

A study on the Importance of Learning Mother Tongue in School Curriculum

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Abstract

Mother tongue is the first language or native language of a person. This is the language we learn at home. Learning of mother tongue through formal education is important because it helps to understand cultural heritage moral values. Learning of mother tongue is essential in school curriculum only through this the child can develop proper communication skill and vocabulary

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Human beings are superior to other animals because of their language behaviour. Every living being, has a particular system of communication like sound, gestures etc. But Barker (1964) says, "It is language more obviously than anything else that distinguishes men from the rest of the animal world".¹

Language is an art, not science. Happiness is the main aim of art. It is naturally the medium of conversation. It plays an important role in developing the ideas of individuals. Man being a social creature, language plays a very important and crucial role in his social life. According to Billow (1961) "Understanding and speaking of language are to a large extent matters of knowledge. The only way to form habit is through practice. Fundamentally the problem of language learning is the problem of the formation of good habits in the fourfold skill of language-Listening, speaking, reading and writing. Ability to appreciate literary forms of language is another skill to be achieved through the formal learning of a language. A language is a habit to be developed, a skill to be practiced."²

According to Sapir, "Language is purely human and non- instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols."

The role of language in human life has been aptly described by Watter Pretty (1968) as follows. "Language is the tool perhaps man's most basic tool. It is impossible to imagine life without language, a life without conversation. Writing books mass communication medias and though based upon language developed concepts".³

To live in a society and to maintain a culture, communication is necessary. For a man to function as an effective member of the society, he has to make use of the language used by the rest of the members of that society. Man has thus to acquire the skill making effective use of language. It is a major medium for the transmission of thought. Language is one of the forms of many human communication.

In an increasingly complex and inter connected world, the need of communication through all means has attained permanent importance. It is basically a matter of talking and listening, a form of behaviour of action such as speaking, and reaction such as understanding. It is a distinctive exclusive and universal mark of the human species.

According to Dean, "language in the broad sense is usually defined as a set of symbols used in more or less uniform ways by a number of pupils who are thus able to communicate with each other. Bennette defined language as the 'most distinctive' of human abilities. It is difficult to disentangle the components because they spill over into human personality itself".⁴ Lack of language puts back the individual as well as the nation to primitive stage.

Importance of Mother tongue

Mother tongue is the base in Education. Mother tongue of one's knowledge depends upon other languages. The importance of the study of mother tongue lies in the fact that it is the best medium of thought and feelings. A child learns its mother-tongue from the surroundings in an informal manner. Generally speaking, a person handles his mother tongue more easily than any other language. According to Julian Durkin and Brian Tiffen H.G.Widdowson (1968) "Mother tongue persuades psychological, educational, social, historical and political. Psychologically it is the system of meaningful signs that in his mind works automatically it is a means of identification among the members of the community to which it belongs, Educationally be thorough if than through an unfamiliar linguistic medium."⁵

Teaching of mother tongue is essential in any education. It is the first step in education. It is the foundation of each and every activity in life. Gandhiji says that, "The baby chooses its short lesson from its mother.

Mother tongue is the foundation stone of each and every activity in our life. The government of India, after independence has taken strong steps to raise the regional language to a position of official language. The Government of

different stages have declared that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction for higher studies also. Anil Vidyalankar (1971) remarks “As language is at the basis of all over academic and social pursuit a person who has never examined his language, and yet claims to do academic work through it, is like a biologist who has never examined, his microscope or an astronomer who does not care about the quality of his telescope.”

According to the report of Education Commission (1964-66) “Mother tongue has a pre-eminent claim as the medium of instruction at the school and college stages. The regional language should therefore, be adopted as the media of education in higher education Indian university men will be unable to make their maximum possible contribution to the advancement of learning generally on science and technology in particular, unless there is a continuous means of communication in the shape of the regional language between its masses its artisans and technicians and its university men. The development of the talent in the country will also, in the view of the council, be retarded unless regional language are employed as media of instruction at the university stage”.

Teaching of mother tongue in schools.

National curriculum Framework 2022 recommends that children be instructed in their mother tongue until they are eight.

Learning mother tongue and learning other subjects through mother tongue are two important aspects of formal teaching learning process. Children learned their mother tongue from home but thorough knowledge on mother tongue through formal teaching is essential for the all-round development of the child.

Why the teaching and learning of mother tongue important in school curriculum?

Learning of mother tongue helps the child to achieve personal development and to acquire social cultural and traditional values. Social development and cultural development of a person lead him/her to perform as a good social being in the society.

Cognitive Development

Thorough knowledge in mother tongue helps the child to develop his/her thinking ability. Effective thinking leads to purposeful and proper reasoning. The learning of mother tongue is an effective strategy for cognitive development.

Cognitive development includes the development of critical thinking and problem solving ability. Knowledge in mother tongue helps the student to develop these abilities. Mother tongue provides a strong foundation for learning other subjects and many languages. Learning of mother tongue helps to develop memory and attention. So it is very important in the process of teaching and learning.

Emotional Development

Mother tongue education helps the individual to express his/her feelings, emotions and desires in an effective manner. Only mother tongue is act as a powerful media to present all emotions with effective intensity. Emotional stability is very important for every individual. They can use mother tongue as an effective media for presenting their feelings and attain emotional stability.

Better Engagement

Learning of mother tongue helps the child to think properly and act accordingly. So they are more engaged in learning activities than others. Thorough knowledge in mother tongue is essential to understand the subject matter effectively and it helps the child to engage in productive outcomes.

Literature and Creativity

Knowledge in mother tongue is a bridge to enter its literature. The students having thorough knowledge in mother tongue are interested in reading and comprehend literature. They are enabled to develop their creativity and imagination. Learning of mother tongue is very important for the development of reading habit among children. Reading of literature promotes creativity and imagination on them. Reading habit leads to positive attitude towards classroom learning and helps the students for getting good academic achievement.

Communication and Vocabulary

Thorough knowledge in mother tongue helps the students to develop their communication skill and vocabulary. They are comfortable in expressing themselves in their native language and it helps them to maintain good and effective social relationships. They can express their needs and requirements effectively it will lead to a more positive learning environment.

Being a good citizen is the foremost aim of an individual. Character building is very essential for attaining this goal. A good social being must well behaved in the society.

Learning of Mother tongue played a vital role in framing the character of children; because through the knowledge of mother tongue they can achieve social norms and values. This enabled them to modify their habits and character in accordance with the needs of the society.

Cultural Development

Learning of Mother tongue helps the children to achieve knowledge about their tradition, heritage and culture. Mother tongue is the way to receive and practice cultural values. It helps to focused on our customs and rituals. Attainment of traditional and cultural values helps them to become socially responsible persons.

Conclusion

Learning of mother tongue is very important and essential for the all-round development of children. Thorough knowledge in mother tongue fosters class room interactions. Teacher – pupil relationships and helps to preserve our traditional heritage and culture. Mother tongue is the effective and efficient media to express emotions, thoughts and dreams. It is the effective and efficient way to receive social and cultural values.

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