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Multilingualism

- **INTRODUCTION :-**

In the present world there are around 6000 languages grouped under language various language families spoken in 200 states. The existence of all these languages side by side resulted in multilingualism. Knowing two or more than two languages became the need for communication among speech communities as well as individuals.

- **NATURE :-**

Multilingualism can be defined as an occurrence regarding an individual speaker who uses two or more languages, a community of speakers where two or more languages are used, or between speakers of two languages. Multilingua-lism basically arises due to the need to communicate between speakers of two languages and across speech communities. Multilingualism is not a

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it is not a recent phenomenon; it was prevalent in the ancient time also. This need further resulted in lingua francas, pidgins and phenomenon like code switching. These are the products of Multilingualism.

- Multilingualism has various advantages:

(a) Accessibility to knowledge of other cultures;
(b) Communication between different linguistic and cultural groups become easier;
(c) High cognitive development of a child;
(d) A broader world view, etc.

Multilingual speakers outnumber monolingual speakers in the world's population. Owing to the ease of access to information facilitated by the Internet, individuals' exposure to multiple languages is becoming increasingly frequent, thereby promoting a need to acquire additional languages.

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• MULTILINGUALISM IN INDIA :-

Language was the basis of reorganization of the states in India after independence and the demand for further reorganization of new states on this basis has been conceded from time to time.

Modern India, as per the 1961 count, has more than 1652 mother tongues, genetically belonging to five different language families. Apart from them 52 mother tongues were considered unclassified at that time. Over 81 languages are used in the print media, 71 languages are used in radio. Inspite of this enormous diversity, several linguistic and cultural elments bind India into one linguistic and sociolinguistic area.

Multilingualistic education typically refers to **'first-language-first education', that is schooling which begins in the mother-tongue and transitions to additional languages.**

In India, the people of various states use various languages so India is called a Multi-lingual country. Each state has its own regional language as official language, Hindi is the

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official language of the country. However, English is the de-facto official language used for communication, business, education and governance making it convenient to link the various linguistic regions.
A significant feature of Indian Multilingualism is that it is complementary. Thus, an individual may use a particular language at home another in the neighbourhood, and still another in certain formal domains such as education, administration and for communication.
In the area of school education, Govt.-run schools use the regional language as medium for instructions while in privately-run schools English is the medium.

• STAGES OF MLE PROGRAM

An analysis of multilingual education programmes (UNESCO) (2003, 2005) suggests that instruction take place in the following stages:-

Stage 1: learning takes place entirely in the child's home language.

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Stage 2: Building fluency in the mother-tongue & introduction of oral fluency in second language.

Stage 3: Building oral fluency in the Second language. Introduction of literacy in second language.

Stage 4: using both first language and second language for lifelong learning.

The multilingualist education in this approach emphasizes first language first in the child, taping the socio-cultural curriculum in the classroom culture and then bridge to second language. The unique thing in this approach is to involve the community in creating their own curriculum and minimise the theoritical hegemony, thereby creating a new set of people who believe in the ethics of creating and sharing knowledge for the society than to limit it to the theoreticians.

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achievement test scores, reduced rates of school drop outs, and student absenteeism from increased community involvement in education and enhanced student self-esteem.' (Hakuta 1986)

Several recent studies have now convincingly shown that there is a highly positive relationship between bilingualism, cognitive flexibility, and scholastic achievement. Bilingual children not only have control over several different languages but they are also academically more creative and socially more tolerant. The wide range of linguistic repertoires that they control equips them to negotiate different social situations more efficiently. There is also substantial evidence to show that bilingual children excel in divergent thinking.

- **ROLE OF TEACHERS IN MULTILINGUAL CLASSROOM:**

The role of the teacher in a multilingual classroom is essential.

1. **Teacher has to be Multilingual too.**
   Be able to explain and translate where the students don't understand with a few simple words...

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2. **Must be a good communicator** in order to explain and guide the students that they could trust him/her, must know how to arrive straight to the point in order to be clear and precise.
3. **Must be a good mediator**, must know the cultures of different countries and the specificity of their languages in order to not create problem but resolve them
4. **Be a good psychologist**, must understand at first sight if the students follow him/her, if they understand and if not to make clear quickly all the misunderstanding.
5. **Be a good cooperator**, make all the students cooperate to improve skills in students.

- **NEED TO PROMOTE MULTILINGUALISM**

In today's global environment there is a great need for multilingualism. It will help in :-

- Personal growth
- Communication for business
- Job mobility

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- Study abroad
- Increase in vocabulary and speech
- Tolerance and respect towards other cultures.

Now we also know of the positive relationship between multilingualism, cognitive growth, and educational achievement, there is every need to promote multilingual education in schools.

- **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION:**

1. Pre-service and in-service programmes for teachers must sensitise them to the nature, structure and functions of language, process of language acquisition in children, language change, emergent and early literacy and equip them with strategies that can help build on the resources of a multilingual classroom.

2. Researchers in the area of language learning and language-teaching methods must be supported and promoted by higher learning

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institutions in the country.

3. For languages which are oral in nature, they must be written down in a script form so that the children of those community have access to their culture and learn in their own language till they become proficient in state/regional language.

4. Publishers must be encouraged and supported to publish print material in lesser known minority/regional/tribal languages.

• CONCLUSION :

In an increasingly globalized and technologically advancing world, language boundaries are fuzzy and fluid. There is a multiplicity of language practices and neo-cultural identity formations. Multilingual heteroglossic education programs must be developed to support multiple languages and literacies all over.

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