



Strategic Integration of Foreign Languages at the Secondary Level: NEP 2020 Preparing Students for a Globalised World

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ABSTRACT

"In order to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of different cultures and enhance their global awareness and opportunities, the secondary level curriculum will include a wide range of foreign languages, including Korean, Japanese, Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian. This is in addition to the already excellent offerings in Indian languages and English, as stated in NEP-2020. The paper concludes that language and culture are deeply connected, and that understanding the language spoken in a particular country provides insights into people's thoughts and lifestyles. When students gain an understanding of different cultures and languages, their perspectives expand. This allows them to think globally and approach challenges in a positive and productive way, with the aim of finding solutions for the issues humanity is currently facing in the 21st century.

Keywords: NEP2020, Foreign Language, Globalised world.

Introduction

The NEP 2020 suggests that secondary-level education will include a whole new world of languages, from Korean and Japanese to Thai, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and even Russian! Furthermore, it drove home the point that this will open doors for students to broaden their horizons, gain insights into various cultures around the globe, deepen their grasp of international affairs, and give them the freedom to spread their wings and explore different countries based on their personal passions and aspirations.

As a result of being taught multi-lingually, the students learn to think critically about what they are learning and experiencing. What is critical thinking? Starr (1989) defines it as having "The freedom to ask questions and the tools to reason liberating one's mind from unthinking prejudice and promoting an appreciation for pluralistic democracy." Students should be supported in questioning the validity of the knowledge presented in textbooks and encouraged to explore other perspectives. "Children who have been provoked to reach beyond themselves, to wonder, to imagine, to post their own questions are the ones most likely to learn" (Green, 1988, p.14). In multi-lingual teaching students are provided such opportunities.

Russian envoy Nikolay Kudashev and South Korea's envoy to India Shin Bongkil appreciated the introduction of their languages in Indian school curriculum and said that it will enrich global knowledge and learning about cultures among the students. Further, they pointed out that it will strengthen bilateral relations. Shringla (2020) argues inclusion of foreign languages in which half of them are European languages viz., French, German, Spanish and Portuguese helps in future for exchanges between India and Europe. Elmes (2013) pointed out that the language does not exist apart from culture. The structure of the language determines how people perceive the world. Moreover, language, to some extent, determines the way we think about the world around us. Understanding of a particular culture requires learning of the language in which they express their views. Hence, we can conclude that culture and language are inseparably linked.

Role of Language and Culture

Humans are able to communicate, interpret, and play because to language, that's a system of "speech, manual, or written symbols" that serves as a means of connections and communications. It helps us to share our ideas with others and also helps us to understand ourselves. A group of people's characteristics and

patterns of behaviour define their culture and the basic characteristics of culture include language, arts, and customs, etc. On the other hand, language covers all features of human life in a particular society and understanding of the surrounding culture is the key to learning a language.

As stated by Spencer (1988, p. 170), Vygotsky "viewed intelligence as the capacity to benefit from instruction, with language having a powerful developmental role." In this way, language serves as a tool for comprehension and learning. Human learning "presumes a specific social nature and a purpose by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them," according to Vygotsky. As a result, language plays an essential role for understanding and gaining knowledge and serves as an instrument for educational advancement.

Several studies prove that early introduction of different cultures in the school curriculum enhance cognitive development of children and also enhance the process of Global Citizenship Education. Scoffham (2019) pointed out that the extraordinary growth in world knowledge happens during the middle childhood highlighted as a part of developmental stage and it is considered as a golden opportunity for promoting global awareness among students. Hence, introduction of foreign languages at secondary level gives students opportunities to choose a language according to their interests and aspirations. However, how children perceive about other nations, people and cultures at the early stage and how they select a language according to their interest is an under-researched area.

Recognising Positive Teacher Attributes

Good (1987) outlines six attributes of good teachers which are essential in multilingual teaching:

- They view their main responsibility as teaching.
- They know that diagnosis, remediation, and enrichment are key aspects of teaching.
- They expect some difficulties in helping all students learn, but are prepared to provide the appropriate follow-up instruction that will be more successful.
- They expect all students to meet at least the minimum specified objectives.
- They are expected to deal with individuals not groups or stereotypes.
- They build a stimulating classroom environment that makes learning enjoyable for all students, not just those in the high-ability group.

Instead of treating all of the students in the same manner, teachers should modify their approach so that it caters to the specific requirements and characteristics of each individual student. This will allow them to effectively support all of the children in their classrooms. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of educators to ensure that they do not discriminate against students only on the basis of their membership in particular micro cultures.

Global Citizenship

At the present time, the term "global citizenship" is used to describe the process of fostering a major interest in global concerns, the development of an awareness and appreciation of diverse values, and the enhancement of a country's competitiveness. On the other hand, all of this must be accomplished through communication, and consequently, one must be able to speak in English, which is the language of the world. Therefore, the ability to speak two languages is a prerequisite for having global citizenship. Over the course of several millennia, the concept of global citizenship has been around. Diogenes, a Greek philosopher, proclaimed himself to be a citizen of the world. On the other hand, the Maha Upanishad, a text from ancient India, referred to the entire civilization as a one family. Nowadays, education for global citizenship is seen in many countries as a game-changer that can help kids and young adults hit the jackpot in their personal and professional endeavours, while also playing a part in making the world a better place.

The Global Citizenship Education (GCED) programme is like an inhale of fresh air in the world of civic education. It takes the bull by the trumpets and focuses on tackling global concerns that are as complex as a piece of jigsaw puzzle, encompassing socioeconomic status, a political issue, and environmental concerns.. Establishing a society that is aware of global issues and possesses the skills necessary to address these kinds of problems is the main mission of the Global Education. The General Conference on Education and Development, GCED is tasked with resolving topics like as peace and rights for humanity, respect for other cultures, tolerance, and inclusiveness. . This programme is specifically mentioned in Target 4.7 in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which was adopted by United Nations General Assembly in 2015. The GCED aims at the learners belonging to all age groups and is promoted by UNESCO and other regional organizations.

Being born in any country is an accident and having national citizenship is accidental but global citizenship is an association of humans of the world coming together and thinking themselves as citizens of the world. This breaks the mental boundaries of cities, regions and nation-states. Global citizens identify with being a part of an interdependent world community where cultural, language and ethnic differences are celebrated as a strength rather than weakness. It was pointed out by Leek (2006) that the goal of education in global

citizenship (GCE) is to nurture citizens who are fully integrated into the global society without sacrificing their own national identity. GCE is designed to give learners a bird's eye view of global governance structures, rights and responsibilities, global issues, and connections between global, national, and local systems and processes; recognise and cherish differences and multiple identities, such as language, faith, culture, gender, and our shared humanity; strengthen skills for living in a world that is becoming a melting pot; and sharpen and contributed to use critical skills for civic literacy. According to declarations made by UNESCO, "global citizenship" Education is aimed to empower students so that individuals can become proactive contributors to a the community that is more peaceful, compassionate, welcoming, and secure. This is done in order to educate learners with the tools necessary to take up active roles in tackling and solving global challenges. One of the most important aspects of exercising global citizenship is having an accurate understanding of one's place in the world. Everyone has the ability to make a contribution towards making the world safer for all people through the implementation of a set of concepts that are included in global citizenship. These principles can be inculcated by persons of any age. As a component of quality education, education for global citizenship is becoming an increasingly significant component, and it is gaining an increasing amount of attention.

The statement implies that "multilingual and multicultural competence" is a significant prerequisite for the development of a global citizen. Global citizenship education requires students to have an understanding of a variety of languages as well as an appreciation for the linguistic and cultural distinctions that exist.

The 21st century is witnessing an unprecedented growth in global interconnectedness, connectivity, trade among nations, interdependence and cultural amalgamation. The world has become a global village. In the era of globalisation the problems are also no more restricted only within the boundaries of nation-state. The problems have now become global in nature. The global issues have emerged in the 21st century which poses a threat to the whole humanity across the globe. The growing concerns like COVID-19 Pandemic, global warming, pollution, global terrorism, hunger, global poverty, migration, ecological destruction and threat to wildlife are now the new challenges which has appeared before the Global society. In this context, development of Global Citizenship is the need of the current world. Global citizens try to deal with the global problems in more peaceful, tolerant, and inclusive way. It is necessary to mould our students to have sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity which leads them to "think globally and act local. It is assumed that the global citizens play active roles, both locally and globally in building more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure societies. They have cognitive abilities, which include knowledge and thinking skills that help them understand the complexities of the world. They also possess socio-emotional skills, such as values, attitudes, and social skills, that allow them to develop emotionally, socially, and physically, and to interact respectfully and peacefully with others. Additionally, they exhibit behavioural qualities, such as conduct, performance, practical application, and engagement, that enable them to address the challenges faced by humanity.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration what has been said, one might reach the conclusion that language and culture are intricately connected to one another. The ultimate objective of multilingualism is to cater to the specific educational requirements of each and every student, with the ultimate goal of enabling all pupils to study to the best extent of their potential. When multilingualism is implemented at all levels of education, it will be possible to support the fullest possible development of all pupils, irrespective of their particular backgrounds. The acceptance of the challenge of multilingualism in our educational institutions is essential to the health and happiness of all of our citizens. In order to gain an understanding of a particular civilization, including its values, customs, contributions, and other aspects, it is necessary to obtain a language. Students have the opportunity to have a better understanding of the many issues that people in these nations experience as a result of the inclusion of foreign languages such as French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, and Russian in their curriculum. As a result, the recommendation of National Education Policy 2020 to include foreign languages at the secondary level enables our students to comprehend that people all over the world are confronted with practically identical kinds of difficulties and to become a part of humanity in order to find solutions to these problems.

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