

Mother Tongue and Language Rights from the Perspective of Tribal Children Primary Education

Meena Kumari

Research Scholar

Dept. Of English, Dravidin University, Kuppam, Chittor-217426

Abstract

Our constitution of India has provided a special provision for the every child of the country with 350a to undergo his or her primary education in their own mother tongue. But if we look at Indian context, it never took place. Always the tribal children were taught in dominant languages of the states. In Andhra Pradesh, the tribal children are pursuing their primary education in the official language of Telugu and similar in the rest of the 29 states of the Indian states. Studies on mother tongue education proved that, better understanding and better cognitive skills were developed those who have studied in mother tongue comparing to other tongues. Apart from this those who are good in mother tongue also good in learning second tongue i.e. English as a foreign language or a second language. As a result school dropout rate is more at the level of tribal children comparing to the other children in the respective states. The reason for the drop outs is, their mother tongue is one of the tribal languages, education in state official language and two official languages he/her has to undergo. The result is dropouts and closing of the schools in tribal areas. Children will be more intelligent in mother tongue education (e.g., Bialystok, 2001; Cummins, 2000) in the multilingual settings. Hence Mother tongue based education should be promoted for better development of tribal children in the state particularly and in the country in general.

Key Words: Constitution, Article 350a, Tribal children, Mother tongue, Second language and Cognitive skills

1. Objectives of the Paper

- To promote the primary education in mother tongue
- To Support for the language right according to the constitution
- To find out the difference between and imposed language and mother tongue

2. Introduction

Language is unique to human beings, without language there is no human interaction. Whatever we speak, express have to be expressed in the language. Though there are other modes of interaction to express, they are able to express only to some extent. Such an important aspect of our life is being neglected. It is the most

neglected area in multilingual countries like India. Though there are many policies in India for many things like river planning policy, town planning policy, policy for endangered species and policy for special economic zones, unfortunately there is no policy for languages rights. In this context, our country should precisely emphasis for the language policy and language rights.

3. How To Define Mother Tongue

Basically many of us think that Mother tongue is the one which is taught by mother, but it is a myth. Mother tongue is the one where; child acquires or picks up on his/her own. E.g. No mother will tell to a child as doggy, eated, monkeyslu etc... It is the child who picks up and acquires based on the exposure and circumstances. The child corrects himself and then they follow their own grammar which is different from elders.

4. The Concept Of Mother Tongue

Having one mother tongue is past attitude, those days have gone as the world has become as a one village in the globalised context, and children are able to learn two or three languages at the same time. We can say bilingualism is our mother tongue and multilingualism is my mother tongue (in the present context) unfortunately it is not happening.

5. Language Politics

According to linguistics there are no superior and inferior languages, including Sanskrit. Every language has its own popularity and every language is best on this earth. We the human beings are politicized the languages for the sake of benefit. If we see our constitution 8th schedule speaks about the languages and their status in the constitution. As we see the chronology of scheduled languages, 14 teen languages, 18 teen languages and now 22 languages are scheduled. There is no particularity or clarity in scheduling the languages, it is all politics, whenever there is a pressure from the some political party (majority of the M.Ps), based on the pressure, they give the status of the scheduled language.

6. Constitution And Primary Education

According to the constitution every child should get his/hers primary education in the mother tongue (first language acquired by him), but it is a myth in the context of the tribal children. Most of the tribal's who live in the interior parts of the forest will have their own language/languages. No of the tribal children are getting his/her primary education in their own mother tongue, but instead of teaching in the mother tongue they are taught in the state official language imposed by the concerned governments. If we look at the many of the studies in psycholinguistic perspective

the child who taught in the mother tongue up to primary education they used perform very well in further education comparing to the children who taught in the other tongue (like English). So as the constitution has given the right to us to study in our own mother tongue it should be applied to the tribal's also.

7. Methodology

To prove the concept of primary education for the tribal children in their own mother tongue and their right to study the primary education in their own mother tongue, any of the secondary schools which start from class 6th can give us enough data for our study. It will be a primary source where we take some five hundred students who consists of 250 tribal children who did not get primary education in their mother tongue and 250 non-tribal children who got primary education in their mother tongue. Here we conduct some test get the results based on the empirical data.

8. What Is Language Right?

Language is necessary for human beings to communicate complicated things. Some languages will have script and some do not have the script, based on the script one should not say that language has no grammar and it is inferior. When there is no grammar how do we store knowledge which is in the language. When there is no language there is no society also. Language binds us in a thicken way even in religion too. Why we are talking all about is language right. It is the right of every child to acquire the primary education in his/her own mother tongue which constitution has given right to every child in this country. If we take the language called Gorum a Munda family of languages spoken in the Korput district of Odisha, it has a peculiar situation. According to the census of India there are 5000 thousand speakers, around nine to ten villages, but if you go to the real situation there are only 20 to 25 speakers who speak the actual language. Those 25 speakers age is between 70 to 75 years. So there e is a need to motivate them to speak in their own language which is good not only for their community but also to the country itself, because those types of languages will give lot of worldly knowledge. So in this kind of situations identity crisis will come. Politically powered language will suppress the unscheduled language, so there is need for the language rights and their education in their own mother tongue. If the Gorum children are given the primary education in their own mother tongue, they can be benefitted to an external length.

9. Language Discouragement

Politically powered languages always try to discourage the minority languages like tribal languages. When there is discourage from the Government side languages automatically tend to lose their identity and finally language itself. In order to not to discourage the tribal languages the primary education should be given in the mother

tongue as we learn in Telugu, like wise tribal children also should acquire in their own mother tongue that leads to language survival also. So the tribal children also should be given the chance to acquire such a privilege of getting good education in their own mother tongue. If a child acquires mother tongue very well he acquires any language or knowledge very well too. Suppose if we think in terms of English language. Some learn English very well and some do not, if we go to previous studies, earlier mother tongue and second language are seen as separate systems with separate structures, but the present studies say that if you learn the first language very well, it itself will reveal that half of the part of second language also is learnt along with the first language.



10. Biodiversity and Linguistic Diversity

Last year on the name of bio diversity corers of money is being wasted, 8000 thousand participated around the world. Here we will emphasize that bio diversity is maintained only when the linguistic diversity is maintained. In maintaining the linguistic diversity mother tongues are so important ant for the conservation of bio diversity. Biodiversity is important for physical health of the mother earth but linguistic diversity is important for the mental health of mother health.

11. Conclusion

The main conclusion of this project is to support for the promotion of primary education in their own mother tongue of tribal children. If the governments of the concerned states administer some policies for the constitutional right of primary education in their own mother tongue it benefits a lot in terms of mother tongue, language survival and the cultures embodied in them.

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