

Draft National Education Policy 2019
&
Language Policy for Education in India
[A Critical Appraisal]

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“Choice in language like choice in other areas offers no guarantee of success. Success, as usual, depends on good fortune, our own ingenuity and the intensity of our commitment to freedom, equality, and justice within and between the communities to which we perceive we belong.”

-Brian Weinstein #

Anand T Hingorani collected and published the writings of Mahatma Gandhi on various subjects. He gave the title ‘*Our Language Problem*’ for Mahatma’s thoughts on languages in India. The title pertinently summarises the language scenario of the country during pre-independence days. This legacy continued during early decades of the independent India. To solve the language problems of the Union, States and Union Territories in various domains of language use, language choices were made in the Constitution for their use in administration, parliament, assembly, judiciary etc.

The question of choice of language/s for learning in the schools and the choice of medium of education did not find place in the Constitution at the time of its acceptance. After the reorganisation of the states on linguistic lines in 1956 protection of language rights in the field of education of the linguistic minorities was found necessary. The *States Reorganization Commission* had asked the Union Government to elucidate a policy outline for education in mother tongue at the Secondary stage. Through the Seventh Constitution Amendment in 1956, Article 350A was made part of the Constitution of India. In the facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage, it said that “It shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups; and the President may issue such directions to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.” It has to be noted that this ensures education in mother tongue for the linguistic minority groups. But it does not say anything about the linguistic majority. So today Hindi or Kannada mother tongue student is not bound to have his education through his mother tongue. He can opt or get it through English.

With this, choice of language/s in education and medium of instruction were left to the discretion of the union and state government/s. Several attempts have been made to arrive at a suitable policy for the domain of language education in India. Since it is contextually needed, I will be citing some of them here.

The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India has formulated the backbone of the nation’s development - a draft of *National Education Policy 2019* [NEP-2019] and placed it before the public for their comments, suggestions and such other inputs before it is finalised and implemented. The language education part of this document needs to be critically examined by the linguists, language teachers and teachers of both modern and classical literature. This paper intends to critically examine the language policy for education elucidated in this policy document from a linguist and language teacher’s point of view.

Language education includes - language(s) to be taught and the language medium through which various subjects are taught at different stages of education-preschool to post graduation.

Language/s as Subject/s in Education

The NEP-2019 states that “The three language formula, followed since the adoption of the National Policy on Education 1968, and endorsed in the National Policy on Education 1986/1992 as well as the NCF 2005, will be continued, keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions and aspirations of the people, regions, and the Union.” The NEP-2019 proposes that the “The three-language formula will need to be implemented in its spirit throughout the country, promoting multilingual communicative abilities for a multilingual country. However, it must be better implemented in certain States, particularly Hindi speaking States; for purposes of national integration, schools in Hindi speaking areas should also offer and teach Indian languages from other parts of India.”¹ It goes one step ahead and states that “...all students from pre school and Grade I onwards will be exposed to three or more languages with the aim of developing speaking proficiency and interaction, and the ability to recognise scripts and read basic text, in all three languages by Grade3.”²

This is an omnibus statement wishful thinking on Three Language Formula [TLF]. It is not of much help without relating to what was really stated in the earlier policy documents about TLF cited here. So first we can look at the historical background and various formulations [*avataars*] of it including the reviews that were officially conducted by the government and the institutions about implementation of it.

The TLF as envisaged by its proponents in the beginning till date has undergone a metamorphosis. There is no one version of it but there are many versions. Along with the version of the TLF, the content of it has also changed. It is not easy to explain all the versions here, but important versions are cited and discussed here. The 2019 document seems to speak of many versions. The historical background and some versions of it and reviews of the same at different points of time are here.

1952

In 1952 at the secondary stage, the *Secondary Education Commission* recommended the study of four languages: (i) Mother tongue (ii) Regional language (iii) link language – Hindi and (iv) one of the classical languages-Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Arabic and Persian.

1956

The *All India Council for Education* recommended the adoption of the TLF in September 1956. The reorganisation of the states on linguistic lines had thrown up states and union territories with majority and minority language speakers. The language education had to be devised for such a heterogeneous linguistic population.

1957

The *Central Advisory Board of Education* [CABE] suggested the adoption of three language formula.

1961

The meeting of the *Chief Ministers of States and Central Ministers* held in 1961 arrived at the following version of the three-language formula. According to it:

- a. The regional language and the mother tongue when the latter are different from the regional language;

- b. Hindi, or, in Hindi speaking areas, another Indian language; and
- c. English or any other modern European language.

1966

The *Education Commission* (1964-66) recommended a modified or graduated three language formula. It was as follows:

- a. The mother tongue or the regional language;
- b. The official language of the Union or the associate official language of the Union so long as it exists; and
- c. A modern Indian or Foreign language not covered under (a) and (b) and other than used as the medium of instruction.

It is to be noted that these 1952 to 1966 formulas were recommendations and not the policies to be adopted for implantation.

1968 NPE

The nation after twenty years of exploration of various options and recommendations of different committees / commissions announced the National *Policy on Education* in 1968. The main focus of this language policy was *nation centric*. About language education it recommended that: “At the secondary stage, the State Governments should adopt, and vigorously implement, the three language formula which includes the study of modern Indian languages preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States and of Hindi with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking States. Suitable courses in Hindi and/or English should also be available in Universities and colleges with a view to improving the proficiency of students in these languages up to the prescribed university standards.”³

After NPE 1968 came into existence, a study was conducted by the NCERT - *Position of Languages in School Curriculum in India* published in 1976 lists 67 subject languages in Indian school education. They are: Angami, Ao, Arabic, Ardhamagadhi, Aasan Urdu, Assamese, Avesta Pahlvi, Bengali, Bodo, Chakhasang, Chang Naga, Dogri, English, French, Garo, German, Gujarati, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Hmar, Ho, Iranian, Italian, Kannada, Karen, Kashmiri, Kharia, Khasi, Khiemnungar, Konkani, Konyak, Kuki, Ladakhi, Latin, Lotha, Lushai, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Mizo, Modern Tibetan, Mundari, Nicobaree, Nepali, Oreon, Oriya, Pali, Persian, Phom, Portuguese, Punjabi, Rengma, Sadani, Sangtam, Sanskrit, Santali, Sema, Sindhi, Spanish, Syriac, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Yeimchungere and Zeliang. It has to be noted that not all mother tongues or languages of India were subject languages in the schools at that time.

1986 NPE

The National Policy on Education -1986 had stated that: LANGUAGES “The Education Policy of 1968 had examined the question of the development of languages in great detail; its essential provisions can hardly be improved upon and are as relevant today as before. The implementation of this part of the 1968 Policy has, however, been uneven. The Policy will be implemented more energetically and purposefully.”⁴ This was also adopted in the *Programme of Action* by the Parliament in 1992.

Acharya Ramamurti Committee which had reviewed the NPE-1986 and prepared a report had said that “Whatever be the difficulties or unevenness in the implementation of the three-language formula, it has stood the test of time. It is not desirable or prudent to reopen the

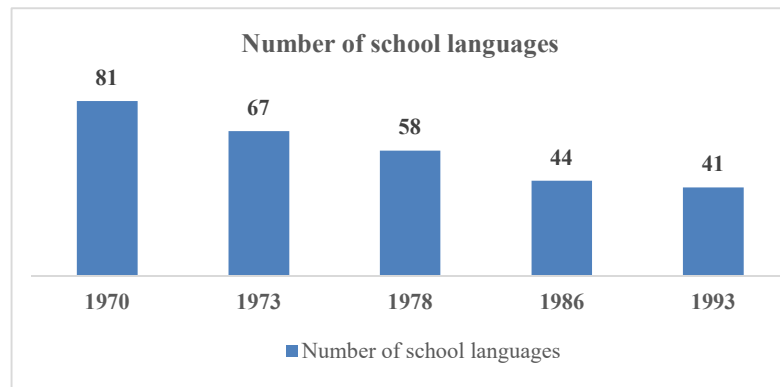
formula.”⁵ Another committee for Review of National Policy on Education-1986 in its final report on December 26, 1990 had said that at the formula level itself “The three-language formula does not speak of the mother tongue but only of the use of regional language along with Hindi/Modern Indian Languages and/English.”⁶ The TLF “... is restricted only to the secondary stage. Consequently, each State decides how many languages and to what degree fewer or more languages should be taught at other stages of education. The result is that different States have different policies at the primary level and at the higher secondary level.”⁷ Also at implementation level it had said that “often, the states offer, in the first, second and third languages more optional than stipulated in the three-language formula, Even though the number of languages taught is three, the languages are not those in the formula. The preferred third language in the Hindi state is often Sanskrit and not a modern Indian language- a southern language-though classical languages like Sanskrit do not find place in the three-language formula...There are differences in the motivation for learning of the third language. While there is economic motivation for learning Hindi, in non-Hindi states, the motivation for learning southern languages in Hindi States is largely cultural. This results in lack of uniformity in learning objectives and competence levels in the third language.”⁸

The *All India School Education Survey* and other studies indicate that the number of languages used in the schools have decreased from 81 in 1970 to 41 in 1993. The table – 1 illustrates this decline. Just within 23 years 40 languages dropped out as subjects from the domain of schools. The warning to the educationists and the government to take steps to reverse the process was available at that time itself. But no remedial measures seems to have been taken.

Table = 1

Year	Number of school languages
1970	81
1973	67
1978	58
1986	44
1993	41

[Source: AISES]



This is the symptom/indication that the TLF had miserably failed long ago in helping Indian languages to become school languages and also failed to retain them in the schools. Instead it has forced school languages to disappear from school system.

January 2000 NCFSE (DD)

Exactly after ten years, this TLF went through another review in the *National Curriculum Framework for School Education: A Discussion Document* of January 1, 2000. While reviewing the implementation of the Three Language Formula, it was stated that “In a number of states/organizations/ boards, however, the spirit of the formula has not been followed and the mother tongue of the people has been denied the status of the first language ... because of the changed socio-economic scenario, the difference between the second and the third languages has dwindled. Thus, in reality, there may be two-second languages for all

purposes and functions. Some states follow only a two-language formula whereas in some others classical languages like Sanskrit and Arabic are being studied in lieu of a modern Indian language. Some boards/institutions permit even European languages like French and German in place of Hindi. In this scenario, the three-language formula exists only in our curriculum documents and other policy statements. From this it is evident that for school education the Three Language Formula is the strategy and goal for Indian multilingual situation but not practicable. It may be recalled that Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry are following the two-language formula of teaching Tamil and English.”⁹

November 2000 NCFSE

The final *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* was released in November 2000 by the NCERT. It had said that “Even about four decades after the formulation of ‘Three Language Formula’, it is yet to be effectively implemented in true in true spirit. Despite all the changes in the socio-economic scenario, market pressures and the behaviour pattern of the Indian youth, the three-language formula still remains relevant.” And suggested a modified TLF based on the review. According to this:

1. The First language to be studied must be the mother tongue or the regional language
2. The second language -
 - a. in Hindi speaking states will be some other modern Indian language or English, and
 - b. in non-Hindi speaking states will be Hindi or English.
 - i. The Third language -
3. in Hindi speaking states will be English or a modern Indian language not studied as the second language, and
4. in non-Hindi speaking states will be English or a modern Indian language not studied as the second language.”¹⁰

2005 NCF

The *National Curriculum Framework 2005* is the result of circulation of the draft, debate and finalisation. The final version in reiteration of TLF says that “The three-language formula is an attempt to address the challenges and opportunities of the linguistic situation in India. It is a strategy that should really serve as a launching pad for learning more languages. It needs to be followed both in letter and spirit. Its primary aim is to promote multilingualism and national harmony.”¹¹

This again repeated that “The three-language formula needs to be implemented in its spirit, promoting multilingual communicative abilities for a multilingual country. In the non-Hindi-speaking states, children learn Hindi. In the case of Hindi speaking states, children learn a language not spoken in their area. Sanskrit may also be studied as a Modern Indian Language (MIL) in addition to these languages. At later stages, study of classical and foreign languages may be introduced.¹¹ It is more than ten years of NCF 2005, the multilingualism through schools a dream of TLF, has remained unrealised.

Major benefit of TLF is English becoming compulsory language as one of the school subjects in India. This has contributed for the spread of English education in the country. The TLF is Macaulay’s Education Minute for post-independence India. Another benefit accrues to Hindi, since most of the states and union territories have made Hindi as language of the school system.

We saw from 1956 to 2005 versions of the TLF, we do not understand, which one the NEP 2019 wants to accept and implement. Though it explains using different terminologies, there is no transparency in the policy document. And looks like beating around the bush with terminologies.

Many Faces of Medium of Education

The draft of the National Education Policy 2019 currently being discussed, recommends on the medium of instruction that “When possible, the medium of instruction - at least until Grade 5 but preferably till at least Grade 8 - will be the home language/mother tongue/local language.” In this context let us look at what was said about this issue in the previous policy documents and the current status of medium of instruction in the country.

1968 NEP

Regarding the medium of instruction, it had stated that “The regional languages are already in use as media of education at the primary and secondary stages. Urgent steps should now be taken to adopt them as media of education at the university stage.” This has remained as a dream only. It has not happened even today. University education is largely through English medium. Some attempts to teach social sciences at the university level in the regional languages were made by some of the universities. But they seem to have reminded as tokens. The technical and medical education is only through English medium in India.

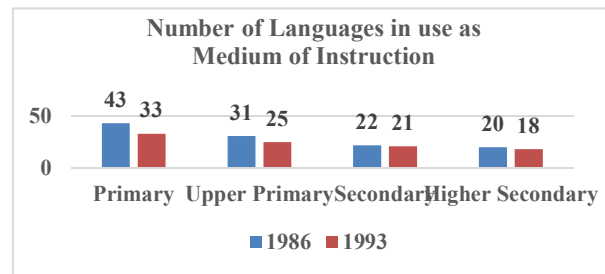
1986 NEP

Did not say anything new. What it said is already cited earlier in this paper. But what was happening on the ground is something different. The table given below provides the information on number of languages used as medium of instruction in India as reported by the All India Education Survey of 1986 and 1993.

Table – 2
Medium of Instruction in Schools

Educational Level	1986	1993
Primary	43	33
Upper Primary	31	25
Secondary	22	21
Higher Secondary	20	18

[Source: AISES]



Between 1986 and 1993 at all levels of the school education the number of languages being used as medium of instruction gradually decreased at all levels. The students were going away from the languages they were taught towards some other language/s. The statistics of the survey remained as statistics and did not open the eyes of educational/language planners. Concerted efforts to investigate the reasons for this attrition and steps to prevent this, seems to have not been taken.

2000 January NCF SE (DD)

The NCFSE states that “As such it is widely recognised that the first language is the learner’s most natural medium of communication, and therefore, of instruction. In the case of learners whose first language is also standard school language/regional language, the medium of instruction at least up to the elementary stage should be the regional language. Thereafter

...English in the present national scenario could be accepted as the medium because by the end of the elementary stage the learners are expected to have acquired fairly satisfactory level of receptive and expressive skills in this language.

However, in the case of those pupils whose home language/first language is different from the regional language, the regional language may be adopted as a medium only from the third standard onward. In the first two years the pupil's home language/first language should be used as the medium in such manner that a smooth transition from the pupil's operations in the home language to those in the school/regional language naturally takes place."

2000 November NCF SE

The final version of the NCFSE-2000 recommends that "The mother tongue is the most vital factor for the children's intellectual, emotional and spiritual growth. The mother tongue is the 'mother tongue' not because it is the mother's tongue but because, like the mother, it is central factor behind the nurturance of the children's mental and emotional make up. Their perceptions, comprehension, responses, creative expressions thinking and analysis - all are maximally developed, therefore, through the medium of the mother tongue. The medium of instruction ideally, therefore, ought to be the mother tongue at all the stages of school education.

In the case of learners whose mother tongue is also the regional language or state language, it must continue as the medium of instruction ideally at all the levels of schooling or at least up to the end of the elementary stage. However, in the case of those students whose mother tongue is different from the state language or regional language, the regional language may be adopted as a medium only from the third standard onward. In the earlier years the students' mother tongue ought to be used in such a manner that a smooth transition from the students' operations in the mother tongue to those in the regional language naturally takes place at the earliest."

2005 NCF

The widely debated document on multilingualism and multilingual education recommended that "Home language(s) of children, should be the medium of learning in schools. [home language(s) or mother tongue(s), it subsumes the languages of home, larger kinship group, street and neighbourhood, i.e. languages(s) that a child acquires naturally from her/his home and societal environment. If a school does not have provisions for teaching in the child's home language(s) at the higher levels, primary school education must still be covered through the home language(s)."

2019 NEP

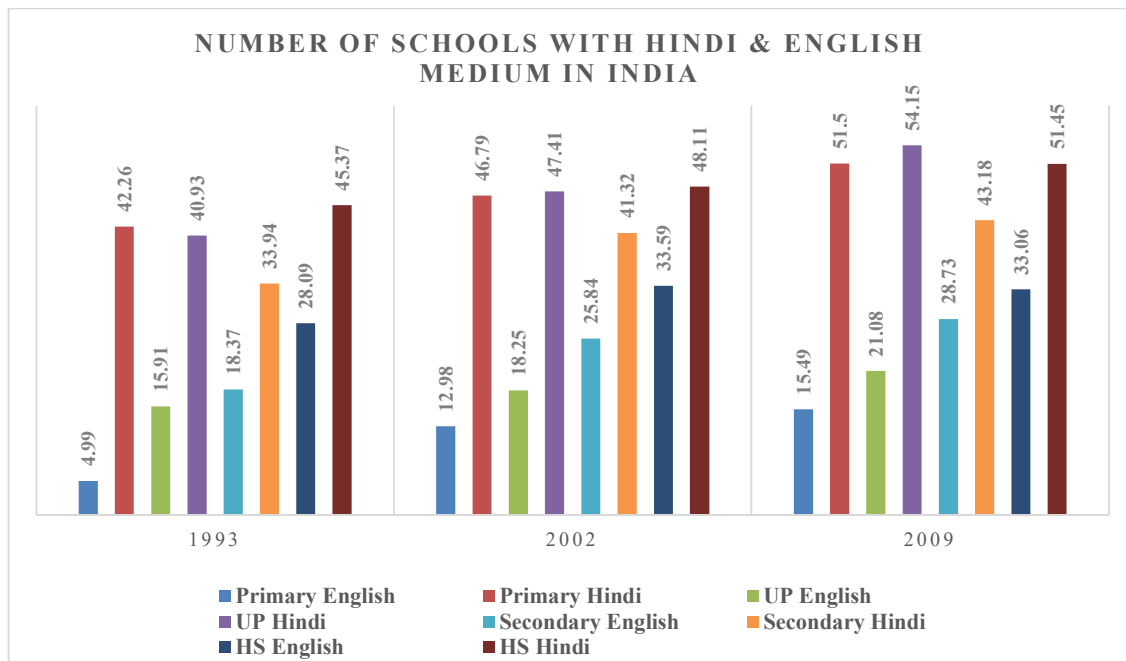
The present draft policy document recommends home language/mother tongue as medium of instruction. It states that "When possible, the medium of instruction - at least until Grade 5 but preferably till at least Grade 8 - will be the home language/mother tongue/local language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible." This may not make much difference to the ground situation. In the absence of availability of updated statistics for all languages as medium of instruction in India and all the years of instruction, we can discuss with the information available in public domain. Now we can look at what is happening in the schools in India about medium of instruction.

The table-3, speaks about the status of number of schools with Hindi and English medium in India from 1993 to 2009.

Table – 3
Number of schools with Hindi and English medium in India

Level	Primary		Upper Primary		Secondary		Higher Secondary	
	English	Hindi	English	Hindi	English	Hindi	English	Hindi
1993	4.99	42.26	15.91	40.93	18.37	33.94	28.09	45.37
2002	12.98	46.79	18.25	47.41	25.84	41.32	33.59	48.11
2009	15.49	51.50	21.08	54.15	28.73	43.18	33.06	51.45

[Source: AISES]



Irrespective of the level of education - primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary the percentage of number of schools in Hindi and English medium has gone up between 1993 and 2009 in the country. Though there is some variation in number of Hindi schools at some levels, number of English medium schools is increasing unabatedly at all levels of education. In the absence of information about the number of student's enrolment in these years we cannot come to any meaningful conclusion. However, we have the statistics of enrolment of students in different medium of instruction in Karnataka. It is possible to make some generalisations. Information about the enrolment of students into different medium of instruction in Karnataka is given in the table – 4.

Table – 4
Enrolment of students in different medium of instruction
at different levels of education in Karnataka

Year	2010-11			2012-13		
	LP	UP	SP	LP	UP	SP
Kannada	89.83	53.90	71.06	76.25	70.38	69.58
English	0.34	40.63	23.00	16.19	22.58	25.42

Urdu	7.34	4.01	3.54	5.85	5.16	3.08
Tamil	0.08	0.18	0.01	0.16	0.15	0.02
Telugu	0.12	0.10	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.04
Marathi	2.25	0.72	2.00	1.38	1.57	1.74
Hindi	0.01	0.19	0.21	0.09	0.09	0.12

[Source: DISE-Karnataka]

The entry to the schooling is from the primary stage. The above statistics reveal that in case of English the enrolment is fast increasing and the enrolment in all medium of instruction is decreasing.

The enrolment of students from 1st to 10th standards in different medium of instruction in Karnataka during 2013-4 and 2015-16 is given in the table-5. It shows that except in case of Telugu and English medium the enrolment of students has decreased in other mediums. There is an abnormal increase in the enrolment of students in English medium 20.179% to 24.789%.

Table = 5
Enrolment of students from 1st to 10th in different
Medium of instruction in Karnataka

Year	2013-14	2015-16
Kannada	73.210	60.210
English	20.179	24.789
Urdu	4.877	4.566
Marathi	1.454	1.318
Tamil	0.096	0.082
Telugu	0.046	0.058
Hindi	0.134	0.070

[Source: DISE-Karnataka]

At the same time there is an abnormal decrease in the enrolment of students in the Kannada medium 73.210% to 60.210%. It has to be noted that during 2013/14 - 1,00,00,138 students enrolled for 1st to 10th standards. During 2015/16 - 1,01,10,326 students enrolled for 1st to 10th standards. From year to year there is an increase in number of students enrolling from 1st to 10th standards. But the percentage of students enrolling for Kannada medium is consistently decreasing and English medium is steadily increasing. This proves that year by year more percentage of students are enrolling for the English medium and not for other medium of instruction in Karnataka.

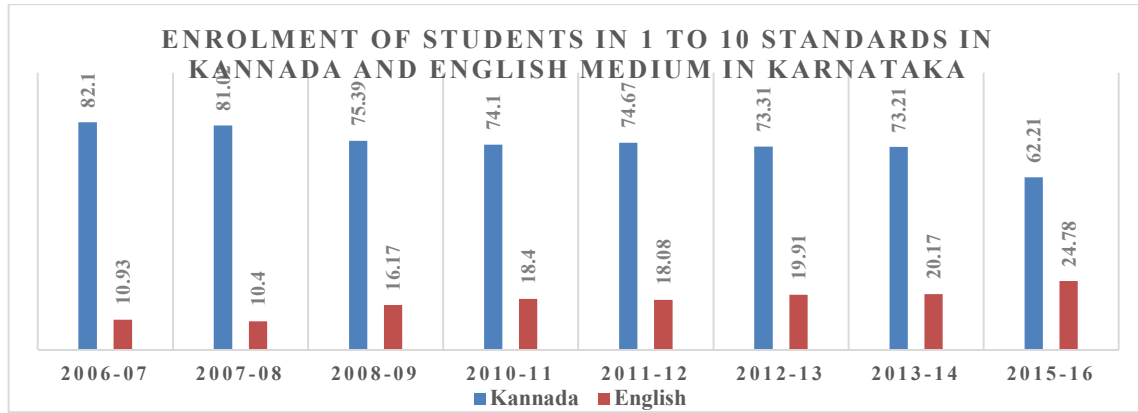
The table – 6 provides the details of the enrolment of students from 1st to 10th standards in the Kannada and English medium of instruction.

Table – 6
Enrolment of students from 1st to 10th standards in Kannada and English
Medium of instruction in Karnataka

	Year	Kannada	English
1	2006-07	82.10	10.93
2	2007-08	81.02	10.40
3	2008-09	75.39	16.17

4	2010-11	74.10	18.40
5	2011-12	74.67	18.08
6	2012-13	73.31	19.91
7	2013-14	73.21	20.17
8	2015-16	62.21	24.78

[Source: DISE-Karnataka]



This information of nearly one decade or so enlightens us as how the students are moving away from Kannada medium [2006-07, 82.10% to 2015-16, 62.21%] and moving towards English medium [2006-07, 10.93% to 2015-16, 24.78%] in Karnataka.

The same could be the scenario in all most all the states of India but intensities only may vary. Immediate curative measures are essential and no meaning in reiterating earlier policies.

So far, we got acquainted with attempts to arrive at a language policy for education and the ground reality in its implementation. Since education is in the concurrent list of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution, the language policy formulation for education and its implementation is left to the State governments under the Constitutional safeguards and broad guidelines. So far, the states have opted only for what satisfies them. The result of it is visible.

Need of the Day

Now, more than seventy years after independence of the country and fifty years of first *National Policy on Education 1968*, after reiterating the same thing in every policy document, we have to understand that our languages are no longer problems but valuable resources to be nourished and properly utilized.

I do not want to blame the union government for the language policy proposed in the draft NEP 2019. It is sad to know that the creators of this document did not think outside their baggage box and hanged on to the failed attempts and tried to remain safe by sticking to NEP 1968. They did not look at the challenging opportunities to change the existing unsuccessful system. The need of this century is a holistic approach and not a patch work approach. Language policy cannot be cut and paste work. It has to be linguistically sound, acceptable to the people and implementable by the government machinery.

It can be seen from the above policy directions that the discipline of language education is burdened with terminologies for the sake of terminologies-home language, local language, mother tongue, first language second language, third language, regional language etc. Before

further discussion let us retain only the terminologies that are needed and transparent to understand and follow. The following terminologies are sufficient for our discussion: mother tongue, regional language, first-second-third language. I would like to clarify that the first-second-third language refers to the chronological order of the introduction of a language in the school education, and nothing less and nothing more.

A golden opportunity to restructure policy of language education after nearly 50 failed years is being lost by the current document *Draft National Educational Policy 2019*. Since at present it is only a draft and it has to be finalised before acceptance for implementation, the issue of language education could be looked afresh, hence these comments and suggestions. Language policy in education has to be linked to people's participation in both knowledge creation/dissemination and their economic welfare. It has to be inclusive policy to include all mother tongues.

The social and political context in which this non-working [TLF] language policy for education was evolved is different from the one that exists in the schools today after 50 years. At that time both Hindi and non-Hindi speaking population was to be kept in good humour and exhibited that they are treated on par and Hindi speakers learn another language and non-Hindi speakers learn Hindi. The first version of NEP 1968 ignored the mother tongue and gave roles for regional languages Hindi and English. This has proved to be grand blunder, in ignoring mother tongue and glamorising English and to certain extent - Hindi. This gave over riding power to English and people started to crave for it in education. The TLF through schooling has helped in the spread of Hindi in the non-Hindi speaking states. It has failed to spread non-Hindi languages in the Hindi speaking states This affected language learning as well as learning through the language. Due to the constitutional provisions most of the regional languages got declared as official languages of the states and union territories and made efforts to become languages of administration wherever possible. Most unfortunately all regional languages failed to become medium of instruction at all levels, English continues to rule the field. If the regional languages are not made languages of education at all levels for all even now, their growth is bound to suffer.

Continued over emphasis on the TLF has ruined the language education scenario in the country. Slowly rootless students are being produced by the system and they are hanging on to the branches of English. Instead of glamorizing a formula as strategy that eludes effective implementation for the past 50 or more years, a formula that has proven to be non-practicable has to be abandoned. A viable alternative to the TLF for language education in the school curriculum should be worked out.

Regarding the medium of instruction, we have done very little more than parroting the statement that mother tongue medium is the best medium. Is it a correct statement and understanding in all the social and linguistic contexts? Even in cases where there are competing tongues and the contexts in which mother tongue is an un-definable concept? Language taught as a subject and the medium of instruction have lost their inter-link. Teaching of languages from the beginning of the student's career and medium through which the instruction is imported to him have lost linkages. In most of the cases they have moved in different directions. A student may be learning Kannada as first language but his medium of instruction need not be Kannada, it can be Hindi or English. It is essential to re-establish the relation between first language and medium of instruction for better educational outcomes. Strategies have to be devised in our Indian contexts to switch over from the mother tongue medium to the regional language or English medium in the subsequent stages, since the same medium of instruction is not available at higher levels of education.

Mother tongue is not merely a communication tool, it is a repository of socio-cultural traits, traditional knowledge systems. A mother tongue can survive and develop only if it is learnt at home and as part of the schooling of the child. Earlier policy of language education, as already said was *national integration centric* and was aimed at spread of Hindi, English and development of the regional languages. It is necessary to note that Hindi too is one of the regional languages.

The need of the hour of the language education policy is to be mother tongue/language centric which protects and promotes the mother tongue of the child. In the context of Indian linguistic scenario where all languages are mother tongues but all mother tongues are not languages, one of the suggestions based on the experience of the implementation of previous NPEs is a holistic approach towards language education. This includes: Grade I to V- Mother tongue of the student is the subject as well as medium of education. Grade VI to VIII – Mother tongue or Regional language is subject as well as medium of education. Grade IX and X - the student is at liberty to choose the subject language and medium of education. Here the question is which mother tongue medium? The answer is simple-all the mother tongues listed by the Census of India-2011 are to be allowed to be part of Indian school system.

The *Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009* says that “medium of instructions shall, as far as practicable, be in child's mother tongue.” The word ‘*as far as practicable*’ has provided ample scope for the states, schools, parents and others to dispense with mother tongue medium and embrace the English or some other medium. We are not aware of any mechanism available to verify the implementation of this section of the Act. This act needs to be amended immediately. In amendment to this Act, these four words ‘*as far as practicable*’ should be deleted and the Act made stronger for implementation. The NPE 2019 promises that RTE “...will be extended downwards to include up to three years of early childhood education prior to Grade 1, and upwards to include Grades 11 and 12.” This is really a welcome extension. The NCERT has announced on Oct 14, 2019 in its pre-school curriculum that “Children between the ages of three and six years should be taught in their own mother tongues, with a focus on learning through play instead of being subjected to rote learning...”¹² It is fine, but who monitors the implementation of this excellent recommendation?

This shift of focus from idealistic *nation centric* to down to earth *mother tongue centric* inclusive language education policy is the need of the 21st century India.

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Brain Weinsten in *The Civic Tongue: Political Consequences of Language Choices*.1983. Longman, New York and London.

NOTES

- 1.Draft National Education Policy 2019. Page -83.
- 2.Draft National Education Policy 2019.Page-81
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