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**National Education Policy 2020: Promotion of Indigenous
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Language of Education: Mother tongue or Other tongue

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Abstract:

Language of education should be mother tongue or other tongue needs special attention in Indian education system. Many educationist, teachers and researchers they highlighted the direct relationship between children's educational progress and learning through mother tongue. They are of the opinion that mother tongue is that students make better progress if they receive basic education in the mother tongue. The paper tries to delineate the medium of language should be mother tongue or other tongue and what are the findings and research in this regard.

Keywords: Education, language, mother tongue, other tongue

Today our social mindset is such that to learn English language means to learn everything in English. In fact, this belief has been proved to be illogical from around the world. Because learning English language and learning from English are two different things.

South Korea, Japan, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Brazil, China are the developed countries where English is taught in the schools of these countries, but the medium of education here is the local mother tongue. All these countries have better economy than India. Their languages are enriched today. People learning from the same languages have won Nobel Prizes and their companies are gaining ground in the global competition.

Encouraging primary education through mother tongue is now a universally accepted principle. The United Nations has declared February 21 as the International Mother Language Day. Various studies conducted by linguists and educationists around the world show that students make better progress if they receive basic education in the mother tongue.

Don Long is an educationist from New Zealand. He conducted a study of Maori students there. In this survey of students who received primary education through mother tongue and students who received the same education only through English language, it was found that the performance of those who received primary education through mother tongue is better. In the United States at George Mason University, a research committee conducted a survey, where they

observed the annual results of mother-tongue students since 1985 in 23 primary schools in 15 states. In this findings, they highlighted the direct relationship between children's educational progress and learning through mother tongue.

Learning through mother tongue has cognitive and emotional significance. Clinton Robinson, a British linguist, says that those who are educated in other languages, especially primary, rather than the mother tongue, eventually find the mother tongue useless. Today there are 6000 dialects in the whole world, out of which ten languages are disappearing every year and half of them are threatened with extinction. Language has a central place in human life. Language is known as a medium of self-identification, self-disclosure. People exchange ideas and communicate through language. Deterioration of native language and culture leads to social problems like poverty, unemployment, family violence, suicide.

If students studying in pre-primary and primary schools are forced to learn in a second language instead of their mother tongue, those students have to struggle in the future. Encouraging primary education through mother tongue is now a universally accepted principle. The United Nations announced to celebrate 21st February as International Mother Language Day every year since 1999.

In the year 2000, at Dakar, the world's elite academicians met. Dr. Sheldon Shaffer presided over the meeting. An international conference on language, education and the Millennium Development Goals was held in Bangkok in November 2010. It was attended by 400 delegates

from 30 countries around the world. In both the places, the usefulness of primary education through mother tongue was the main topic. Some common findings emerge prominently from both these initiatives. They are as follows:

- 1) Primary education is more beneficial if done through mother tongue. Children's base becomes wider.
- 2) Children gain confidence and learn another language easily.
- 3) Providing primary education through mother tongue reduces school dropout rate of children.
- 4) If primary education is imparted in another language, students forget their native language and culture etc.

Currently in urban and rural parts of India, schools imparting knowledge through mother tongue are in deteriorated condition. Parents are rushing to English medium schools. Private schools are making efforts to get CBSE / ICSE affiliation. In fact, at students' home they do not get an environment of English language. If children get education through the language other than mother tongue, adverse result happens making them handicap in academic skills and knowledge gain. If children for the first Seven Eight years receive Education from the mother tongue, they learn the things received at a great speed.

If educational quality is degraded in mother-tongue schools, it is the responsibility of the government to find out the problems and strengthen them. Moreover, to provide all necessary facility in schools, producing global of quality textbooks, to do the experiments in with Semi-English medium, orienting teachers and creating awareness and faith about education along the parents are government's Work. Parents too should understand the utility of primary education in mother tongue. Primary education through the mother tongue benefits the children to learn things in better way at higher studies as well as they learn English with more ease.

Worldwide for imparting knowledge in Higher Education, local language is used. In the countries of G-20 group, they cutting edge Universities where they provide education through mother tongue. In South Korea 70 percent Universities give Education from Korean language.

The government restricted introducing English in schools before Third Grade, as it has adversely affected students' comprehension skills. Even in Japan, in universities curriculum is taught in Japanese language itself. Universities in China, use Mandarin to provide education. In France, French is the only language of school education. Schools in Germany mainly make use of German language for education. In higher education also, curriculum of more than 80 percent Masters courses is taught in German language. The language diversity preserver Canada, has logical approach towards towards education. There mostly in the provinces English language is used for schooling. And in Quebec where French linguistic Population is more, they prefer French language for primary and secondary classes and even for various programmes in universities.

It is a tragedy that most professional courses in India are taught in English. In India, the situation is very critical with respect to science, engineering, medicine and law courses. Courses in regional languages do not exist for these areas. Fortunately, we are starting to realize the importance of learning through our language. How can we improve this dire situation? Our National Education Policy shows the way to preserve our languages while providing quality education to all and improving the quality of education. We should start with primary education (at least up to class V) in mother tongue and gradually increase the coverage. As far as vocational courses are concerned, fourteen colleges in Karnataka and Tamilnadu have taken a commendable decision to introduce courses in regional languages, more such efforts are needed in other places across the country. Private universities should also start some bilingual courses in collaboration with each other. In order for maximum number of students to pursue higher education through their regional languages, the major obstacle is the lack of good quality textbooks. Books especially for technical courses are not easily available in regional languages. It needs immediate attention. In today's digital age, good use of technology is possible to easily deliver courses in Indian languages to students in remote areas. Digital education system is new in our country and English is widely used in this system, so most of the children are not able to benefit from it. This situation also

needs to change.

Parents want their children not to face language problems in competitive exams as well as in other states, abroad. With this feeling, in Maharashtra, children choose English medium instead of Marathi. For this reason, the experience has been reversed for those who chose English medium. The belief of millions of parents that English medium provides more quality, better and deeper knowledge than Marathi medium, turned out to be false. A large number of Marathi medium students are computer experts, IAS and IPS officers, researchers, professors, engineers, nuclear scientists, industrialists. Marathi medium students are also more in business, agricultural research, drug manufacturing, medical experts. We should be aware that Abdul Kalam, Mashelkar, Gowariker achieved world class performance due to learning from their own language. Some belittle the learning of these scientists in their native language as "because there was no English medium in their time or their economic situation was not good, they must have studied in their mother tongue". Learning in one's own language to be able to perform well is not just the experience of a few big scientists. It is a true global experience.

Although English medium was not easily available during the time of Mashelkar, Kalam, the parents of those who are currently successful between the ages of 25 and 40, although English medium was available in their childhood, their parents thoughtfully chose Marathi medium for them. In Marathi school, children understood all the subjects well and thoroughly, they did not have to teach every subject. As the studies in Marathi ended early, these children were able to participate in sports, arts and cultural activities. Their personality was enriched by that involvement. Due to the enrichment of personality, students of Marathi medium got a large number of opportunities for big positions in later life. Those of their age who were put in English medium by their parents did not achieve the same success as Marathi medium students.

France, Germany, Japan, China, which provide education from kindergarten to graduation in native language, progress faster than India. Learning in one's own language does not lead to confusion in other countries. They strongly promote

children's academic progress through mother tongue education. Children in Maharashtra should be given the opportunity of education through Marathi. Education in mother tongue is of high quality, easily assimilated by children, useful for life and at low cost. A report by the United Nations UNESCO states that "children educated in their mother tongue have better cognitive power and quality than children educated in a foreign language."

It is the oldest belief in Maharashtra that children in mother tongue schools find it difficult to get higher education through English. After studying science subjects in Marathi till 10th standard, face only two months of difficulty when they enter in 11th standard. Those who have studied in English medium till 10th do not have any language problem, but they have a lot of difficulty in understanding various subjects. This is the experience of millions of students. It is useful to prepare the concepts in Marathi school till 10th by being prepared to bear difficulties for two months. Everyone should note that Marathi school is more useful till 10th even for further higher education in English.

Seventy one countries got independence during India's independence. Those countries accelerated the progress by using their own language for education, research, administration, trade. The pace of India's progress remained slow due to undue importance given to English over the native language. Government of India, Government of Maharashtra will henceforth give priority to Swabhasha. 350 knowledge, science and technology courses in higher education including medical engineering will be taught in 22 official languages of India. In Maharashtra they will be in Marathi medium. To benefit from this, it would be appropriate for children to take admission in Marathi medium. The use of Marathi in business, industry, education, government, private affairs, mobile phones, computers in Maharashtra has increased recently and will continue to increase. Education in Marathi medium will be useful in such a Marathi environment. Parents should be aware that by choosing English medium, imparting education inconsistent with the environment will further injustice to the children.

It is a big misconception that English is the only language of science and technology. The reality is different and is completely opposite to the above

misconception. In the history of the world, 99% of the successful and useful researches in science and technology have been done by non-native speakers of English. Most of the people who studied at school in languages like Marathi, Tamil, Bengali, Kannada, Telugu, Bahamian, Japanese, Chinese Mandarin, French, German, Russian, Spanish, which are more advanced than English, have done most of the successful researches that are useful to the world.

World educationists suggest that schooling should be given after the age of six. Even the countries that run English medium schools in India do not start school before six years. Parents are willing to spend money, so KG for four-year-olds was introduced, even two-year-old children are being trapped in school because of windfall money from parents. This practice, which is considered unscientific all over the world, took root in India due to the attraction of English medium.

By a social organization, in 142 reputed schools in Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi etc. 32000 children from 5th to 7th standard were tested. It found that the knowledge of English medium students is superficial and their expression is poor as they rely only on recitation compared to other medium.

UNESCO is a global organization that insists on education through mother tongue. Since the 1990s, UNESCO has published many articles and papers in this regard and has continuously appealed to multilingual countries to promote education through mother tongue. 40% of the world's children are educated in a language they do not understand easily and which is not their mother tongue.

The reputed organization British Council writes an article in its 'Voices' magazine titled 'Why Schools Should Teach Young Learners in Home Language' and it mentions the positive impact of mother tongue education on cognitive and intellectual development. The Government of Hong Kong has made clear provisions for this in its education policy. Changes are happening in countries like United Arab Emirates, many African countries, Germany and Turkey. In Africa and many European countries people have formed movements. There is a lot of information about this on the internet and social media.

We are often afraid to go against society. If everyone is going one way, we hesitate to face the other. But if the difference between the sheep and us humans is proved, it is from this one thing and that thing is thought. If you think about it, it is true that not learning through English has not hindered us. If you read it, you will know that there are many like us who have no problem. But the members called 'All' teach their children through English, then there are no thought when deciding that we should do the same. Because it is not taken into account that being different is not falling behind. What is right should be said rightly, because the future of children is in question. If the future is the job, and the money ends here, then it is natural that the place of the mother tongue is not seen in the future.

The decision taken by AICTE and IIT, Madras to jointly translate the syllabus of 'Swayam' into eight regional languages namely Marathi, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali, Malayalam and Gujarati is a welcome step. It will be useful for engineering students. They will also be able to absorb English-dominant courses more easily in the future. For democratization of higher education we need technology driven initiatives. Learning any subject through mother tongue is less stressful. Everyone should learn as many languages as possible. But for that, mother tongue should have a strong foundation. I am not saying 'mother tongue versus English' but I am advocating a 'mother tongue and English' approach. In today's world where countries are becoming increasingly interconnected, mastery of different languages opens up new opportunities globally.

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