

Language Complexity and Multilingual Education in India – A Policy Perspective¹

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Abstract Debate on the medium of instruction in the primary education in India has a long history. Initially it was between classical Indian languages and foreign language, English. Colonial rulers promoted English education with adequate fund and trained teachers with modern education background. In the advent of independence movement, the medium of instruction became a political issue. The issue of what should be the medium of instruction for mass education has received the attention in all the education commissions from 1853 onwards. Independent India delineated this issue within the context of national integration and brought out three tier language formula in 1968. Only a few Indian States implemented it, while majority ignored this policy proposal. Meanwhile, the demand for English as medium of instruction strengthened among the urban middle class, making way out for modern Indian languages also from the classrooms. The present paper is an enquiry into the strategy and the methodology delineated to handle the linguistic diversity of the nation as well as the socio-economic mobility of the people through classrooms by Indian State using policy history framework.

Keywords: Primary education, medium of instruction, Mother tongue education, Multilingualism, Education policy, Language policy, Three tier language formula, Linguistic diversity, Market.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the key component of cultural identity. However, multilingual proficiency is also an essential component to access various knowledge sources and larger world with broader outlook. In political unifications and divisions of nations, language played major role as multi or bilingualism often determines political discourse and political history.

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The strength and weakness of Indian state is its cultural as well as linguistic diversity. Whether the colonial government or post independent government, educational discourse without touching upon the linguistic concerns of the nation is incomplete. Hence, the process of bringing about a unified governance structure in India by the colonial government revolved around the issue of education, specifically the modern English education to the natives in Indian subcontinent. Later the emergence of *Swadeshi* movement and the idea of Indian nationalism also deeply engaged in inculcating a national spirit through connecting diverse cultural, religious and ethnic communities in the subcontinent through a facilitating linguistic model. The evolution of a discourse on multilingualism in Indian classrooms seemingly reflects the political agenda of the State which eventually resulted in the formation of Indian state in later period. The post-independent India also constantly engaged in developing an appropriate strategy and methodology to deal with multilingualism in the classrooms.

An enquiry into the strategy and the methodology delineated to handle the linguistic diversity of the nation as well as the socio-economic mobility of the people through classrooms by Indian state provides answers to:

- (1) What is the objective of the Indian State (pre and post-independent) while dealing with the issue of multilingualism? (a) Is it just at to consolidate people and/ or provide a facilitative environment for functioning of the State? and (b) Or has it an inclusive meaning that ‘beyond Mother Tongue (MT)’?
- (2) How did the State policy shape the idea of multilingualism in the post-independence India? (a) Was it related to promote the spirit of nationalism or aimed at the scientific-technical and knowledge development of India? and (b) Is the concept of multilingualism cater the employability of the educated Indian?

The present paper is an attempt to provide answers to these questions. It explains what multilingualism is and how it has been understood in Indian education policies from time to time. Then it looks at the debate of mother tongue (MT) education and elevation models proposed by various commissions and committees. Finally it looks at the twist and turns in the post-independence India towards addressing or promoting multilingualism in the classrooms. The discussion, hence, will reflect how language helps national integration and cultural development as well as economic development of the nation since independence.

2. MULTILINGUALISM IN INDIAN CONTEXT

2.1 Concept of Multilingualism

Multilingualism has been defined by different scholars differently. Kemp [2] defines multilingualism as the ability of a person to use three or more

languages, either separately or in various levels as different languages for different purposes in different competency levels based on their education, occupation and exposure with the language etc. According to this definition, when a person switches or mixes codes to communicate effectively, or speaks many dialects or converse proficiently the different variant of the same language is also considered to be multilingual.

Multilingualism has always been part of cultural and social ethos of India. The diversity, magnitude and complexity of multilingualism in India is characterized by both individual and societal bilingualism. In other words, 1635 rationalised MTs, 234 identifiable MTs and 22 major languages belonging to four different language families are spoken in India. In which 29 languages have more than a million native speakers, 60 have more than 100,000 and 122 have more than 10,000 native speakers (Census of India 2001) [3]. People's Linguistic Survey of India (2012), a private language census also identified over 66 different scripts and more 780 languages in India [4], and the People of India project of Anthropological Survey of India reported 325 languages which are used for in group communication by 5633 communities [5].

The Census of India, 2011 also reported that nearly 35 per cent of the population are bilingual (it is almost 45 per cent in urban area and if we consider the dialect as a different language the percentage would cross more than 60 per cent as bilinguals) in India. Nearly 10 per cent of the population is trilingual and it is almost 20 per cent in urban India. Among the various second languages, English emerged as the more preferred second language for 34 per cent Indians (Gupta et al 2015) [6]. Census data also shows that the number of bilinguals and trilingual in India is rising sharply over the period. This lingual diversity is translated in Indian classrooms as nearly 69 different languages are being used either as subject and 47 as medium of instruction. The print media uses 87 languages and radio 71. This shows that there is a systematic improvement in addressing the multilingual character of the nation by the State policy during the post-independence period.

2.2 MT, Biligualism and Multilingualism in Classrooms

In this context the idea of multilingualism in classrooms or education receives attention. This is one of the important political and social issue of nations ever since language identity is as critical as other cultural identities. One of the relevant definition of multilingual education is Horbberger's (2009) [7]. He tried to understand it from linguistic as well as cultural perspectives, considering the multilingual and multicultural classrooms as a the starting

Bhaskaran, RP

point of the knowledge and moving toward their participation as full and indispensable actors in society – locally, nationally, and globally.

While emphasizing on the language and cultural diversity of the nation, the post-independent Indian State geared up addressing the increasing developments in the environment with regard to the nation development goals and changes in the rest of the world. The question is that whether this understanding emerge as an outcome of the national development or as a compulsion (just like majority of Indians forced to speak more than one language due to either in or out migration in their localities). Briefly, multilingual education is an instance of bi-literacy, “in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing”. Considering this, modern Indian education followed multilingualism incorporating modern Indian languages, the MT and the global language, English. Colonial classrooms in India was bilingual – MT and English and the language policy proposed multilingualism in the classrooms covering MT, English and Hindi.

The background paper of Education for All Monitoring Report 2004 (UNESCO) [8] argues that MT based bilingual education offers significant pedagogical advantages which have been reported consistently in the academic literature (Baker 2006; [9] and Cummins 2000) [10]. Educationalists agree that teaching in MT at primary classes or upto 12 years [11] is a crucial factor for developing the intellectual, physical and moral aspects of education in earlier years of schooling. If initial formal instruction is dispensed in the MT for at least five/six years or throughout the whole of primary level, a strong ‘bridge’ is thus laid for students; firstly for successful transfer of literacy skills from the MT to the second language, secondly for second language acquisition and thirdly for successful achievements in further studies (Malone, 2012 [12] and Thomas and Collier, 2002) [13]. Bilingual models and practices vary as do their results, but what they have in common is their use of the MT at least in the early years so that students can acquire and develop literacy skills in addition to understanding and participating in the classroom. Learning in MT in early years of school has the psychological importance as it is primary language learnt by a child and the child normally think and conceptualise things around through that language. The L1 also helps to develop and shape the thinking skills of young learners to become confident and competent enough to use it as a supportive medium to build up new languages and concepts at schools.

Keeping this in mind, the present paper tries to understand the how Indian State conceived the policies to address the bilingual/ multilingual character of Indian classrooms.

2.3 Colonial Approach to Deal Language Complexity and Multilingual Education

2.3.1 Colonial Education Policy and its Experience

Linguistic diversity was an inevitable part of Indian social fabric in that period. Pre-colonial Indian education intended for religious purpose, for accounting and administrative purpose and literacy activities. Medium of instruction, then, was mostly in Sanskrit or Persian/ Urdu or Arabic as the proficiency in classical language determined the scholarly status of a person, even though each Republic had its own language, indigenous education system had little presence of vernacular language. Classrooms of the pre-colonial period was, hence, by nature multilingual. Dealing with the multilingualism, along with prevailing cultural and religious diversity posed as major challenge to the British.

The educational objective of British in the 19th century was minimal as support staff for administrative, judicial proceedings and trade (Basu, 1989) [14]. They needed people with proficiency in local language as well as English. Though some of the British officers wanted to convert locals to Christianity through English education, Company rejected this proposal, fearing it would arouse suspicion about its motives among the people and provoke opposition to the Company's rule. At that time, some sections of the society realized the importance of English education as learning English and Western science is essential to overcome India's backwardness while Europe transforms under Industrial Revolution (Naik and Narullah, 1974) [15]. Towards the end of 19th century, Education became a main engagement of the Company and missionaries were encouraged to open schools.

The controversy over the medium of instruction and language education in Indian schools begun that period. Many Indians developed interest in learning English and reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy demanded to open English college in Calcutta instead of Sanskrit or Persian. Language controversy in Indian education, then, was between whether medium of education in higher level should be through classical languages (Sanskrit for Hindus and Arabic and Persian for Muslims) or through modern Indian languages or through English (Orientalists and Anglicans). Even though, all these groups were agreed that Western science and knowledge should spread in India [16]. Followed by this, some Princely Provinces initiated experiments in education which eventually led to development in education.

There was an underlying consensus among the Company officials that they have to educate people "*who cannot, at present, be educated by means of their own MT. We must teach them some foreign language and in India,*

Bhaskaran, RP

English is the language spoken by the ruling class. It also spoken by the higher classes of natives at the seats of government. It is likely to become the language of commerce throughout the seas of the East the natives are desirous to be taught English and are not desirous to be taught Sanskrit or Arabic” [17]. The Macaulay Minutes proposed a policy to undertake formal Western type of education imparting knowledge of Western literature and science through English as a medium of instruction. Despatch of Court of Directors in 1854 expected that such an educational model would act as “downward filtration theory” as it will help Company to reach the masses through the English educated natives.

English Education adopted, and encouraged by the Government, spread along with the vernacular language [18] schools. But due to the prevailing religious and cultural traditions, many looked at English and western science education with suspicion, resulting in a division of educated Indians as English knowing and non-English knowing. The English knowing educated class developed a superiority complex, and refused to mix with the rest which went against the “downward filtration theory”. Therefore, in the Dispatch Commission Report, First Education Commission Report in 1854, brought a compromise formula to settle the controversy of the Orientalists and Anglicists groups on the issue of language and the medium of instruction such as vernacular languages were the medium of instruction for the masses and English language was taught wherever it was demanded. Further it clarified that vernacular language as medium of instruction in indigenous primary schools, but at high school level onwards, medium of instruction should shift into English or modern Indian language in which modern science was taught only in English (Basu, 1989 [19] and Ghosh, 2013) [20].

Followed by the changes in political sphere after the 1857 revolt, the British brought significant changes in the education policy. Indian Education Commission in 1882 provided freedom to the school management committees to choose vernacular language as the medium of instruction depending on the local needs and proposed establishment of secondary schools by the State that offer instruction in English based on the system of grant-in aid. The Government of India Resolution on Indian Educational Policy issued in March 1904 stressed the importance of MT education in the primary classes and English in the high schools .

The english language evolved by promoting modern knowledge base that developed scientific and technical growth for European Industrial Revolution. To meet its colonialization objectives, the British Government introduced English as the medium of instruction and as a subject of study, but limiting to missionary schools. Vernacular schools did not have resources, mainly

trained teachers, produced only functional literates, dividing the society as English educated and non-English educated. But, by early 20th century, the British Government refined their strategy towards teaching language in both vernacular and missionary schools. Primary education was strictly in MT and English became the medium of instruction from high school in missionary schools. In vernacular schools, science was taught in English and English was introduced as a subject from middle school onwards.

Debates and changes during this period explains that aspiring Indians demanded English and it has been observed as the opportunity to get rid of the underdevelopment in the subcontinent. English language based multilingual education brought together the highly linguistically diversified subcontinent. Though, Sanskrit and Arabic/ Persian were prevailing in India for centuries as a connecting language, its proliferation among the masses were insignificant and it remained as the language of elite. Open access to education to all communities and introduction of a foreign language, English, as the second language in schools provided a new world of opportunities for many who were outside the indigenous school system.

English language also introduce the Indian educated elite with socio-economic and political transformation stories across the world. Idea of nation and nationalism in fact reached India through the English education. As the language, the political ideology was also completely alien, but the urge for freedom and right to shape the destiny of the nation by its people changed the course of colonialization in the subcontinent.

2.3.2 Multilingualism of Nation State and Nationalists

The nationalist movement that emerged in the early 20th century demanded for MT education. This influenced the British education policy in 20th century. While arguing for the compulsory primary education, the educationalists of British Government and nationalist movement argued for the MT as medium of instruction at primary level, along with training in English and classical languages.

The First National Education Conference held in Wardha in 1937 underlined that the medium of instruction should be the MT. Basic Education Model of Gandhi also worked around the MT based vernacular language as medium of instruction. But, Kher Committee Report proposed the gradual elevation to English language by emphasizing that primary education strictly in MT, then introduction of English and local language (based on demand) at middle level and by secondary level onwards English as the medium of instruction. At this period, to integrate the nation, the independent movement promoted Hindi, especially in non-Hindi speaking regions. Hindi training, then, was purely a voluntary activity and outside the schools.

2.4 Multilingualism: A Strategy for National Integration in Post-independent India

In the post-independence India, the Constitutional Assembly debated the issue of linguistic minorities in one hand and need for a national language on the other hand. Eventhough, the Constitution does not provide any specific direction regarding medium of instruction, Article 350-A of the Constitution of India points out that

‘it shall be the endeavour of every state or of every local authority within the state to provide adequate facilities for instructions in the MT at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.’

Using regional language or languages as medium of instruction has been challenged in the Supreme Court [22], while deciding certain cases related to higher education. The Court has laid down that the universities cannot follow the regional language or languages as the sole medium of instruction. The law laid down by the Supreme Court becomes a kind of binding on the educational institutions and hence, English as medium of instruction and examination also adopted at higher education level.

In the initial years of independence, since education was in the State list, school education received little attention in the national level, so as the discussion on multilingualism in the classrooms. However, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) adapted the main content of the educational policy developed after the Wardha Conference (Kher and Zakir Hussain Committee recommendation) which has laid down the language policy start with MT at primary level and eventually incorporating English at middle and secondary level onwards.

The concern of the leadership in the independent India was the social and national integration, deepening democracy and economic development through agriculture and industrial growth. Language plays a major role in it as a facilitative language policy can integrate the linguistic diverse nation, increase literacy rate and improve knowledge base and quality of human resource through education. Importance of MT as the medium of instruction was clear to the State, but the strategy to reach out the population through language education was at first briefed in the first Education Commission in independent India – National University Education Commission headed by Dr. S Radhakrishnan. It proposed a strategy to introduce multilingualism through a system of education at the university level by making provision for the study of several languages in the curriculum (Srivastava, 2007) [23]. The Three-Language Formula emerged out of this consideration. The Kothari

Commission in 1966 delineated it properly and the First National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1968 adapted it as the Three Tier Language Education Policy. The original principles that shaped the three language formula were that MT as the first language which children must learn from the primary levels both as a subject and as the medium of instruction in order to derive maximum advantage from education (Srivastava, 2007) [24]. The formula also included the study of regional language - Hindi in non-Hindi speaking regions and South Indian States or other non-Hindi language in Hindi speaking regions and English as the third language. Implementation of three language formula, introduction of English and second language, is proposed to start from middle school level (class V onwards) and making it mandatory at high school.

The objective of the three language policy was the development of regional/modern Indian languages and the national language, and to connect India with world through a global language, English. The medium of instruction should enable students to acquire knowledge with facility, to express themselves with clarity and to think with precision and vigour. And the inclusion of Hindi or any modern Indian language as second language strengthens social and national integration. And the international linkages are promoted and also access to modern education (especially science and technology) is increased by learning a foreign language [25]. Three language formula has been adopted in all non-Hindi speaking regions except Tamilnadu, but Hindi speaking States ignored the proposal to learn either a South Indian or modern Indian Language [26]. The non-inclusive approach of the Hindi speaking States challenged the idea of national integration and developing mutual respect and understanding diverse cultural spectrum of the country and the contemporary Indian history provides evidence to it.

The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and modified in 1992 also addressed the issue of medium of instruction. The second education Commission – Ramamurti Committee in 1990 reviewed the NPE 1968 proposals and its status. Implementation of three language formula failed mainly due to the lack of teachers and pedagogy to handle modern Indian languages and English in the Hindi speaking regions. Therefore, it has proposed to set up institutions that provide technical and training support to multilingual education in Indian classrooms. Specified objectives of teaching different languages, levels of language proficiency to be achieved in respect of each language and specification of the class from and the duration for which the three languages will be taught are discussed in detail in the report. The Committee also reviewed the role of language in inclusive education especially the education of marginalized communities and groups in India. In brief, the Committee suggested measures to equip a child to deal with

Bhaskaran, RP

language challenges in the higher education as there is an increasing need to have multilingual proficiency in the higher education classrooms.

The input document on NPE, 2016 also deliberated on language policy in a similar manner, without considering the larger challenges that the classrooms experience due to the inclusive education policies and the migration of people across the country. However, while emphasizing on MT education and Three Language Formula, NPE Report 2016 suggest flexibility in the concept of Three Language Formula. It assume that with the passage of time the States have responded to local aspirations and preferences voiced by parents who would like their children to possess language communication skills that can facilitate intrastate, intra-regional as well as global mobility. Keeping this in mind, the NPE 2016 (draft) recommends that as long as the States ensure that the MT or the regional language forms the basis of primary education up to Class V (a fact underscored by the earlier two policies) the choice of the second (at primary level) and third language (at secondary level) should be left to individual States to decide (MHRD, 2016) [27]. By doing this, the concept of social and national integration is slowly taken away from the classrooms and it envisages systematic elimination of modern Indian languages including Hindi from the classrooms and considering the glare of international mobility, English might continue in the classrooms and it might be the only linguistic link in India in future. In other words, a major shift from the ideals of the India that has been nurtured and respected all through.

2.4.1 Failure of Three Tier Language Policy

The three-tier language formula with MT instruction reflect the commitment of the State to reinforce social and national integration and to provide required quality human resources for the nation building process for agricultural, industrial, technological and knowledge development activities. Multilingual education also aims to promote employability among the literate population in the country. However, the constant failure of various states, especially in the Hindi speaking regions, to implement three tier language formula makes them oblivious about the cultural specificities of the non-Hindi speaking regions. On the other hand, the imposition of Hindi as a compulsory language across the country in the name of national language and national spirit also challenge the Constitutional rights of the people in the country. The proposal of the input document on NPE 2016 proposes right to the State governments to choose language according to the aspiration and requirement of the people of the State. It might further challenge socio-cultural fabric of India in the contemporary socio-political context. The withdrawal of the three tier language policy and weak implementation of English teaching and its systematic scaling up

to higher education increasingly poses as a classic example of training and curriculum failure. On the other hand, the drift between the urban English medium educated people and people educated from the modern Indian languages divide the country in much worse manner than the English educated and non-English educated in the 19th century.

3. CHANGING PARENTAL ASPIRATIONS AND RISING DEMAND FOR PRIVATE ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS

Unfortunately, none of the Commissions/ Committee and subsequent Policies brought the issue of private sector that provide education in English as a medium and also the changing aspiration of parents towards English medium education for their wards. As a result, whenever the Governments attempted to introduce MT as the medium of instruction at primary level, it has been challenged by the parents. The fight between private English medium schools, parents and the Karnataka Government since 1989 followed by the Government of Karnataka order making MT as the medium of instruction from I to IV standards is the classic case in this regard. The Karnataka Government re-issued the order in 1994 which was challenged in the court and full bench of the Karnataka High Court upheld the order in 2008. The parents and the private educational institutions appealed against the High Court verdict in the Supreme Court. The Constitution Bench in Supreme Court overturned the High Court verdict, stating that “the freedom of speech and expression will include the right of a child to be educated in the medium of instruction of his choice, the only permissible limits of this right will be those covered under clause (2) of Article 19 of the Constitution and we cannot exclude such right of a child from the right to freedom of speech and expression only for the reason that the State will have no power to impose reasonable restrictions on this right of the child for purposes other than those mentioned in Article 19(2) of the Constitution [28].” In the final ruling, the Supreme Court observed, “the imposition of MT affects the fundamental rights under Articles 19, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.”

Public opinion on the medium of instruction always ends up with contestable stands as the rate of return between medium of instruction as MT and English are incomparable to families across all socio-economic classes. In most of the cases, the popular perception is that return from MT instruction is much lower (so as its cost) and even if the cost is high for a private English medium education, it generates better return. This perception emerges from the employability point of view. In a globalized employment market and cosmopolitan environment, native speakers often failed to be in the same level while competing with English speakers.

Therefore, when choice is given, parents opted to shift from MT based instruction to English medium. Though, the English medium schools adapted multilingual character of the land, the child is forced to learn from pre-primary onwards in a foreign language instead of the globally accepted MT based bilingual model where there is a gradual transformation to MT to L2.

Change in the parental aspiration, along with the market requirements are the main reason for the rise in the demand for English medium schools which is predominantly managed by private entities and the shift towards School Boards other than State School Education Board that promote MT based instruction. And whenever, the State Governments attempted to make MT as medium of instruction in the primary classes across all the Boards in the State mandatory, it was challenged by parents and private institutions. The above cited Supreme Court order is an outcome of such a Government policy.

On the other hand, the education policies of the Government of India and the State Governments largely cater public education, often providing space for private sector to operate undermining the provisions of policies, especially with regard to the approach towards multilingual education. The difference in approaches followed by the Government and private institutions with regard to multilingual education and medium of instruction lead to unmatched levels of language proficiency and learning levels between the students of these two sets of institutions. In other words, classrooms are increasingly bilingual where majority study in MT classrooms with English from post primary level onwards. On the other hand, a minority study in foreign language classrooms, English, with Hindi as second language and in few States a modern Indian language emerge as the third language became multilingual and they considered to be better employable in the globalized world.

The premium education institutions within the government system, ie, Kendriya Vidhyalaya and Jawahar Navodaya Vidhyalaya offer bilingual education – Hindi and English and the teachers are well trained and qualified, so as they could handle transition to English medium in a better way. The Government agrees that increasingly the Kendriya Vidhyalayas converting into English medium due to parental demand [29]. Similarly, responding to the needs of the people, some States especially Kerala, Karnataka and Tamilnadu started English as medium of instruction within the government system since post – 2000 (Mohanty, 2006) [30] and it has been well received as well. Even in this models also the MT based bilingual approach in primary classes are largely ignored. The issue that emerge, in this context, is (a) how to ensure a smooth transition to a foreign language which is not used at home as well as public life, and (b) how to ensure that proficiency in the MT or one modern Indian language is achieved effectively?.

The marketability and global acceptance of English makes it as the preferred language, while the same reason can play against the MT which is a modern Indian language. In this context, the language policy of the Government both at Central and State level has to systematically approach the medium of instruction debate in such a way to make MT based bilingual approach in pre-primary and primary classes and improving/ innovating language teaching practices, and methods in order to generate interest among the children and help them to improve their language proficiency (speaking, reading and writing) effectively. In the multilingual or bilingual classrooms, where, language learning/ teaching is content integrated, the capacity of the teachers to handle both language and content is very critical. In-service training programmes of the Central government for teachers of Kendriya Vidhyalaya and Navodaya Vindhyalaya addressed it effectively. Some States elaborated the broad framework provided by NCERT, while imparting it from training to the last teacher many a times, it gets diluted due to various infrastructural issues. Therefore, improvement in the teacher education curriculum with innovative techniques like content and language integrated learning methods might be advisable. However, it is very important to incorporated modules that enhances the motivation of the teacher to update their understanding on the subject as well as the language they handle in the classroom practices with in-service training and developing innovative techniques in their classroom practices are very critical.

Language policy only provides the broad framework. It is the practitioners who understand the challenges innovate their intervention practices so as to improve their proficiency and interest in the teaching of language as well as learning of language and content by the students. This process is an ongoing area of research and development in education that the key stakeholders, the teachers, should spearhead.

4. CONCLUSION

Policy intervention in medium of instruction in the modern India is started with the First Education Commission in 1854. Since then medium of instruction is always appeared as a contestable issue as each and every corner of the country is multilingual. Education policies of the independent India introduced three tier language formula to address the issue aiming at promoting regional language which is the MT to the language based States, to integrate nation with Hindi and connect people with rest of the world through English. The NPE 1986, modified in 1992 went further ahead to incorporating tribal languages and minority languages as MT in order to address the issue of high dropout among the children of marginalized children due to teaching in the dominant language of the region.

However, as the influence of market forces started to dominate the labour market in a globalized world, English became the prominent language. And as and when the affordability of parents improved they chose English as the medium of education for their children. It is unlikely to have a reverse trend in the near future. Therefore, what India needs at present is to improve the language teaching maintaining the multilingual character of the society in general and classrooms in particular. Education/ language policies, can only provide a larger framework, but the teachers and teacher trainers including the higher education in India should work in an integrated manner to address the issue of language proficiency of MT, and the international connection language primarily and provide avenues for those who interest in national language. If the unhealthy debate between MT and English as medium of instruction continues, children especially the majority who depend on the government institutions will suffer in the process.

ENDNOTES

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- [21] “As a general rule, a child should not be allowed to learn English language until he has made some progress in the primary stage of education and has received
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Bhaskaran, RP

a thorough grounding in his MT. It is equally important that when the teaching of English has begun, it should not be prematurely employed as the medium of instruction in other subjects. The line of division between the use of vernaculars and of English as the medium of instruction should, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of 13". (Auxiliary Committee of the Indian Statutory Commission. Review of the Growth of Education in British India. Printed by the Manager Government India Press, Delhi. 1929. URL: https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.125001/2015.125001.Review-Of-The-Growth-Of-Education-In-British-India_djvu.txt Accessed on July 30, 2017)

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