



## **A STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MOTHER TONGUE AS A MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION**

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### **Abstract:**

*Language is the most important part of any culture and community. In a multilingual society, an individual gets an opportunity to familiarize with more than one language, other than his/her mother tongue. In such society, language of instruction need not always be the mother tongue of the individual or the regional language; it can be a foreign language. In such a complex society, the medium of instruction is always a challenging premise. It is necessary to preserve one's mother tongue as well as keeping with the changing trend learning a foreign language may not be a compulsion, but beneficial. It is the language that an individual has grown up speaking from his/her childhood. It is the first language that the infant picks up from his surroundings. It is his/her native language, the medium of communication. Learning in mother tongue has its own benefits. It is the language that an individual has grown up speaking from his/her childhood. It is the first language that the infant picks up from his surroundings. It is his/her native language, the medium of communication. Learning in mother tongue has its own benefits. This study aims to explore the importance and challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction.*

**Key Words:** *Language, Mother Tongue, Benefits and Challenges*

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*“The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.” — Ludwig Wittgenstein.*

### **Introduction:**

Language is the most important part of any culture and community. Language helps an individual to express their feelings, emotions and thoughts. It is the way by which people communicate with one another, build relationships, and create a sense of social togetherness. Language plays a significant role in the soci-cultural development of an individual. Hence language holds a significant place in every human life.

In a multilingual society, an individual gets an opportunity to familiarize with more than one language, other than his/her mother tongue. In such society, language of instruction need not always be the mother tongue of the individual or the regional language; it can be a foreign language. In such a complex society, the medium of instruction is always a challenging premise. It is necessary to preserve one's mother tongue as well as keeping with the changing trend learning a foreign language may not be a compulsion, but beneficial.

**Mother tongue as a medium of instruction:** The common use of the word ‘mother tongue’...not only refers to the language one learnt from one's mother, but also the spoken and home language; that is, not only the first

language in terms of acquisition, but the first in terms of its importance and the speaker's ability to better understand its linguistic and communication features. It is the language that an individual has grown up speaking from his/her childhood. It is the first language that the infant picks up from his surroundings. It is his/her native language, the medium of communication. Learning in mother tongue has its own benefits. If a child is able to understand his/her mother tongue, and if instructed in that language itself, his/her transition to school education becomes easier. UNESCO has recommended that children be taught in their community's mother tongue during the early years of schooling, so that the children can fully learn to read and write, understand early mathematical concepts and other subjects. A research by Rajathurai Nishanti from Bharathidasan University shows that the mother tongue is vital in framing the thinking and emotions of people. Learning in one's own language will help the student express himself/herself better. There will be better communication/interaction between the teachers, students and parents. The parents will take interest in their child's studies, which will be absent or less, if the child's learning is in a foreign language. It is noteworthy the medium of instruction is their mother tongue, can develop a better understanding of one's cultural background.

#### **Need and Significance of the study:**

India is a multilingual nation. Each state has its own regional language and numerous dialects. The question of which language should be the medium of instruction, is always seeking attention and solution. With the popularity English language is gaining, parents opt to send their children to schools, where the medium of instruction is English. In such a scenario, the regional language/ mother tongue and dialects are slowly losing their prominence. Someone has rightly said that another tongue is not just a means of communication, it is the essence of our culture and identity. Successive educational policies have stressed the importance of mother tongue as the medium of instruction. Kothari Commission recommended the three language formula. The National Education Policy 2020 stated that at the primary level the medium of instruction should be in the mother tongue. It is important to know that, there are communities who speak dialect which have no script, in such cases they opt regional language as the medium of instruction. This study aims to explore the importance and challenges of mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

#### **Research problem:**

- Research problem is a statement about an area of concern that needs to be carefully and meaningfully understood and investigated. A research problem statement should be concise, clear and specific. For this study the research problem statement is:

**'A study of the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction'.**

#### **Objective of the study:**

- To study the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction
- To study the challenges faced in fostering mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

#### **Research Design:**

- Method of the study: - for the study survey method under quantitative research was used.
- Sampling technique: - Convenient sampling technique was used for the study.

- Sample Size: - The sample size for the present study was 132 individuals.
- Tools used for the present study: - the researcher prepared a questionnaire as per the objectives of the study. Each statement had three options viz Yes, Not sure and No.
- Datacollection:-The data was collected using google form.
- Statistical Analysis: - The data collected was analyzed using frequency percentage.

### Major findings of the study:

#### ✓ *As per the objective-1*

- 89.4% respondents were of the opinion that mother tongue as a medium of instruction will help children to learn other language easily.
- 92.4% respondent stated that mother tongue will help in developing creative self-expression in children.
- 90.9% respondent stated that the medium of instruction in mother tongue will develop socio-cultural identity of the children.
- 80.3% respondent stated that the medium of instruction in mother tongue will help the children to develop effective communication skills, whereas 12.1% were not sure whether children will develop effective communication, if the medium of instruction is in mother tongue.
- 90.9% respondent stated that learning in mother tongue helps children in better understanding of the learning material.
- 92.4% respondent stated that medium of instruction in mother tongue will help parents to assist their children in their homework.
- 81.8% of the respondent stated that a beginner child's entry into education will be smooth as he/she is familiar with the language used by the teacher whereas 10.6% response was negative.
- 79.5% respondent stated the instruction in mother tongue will develop the thinking skills of the children, and 12.1% were not sure whether it will develop the thinking skills of the children.
- 70.5% respondent stated that for the development of all the three domains, instruction should be in mother tongue. 20.5% respondents were not sure whether it will develop all the three domains in children.

#### ✓ *As per the objective-2*

- 68.9% respondent stated that in cosmopolitan cities, it is difficult to implement mother tongue as a medium of instruction. 16.7% respondent were not sure whether in cosmopolitan cities, it is difficult to implement mother tongue as a medium of instruction and 14.4% responded negatively.
- 66.7% respondent stated that lack of standardized curriculum is a challenge in the

implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. 15.9% were not sure whether lack of standardized curriculum is a challenge in the implementation of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. 17.4% responded negatively.

- 59.8% respondent stated that lack of standardized curriculum will make it difficult to provide same quality of education regardless of the language. 25% respondent was not whether lack of standardized curriculum will make it difficult to provide same quality education regardless of the language. 15.2% responded negatively.
- 80.3% respondent stated that the perception that learning English language is essential in the global era pose a big challenge to use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction. 10.6% responded negatively.
- 84.1% respondent stated that the lack of support in promotion of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in higher education is another challenge whereas 10.6% were not sure.
- 81.8% respondent stated that in multilingual classroom, it is difficult to implement mother tongue as a medium of instruction. 13.6% responded negatively.
- 75.8% respondent stated that it is perceived that, being fluent in English than mother tongue provides better job opportunities. 11.4% were not sure whether being fluent in English than mother tongue provides better job opportunities and 12.9% responded negatively.

#### Conclusion:

- ✓ Medium of instruction in mother will help in the better understanding of the content and learning material
- ✓ It will help the children to develop effective communication, proper thinking skills, express himself/ herself creatively and establish their socio-cultural identity
- ✓ Parents will be able to help their children in their homework.
- ✓ It is challenge to implement mother tongue as a medium of instruction in cosmopolitan cities.
- ✓ English poses a big challenge. Knowing English will help the individual to get better job opportunity.
- ✓ There is no strong support in promotion of mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

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