



Advancing Linguistic Equity Through the National Education Policy 2020: A Critical Analysis of the Impact and Implementation of Multilingual Education on Inclusivity and Policy Trajectories

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ABSTRACT

Bi/multilingual education significantly impacts students' cognitive development, enhancing their ability to think critically and creatively. It also promotes cultural awareness and sensitivity, which are crucial in today's globalised world. Additionally, this report discusses some methods for effective implementation of bi/multilingual education, such as promoting the usage of mother tongue as a essential medium of educational instruction, introducing foreign language courses, and providing language learning opportunities through digital platforms. The findings of this paper provide key insights for policymakers, educators, and practitioners on the effectiveness and sustainability of these approaches in promoting long-term learning outcomes. Moreover, exploring the long-term impact and implementation of bilingual/multilingual education on students' learning and development can provide valuable insights into the influence of this approach on society as a whole. Therefore, this research on bilingual/multilingual education can have significant implications for the future of the education system as well as workforce development.

Background: This paper aims to explore the impact and implementation of bi/multilingual education in achieving linguistic equity under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Research has shown that promoting bi/multilingual education can lead to linguistic equity and cognitive benefits for students. However, implementing such programs requires adequate teacher training, resources, and support from the government.

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact and implementation of bi/multilingual education in achieving linguistic equity under the NEP 2020, with a focus on the necessary teacher training, resources, and government support.

Methods: The research method will involve a comprehensive review and analysis of secondary sources, including academic journals, government reports, and policy documents.

Findings: The findings of this research will shed light on the impact and implementation of bi/multilingual education in diverse contexts, providing insights into the benefits and challenges of this approach.

Research Gap: However, the long-term impact of these programs and methods to incorporate different concepts have yet to be extensively researched in existing studies. Therefore, it is important to conduct further research to fully understand the effectiveness of bilingual/multilingual education in different contexts and to develop strategies for successful implementation. The following study aims to address this gap by reviewing existing literature on the long-term impact of various programs and methods to incorporate new concepts in different fields. This research contributes to the limited literature on the impact and implementation of bi/multilingual education in diverse contexts, by examining both the benefits and challenges of this approach.

Keywords: linguistic equity, bilingual education, multilingual education, bi/multilingual education, National Education Policy 2020 and NEP 2020.

1.1 Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 focuses on achieving linguistic equity by promoting multilingualism and bilingualism in education (Mahapatra and Anderson, 2023). This policy recognizes the importance of preserving and promoting India's rich linguistic heritage while also preparing students for a globalised world where multilingualism is increasingly valued. However, the implementation of this policy faces several challenges such as the lack of trained teachers, appropriate teaching materials, and infrastructure (Kumar et al., 2021). These challenges need to be addressed to ensure the successful implementation of bi/multilingual education in India.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are listed below.

- To examine the significance of Linguistic Equity Under NEP 2020
- To analyse the impact of bi/multilingual education on linguistic equity in India.
- To evaluate the implementation of bi/multilingual education under the NEP 2020.
- To identify the challenges and opportunities for achieving linguistic equity through bi/multilingual education in India.

1.3 Significance of Research

The research on linguistic equity under the NEP 2020 is significant as it can have a major impact on the implementation of bi/multilingual education in India (Sharma, 2021). By identifying the challenges and opportunities, policymakers can make informed decisions to ensure that students get access to good quality education in regional languages or their mother tongue, which can lead to greater social inclusion and national unity. Furthermore, the promotion of multilingualism can also enhance India's economic competitiveness by preparing students for a globalised world where multilingual skills are increasingly in demand (Kalyani, 2020). It can also preserve and promote the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of India, which is a valuable asset for the country's soft power and tourism industry.

Literature Review

2.1 Overview of Linguistic Equity

Linguistic equity refers to the fair and just treatment of all languages and dialects within a society. It recognizes that language is a fundamental aspect of identity and culture and that linguistic diversity should be celebrated and preserved (Mo Chridhe, 2019). Linguistic equity aims to ensure that all individuals have equal access to, healthcare, employment, education and other essential services regardless of their language background. This includes providing language support services such as translation and interpretation, promoting multilingualism in schools and workplaces, and challenging linguistic discrimination (Sanders et al., 2020). Linguistic discrimination can take many forms, including excluding individuals from job opportunities or educational programs based on their language abilities or background, and it is important to address these issues to create more inclusive and equitable societies.

2.2 Significance of Linguistic Equity under NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of linguistic equity in education and aims to promote multilingualism and language diversity (Mahapatra and Anderson, 2023). The policy emphasises the need to provide equal opportunities for students from different linguistic backgrounds to promoting proficiency in other languages. It fosters social inclusion by reducing linguistic discrimination and providing equal opportunities for students, regardless of their language background (Kumar et al., 2021). In addition, it prepares students to be global citizens who can communicate effectively in a multilingual and multicultural world.

2.3 Impact of Bi/Multilingual Education

Studies have shown that bi/multilingual education has a positive impact on cognitive development, including increased creativity, problem-solving skills, and higher academic achievement (Mohanty, 2022). Additionally, it has been found to promote cultural awareness and tolerance, as well as improve job prospects and earning potential in an increasingly globalised workforce. However, the implementation of bi/multilingual education can face challenges such as a lack of resources and teacher training, as well as resistance from monolingual communities.

2.4 Bi/Multilingual Education Implementation

According to research, bi/multilingual education implementation can lead to improved cognitive development, academic achievement, and cross-cultural communication skills. However, there are challenges such as lack of resources, teacher training, and community support that need to be addressed for successful implementation

(Ramadiro, 2022). It is important for policymakers and educators to prioritize the promotion of bi/multilingual education and provide the necessary support for its implementation to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students.

2.5 Bi/Multilingual Education Promotes Linguistic Equity

Bi/multilingual education promotes linguistic equity by recognizing and valuing the linguistic diversity of students, especially those from marginalized communities. It provides opportunities for students to develop proficiency in their mother tongue while also gaining knowledge on additional languages, which can lead to greater academic success and social mobility (Premsrirat and Burarungrot, 2022). Additionally, bi/multilingual education can help break down language barriers that may prevent students from fully participating in the classroom and accessing educational resources.

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach of this paper is secondary, which means that it relies on existing literature and data sources to answer the research questions. The methodology involves a comprehensive review of relevant studies, reports, and other secondary sources to gather information and insights on the topic under investigation.

3.2 Data Collection

The data collection strategy employed in this paper is solely based on secondary sources. This includes a thorough search and analysis of existing literature, reports, and other relevant documents to gather information that is pertinent to the research aim and objectives.

3.4 Limitations

The limitations of this research include the reliance on secondary qualitative data, which may have biases and limitations in terms of the scope and depth of information available. Additionally, the lack of primary data collection may limit the ability to fully explore certain research questions or perspectives.

4.1. Analysis and Findings

The aim of the paper is to explore the concept of linguistic equity and its implications for language policy and planning in various contexts. It will also examine the current state of linguistic equity, identify gaps and challenges, and propose recommendations for promoting linguistic equity in society. It also provides an overview of the impact of bi/multilingual education and how it promotes linguistic equity (MoChridhe, 2019). The analysis will include a review of relevant literature, an examination of policies and practices in different educational contexts, and an exploration of the challenges and opportunities associated with promoting linguistic equity through bi/multilingual education.

4.2. Significance of Linguistic Equity under NEP 2020

The NEP 2020 emphasises the importance of promoting multilingualism and linguistic diversity in education. It recognizes that language is a crucial tool for learning and communication, and aims to impart opportunities for students to learn multiple languages, including regional and foreign languages, from an early age (Mahapatra and Anderson, 2023). Additionally, the NEP 2020 emphasises the need to promote equitable access to language education for all students, regardless of their linguistic background or proficiency. The policy proposes the implementation of a flexible language policy that allows students to learn in regional language or their mother tongue until at least fifth grade (Kumar, 2021). This not only promotes linguistic equity but also helps in cognitive development, as students can grasp concepts better in a language, they are familiar with. Furthermore, the policy also aims to provide opportunities for students to learn other languages, including foreign languages, as it is essential for global communication and cultural exchange (Sharma, 2021). Therefore, implementing language policies that promote bilingualism can have long-term positive effects on students' academic and personal growth.

4.3 Impact of Bi/Multilingual Education

Research has shown that bilingual education can improve cognitive abilities, such as critical thinking skills, and lead to better academic performance in both languages. Additionally, multilingual education can promote cultural awareness and understanding, as well as provide opportunities for students to communicate and interact with a wide range of people in their personal and professional lives (Charoenphon, 2023). Moreover, in today's globalised world, speaking multiple languages has been increasingly popular in many industries and professions. Therefore, investing in bi/multilingual education can provide individuals with a competitive edge in the job market and open up opportunities for international travel and cultural exchange. The NEP 2020 also recognizes the importance of multilingualism and aims to promote it by providing opportunities for students to learn at least two languages, including their mother tongue (Kalyani, 2020). This policy shift can have a

significant impact on bi/multilingual education in India, as it will encourage schools and universities to offer language courses and create a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. Thus, being bi/multilingual can have a significant impact on an individual's cognitive development, social interactions, and career opportunities (Kumar et al., 2021). It is a valuable skill that can enhance communication and understanding across cultures, which is now implanted through NEP 2020 in India.

4.4 Bi/Multilingual Education Implementation

Bi/multilingual education implementation is crucial in promoting linguistic diversity and preserving indigenous languages, while also providing students with the opportunity to develop proficiency in multiple languages (Kirss et al., 2021). It can also lead to better academic performance, increased cultural awareness, and improved job prospects in an increasingly globalised world. To implement bi/multilingual education, schools can adopt a dual-language immersion program where students are taught in two languages. Another strategy is to offer language classes as an elective or as part of the core curriculum and to provide opportunities for students to practice their language skills through cultural exchange programs or internships abroad (Hélot and Bonacina-Pugh, 2023). In addition, schools can also hire bilingual or multilingual teachers to support language learners and create a more inclusive learning environment. Furthermore, incorporating technology such as language learning apps or online resources can also enhance language acquisition and provide additional opportunities for practice outside of the classroom (Coady et al., 2023). Additionally, incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into the curriculum can also help to broaden students' understanding of the world around them. This can be achieved by incorporating literature, history, and social studies from different regions. By doing so, students can gain a deeper appreciation for different cultures and ways of life, which can ultimately lead to greater empathy and understanding towards others (Kim, 2020). These implementation strategies can help to promote a more diverse and globally-minded educational experience for students, preparing them for success in an increasingly interconnected world.

4.5 Opportunities and Challenges of Bi/Multilingual Education in Achieving Linguistic Equity

Bi/multilingual education offers numerous opportunities for achieving linguistic equity, including the promotion of cultural awareness and understanding, the development of cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills, and the enhancement of employability in a globalised job market (Özdil and Kunt, 2023). However, challenges such as lack of resources and support, teacher training, and language policy implementation must be addressed to ensure equitable access to quality bi/multilingual education for all students. However, implementing bi/multilingual education programs can be challenging due to the lack of resources and trained teachers (Dorner and Cervantes-Soon, 2020). Additionally, there may be resistance from parents and communities who view the use of languages other than the dominant language as a threat to national unity or cultural identity. Moreover, the lack of qualified mentors who are proficient in the target language and pedagogically skilled in teaching bilingual/multilingual education can also pose a significant challenge to achieving linguistic equity (Ortiz et al., 2022). Furthermore, there may be a shortage of appropriate learning materials and resources in the target language, which can hinder students' language development and progress. The NEP 2020 recognizes the opportunities for bi/multilingual education to promote linguistic equality (Kumar, 2021). However, the effective implementation of this policy requires overcoming the challenge of providing sufficient resources and materials in all the languages taught.

5.1 Conclusion

The impact of bi/multilingual education can be significant in promoting linguistic diversity, fostering intercultural understanding, and enhancing academic achievement. Students who receive instruction in their native languages while also learning a second or third language are more likely to succeed academically and have greater opportunities for future success in a globalised world. Furthermore, bi/multilingual education can also contribute to the preservation and revitalization of endangered cultures and languages. The NEP 2020 recognition of the significance of bi/multilingual education to build a positive step towards promoting linguistic equity in India. However, the effective implementation of this policy requires heavy investment in resources and materials to support teaching and learning in all languages.

5.2 Recommendation

Some recommendations for achieving linguistic equity are listed below:

- The government needs to allocate sufficient funds towards promoting linguistic equity and collaborate with educational institutions and language experts to develop appropriate materials and pedagogical approaches.
- Regular monitoring as well as evaluation of the policy's implementation should be conducted to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement and promote linguistic diversity and preserve endangered languages.
- Consult with language communities for better development and implementation of the policy that promote linguistic equity.

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