

Multilingual Education in Orissa

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Why MLE

- Many states of India have uniform curriculum and text books which is not suitable for all tribal children whose home language is different from the school language.
- Denying children from their mother tongue education lead to serious intellectual damage which block learning of the children
- Research has shown that children do better when they are taught in their mother tongue. (Thomas and Collier). Children competent in mother tongue can do better in other tongues.
- It is essential to sustain cultural and linguistic bio-diversities to promote human knowledge which is a part of intellectual property. Culture and language should be the foundation of education especially in ethnic minority and linguistic minority communities to make education context specific.
- Multilingual education is a reality and it is a resource. Research says that the mental development of multilingual children is better than the monolingual children.

MLE GOALS

1. Ensure equity and quality education to tribal children to explore the world around them and use their resources meaningfully for their livelihood.
2. Empower the tribal children with reading and writing skills to acquire knowledge and information in their mother tongue as well as in state/ national and international language
3. Develop socio-economic status in comparison to others through literacy.
4. Develop self-respect in/for their language and culture and enrich human knowledge.
5. National integration is not threatened

National Curriculum Framework 2005

NCF 2005 envisages for language education and has mentioned that

1. Language teaching needs to be multilingual not only in terms of the number of languages offered to children but also in terms of evolving strategies that would use the multilingual classroom as a resource.
2. Home language/mother tongue of children should be the medium of learning in the schools.
3. Second language acquisition through basic proficiency and development of language as an instrument for abstract thought and knowledge acquisition through literacy.
4. The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilinguals that can enrich all our languages; this has been an abiding national vision. English needs to find its place along with other Indian languages in different states...
5. Learning to Read and write

The authentic place of mother tongue in educational domain is not meant to be subtractive but additive which fosters healthy multilingualism and ensures growth of all languages.

Multilingual Education in Orissa Context

PLANNING:

Out of 30 districts, 17 districts are in TSP and 13 districts are in Special Component Plan. 30

District Tribal Coordinators are in position to plan and implement on tribal education.

1. Initial Language Education Plan
Orissa Child census 2005 Data: While collecting data in OCC -2005 total 17 tribal languages were identified that cover the majority of tribal language speakers. These are Santali, Munda, Oram, Kishan, Koya, Kui, Kuvi and Saora

2. Linguistic Survey and Mapping: Survey on endangered languages like Bonda, Juang, etc. and survey in 25 Blocks with high tribal population revealed that though the parents are partially exposed to state language, school children in those areas are not exposed to school language. Based on the above information, schools were identified with 100% tribal children with monolingual/bilingual situation.

Linguistic Diversity in Schools of Orissa:

There are 11749 schools in the state with at least 20 children in each school with linguistic diversities. Number of such schools is in 11 districts where the dropout /never enrolled tribal children are high and there the gap of home language and school language is high. There are 3400 schools in the state with 100% tribal children in the schools speaking their home language which is different from the school language.

Orissa Initiative on MLE Planning:

In October 2005, Govt. of India, NCERT, CIIL and UNESCO conducted a National Seminar in Mysore on Multilingual Education in which many states took part in it. Based on that Orissa took up MLE in April 2006 as a model for equitable quality education.

In July 2006 State Tribal Advisory Committee(TAC) headed by the Chief Minister, Orissa decided to adopt ten tribal languages as the medium of instruction and introduce them in the schools with 100% tribal children with their distinct language situation.

The TAC decided to adopt ten languages for multilingual education. The languages adopted are Santali, Saura, Koya, Kui, Kuvu, Kishan, Oram, Munda as major languages. Juang and Bonda were adopted in MLE as endangered languages.

Criteria of selection of Schools:

Schools were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Where the gap of home language and school language is high
2. Number of tribal children in the school belongs to 100% monolingual
3. At least it should be a primary school with five classes and five teachers
4. At least one teacher from mother tongue to teach in tribal language

District MLE Steering Committee chaired by the Collector along with education officers and public representatives approve the feasible MLE schools.

Status of Pilot Schools

Till date total 435 schools have been adopted in MLE approach out of which 100 are Santali in Mayurbhanj. Rests of the languages are one year ahead of Santali since Santali language was introduced in 2008-09. DIET Baripada has been assigned to prepare Class II materials in Santali language.

Preparation of Curriculum, Text books and Teacher Training Module:

Curriculum and instructional materials were made during July 2006 to May 2007. The teachers were selected from respective tribal communities. They were trained on MLE approach.

A significant component of any multilingual education program is the provision of instruction in the first language, second (or third) language—the language of more advanced education. Since second language instruction and learning are well-established academic traditions, there is plenty of research and numerous models to draw from in developing curricula for this area.

National and International Resource persons provided their academic support on MLE approach. The principles of thematic approach in curriculum were adopted and accordingly theme web were prepared from the cultural themes of the respective tribal communities and subsequently based on these themes materials were prepared. Teachers from ten tribal communities and 8 DIET faculties in charge of MLE were trained on MLE approach and engaged in material preparation.

The two track method BICS (Basic interpersonal communication skill) and CALPS (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skill) were taken in preparation of curricular themes /text books (alphabet chart, alphabet book, number chart, number book, for CALPS and Big Book, Small Book, listening story , story chart etc. for BICS).

Thirty week theme web is administered in a calendar year in the MLE school. Each week contains a set of books for the children to read. Thus there are more than 90 books in class-I and 90 Books in class II. In addition to this listening stories, experience stories and story chart are used by the children for innovative self reading.

For class II Oriya was introduced as second language and therefore second language acquisition skill was adopted as the bridging strategies for language education and word web, alphabet book , Big Book and small Book in Oriya (both in MT and L2) were prepared.

Teacher training Module was also prepared based on the basic theories of MLE . Theories and methods of MLE , content and process, subject areas, importance of use of TLM , classroom transaction, inbuilt evaluation are in the module.

The best practice that was developed in MLE Orissa was that teachers from the tribal communities were engaged in curriculum design, material production and preparation of teacher training module.

Training of teachers of Pilot MLE Schools:

It is widely acknowledged that good teachers are important to good education. Most countries have established teacher-training institutions to supply teachers to their schools. However these institutions are normally structured to prepare teachers to teach only in a/the language of wider communication. Multilingual Education or mother tongue based education is adopted, but it is hard to get resource institutions who can deliver the goods based on the principles of language education. Therefore, teachers and DIET lecturers were trained as master Trainers on MLE in the curriculum development and material development programmes.

A fifteen days teacher training programme is prepared for class I and another 15 days training programme for class II teachers by the state MLE resource group. The training module is sound in terms of spelling out the basics of MLE theory and practice.

Monitoring and Assessment of MLE Schools:

Monthly resource day meeting is held in the Block involving the pilot MLE teachers to discuss on

the effectiveness of teaching- learning process of the children. Detail documentation of teachers experience and reflection of classroom transaction on children's performance are captured. This helps improving the teaching and learning process.

A monitoring team is constituted at the district /Block/CRCC level to assess the day to day schooling of MLE pilot schools. The BRCC and CRCC are oriented on how to monitor and assess the classroom transaction effectively so that the children can learn meaningfully. Besides, reading and writing, fluency of children, exposure of children in discussion and dialogue with the peer group, updating weekly writing files, and reading of Big Book and small Book are monitored.

Documentation

Process documentation of all the workshops related to MLE is available in OPEPA web sites. MIS unit of SSA Orissa contains the details of language speakers. (www.opepa.in)

Future Direction

1. Orissa aims at scaling up 1000 schools with linguistic diversities through adopting MLE approach over a period of five years 2007-08 to 2012. So the schools will be opened cumulatively
2. Regional Resource Centers for Tribal Education(RCTE) will be opened in three DIETs (Baripada , Sambalpur and Jeypore) for north , west and south zones of Orissa to provide a knowledge base to teachers serving in MLE . The RCTE s will conduct research, develop curriculum, train teachers and evaluate and monitor.
3. Alternative Bilingual / multilingual approach to be adopted for schools with more than one language to teach them second and third language simultaneously.
4. ECCE in Pilot schools is to be taken up for language education to bridge the language gap of pre primary and primary education.
5. Setting up a knowledge hub in the country involving the international agencies and National agencies on concretizing tribal education in the country, and create a interstate net work for MLE
6. Community ownership and involvement in curriculum design is a better sign which can be gradually help the project to make it a bottom up approach , there by empowering the tribal communities to own the school knowledge, as their knowledge system.