

Multilingualism: A Paradoxical Dimension of Mother Tongue Education in Nepal

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Abstract

This paper explores and analyses the policy and practice of mother tongue education implemented by the government of Nepal which has rather become inexpressibly dormant. The quiescent and fugitive mentality of implementing agency has created a chaotic situation in an academic achievement of the ethnic groups of students who use their dialect and find difficulties in classroom instruction at school. This paper exuberantly brings out the subtle circumstances of classroom pedagogy on mother tongue education heavily suffering from the lack of human resources since the implementation of mother tongue education in 2007 in Primary level. This paper has dealt with the analysis of policy and practice, field opinions of teachers and principals and the reflexive facet of the researcher. The findings recapitulate that implementation of mother tongue education has been augustly welcomed however; short comings on availability of human capital and classroom pedagogy concurrently devastated the academic achievements of mother tongue user children due to the medium of classroom instructions in Nepali and poorly developing English instruction system in the classroom.

Key words: mother tongue education, government policy, classroom pedagogy, human capital, field opinions, academic achievements

Introduction

"First words must mean something to a child.

First words must have intense meaning for a child.

They must be part of his (sic) being"

(Warner, S. A., 1963/1971. P. 30) as cited in Bloch (2006; p. 2).

Nepal, a country of heterogeneity with small area of 1, 47,181 km. sq. located in between 26° 22' to 30° 27' north latitude and 80° 4' to 88° 12' east longitude in South Asia, has a unique linguistic diversity. According to National Population

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and Housing Census, 2021 the total population counts as 29, 164, 578 with the growth rate of 0.92% per annum. There are 125 caste/ethnic groups and 123 languages are spoken as mother tongue in Nepal (CBS, 2012). 44.6% of people use Nepali as their mother tongue while other remaining populations use various dialects as their mother tongue in Nepal (ibid). Similarly, overall literacy rate is 76.3% in which male literacy is 83.6% compared to female literacy rate of 69.4%.

The heterogeneity of languages spoken in Nepal as mother tongue diversifies Nepalese cultural settings from Terai, Hill and Mountain regions of Nepal which are diversified linguistically. This scenario of diversities in the usage of mother tongues gives good prospects of indigenous knowledge which can be utilized for broader curricular activities in education system of Nepal.

Language plays a vital role in an academic achievement of early school going children. Mother tongue education in primary education in Nepal is marred due to the heavy lacking of human resource and linguistic pedagogical teaching-learning praxis. Speaking ones dialect is not a big deal in a multiethnic community in Nepal however, pedagogy deals a lot. This paper highlights rather subtle educational issue of mother tongue education in primary level in Nepali government schools. It seems ridiculous to implement mother tongue education, in a sense that it carries no value at all if required skilled human resource is not produced.

Multilingual characteristic of Nepal is being recognized constitutionally but it has remained latent and impractical in Nepal due to feeble and reluctant policy implementation (Upadhyaya, 2011) implanted with induced political culture of our society. However, early school going children from ethnic communities who use mother tongue as a daily communication failed to achieve academic success (Tamang, 2009) because language difference as that of home and school made them difficult to grasp subject matter instructed in the classroom.

This article highlights the subtle educational issue of mother tongue education in primary education in Nepali public schools. Basic argument of this article is if human resources related to mother tongue instruction in the diverse classrooms are not prepared; the mother tongue education implemented in primary education system of Nepal is ridiculously paradoxical and that would count only for show teeth to attract donations and financial supports from donor countries or the international institutions.

Well, mother tongue in the classrooms as a medium of instruction, their significance and benefits, state policy, theoretical perspective, existing situation and the conclusion and way forwards are the basic tenets of this paper in general. While going further with this paper, I shall use human resource and human capital to denote same meaning, ethnic diversity as minorities or vice-versa and linguistic diversity and multilingual as mother tongue for the purpose of this paper.

Methodology

This study is based on the field works of community schools of Sindhupalchok district in Bagmati Province and Morang district in province 1 in which Tamang, Rai, Limbu, and Magar children are enrolled in majority who use their dialects at home. This study also includes the reflexive notes and opinions of researcher and analysis of policies forwarded by the government of Nepal since 2007 on providing primary education in mother tongue.

I collected information from Shree Ramdevi High School, Jalkeni, Sindhupalchok when I was practicing teaching in one of the schools in Jalkeni. I frequently visited schools and talk to teachers and headmaster about the teaching-learning practice of mother tongue. I also frequently visited to talk to teachers and headmasters of schools in Patharisanishare municipality about the issue while I was free from my regular job. I even visited some of my participants' home during the vacation for the purpose.

Findings and Discussions

My childhood experience has built a foundational block in building the arguments in this paper which I would like to illustrate below with a sub-section.

Chaotic Language Combat: Home Language and Classroom's Instruction Blur

When I was admitted to school nearly an hour walk from my home in a village crossing a river, the earth had revolved for six times for me. Along with me a neighbor Limbu girl was also admitted whose language practice was very stereotypical (at least for me) Limbu dialect at home which I never learn speaking though I spent playing with her in my childhood. We were kept in the same section of LKG. As the time elapsed one month, two months ahead, she became more reluctant to go morning walking to school and she had to be pampered a lot whereas I enjoyed my classroom mate, teachers and the learning of ABCD, 123 which my father introduced me at home. As far as I remember she never enjoyed her friends, teachers and the class and never spoke with others

except me. The most disastrous was her result for two whole years because of which she has to repeat the same class LKG and UKG for two years each. As I understood then and realize now, from grade one she began enjoying friends and school.

I as a teacher now realize that if the children are familiarized with the language in the school which is used at homeⁱ their personal development and academic progress could be faster and easier for them to cope up with the new environment as well. Well, I most importantly understand now as the Danish Educational Network (2008) put the point that “it is a myth that a student learns a foreign language better without learning their mother tongue” (p. 3).

I have read a well-known sentence by Prithvi Narayan Shahⁱⁱ ‘Nepal is a garden of four castes and thirty four sub-castes’ⁱⁱⁱ in Nepali history books. Now, I encounter the same phrase in the social studies text book 10 in history portion. As a teacher, I have explained to the students the meaning of sentence in several ways that I would like to. The major explanation I make usually in the classroom is the idea that corresponds with the four Varnaashram or caste system existing in the Nepali society (Hofer, 2004) relating to the particular community, language, culture, festival, religion and so on. But do I make children aware about the implications of these diversified grounds of heterogeneity in our context; it is the question that hounds me now. If I have been able to make it, the children definitely have discussed with their parents about their language, culture, festival and religion that they have faith upon and, observe in their homes.

Mother tongue to me is naturally acquired communicative skills that one receives and accepts from mother’s womb. Metaphorically, I believe that if you have good practice and knowledge of your own mother tongue your place of living would be heavenly; otherwise you become lunatic and lost. A social studies teacher in Chandra Kirateswar School in Morang district opines; *"I think students would have understood better if they were taught in their own dialect because it is difficult to make them understand in Nepali medium of instruction and they get failed in some subjects like mathematics and sciences. However, we should do it"*. I believe this situation has led teachers and students both in trouble that has marred academic progress of students and guilty sentiment in the heart of teachers.

For instance; a principal at 'Janamukhi High School' in Pathari-Sanischare municipality of Morang district pours his distress; *"We had Limbu language*

class before three years ago but now we don't have teacher to teach in that language. When we had a teacher the students were very interested to learn the subject matters in their language". This practical voice resembles with the argument given by Kioko (2015) who reveals that students in early grade years benefit very highly from using their home language in the classroom instruction. It is vehemently crystallized that the idea of practicing teaching-learning activities in the classroom would give abundant space to learn about the society and the world through mother tongue education in the early grades.

Linguistic Diversity: A Mother Tongue Facet

According to the CBS (2012) there are 126 castes/ethnic groups living in Nepal and they speak 123 different languages as a mother tongue. This makes Nepal a culturally diversified, characteristically and linguistically heterogeneous. It is obvious that languages make human civilization different than the other biological beings. In the words of (Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy & Gumidyala, 2010) "Languages are said to make us human; but they also dehumanize when they become instrument of power for some and shame and guilt for others" (P. 280). In the context of Nepal, the policies and programs are prepared in respect to languages in education since 1950s (Tamang, 2009) after the dawn of democracy in Nepal nonetheless the practicality has been the problem of mother tongue exclusion in the class room delivery.

The linguistic personification in Nepal is basically seemed from the promulgation of the constitution of Kingdom of Nepal, 1962 by late Monarch Mahendra which formally legalized Nepali as the national and official language as one language policy (Yadav, 2007) in Nepal. This un-empathetic action of the state establishing Nepali, the only medium of mass communication gave an extreme development of Nepali language in the country. The officializing of the Nepali language brought greater effects on the demise of the other languages in Nepali society because it was made compulsory to be learned and was necessarily made medium of instructions in the classrooms. As a result, school and colleges had to use Nepali as hard core language, writing and speaking Nepali language was established as national identity in Nepali academia. In the line of this basic phenomenon, the political upheavals with effects of vested interests of several political leaders including Monarchs and Ranarchism demolished the multilingual foundation in Nepal.

The autocratic rule commenced by the Hindu Shah Dynasty Kings, in which monarchy, religion and the Nepali language played decisive roles in governance,

thereafter furthered by the dynasty of prime ministerial rule of the Ranas that followed and continued for 104 years from 1846 to 1951 (Upadhyaya (2011). It explicitly argues that heavy importance was bestowed upon one and the only language, Nepali which was exaggeratingly supported through law. Since 1769 (when Prithvi Narayan Shah captured Kathmandu Valley) the monolingual state policy deteriorated the linguistic diversity of Nepal, though ethically, Nepal was termed as the nation of four castes and thirty six sub-castes. The hidden strategies of the rulers in the past have created and left huge gap in linguistic diversity as well as socio-economic dimensions of the ethnic minorities. As a result, the power distribution inclined to the certain groups of people, particularly Brahmins, Chhetris and Newars (Dahal, 2000) which helped Nepali language to be established as domain of national identity. After the restoration of democracy in 1990s the people who were suppressed by the assimilative and homogenizing rhetoric for years began raising voices out of their grievances, giving rise to strong counter projects with diverse visions, strategies and interests contesting each other (Upadhyaya, 2011) which gave rise to promulgate the constitution of kingdom of Nepal 1990 with the provision of multilingual, multicultural, and multi-religious proposition. After such provision in the constitution the concept of mother tongue education was realized and has been implemented in the primary level in Nepal.

Understanding about linguistic diversities of Hofer (1979, 2004) is quite different; he opines that “a socio-cultural typology of the peoples of Nepal is much more difficult than their linguistic classification” (p 6). But Hofer’s understanding is much more simply theoretical rather than empirical. I don’t agree with his opinion because when we observe intrinsically we could divide the language spoken in Nepal into two; one Indo-Aryan and another Tibeto-Burmese but within Tibeto-Burmese there lies several hundred of languages which Hofer left unobserved. While pursuing to understand the linguistic classification in Nepali society broadly we can divide into two: Tibeto-Burmese and Indo-Aryan. “Some scholars have divided linguistic diversity into four groups like Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burmese, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian” (Regmi, 2012). All these language varieties are spoken in Nepal but the assurance and protection used to be given only to Indo-Aryan language keeping it at the status of national language in the past. While the later language speaker seem less in the number of their division into caste like mostly Brahmin, Chhetri

and Dalits whereas the former¹ language speakers seem largely scattered into several ethnic groups and indigenous groups who actually are deprived in educational achievement due to the medium of language delivery in schools. The primary education program in the past has provided us the evidence that the students in early grades who use their dialects at home face difficulties in learning (Awasthi, 2004) and it re-sounds with a teacher's opinion at Samaajik Lower Secondary School in Morang district as she revealed; "In early grade, when students come here for the first time, their language differs a lot because we use only Nepali and English languages at school as a medium of instructions and they seemed frustrated in learning activities".

It is significantly necessary to take efforts to make live all the languages spoken in Nepal because the mother tongue education is a must through which we can maximize the academic achievement of the ethnic groups that constitutes 55.4 percent (NPHC, 2011) significantly higher than the Nepali language users. Besides, the promotion of mother tongues can promote living environments and much necessarily to promote and preserve the local terminologies and indigenous knowledge are the two sides of the same coin. For this promotion of mother tongue delivery in the class room is vehemently essential. However, the use of mother tongue in the teaching-learning practice in the classrooms have been printed and produced in black and white rather as documentation for attracting foreign currency (Kantipur Daily, 2016) in the name of mother tongue language project in Nepal.

I argue the use of language is the essence of learning because the learners unless understands the language used for delivery can't make any meaning of staying in the classroom. In this connection Halliday (1993) comments that when the children learn language they do not simply engage in one kind of learning among many, rather they learn the foundation of learning itself. He further argues that most distinctive trait of human being is involvement in the process of making meaning out something they learn and the medium of expression is language. Thus, it is mandatory that every child should have his/her first lesson taught in his/her home language.

Seemingly, the children from the ethnic groups in Nepal fail to make classroom instructions useful that leads to dropout and repetition. This is how the children from the ethnic and indigenous groups are compelled to exit from the early

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school and discouraged to attend school due to linguistic difficulties and thus remain illiterate. In this connection, all the stakeholders must learn the lesson about effective provisions of mother tongues in the higher education if not the implementation of mother tongues in the primary education would be absolute failure, as we have experienced in the recent trends as schools, due to lack of human resources in mother tongues, make exchange provision with English and other subjects.

Mother Tongue Policy and Practice in Nepal

In this section, I discuss how the language policy has marred the all round achievement/development of mother tongue speakers in Nepali society that has indirectly negative effects in schooling and academic achievement. A teacher at Shree Ramdevi High School, Jalkeni in Sindhupalchowk district asserts;

"Tamang children who know only Tamang dialect get enrolled in this school in nursery grade but their performance is very low because they don't understand the medium of class room instructions. Due to which many of them leave school in early age and opt for labor job in the village or in the nearby towns. We have even not seen books so teaching in Tamang dialect is farfetched". It is obvious that it was fabulous idea to implement mother tongue education in primary school albeit it hasn't been so advantageous to the targeted population due to heavy shortage of human resource. We know that we live in a society with an abundantly diversified collection of languages. Terry and Irving (2010) found that there is evidence of being diversified in people, environment and every form of life on the earth. In order to address such diversity as a result of the commitment made in the world conference of education for all in Jomtien in 1990, the ministry of education developed strategies, modalities and action plan to implement the EFA program with the support of governmental, nongovernmental organizations and other agencies in Nepal (Literacy watch, 1999). Nevertheless, it has been fruitless due to the sluggish and negligent actions on government's part to produce appropriate human capital on mother tongue education.

In the study of Muluki Ain Hofer, (2004) reveals that the Thakuris, Brahmins and Chetris were regarded as political elites whereas the majority of the slave was, without doubt, recruited from the ethnic groups like Bhotiya, Awaliya and the Kirati who had become dependent peasants of higher castes. He further states that an enslavement of the ethnic groups was made legal provision controlled by administration by Muluki Ain in the name of protecting slaves

from the oppression of landlords. The ethnic identity was suppressed socio-culturally and legalized the superiority of Brahmins and Chettries which helped to cultural reproduction of high castes. We can say that the historical suppression, in which only the higher castes; specifically Brahmins used to receive education in the Gurukul system or Sanskrit schools but no concern was paid by state towards multilinguality, which was under the control of so called high caste, and thus none of the approaches were made on ethnic languages and schooling. Due to such sarcastic socio-cultural and political history, the ethnic communities lost their languages generation after generation. The restoration of democracy during early 1990s caused the revival of linguistic rights of the people with ethnic identity.

As per the report of National Education Commission (1992) in Nepal the simple fact that the national prosperity hinges on the educational development has been realized in the true sense of the term only since the advent of democracy in 1951. The governmental efforts have been seen in several of the plans and policies that have been promoting educational development in Nepal. According to Nepal Education System Plan (1971, seventh amendment, 21 January, 2010) under article number 417, the medium of language in a school shall be Nepali and English or both languages and in the sub article 2 (a) of the same article states the education up to primary level may be imparted in the mother tongue. The regulation provides very skeptical provision (may be) on mother tongue education whereas it has provided spatial provision for Nepali and English languages. In this sense, we can conclude that the mother tongue education has been the show piece in the extent of National Education System of Nepal.

We can't ignore the English language that rules the current world and Nepali language which is spoken by relatively lower numbers of the Nepalese that stands with 44. 6% (NPHC, 2011). On the other hand, other languages (dialects) spoken in Nepal constitute 55. 4%, those constitute the languages spoken from the tropical region of Terai to Alpine region in the Himalaya and from Mechi in the east to Mahakali in the west. In this context, is the policy of 'may be' mother tongue education up to primary level promotes linguistic diversity in Nepal? As such the language policy in education is determined by the people in the power as our history proves it. In this context, Kangas, (2000) argues that a language is a dialect promoted by elites (p 15). The argument resembles the situation of Nepal where the minority mother tongue users' interests have been

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demolished by state mechanisms for centuries and recently it has been just shown to be included in the policy level.

With this example, we can conclude that the mother tongue education in primary education has been tried to enforce with elites' deterministic approach that has exemplified with lack of appropriate human resource or the mother tongue teachers in the primary schools. As a result, we can make out the reason that why most of the different mother tongue users are less enrolled in the higher studies? Or those minorities fail to achieve as higher ranking as those of Nepali speakers academically. Without proper management and encouragement at the higher level of studies on mother tongues, how one can think about implementing mother tongue education in primary level? In this sense, is not the government's policy on mother tongue a paradoxical dimension? Linguistic diversity is one of the living environments among the three that encompasses all round living standards of the people that brings closer to the nature. Kangas (2000) argues that the linguists hide behind the shield of scholarly objectivity while the linguistic diversity that has been in existence for tens of thousands of years is being eroded at an alarming rate (p xxvi). This argument signifies the situation of linguistic diversity of Nepal as it is in somewhat extinction threshold but we, even in the policy level are quite reluctant to see it as important as our wealth and worthy living environment.

The Multilingual Education and its needs were recognized with the restoration of democracy in 1990. For the first time in the history of Nepal the multilingual education was recognized through constitutional provision. Since then, there have been lots of efforts from national and local level to build equitable education in Nepal but all those efforts have not produced comprehensive results. In this regard Upadhyaya (2011) strongly argues that despite several attempts towards inclusivity through speechifying of language policy and planning and ethnic and cultural rights in the Nepalese constitutions, though pluralistic in its presentation, are all the replication of the vested interest and hidden agendas that help in one way or other maintaining dominance by the traditionally dominant groups.

After the successful people's movement II, the huge political transformation of constitutional monarchy to federal democratic republic and from Hindu polity to a secular state has introduced some of the crucial changes in the language policy. The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2063 has not only recognized the multilingual and multicultural realities of the country but has also enshrined a

historic legal provision by guaranteeing basic education in one's first language. In part three under article number 17 sub-article 1, it has established the law that every community has right to receive education on his or her own mother tongue. But are we utilizing the provision appropriately? The question should rise in every body's right brain? According to Regelski (2002) argued that the idea of multiculturalism presents important challenges to society and consequently to schooling, nevertheless, despite considerable lip service by opportunists, it is often not taken seriously enough. I am in the line of Regelski (2002) and would argue that the policy and practice have differed significantly as we have witnessed and experienced that the implementation of mother tongue education has turned into English education due to the lack of human resource provisions by the state. Government's efforts in the policy level are praise worthy but it is ineffective in the implementation level (Tamang, 2009) that hints that the state mechanism has inefficiently acted upon the implementation part of the policy of multilingual or mother tongue education system.

Language Perspectives and the Mother Tongue

Language can be defined as a means of communication that shapes cultural and personal identity and socializes one into a cultural group (Gollnick & Chinn, 2006) as cited in Terry and Irving (2010). Language is one of the powerful medium of transferring ideas from one to another as teachers deliver curriculum; the students try to grab them to their fullest extent, and analyze the ideas expressed by them. In the context of socio-culturally and linguistically diversified society like ours, there is not a single; value language in the classroom delivery which has been degraded/degrading quality academic achievement in certain portion of the population i.e. ethnic groups.

There is huge debate on quality of education in the Nepali academia; I believe that effective implementation of mother tongue education in the primary level can extinguish burning flame of quality question because it will help the mother tongue users achieve high academically as they account for 55.4% (CBS, 2012). Besides, school retention will increase definitely so that the government agencies and nongovernmental agencies (NGOs/INGOs) may not have to put their hilarious efforts to bring children into the school by providing subsidiary which is too temporary approach. Chinapah, Cars and Grinberg (2013) argue that the education system which attracts learners, satisfies their fundamental learning needs and improves their lives and overall experiences of living obviously contains the quality at its heart. However, the needs are not yet

recognized in our context and the educational programs are constructed in the top down approach which is deteriorating factor in quality achievement of ethnic minorities in the school education system in Nepal. Thus, implementation of mother tongue education in primary level is exaggeratingly based on unfaithful policy because policy makers do know teachers education on mother tongue is required at the first hand. Nonetheless, no policy has been adopted in this regard, so is it not a hilarious action from the educational policy makers.

Singh (2011) opines that in particular pupils should commence their schooling through the medium of the mother tongue, because they comprehend it best and because to begin their school life in the mother tongue will make the break and bridge between home and school as small as possible. In the words of Tamang (2009, mother tongue education, in terms of multilingualism, is based on prominent child right which was recognized in some states of India in 2004 and was followed by Nepal in 2007. Due to the global impact of English education-culture and historical stereotypical Nepali curriculum have much effected in the loss of indigenous knowledge which I believe is under the peril of extinction. According to Dove (2006) the idea of indigenous knowledge is destroyed due to the influence of hybrid products of modernity as a result the indigenous knowledge and its conservation has become much contesting in the present situation of the country. In Nepali context, teaching in English medium is considered as modernizing the education system that has taken place the medium of instructions in almost all the government schools in Nepal which seemed the death knot for local dialects. This action leads to extinctions of local dialects or mother tongues and indigenous knowledge and indigenous terms would get extinct and the coming generations would not be able to experience the diversities and heterogeneity in the language perspectives of Nepali society. When we see through the eyes of critical social theory the education provided to the ethnic group children in Nepali language is worthless because the educational provision delivered in the class rooms does not promote emancipatory function (Leonardo, 2004) rather it promotes posteriority. Well, the education should inculcate in every individual the supreme human values along with national and social norms and mores to; help promote a healthy social evolution (NEC, 1992). When the languages (mother tongues) are excluded from education system, it strongly contributes to extinction of diversity. Kangas (2000) refers this situation as 'linguistic genocide in education' and more instant consequences are failure in academic performance,

capability deprivation and poverty (Sen, 2000) of the minority mother tongue users.

Linguistic diversity brings richness of knowledge in the society and which in return promotes living environment of the people building nexus relations between and among themselves. In this connection, Lewis (2004) argues that the curriculum and learners should be connected that makes learning complex and dynamic activities. Well, when the curriculum provides dynamic and multiple learning activities the academic achievement would be elevated due to the connectedness with learners socio-cultural environments. This learning dimension also demands the requirement of mother tongue delivery in the classroom teaching practices. A teacher at Sunakhari High School asserts; *"There are more students from Rai and Limbu communities in this school, if those language (mother tongues) teachers were available then we would also have developed knowledge on those dialects and children might have understood better in the class"*. Pflapson (2011) assures that the language(s) used in the classroom dramatically affects children's opportunity and ability to learn. However, in Nepali context such classroom practices and decision have been made without a careful consideration of implications for learning outcomes (ibid) which is clearly seen as lack of human resource development to implement mother tongue education in primary level. A teacher at Saraswati Primary School in Morang opines; *"It was good to know about mother tongue education in primary level however, we lack teaching-learning pedagogies and the teachers. There are books but no one is ready to teach"*. The policy formation and implementation regarding mother tongue education in primary level is seen simply as complying with the international frameworks without adequate preparation due to which it seems very reluctantly practiced in the primary schools.

Significance and Benefits of Mother Tongue Education

With exclusive appreciation of teachers and schools hard works and dedication Kangas (2000) maintains that too many indigenous and minority children still fail in the formal education system all over the world though the teachers and schools are working hard on making children learn. What I have experienced about the learning ability of Newari and other ethnic groups' children in the lower secondary level is they feel very difficult to understand the subject matters delivered in the classroom in Nepali and English medium of instructions. Some students find difficult to pronounce and write the Nepali words. The 8th grader

can't make easy reading and writing in English and Nepali and even in mathematics due to which the academic performance does not seem satisfactory and their parents get worried on their children's achievement. I believe that if their foundational learning ability had been developed with comprehensive mother tongue instruction, their achievement could have been improved. Therefore, mother tongue is the best medium for imparting knowledge and skill at the primary level, its use and implementation should be encouraged in a democratic spirit all over the country. Malone, (2005) as cited in Ghimire (2012) realizing the essence of mother tongue, argues that the use of mother tongues during the early and basic level can improve the quality of education as it bridges the home and the school and further prior knowledge of children can become instrumental for learning.

It does not only benefit the children academically, but the languages serve as symbols of ethnic identity and each speech community wants to preserve and promote its language (Yadava, 2007). He further realizes that linguistic diversity is very closely related to ecological and cultural diversity because the domains of biological, linguistic and cultural diversities hold a mutually reinforcing relationship. Thus, the promotion and protection of linguistic diversity has greater significance to our livelihood.

While preparing a framework paper for implementing Multilingual Education (MLE) countrywide in Nepal, Taylor, (2010) argues that MLE should be implemented in the country for both educational and socio-political reasons relating to the educational well-being of linguistic minority children.

Nevertheless, the deteriorating condition of mother tongue education in the primary schools gives a dim hope of improvement on classroom pedagogies and classroom instructions. Robinson (2003) opines that nowadays, in Nepal, the issue of the multilingual aspects has been seriously taken not only as socio-political matter but also as symbol of ethnic identity of the speakers. Thus, linguistic diversity should not strictly be understood as socio-political dimension only, it is most importantly the symbolic identity that could be promoted for better diverse and inclusive Nepali society.

While referring to educational programs and plans of the government the recent EFA goals, MDGs goal and SSDP focus on the easy access and equity of the participations of children in the education system with mother tongue education in the primary level. "There is extensive evidence suggesting that students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds experience poorer educational

outcomes than their peers” (Bennett et al., 2004; Conchas & Noguera, 2004; Sanders, 2000) as cited in Terry and Irving (2010).

The mother tongue classrooms delivery improves reading and learning outcomes which significantly support cognitive development resulting overall language and academic achievement (Ball, 2010). He further draws the evidence from Cameroon, India, Mali, the Philippines, South Africa, Vietnam, and elsewhere attests to the benefits of learning in a familiar (mother tongue) language. Moreover, in the context of linguistic diversity of Nepali society I believe that the appropriate classroom delivery in mother tongue can create access to education improving internal educational efficiency. Effective indulgence of children in primary education can build better self-conceptualization facilitating the learning ability of other languages as well. As Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy & Gumidyala (2012) found that the educational failure of linguistic minorities all over the world is primarily related to the mismatch between the home language and the language of formal instruction that concretizes the idea of using mother tongue instructions in the classrooms in Nepali contexts too.

One of the main agreed goals at the world education forum in 2000 in Dakar was “to make absolute assurance of access to complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality by 2015 especially to children from ethnic minorities, girls and children in difficult circumstances” (UNESCO, 2000). Nepal is one of the signatories of the World Declaration on "Education for All" through world conference on education for all held in Jomtien in 1990 which fundamentally is making commitment to implement the World Declaration on Education for All and Frame Work for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs (Literacy watch, 1999) I believe that one of the basic learning needs is mother tongue instruction in the primary classrooms which is in dwindling condition. Hence the mother tongue instruction system has to be promoted and protected from the vicious circle of the linguistic nihilistic course through sustainable provision of human resource in mother tongue for appropriate implementation of the policy set by the state regarding mother tongue education in Nepal.

Conclusion

It is widely accepted that home is the first school where children learn through language that the family members speak. When a student attends school, the children from the ethnic background who use mother tongue as the first language at home face the most challenging task to understand the medium of

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delivery. As a result, the children those who tend to assimilate easily within the transitional period of learning another language in the classroom would continue the school, on the other hand, those who could not get assimilated easily with the delivery language they leave the school or repetitions occur with no alternative.

The ethnic and the indigenous groups who are linguistically assimilated can perform well but the groups of students who belong to different socio-cultural background (mother tongue speakers) are deprived of understanding the outer world. They don't have alternative rather than leaving the school, or repeat the same grade for another year in early age because of the linguistic adjustment difficulties. Yadava (2007) advocates that if the development of multiple cultures is so important then the roles of languages become critical, for cultures are always chiefly transmitted through the medium of spoken and written languages. Nevertheless, in the Nepali classrooms though children come from various dialectal backgrounds and cultures the medium of class room delivery is one and alone i.e. Nepali medium which has barred other mother tongue users from being part of the schooling for longer period because they don't understand what they learn and get easily distracted.

In addition to other problems like poverty, inaccessibility and ignorance the language is an integral part of daily life (Bloch, 2006) and is crucial play maker in the early life of the children. Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Gumidyala (2010) argue that the forceful indulgence of minority children in overriding language classrooms with subtractive effects on their mother tongues continues to be the most pressing educational issue in multilingual settings. It is to be realized that without fluently developing the first language, it is impossible to build understanding in the second or third language. Therefore, cognitive power building upon languages and for sound academic achievement for social benefits, the hardcore privileges should be provided to mother tongue delivery system of curriculum along with the earnest sustainable human resource provision and classroom pedagogy on multilingual perspectives.

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