

Original Article

ROLE OF NEP 2020 AT THE FUNDAMENTAL AND PREPARATORY STAGES OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

Dr. S. D. Selvasundari ¹ 

¹ Head and Assistant Professor, Department of English, G. Venkataswamy Naidu College, Kovilpatti, Tamil Nadu, India



ABSTRACT

The National policy of Education 2020 insists the significance of language in shaping the educational landscape of India, particularly in elementary and preparatory education. This policy encourages the use of mother tongue or regional languages as the medium of instruction, aiming to develop cognitive skills, cultural preservation and inclusive. By adopting a multilingual approach, NEP 2020 seeks a connect the gap between home and school languages, enhancing students' learning experiences and academic performances. This article explores the role of language in NEP 2020, highlighting its potential benefits, challenges and implications for elementary and preparatory education in India. The analysis highlights the importance of effective implementation, resource allocation and teacher training to ensure the success of multilingual education initiatives. Ultimately, NEP 2020's language provisions have the potential to change India's educational system, promoting linguistic diversity, equity and quality education for all.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Language Learning, Mother Tongue, Fundamental Stage, Preparatory Stage

INTRODUCTION

Language is the unique quality of all the human beings. Language is the main source of communication and to maintain good relation in a society. It helps us to share information and to express our views and emotions to the others. The National Education Policy 2020 is a game changer for India's education system, aims to transform the country into a global knowledge super power. It focuses on making education more holistic, flexible and multi- disciplinary. It encourages mother tongue till elementary school level.

NEP 2020 analyses the paradigm shift from traditional to holistic education. It evaluates the potential improvements in foundational literacy. It explores how to promote mother tongue instruction which preserves cultural heritage, This paper explores the role of NEP 2020, highlighting its potential benefits, challenges and implications for elementary and preparatory education in India. This paper highlights the importance of effective implementation, resource allocation and teacher training to ensure success of multilingual education initiatives.

*Corresponding Author:

Email address: Dr. S. D. Selvasundari (dr.selvasundari1@gmail.com)

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OBJECTIVE

The main objective is,

To identify language related challenges faced by teachers and students in the fundamental and preparatory stages of education.

To examine the impact of language policies on learning outcomes

To explore strategies for promoting multilingualism and improving language instruction in these stages.

This study aims to contribute to the development of effective language policies and instructional strategies for the fundamental and preparatory stages of education under NEP 2020.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The National Educational Policies have evolved significantly over the years with a focus on promoting multilingualism and to preserve linguistic diversity.

NEP 1968: This policy introduced three language formula, recommending instruction in English, Hindi and a regional language. It emphasized the importance of language education in reducing the gap between the intelligence and the masses. It encouraged the teaching of Sanskrit as an essential part of India's cultural heritage.

NEP 1986: This policy retained the three-language formula, with a focus on removing disparities and equalizes educational opportunities. It emphasized the removal of social and economic disparities, especially for women, scheduled Tribes and Scheduled castes.

NEP 2020: It promotes multilingualism, allowing states to choose languages with at least two natives to India. It recommends instruction in the mother tongue or regional language until grade 5 and preferably until Grade 8. It encourages bilingual teaching and learning materials, with flexibility for states to adopt the language combination. It emphasizes the preservation of India's linguistic commitment to linguistic diversity and promoting national integration.

NEP 1968 and 1986 emphasized the three-language formula, recommending instruction in English, Hindi and a regional language with a focus on standardization. NEP 2020 offers flexibility, allowing states to choose languages with at least two native to India and promotes instruction in the mother tongue or regional languages until grade 5. From a rigid three language formula in 1968 and 1986, NEP 2020 is more flexible and multilingual approach. Greater emphasis was given to preserve India's linguistic heritage and cultural diversity in NEP 2020. According to Dr. Kotra Balayogi, NEP 2020 has achieved notable successes by promoting holistic education, emphasizing early childhood education, introducing curriculum flexibility, and integrating technology however, the policy's implementation faces challenges related to infrastructural limitations, resistance to change, concerns about standardization, and the need for comprehensive teacher training.

ROLE OF MOTHER TONGUE IN LEARNING

Mother Tongue plays a vital role in learning. It serves as the foundation for cognitive development, cultural identity and academic success. Researches show that children who learn in their mother tongue tend to perform better in their academics. They develop better communication skills and have a stronger sense of cultural identity.

Learning in mother tongue has many cognitive benefits. It allows children to understand complex concepts more easily as they are already familiar with the language and its nuances. It enhances students' problem solving skills, memory and creativity. Moreover mother tongue instruction helps children to develop a strong foundation in language skills which can be transferred to other languages.

The mother tongue is deeply rooted in a child's cultural identity. It is a carrier of culture, tradition, values and plays a significant role in shaping a child's worldview. The child gets a chance to connect with its cultural heritage and develops a sense of belonging which will groom the child's personality in a positive track.

Studies have shown that children who learn in their mother tongue tend to perform better in academics, because they are able to grasp the concept more easily and participate actively in peer group and class room discussions. This in turn develop the love for learning. Mother tongue instruction can help to reduce dropout rates and it reduces the confusion and students understanding capacity will improve. According to Vaibhav Kumar, Prof. G. Anburaj in their article, "*Effect of mother tongue on learning the English language*," Evidence from students reveals that the mother tongue has a profound and complex influence on the process of acquiring the English language. A majority of students noted that their first language has significance in their comprehension and expression of English grammatical and lexical constructions.

FUNDAMENTAL STAGE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

The fundamental stage of learning is a critical phase, where students develop foundational skills and knowledge that shape their future academic success. This stage consists of three years of pre-school or Anganvadi education, followed by two years of primary classes (Class 1&2). It caters the children aged 3 to 8.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF FOUNDATIONAL STAGE LEARNING

Play -based learning: Focuses on developing language skills and promoting overall development through interactive activities. To develop foundational literacy and Numeracy, teachers should emphasize building strong foundation in reading, writing and basic mathematics. To enhance the holistic development, in the fundamental and preparatory stages, it was encouraged to concentrate physical, emotional and social growth through various activities.

Stages of learning: The fundamental stage is a part of a broader learning process, which includes,

- 1) **Acquisition:** Learning new skills or knowledge
- 2) **Fluency/ Proficiency:** Developing accuracy and efficiency in performing tasks
- 3) **Maintenance:** Retaining learned skills and knowledge overtime
- 4) **Generalization:** Applying learned skills in different contexts
- 5) **Adaptation:** Using learned skills to solve new problems or address challenges.

Educators can tailor their approaches and meet the unique needs of the students and set them up for future success in Language learning at the fundamental stage.

NEP 2020 insists on using the mother tongue (L1) as the medium of instruction to facilitate effective learning. The following are the key strategies for the above. To inculcate emergent literacy, focus on developing print awareness phonological awareness and vocabulary development through interactive activities like story telling singing and conversations is essential. In multi lingual approach, children are encouraged to learn multiple languages with a focus on the home language, to promote cognitive development and cultural preservation.

Play Based learning includes games, role playing and hands on activities to make language learning fun and engaging. Story telling is always a favorite activity for the children. Make them read and expose children to various texts, including picture books and stories to develop comprehension and vocabulary skills.

STAGES OF LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

- 1) **Pre-production:** Children listen and observe, gradually build vocabulary and grammar.
- 2) **Early production:** Children start producing simple words and phrases using gestures and facial expressions
- 3) **Speech emergence:** Children develop more complex language structures and start using language in context.
- 4) **Intermediate Language:** Children refine their language skills, learning nuances and idiomatic expressions
- 5) **Advanced Language Proficiency:** Children achieve fluency and accuracy using language for various purposes.

PREPARATORY STAGE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

The preparatory stage of learning consists of students from grade 3 to 5. This stage focuses on building foundational skills in subjects like language, mathematics, science and social science, while promoting overall development and curiosity

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

Students of this stage are little grown up when compared to the previous stage. Experimental learning: Hands on activities, experiments and projects encourage students to explore and learn by doing. Integrated Approaches can be applied to master the Subjects, which are interconnected to foster critical thinking, problem -solving and creativity. Multilingualism can be encouraged and emphasis should be on developing language skills in multiple languages, including the mother tongue. To enhance the holistic development, focus on the physical, emotional and social growth through co- curricular activities.

The learning objectives for the preparatory stage will be,

To develop fundamental literacy and numeracy skills,

To Encourage scientific, inquiry, critical thinking and problem solving

To foster creativity collaboration and communication skills

To promote physical fitness, health and well being

To cultivate emotional intelligence, social skills and values

The following are the best teaching approaches: Play based learning and interactive methods, Inquiry based learning and hands on experiments, collaborative learning and group projects, Technology-enabled learning and digital literacy

The Language learning in preparatory stage, focuses on building strong reading, writing, speaking and listening skills through engaging activities like storytelling, group discussions and presentations

KEY FOCUS AREAS

Language skills - LSRW skills

Grammar and Vocabulary - Basic Grammar concepts and Vocabulary

Creative writing - story telling, essays & letter writings

Communication skills - Oral communication & self confidence

CHALLENGES FACED BY PREPARATORY AND FUNDAMENTAL STAGE LANGUAGE LEARNERS

There are so many challenges like limited vocabulary acquisition, difficulty in pronunciation and intonation, struggling to understand complex sentences and texts, limited speaking and writing fluency. The influence of mother tongue will be a barrier in adapting multiple language diversity and dialects limited exposure to language outside classroom. Pressure to perform well, limited teacher training in language teaching methodology, limited access to quality language learning resources are also the challenges of language learning.

REMEDIES

There are some effective word building activities. Teachers can make students use word families, Prefixes, Suffixes related activities to expand vocabulary. Word wall is an interesting word game by which students can create an interactive word walls with new vocabularies

Reading aloud is a good practice to develop vocabularies and other language skills. Read stories and encourage students to repeat words. To improve pronunciation, we can ask students to repeat words and phrases multiple times at the foundational stage of language learning. Teachers can encourage to mimic native speakers. Along with the above training they have to teach phonics and pronunciation rules to the learners.

Comprehension is another basic need of the learner. To understand the message or content usage of visual aids like pictures, diagrams and videos are must. Encourage students to summarize texts. After reading, open ended questions can be asked to the readers to check comprehension.

Fluency can be attained if the learner is good in language skills. Engage students in Role play and conversation, story telling and give opportunities for writing practice. Use Bilingual resources and support compare and contrast languages. Provide opportunities for language immersion by using multilingual resources and materials. Teachers can encourage language exchange programme by celebrating linguistic and cultural diversity. Language -rich environment can be created by using Technology in real life context to teach language.

Assessment is the important stage by which the outcome of the learners is evaluated. Use formative assessment and provide constructive feedback. Encourage self-assessment and reflection. Provide Professional developments like workshops and training sessions. Encourage peer support, Resource- use digital resources, libraries and lab. Involve the community in language learning.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of three languages learning in NEP 2020 plays a vital role. It highlights the importance of effective implementation, resource allocation and teacher training to ensure the success of multilingual education initiatives. Ultimately, NEP 2020's language provisions have the possibility to change India's educational system, promoting linguistic diversity, equity and quality education for all. NEP 2020 emphasizes language for psychological feature development, cultural protection, and national integration through a negotiable "Three-Language Formula". Key aspects include using the mother tongue as the medium of education in early years, fostering multilingualism for enhanced cognitive benefits, and promoting Indian and foreign languages to improve national and world-wide communication.

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