

INNOVATIVE PRACTICES IN TEACHER EDUCATION: THEORY & RESEARCH

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Innovative Practices in Teacher Education: Theory & Research

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Language Questions in Multilingual Culture of Education: Sensitising Metalinguistic Awareness for Teaching Juang Learners

Ranjit Mandal^{*}

ABSTRACT

The process of language teaching and learning has turned out to be a futile effort for many tribal learners although the emphasis is recently laid on developing a substantial body of knowledge for facilitating such process in the multilingual context. Much importance has been given to the ancillary areas of the curriculum such as what teachers need to know and are able to do, how to build on indigenous resources available in the classrooms and communities, and thereby developing linguistic competencies of the learners. It however skirts the primary aspect i.e., the ways to educate teachers which ensure not only the acquisition of various teaching strategies, but also the implementation of such acquisition by the teachers in a multilingual classroom. Therefore, there is an urgent need to understand, develop, implement, and integrate various teaching competences in a teacher education programme.

The paper is based on the observation of teaching-learning process of Juang tribe in MLE and Non-MLE schools of Keonjhar district of Odisha. It seeks to outline the problems of teaching language to the tribal learners and proposes reforms as part of teacher education programme. The paper describes in details what metalinguistic knowledge is and how teachers can be educated to evoke such awareness in a multilingual classroom especially of MLE and Non-MLE schools located in tribal regions. The paper also deals with the importance of tribal culture in language teaching and how teachers can use it as an important resource for language teaching.

Keywords: *tribal education, multilingual education, teacher education, metalinguistic awareness.*

INTRODUCTION

With the increasing mobility of multilingual awareness, several attempts have been made at various levels for holding back and enriching the tribal languages in recent time. MLE programme is one such supreme instance. Various reforms have been proposed by many including UNESCO as there is an urgent need of looking into the education of linguistic minorities from new perspectives. UNESCO's website (<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/index.php>) estimates 197 languages of India under its *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger*. Mostly these languages are those of tribal speakers and are on the verge of immediate extinction. So, it is necessary not merely to deal with the sensitive issue of language teaching but also to revive and save such languages through pedagogical practice.

The paper is based on the observation of teaching-learning process of MLE and Non-MLE schools of Juang learners in Keonjhar district of Odisha. It attempts to address the problem of teaching language to the tribal learners and proposes reforms as part of teacher education programme. The paper describes in details what metalinguistic knowledge is and how teachers

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Modern India with its 1.3 billion people was the seat of one of the ancient civilizations of the world. The nucleus of the civilization was its education system that thrived and practiced to lead everyone who attended it from 'darkness to light' (तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय). The unique features of knowledge systems that flourished in ancient higher learning centres, namely Takshashila and Nalanda, had attracted many scholars from across the world. Modern India, soon after independence, constitutionally committed itself to the education for all. This commitment gradually created the world's largest school education system with 200 million children enrolled in schools. To advise the Ministry of Education in the Indian Government on matters of school education, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was created in the year 1961. Since its inception, NCERT through its eight constituent units, namely National Institute of Education (NIE), Regional Institutes of Education (RIE), Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) and Pandit Sundarlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), has been performing its advisory role in an exceptional manner.

The Regional Institute of Education, Bhopal is one of the constituent units of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, India, located on Shyamla Hills in Bhopal, the capital city of Madhya Pradesh. The Institute caters to the needs of school education and teacher education of the states namely Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Union Territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu. The Institute offers five pre-service Teacher Education Programs such as four year integrated B.Sc. B.Ed., B.A. B.Ed., Two year B.Ed., Three year integrated B.Ed. M.Ed., Two year M.Ed., and Diploma Course in Guidance and Counselling (DCGC). Further, the Institute offers in-service training programmes for teachers, teacher educators and state educational functionaries of western India. The Institute has a Demonstration Multipurpose School (DMS) on its campus for trying out innovative practices in school education and teacher education. The Institute has been awarded with A+ grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) of India in the year 2016.



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