?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	32	16.1	16.1	18.1
	3	43	21.6	21.6	39.7
	4	72	36.2	36.2	75.9
	5	48	24.1	24.1	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

Approximately 60.3% of respondents indicated that lack of resources is a challenge in introducing mother tongue. The majority of participants acknowledge that insufficient resources can hinder the implementation of mother tongue MOI.

Lack of Support

Table 7.6: Showing lack of support as a challenge in introducing mother tongue?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	6	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	34	17.1	17.1	20.1
	3	64	32.2	32.2	52.3
	4	47	23.6	23.6	75.9
	5	48	24.1	24.1	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

About 57.8% of respondents identified lack of support as a challenge in introducing mother tongue, a significant number of participants perceive a lack of support as an obstacle to implementing mother tongue as MOI.

Lack of Interest
Table 7.7: Showing lack of interest as a challenge in introducing mother tongue ?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	3.5	3.5	3.5
	2	24	12.1	12.1	15.6
	3	67	33.7	33.7	49.2
	4	49	24.6	24.6	73.9
	5	52	26.1	26.1	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

Around 50.3% of respondents considered lack of interest to be a challenge in introducing mother tongue, a substantial portion of participants recognize that lack of interest could hinder the successful implementation of mother tongue as MOI.

Lack of Policy
Table 7.8: Showing lack of policy as a challenge in introducing mother tongue?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	17	8.5	8.5	10.6
	3	44	22.1	22.1	32.7
	4	86	43.2	43.2	75.9
	5	48	24.1	24.1	100.0
	Total	199	100.0	100.0	

Approximately 65.3% of respondents identified lack of policy as a challenge in introducing mother tongue whereas the majority of participants perceive the absence of a clear policy framework as a hindrance to implementing mother tongue as MOI.

Table 7.9: Showing Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Should Mother tongue be introduced in primary school	199	1.00	5.00	3.3166	1.19986	1.440	-.260	.172	-.717	.343
Can seeking resources be a way to cope with the introduction of mother tongue	199	1.00	5.00	3.8995	.96397	.929	-.925	.172	.726	.343
Can seeking policy be a way to cope with the introduction of mother tongue	199	1.00	5.00	3.9347	.85915	.738	-.598	.172	.086	.343
Can seeking support be a way to cope with the introduction of	199	1.00	5.00	3.5980	1.01464	1.029	-.387	.172	-.267	.343

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
mother tongue										
How likely are you recommending mother tongue as a mode of instruction	199	1.00	5.00	3.6231	1.28065	1.640	-.503	.172	-.840	.343
Valid N (list wise)	199									

The mean ratings for the question "should mother tongue be introduced in primary school" and the question "how likely are you recommending mother tongue as MOI" were both around 3.32 and 3.62 respectively, indicating a moderate level of agreement. Regarding coping strategies, the mean ratings for the questions "can seeking resources are a way to cope with the introduction of mother tongue" and "seeking policy is a way to cope with the introduction of mother tongue" were around 3.90 and 3.93 respectively, suggesting that respondents generally agreed that seeking resources and seeking policy could be effective ways to cope with the introduction of mother tongue. The question "can seeking support be a way to cope with the introduction of mother tongue" received a mean rating of approx. 3.60 indicating a moderate level of agreement with seeking support as a coping strategy suggesting there may be differing opinions and perspectives among the respondents.

Table 7.10: Showing Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Should Mother tongue be introduced in primary school	199	1.00	5.00	3.3166	1.19986	1.440	-.260	.172	-.717	.343
Using mother tongue may Impede learning outcomes.	199	1.00	5.00	2.3417	1.09352	1.196	.271	.172	-.961	.343
Using mother tongue may Diminish language skills.	199	1.00	5.00	2.3668	1.13756	1.294	.302	.172	-.943	.343
Using mother tongue may Create cultural barriers.	199	1.00	5.00	2.3869	1.12637	1.269	.264	.172	-.923	.343
Using mother tongue may Lower self confidence	199	1.00	5.00	2.4221	1.14270	1.306	.224	.172	-1.005	.343
Using mother tongue can Enhance learning outcomes	199	1.00	5.00	4.0704	.90178	.813	-1.016	.172	.877	.343
Using mother tongue can Improve language skills	199	1.00	5.00	4.0402	.92572	.857	-.968	.172	.616	.343
Using mother tongue can Foster cultural diversity.	199	1.00	5.00	4.0704	.87333	.763	-1.148	.172	1.659	.343

Using mother tongue can Boost self-confidence.	199	1.00	5.00	4.1206	.83818	.703	-1.063	.172	1.479	.343
Valid N (list wise)	199								

The descriptive statistics show that respondents are divided on whether mother tongue should be introduced in primary school as MOI with a mean of 3.32 and standard deviation of 1.20 respectively. The distribution is slightly left-skewed and platykurtic, indicating that there are more respondents who disagree or strongly disagree than those who agree or strongly agree, and that there are fewer respondents who are neutral or have extreme opinions. The respondents tend to disagree or strongly disagree with the statements that using mother tongue may impede learning outcomes, diminish language skills, and create cultural barriers, or lower self-confidence, with means ranging from 2.34 to 2.42 and standard deviations ranging from 1.09 to 1.14.

The distributions are slightly right-skewed and platykurtic where the respondents tend to agree or strongly agree with the statements that using mother tongue can enhance learning outcomes, improve language skills, foster cultural diversity, or boost self-confidence, with means ranging from 4.04 to 4.12 and standard deviations ranging from 0.84 to 0.93 respectively. The distributions are left-skewed and leptokurtic, indicating that there are more respondents who disagree or strongly disagree than those who agree or strongly agree, and that there are more respondents who are neutral or have extreme opinions.

6.   Recommendations and Suggestions
The study recommends that parents should be encouraged to choose their own native language i.e. mother tongue for their children as MOI. Teachers and school practitioners should pay attention to students' attitude towards MOI.

Different methods of language learning and language implementation in schools proposed by linguistic community should be looked upon. Teachers must be well-qualified and well-trained. Organizing and conducting conferences, seminars and workshops to bring awareness and to facilitate is the need of the hour. The state should also help the communities to develop the tribal language scripts by providing platforms.

7.   Conclusion
The majority of respondents (54.3%) rated lack of training as a challenge in introducing mother tongue. A significant proportion of participants recognize the importance of training to effectively implement mother tongue as MOI. Approximately 60.3% of respondents indicated that lack of resources is a challenge in introducing mother tongue. The majority of participants acknowledge that insufficient resources can hinder the implementation of mother tongue as MOI. This highlights the need for adequate resources to support the introduction of mother tongue in primary level.

About 57.8% of respondents identified lack of support as a challenge in introducing mother tongue. A significant number of participants perceive a lack of support as an obstacle to implementing mother tongue as MOI. Around 50.3% of respondents considered lack of interest to be a challenge in introducing mother tongue. A substantial portion of participants recognizes that lack of interest could hinder the successful implementation of mother tongue as MOI. Approximately 65.3% of respondents identified lack of policy as a challenge in introducing mother tongue. The majority of participants perceive the absence of a clear policy framework as a hindrance to implementing mother tongue as MOI. These above interpretations suggest that the identified hindering factors, including lack of training, resources, support, interest, and policy, are perceived by the respondents as challenges that need to be addressed for the successful introduction of mother tongue as MOI in primary schools in the Pasighat Educational Block, East Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. In a state like Arunachal where language diversity is enormous, it would be a difficult task to implement a single tribal language as medium of instruction.

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