Nepal Academy

PERSPECTIVES ON MOTHER TONGUE-BASED
MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Edited by
YOGENDRA P. YADAVA
LAVA DEO AWASTHI

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Kamaladi, Kathmandu

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Chancellor's Remarks

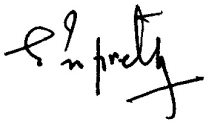
It is well known to all that Nepal Academy, first established as Royal Nepal Academy in 2014 V.S., has been carrying out its responsibilities assigned by the state. Its main objectives are to bring out important publications related to the study, research and promotion of the various disciplines such as Nepalese languages, literature, arts, culture and other fields of knowledge. Following the people's movement in 2062/63 V.S. the disciplines such as fine arts, drama and music have been segregated from Royal Nepal academy and incorporated into separate academies. Under Nepal Academy Act 2064 Nepal Academy has been established with the objectives to promote Nepalese languages, literature, culture social sciences and philosophy through the promotion of study and research in these disciplines. This academy has been now actively involved in its activities entrusted to it as its legacy since its inception.

We have been committed to addressing the country's diversity existing in language, literature, religion, philosophy and other fields and engage the experts in Nepalese academia in order to enrich the unity in diversity. As an umbrella organization of all Nepalese scholars residing within Nepal and abroad this academy promises to maximally utilize their knowledge and expertise and accord them academic status. It has formulated its policy and programmes with a view to creating their common forum.

In addition, we have been committed to enhancing the reputation of Nepal Academy through developing institutional understanding with the international organizations established

with similar pursuits. We have felt the necessity to seek the cooperation of the entire academia and develop this academy as an academic organization of international repute. All the academicians know it well that Nepal Academy has been active in exchanging knowledge through seminars, conferences, studies, research and publications.

Dictionaries and grammars are being prepared under the plan of The Department of Language (Mother Tongue, Dictionary and Grammar) in the different Nepalese languages. *Perspectives on Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education in Nepal* has been prepared and published under this plan. It aims to bring together the articles developed and presented in various seminars on use of mother tongues in basic education. It is expected to have greater utility for implementing Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education policy and programme in the country. Nepal Academy appreciates the authors' contributions to this volume. We thank Yogendra P. Yadava and Lava Deo Awasthi as editors for bringing out this volume. We hope this volume will be appreciated by the language communities in Nepal and elsewhere.



Nepal Academy, Kamaladi,
Kathmandu, Nepal

Ganga Prasad Uprety
Chancellor

From the Publisher

Nepal Academy has been established to cater to the support of strengthening Nepal as a nation and helping the sustainable development of Nepalese nationality through the study and research in language, literature, culture, philosophy, social sciences and the various aspects of Nepalese life. It is, therefore, the prime responsibility of Nepal Academy to fulfill the knowledge required for the nation. Nepal Academy has been engaged in materializing the needs of Nepal as nation through the study of Nepal's tangible and intangible heritage for the last 63 years.

Presently Nepal Academy consists of eleven departments which have been dedicated to the promotion of their respective disciplines through organizing talks and seminars and publishing research reports, journals, magazines and books.

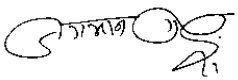
Likewise, Nepal Academy has been continuously involved in the research and study supporting the preservation of the status of Nepal through the promotion of mutual goodwill amongst Nepalese in keeping with the existing time.

Of the eleven departments The Department of Language (Mother Tongue, Dictionary and Grammar) has been carrying out works on lexicography, grammar writing and other linguistic activities related to the mother tongues spoken in Nepal.

In this context, *Perspectives on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education* has been completed as a project of this department. This volume is a collection of articles dedicated to the various issues and experiences related to

implementing the use of mother tongues in basic education in a linguistically diverse country like Nepal. Prof. Dr. Yogendra P. Yadava, member of Academic Council, Nepal Academy and Dr. Lava Deo Awasthi, Chairperson, Language Commission, deserve our thanks and appreciation for jointly editing this volume. Our thanks are due to Shashi Chalise, Ranjan and other individuals for bringing it out. We hope this volume would prove to be a great asset in the field of mother tongue-based multilingual education in the Nepalese context.

Nepal Academy, Kamaladi,
Kathmandu, Nepal



Dr. Jagman Gurung
Vice-chancellor

Contents

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PÄ VI AHONEN holds a Master's degree in pedagogy, sociology and psychology, specializing in student counselling. She has 27 years' experience in development cooperation, including 17 years in education development in different countries such as Serbia, Palestine, Bhutan and Saudi-Arabia. In Nepal she worked in two different programs for 15 years. Her assignment as a Technical Advisor in Multilingual Education Project (2007-2009) was the most important project and was an important learning experience. The project was implemented by the Department of Education (DoE) ministry of education (MoE) in close cooperation with Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities, National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities and Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University. Mother tongue education program was implemented in six districts, seven schools and eight languages during the project period. The Multilingual Education Guidelines were developed and forwarded to MoE for final endorsement.

LAVA DEO AWASTHI earned an MA degree in Humanities and Social Sciences (in English Literature) in 1983 from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. He did an MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL in 1989 from Leicester University, UK and a PhD on "Exploring Monolingual School Practices in Multilingual Nepal" from the Danish University of Education, Denmark in 2004. Dr Awasthi was the former Director General of the Department of Education and former Secretary to the Government of Nepal. At present he is serving as the Chairperson of the Language Commission in Nepal. He has taught in schools and university campuses and is a visiting faculty at Kathmandu University in Nepal. He has authored several articles on language policy and planning, language and learning, and multilingualism and multilingual education.

PRADEEP L. BAJRACHARYA served at the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFDIN) as Senior officer. Bajracharya was responsible for coordinating languge policy. He looked at mother tongue education in collaboration with ethnic minorities of Nepal.

CHUDA MANI BANDHU is Emeritus Professor of Nepali and served as the founder Head of Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University from 1996 to 2000. He also worked as member of Nepal Academy from 1984 to 1990. He taught Nepali linguistics, published a number of books and articles in different journals. He participated in several national and international seminars and conferences on linguistics, folklore and literature. He was the founder member and secretary of Nepal Folklore Society. He is now chairing the Akshar Sadan.

PREM BHATTARAI did an M.Ed. in English Education from Tribhuvan University in 1993. He completed his M.A. in Population and Development from Shiraz University, Iran under UNFPA fellowship in 2003. Bhattarai has worked in different capacities in the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for 26 years. At present he is working as the Director of Curriculum Development Centre, under Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. He is responsible for coordinating the development of school level curriculum from grades 1-12. He is also involved in development and implementation of the guidelines and other policy instruments related to school curricula. He also worked in mother tongue-based literacy and lifelong programs.

TOYA NATH BHATTARAI did an MA in Political Science in 1981 and an M.Ed in English Language Teaching from Tribhuvan University in 1987. He completed Public Policy Analysis course under Hubert Humphrey Fellowship of Fulbright Exchange Program at The American University in Washington DC USA during 1994-95. Bhattarai worked for the Government of Nepal for thirty three years from 1978 through 2011 in the Ministry of Education and at the parliament secretariat. He represented the

Government of Nepal and presented research papers on Nepal's language policy and medium of instruction policy in a number of national and international seminars and conferences. His research papers have been published in the proceedings of international conference and journals. Currently Bhattarai is doing research on multilingual education for a PhD degree at Kathmandu University School of Education.

MADHAV DAHAL was associated with Non-Formal Education under the Ministry of Education. Presently he is working in the center of Distance Education programs.

DUBI NANDA DHAKAL is Professor and Head of Central Department of Linguistics at Tribhuvan University, and an advisor to the Language Commission, Nepal. He obtained his PhD from Tribhuvan University writing a typologically-informed grammatical description of Darai, an Indo-Aryan language. His interests include language documentation, language planning, description of lesser-described languages, and language typology among others. He has published grammatical descriptions of Darai, Majhi, Bote and Rana Tharu languages. In addition, he has published glossaries and dictionaries of Nubri and Raji languages. The publications made in collaborations with other scholars are the glossaries of Tsum, and Gyalsumdo. He has also co-authored grammar and dictionary of Baram language. He has collaborated with a number of foreign scholars from various universities such as University of Guilford, and Unviersity of Bristol (UK), Australian National University (Australia), and Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville (USA). His articles have been published in international peer-reviewed journals inculding *Indian Linguistics*, *North East Indian Lingustics*, *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, *Himalayan Linguistics, Nepalese Linguistics*.

NAOMI FILLMORE is an experienced language, education, and development specialist. Over the last decade, she has supported language and education initiatives as a teacher, researcher, manager, and adviser in diverse settings across South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Indigenous Australia. In 2018, she served as the

mother tongue-based multilingual education adviser to the Language Commission in Nepal. Naomi holds an MA in International Development from Deakin University, completed through research on multilingual education reform in the Philippines, and a BA in Applied Linguistics from Griffith University. Her research interests include mother tongue-based multilingual education, early grade reading, literacy development, inclusive education, education policy reform, and implementation, and first and second language acquisition.

GEHA NATH GAUTAM completed an M.A. in Nepali Language and an M.Ed in Nepali eduction from Tribhuvan University in 1998 and 2000, respectively. He taught in schools for 5 years. From 1996 onwards he worked as School Supervisor/Section Officer, Under secretary/District Education Officer and Director under the Ministry of Education. He led the Campaign for Literacy in Sindhupalchowk as the first district of Nepal to be declared as the literate district. Similarly, he also contributed to the implementation of Multilingual Education. He has published a number of articles on education and innovation. He has been working for Mid-day Meal, Water Health Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in schools and has contributed to developing Model Schools for quality education in Nepal. Currently he is working as Director in the Center for Education and Human Research Development (CEHRD), Sanothimi under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.

DAVID A. HOUGH has dedicated his academic career to research, teaching and activism in support of linguistic and cultural human rights for indigenous and minority peoples. He has worked extensively in Asia and the Pacific to develop dictionaries and learning materials based on indigenous knowledge systems. From 2000 to 2003 he was Chief Scientific Researcher for the Kosrae State Department of Education in Micronesia, a project sponsored by the Ministry of Education, HM Government of Japan. From 2007 to 2008 he served as Chief Technical Advisor to the Ministry of Education and Sports Government of Nepal, where he oversaw a multilingual education project to enable the linguistic minority groups in the country to be educated in their mother tongues. He

has also worked in Far East Russia with the Naanai and Udeghe communities, as well as in Japan on issues of Ainu and Uchinaa (Okinawan) linguistic and human rights. From 2013 to 2017 Dr. Hough served as Senior Advisor for Bilingual Education for the Public School System of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. In 2017 he received an official commendation from the Ambassador of Japan to the Marshall Islands for helping to build goodwill and understanding between the two countries.

SUSAN MALONE began her career in mother tongue-based education (MTBE) with SIL International in Papua New Guinea (1982-1991). After earning a Ph.D. at Indiana University-Bloomington in 1997 she served as SIL's Asia Area Literacy Coordinator (1998-2008) and as a visiting lecturer at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia (RILCA) with Mahidol University, Thailand. Since 2009, Dr Malone has continued to support MTBE in over thirty countries. She has served as an advisor for RILCA's program in southern Thailand, and as a consultant for Save the Children in Viet Nam, BRAC in Bangladesh, UNICEF in Viet Nam, LIBTRALO in Liberia, UNICEF in western Asia and the Ministry of Education in Timor Leste. In addition to consulting, she has coordinated numerous MTB MLE training workshops and international conferences in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. In 2016, she received an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree (honoris causa) from Mahidol University, Thailand. Dr. Malone is the author of the *Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education* (2007), and the *MTB MLE Resource Kit (*2016), both produced by UNESCO's Asia and the Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok. Dr. Malone's MTBE resources are available online at https://www.sil-lead.org/susanmalone.

MAHENDRA KUMAR MISHRA's major works on Odisha folklore include *Visioning Folklore* (2002), *Saora Tales and Songs* (2005), *Oral epics of Kalahandi* (2007), *Oral poetry of Kalahandi* (2008). He has authored of five books on Odia and tribal folklore. He has also compiled *Folktales of Odisha* (National Book Trust, New Delhi). Dr Mishra was the State Coordinator for Multilingual

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AJIT MOHANTY was a Professor of Psychology and ICSSR National Fellow in Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has over 180 publications including 10 books, papers and book Chapters. His latest book *The Multilingual Reality: Living with Languages* (2019) has been published by Multilingual Matters, UK/USA. He is a Fellow and past-President of the National Academy of Psychology, India and a Fellow of the Association of Psychological Science, USA "in recognition of (his) sustained outstanding contributions to advancement of psychological science". He was Fulbright Visiting Professor in Columbia University (2007-08), Fulbright Senior Scholar (University of Wisconsin), Killam Scholar (University of Alberta), Senior Fellow (Central Institute of Indian Languages), Nehru Chair Professor (M. S. University, Baroda), Visiting Professor at University of Western Ontario and University of Toronto and UGC Emeritus Professor in Utkal University. He has worked with tribal children and communities as an action researcher for over four decades and continues to engage with issues of tribal languages and education. *Encyclopaedia of Applied Linguistics*, 2013 (Springer) carries a Biographical entry on Professor Mohanty for his eminent contributions to the field of Applied Educational Linguistics. He drafted the 2014 Policy for Mother Tongue based Multilingual Education of tribal children in Odisha (India).

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MAYA RAI graduated in English literature and language and joined the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) as Gazetted Officer in 1988. During her tenure in MoEST she worked in different posts. Rai retired as Director of Eastern Regional Education Directorate. She is an expert in English Language Teaching and mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB/MLE) and presented papers in ELT International Conference in Glasgow, UK, and MLE Conference in Jawaharlal Nehru University, India. She developed school level English curricula, textbooks, listening texts, test items, radio lessons for Open Schools, teacher's guides and trained teacher trainers. Ms Rai as Deputy Director of National Centre for Educational Development had initiated MTB/MLE Teacher Training Program and developed Curricula for Teacher Training. As Resource Person, she had collaborated with teachers of 18 languages to develop Teacher Training Curricula, Manuals and Self Learning Materials,

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SHELLEY K. TAYLOR, Professor of Applied Linguistics (Western University, Canada), teaches graduate courses comprising topics ranging from minority language issues, to teaching and

learning English as a 2nd language and French as a 2nd language, and critical language awareness. Her current research focusses on *Language and Literacy Learning among Youth Refugees*. Earlier research involved the educational experiences of Nepali-Bhutanese refugee children in Canada, English medium instruction in higher education in Denmark, plurilingualism in TESOL, and students' plurilingual development in Canadian-French immersion programs. Her language-in-education and multilingual policy interests have included multilingual language education and materials development in Nepal, and trilingual language policy in Greenland. She has published in the *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics; Canadian Modern Language Review; Colombian Journal of Bilingual Education/GiST Education and Learning Research Journal; Copenhagen Studies in Bilingualism; International Journal of Bilingual Education & Bilingualism; Race, Ethnicity & Education* and *TESOL Quarterly* as well as *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching* (2018) and *An introduction to applied linguistics* (Schmitt & Rodgers, Eds., 2019). She has been the convener of an International Research Network for AILA (**"**Adapting Mainstream Learning Environments to and for Learners from Migrant Backgrounds: Making Digital and Linguistic Knowledge Links") since 2011.

FATIK BAHADUR THAPA holds Master's degree in Regional Development Planning and Management. He has been engaged in development sectors in various capacities. He provided consultancy services in designing and conducting trainings to ILO, Nepal, Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI), Local Development Training Academy (LDTA), Plan Nepal, Rautahat for three decades. He also provided consultancy services in designing and conducting training to ILO, Nepal, Training Institute for Technical Instruction (TITI), Local Development Training Academy (LDTA), Plan Nepal, Rautahat. He has research experiences on Baseline Study on a number of Adibasi Janajati Administrators, Professionals, Managers and Technicians and in Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary bodies; Traditional Economies in Nepal; Roles of Political Leaders from Indigenous Communities in the Development sectors. He coordinated the Age

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NIRMAL MAN TULADHAR is Emeritus Professor of linguistics and former Executive Director of Centre for Nepalese and Asian Studies (CNAS), Tribhuvan University. He served as Chief and Managing Editor of *Contributions of Nepalese Studies* for several years, Member Secretary of Linguistic Survey of Nepal project and taught linguistics at Tribhuvan University. He participated in a number of national and international conferences and contributed articles on Nepalese languages. He also served as President of Linguistic Society of Nepal and is now chairing Social Science Baha. He was a Japan Foundation Fellow under the Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Programme at Kyoto University, Japan.

MIRANDA WEINBERG is Visiting Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Swarthmore College in the United States. Her research focusses on multilingual education, language revitalization, and language shift in the United States and Nepal. She holds a PhD in Educational Linguistics and Linguistic Anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. Her research has been published in journals such as *Language and Communication, Linguistics and Education,* the *Journal of Language, Identity and Education,* and *Signs and Society*. In addition to scholarly work, she has been a Save the Children-University Partnership for Educational Research Fellow and has built software for endangered language teaching at Rosetta Stone.

YOGENDRA P. YADAVA is member of the Academic Council heading Department of Mother Tongues at Nepal Academy for a second term and honorary member of Linguistic Society of America. He is Emeritus Professor of linguistics at Tribhuvan University. The areas of his academic interest include formal syntax, lexicography, Nepalese languages and their documentation, and mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE). Yadava completed PhD in linguistics at EFLU, Hyderabad (India),

writing a dissertation in generative syntax. He was Fulbright visiting scholar at University of Chicago, fellow at International Institute of Asian Studies, Leiden, and University of Mainz (Germany). He edited *Readings in Maithili Language, Literature and Culture* (Nepal Academy, 1998) and authored *Issues in Maithili syntax* (Lincom Europa, 1998) and *Prajna Maithili-Nepali-English Dictionary* (with Nepali and English Glossaries (Nepal Academy) 2017). He also co-edited a number of books including *Topics in Nepalese Linguistics* (1999), *Contemporary Issues in Nepalese Linguistics* (2005), *The Indigenous Languages of Nepal: Situation, Policy and Coordination* (2006), *Recent Issues in Nepalese Linguistics* (LSN, 2007)), *A Grammar of Baram* (2010), *Himalayan Linguistics vol 10.1 In memory of Michael Noonan and David Watters*, (UCSB, 2010), *Ethnologue: Languages of Nepal (*2012), *Prajna Nepali-English Dictionary (*with English-Nepali Glossary) (2014), and co-authored *Medium of Instruction and Languages for Education (MILE): Ways forward for Education Policy, Planning and Practice in Nepal (*2017). Yadava contributed several articles to journals and books and served on the editorial board of international journals.

1

Introduction[1]

YOGENDRA P. YADAVA
AND
LAVA DEO AWASTHI

Nepal, like other countries of the Asia and Pacific region, is characterized by linguistic diversity along with its ethno-cultural multiplicity. This country, despite being small in area (56, 827 sq mi) and inhabited by almost 30 million people (Census 2011) of 125 officially recognized castes and ethnic groups practising ten different faith systems (viz. Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Kirat, Christianity, Prakriti, Bon, Jainism, Bahai and Sikhism (CBS 2012: 4)), is estimated to speak approximately 123 languages in its different climatic and ecological zones (CBS 2012: 4, Yadava 2013, 2014).

Basic education systems in multilingual societies have almost been monolingual globally, using a dominant language. Nepal is not immune from this predicament. Athough the *Constitution of Nepal* (2015) has enshrined children's right to education through mother tongues, Nepali, the dominant and official language in the country, has alone

1. *We would like to express our thanks to Shashi Chalise, Krishna Kumar Sah, Ranjan Ghimire, Basanta Raj Shrestha and several others for their suport in bringing out this volume promptly despit of strict lockdown during the global outbreak of COVID- 19 Pandemic.*

been practically used as the medium of instruction (MoI) at community schools though private schools have invariably been using English as MoI. It is, however, to be noted that there has been a growing trend recently to shift to English as MoI even at community schools for facilitating mobility, foreign employment, technical education, and so on.

There has almost been unanimity in the literature that learning occurs best in the language a child speaks most fluently, which is obviously a home language or mother tongue. Basic education through mother tongue can be helpful for developing children's cognitive capital and for providing them with a firm foundation to learn other languages more quickly. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB MLE) in early education has been more effective in enhancing reading ability, conceptual development and learnability of other languages (UNESCO Bangkok, 2014). As a result, children have been found better at reading comprehension, mathematics and learning a second or foreign language.

Several longitudinal studies of mother tongue medium and English medium schools in Asia Pacific region including Papua New Guinea (PNG) also support it. In PNG, the most linguistically diverse country in the world with over 800 distinct languages spoken by 6 million people, a mother tongue-based bilingual education programme was introduced in 1995. A longitudinal comparison of its MT and English medium schools has found that the former has been more effective in enhancing quality education than the latter. In Nepal as well a similar study comparing Rajbanshi medium and Nepali medium schools shows that dropout rate has been reduced and there has been better performance in other subjects such as Nepali, mathematics and science in the former than the latter (Rajbanshi 2014).

Recognizing the importance of MTB MLE Nepal has been signatory to several international and regional human rights documents (instruments) which regulate the right to

education in relation to language and made legal provisions for this purpose since the restoration of democracy in 1990. It was with the promulgation of the constitution of Nepal (1990) that right to education through mother tongue was legally recognized in the country. As a corollary, Language Policy Recommendation Commission (LPRC) 1994 recommended in its report that the mother tongue should be introduced in the education system as the medium of instruction as well as the subject. Thus, LPRC provided a basis for further policy pronouncements for implementing MTB MLE in Nepal.

It is important to note that in the current context of federal restructuring of the state the local governments have been entrusted with the responsibility for implementing school education including MTB MLE. However, there has been acute dearth of relevant literature in this field despite the fact that a number of studies on MLE have been conducted by national and international experts and several seminars/ workshops have been organized with paper presentations by MLE specialists. Hence, the Department of Mother Tongues at Nepal Academy decided to collect the write-ups related to the aforesaid seminars, workshops and studies, and edit and publish them as a volume on MTB MLE in Nepal.. In this regard, we extend our gratitude for the support we received from the contributors and highly appreciate their response for making the articles available in time for this publication. We hope this volume dealing with the relevant issues in MTB MLE in Nepal can be a valuable asset to both policy makers and practitioners in this field.

This volume titled *Perspectives on Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education in Nepal* consists of 15 articles. They have been briefly described as follows:

The article by Bajracharya et al. (including Skutnabb-Kangas as the lead author) sets out the ethnolinguistic context of Nepal and tries to explain why MLE is essential. It draws on the experiences from

countries like India, Finland, Norway, and Peru. It also deals with national legal provisions and international human rights obligations. Finally, it recommends possible future directions for MLE in Nepal.

In their article Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty analyze the policy and strategy for MLE in Nepal in terms of placing language in educational issues in a broader societal, economic and political framework. They also look at broader language policy and planning perspectives and issues, MLE scenarios, current experiences from the country and specific challenges in MLE implementation strategies. Finally, the article is summed up with viable recommendations.

In his article Hough defines multilingual education and explains why it is important for children's better education in the Nepalese context. He then explores appropriate strategies for implementing MLE in the country. He finally focusses on the approach called *cascading*, whereby he means: "If each community, after developing their own programme, goes on to train five new communities, the goal can be reached."

Taylor's article focuses on the relevance of MLE in Nepal and suggests a framework for implementing the MLE programme.

Ahonen summarizes the completion report on the project "Multilingual Education Programme for all non- Nepali Speaking Students Primary Schools in Nepal 2007-2009" commissioned by the Ministry of Education (Government of Nepal) with technical support from the Government of Finland. This report deals with the project's objectives, procedure, outcomes, and the ways forward.

In her article Malone defines MTB MLE and explains why it is important for better education. She holds that planning, implementing and sustaining MT-Based MLE programme in multiple language communities are challenging, especially in multi-lingual countries lacking extensive financial resources. She argues, "MT-Based MLE programmes enable students from non-dominant language

communities to build a strong educational foundation in the language they know best—their MT or first language (L1)—and a good bridge to the official language—the school L2—and other languages of learning (L3, L4, etc.) and then encourage them to use both / all their languages for life-long learning". She also shows how theorists consider MTB MLE as bridge for achieving better education.

In his article Awasthi looks at theoretical premises of mother tongue medium education and explores to what extent minority mother tongues have been recognized as the language(s) of instruction. He also shows why a particular language has been used as the medium of education and what are various models that are seen successful in achieving linguistic, educational, social and identity goals. In addition, he wants to show how high levels of bilingualism contributes to attaining higher levels of success in school and society, ensuring harmonious bilingual and bicultural abilities, opening ways for employability and wellness. In the following part, he discusses some of the approaches and attitudes to minorities in the educational process and charts the stages that have originally been identified in minority education in a specific context.

The goal of Yadava's article is to envisage the MTB MLE Framework in order to cater to the need for designing an architecture for managing and implementing the educational programmes in Nepal, a linguistically diverse country. It has been organized into three sections. Section 1 deals with the concept, rationale, sociolinguistic context, language-in-education policy existing in global context as well as Nepal, MLE-related issues, and challenges and the objectives of the study in question. Section 2 elaborates the core components of MTB MLE such as language typology of schools, selection, sequencing and transition of languages in school education, appropriate pedagogies, curricula and material development, capacity building, supporting system, advocacy strategy, sustainability, functional linkage among

line agencies, language preservation through MTB MLE programme, and monitoring and evaluation. Finally, this framework highlights some residual issues related to this study in the current federal restructuring of the state, especially legal empowerment of the local government, which has been entrusted with the responsibility for implementing school education.

In her article Pradhan draws on the fieldwork conducted at Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHSS), a government school running MLE programme, to discuss the ways in which the notion of 'the local' (*sthaniya*) played an important role in this process. This article "argues that in the multilingual context of MLE schools such as JKHSS, where different languages and forms of knowledge come together, the discourse of 'local' can emerge as an important process in the ongoing construction of relevant knowledge. Given contemporary Nepal's socio-political context with nascent spaces for the language of diversity and inclusion, these dynamics are both a response to historical development and local relevance." Here, Pradhan closely observed localised practices relating to language use vis-á-vis broader historical contexts.

In his article Mishra deals with the paradigm shift in children's education through MLE and compares his experiences about planning and implementing MLE in the two neighbouring countries India (especially the state of Odisha) and Nepal.

Weinberg's article looks into the space between national language policies and school-level decisions and practices with reference to the three schools in Dhimal-speaking area in the district of Jhapa in Nepal. It shows that there are many challenges for implementing the constitutional rights of children for their education through mother tongues. Nevertheless, both policies and practices have opened significant ideological and implementational space (Hornberger 2002, 2005) for the advancement of indigenous

languages and their speakers. It sums up by arguing that "There may be a long way to go to ensure quality multilingual education for all Nepali students, but these students are experiencing, and enjoying, early steps toward that goal".

Bandhu's paper advocates for integrating local languages and cultures into the education policy and programmes with particular emphasis on the oral approach to education in the beginning with short term programmes and then going for long term planning in the context of recent developments in MLE in Nepal.

Dhakal's article presents a historical outline of arguments for and against the use of indigenous languages in education in Nepal. It argues for searching appropriate alternative models of MLE in order to implement successful MLE programmes in the country.

Fillmore's article is a brief account of her recent study in Nepal which offers an insight into the perceptions and practices of parents, teachers and students in six primary schools in remote Nepal. Its "findings show that, overwhelmingly, parents and teachers support the new constitutional provision, with 90 per cent of parents and 98 per cent of teachers agreeing that children have a right to education in their mother tongue."

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Multilingual education and Nepal: A concept note

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1 Introduction

1.1 Nepal: Demographic, linguistic and socio-cultural background

Nepal is a landlocked country, bordering with China in the North and India in the East, South and West. It has an

1 This Concept paper is one of the results from the 3-day intensive course *Language Policy, Mother-tongue-based Multilingual Education and Linguistic Human Rights* which took place in Kathmandu in February 2008, with Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas as the teacher ("Guruma"/"Didi"), under the auspices of the *Multilingual Education Program* (a joint effort on the part of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) of Nepal and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of Finland. The participants suggested towards the end of the course that they write a concept paper, discussed and decided on the content and divided the work between themselves. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas put together the various parts and added some issues. Iina Nurmela, the Young Technical Advisor of the project, organised, with support from the rest of the project team but especially Sangmo Yonjan-Tamang, the course with enormous efficiency and dedication. Thanks are due to Iina without whom nothing would have happened.

area of 147, 181 sq km, with a length of 885 km from east to west, and a mean breadth of 193 km from north to south (Yadava & Turin 2006: 7). Geographically, it consists of four layers of distinct zones: 1) the Himalayas 2) the Mahabharata range, 3) the Siwalik, and 4) the Terai. All these geographic belts of Nepal run from east to west. As of 3 April 2018, Nepal is divided into 7 provinces and 77 districts. It has 753 local units. There are 6 metropolises, 11 sub-metropolises, 276 municipal councils, and 460 village councils for official works. The constitution grants 22 absolute powers to the local units while they share 15 more powers with the central and provincial governments. In the 2011 census, Nepal's population was approximately 26 million people. Nepali people belong to several different languages, cultures, social, caste and ethnic backgrounds. The census 2011 noted 125 castes and ethnic groups and recorded 123 plus languages (while the Ethnologue, 15th edition (www.ethnologue.org) claims 123 living languages, and and Yonjan-Tamang (2006) claims over 143 languages. The mother tongues enumerated in the census of 2011 (except Kusunda) belong to four language families: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian, while Kusunda is a language isolate consisting of a single language without any genetic relationship with other languages. The Indo-Aryan subfamily (excluding English), constitutes the largest group in terms of the numeric strength of their speakers, nearly 82.1% (Census 2011).

The Sino-Tibetan family of Nepal's languages forms a part of its Tibeto-Burman group. Though spoken by relatively less number of people than the Indo-European family (17.3%), it includes a greater number of languages, about 63 languages (Census 2011).

Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages rank third at 0.19% and fourth at 0.13%, respectively, while only about 28 people speak Kusunda (Yadava 2014:55). Nepal's mother tongues may be categorised into major and minor groups in terms of the number of their speakers recorded in the census of 2011. If 100, 000 speakers is the cut off for 'major' languages, their number in Nepal is 19, and their cumulative percentage of the population is approximately 96%. Inversely, the remaining 104 plus languages (barring a few of the cross-border languages with their kin states) are spoken by about 4% of Nepal's total population (Yadava 2014). Most languages have fairly few speakers; fewer than 20 have more than 100, 000 speakers. Cultural and linguistic diversity are one of Nepal's national treasures. Nepal has a responsibility to conserve a rich linguistic and cultural heritage.

Inspired by the Popular Movement of 2006, people voiced their aspirations for changes in different aspects of national development including education system. The new Constitutional Assembly, elected on the 10th April 2008 declared Nepal a republic and was going to adopt a new federal structure for the state. The present Constitution of Nepal, adopted in 2015, establishes Nepal as a federal secular parliamentary republic. Equity and social inclusion are high on the reform agenda. Education has been recognized as the fundamental right in this Constitution.

Since mid-1950s Nepal has embarked upon a planned approach to development in various areas including the education sector. The country has a three-year interim plan for education (2007/09). At present, efforts are underway for improving educational access and quality at primary and secondary levels through interventions such as Education for All (EFA), Teacher Education Project (TEP), Secondary

Education Support Program (SESP), Community School Support Programme (CSSP), Food for Education (FfE), Higher Education Project (HEP) I & II, etc.

Considering the richness of indigenous knowledge, cultures and languages in the country, emphasis has been placed on how best schools can utilize local resources and offer education integrating ground realities with the knowledge of the world. Each community shall have right to receive basic education in the mother tongue as provided by the law. Mother tongue medium education will be employed as an integral part of instruction at early grades of basic education, and should be used for as long as possible. Since Nepali, the official language, is also being taught and will be used as the medium part of the time in higher grades, education necessarily needs to be multilingual.

2 What is multilingual education (MLE)? Why is MLE required in Nepal?

Multilingual Education (MLE) is the use of three or more languages as languages of instruction, in subjects other than the languages themselves, at a single school in a multilingual community.

South Asia is home to incredible linguistic diversity (Kosonen 2007) and so is Nepal (Yadava and Turin 2006; Yonjan-Tamang et al. 2009). This diversity brings with it many challenges. Both older and recent researches (Skutnabb-Kangas 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010) show that education mainly through the medium of the mother tongue is a must for educational success. This linguistic diversity brings a need to use multiple languages. A multilingual approach to education paves the way for students to the languages they need. Multilingual education begins with the mother tongue.

Statistics and research shows that learners from indigenous and minority (IM) language communities are at an educational disadvantage when they are taught using a dominant/majority language as the medium of teaching (Skutnabb-Kangas 2008; McCarty 2009; Bear Nicholas 2009). Teachers do not speak or understand the language of students from minority communities – therefore it is difficult for students to learn. High repetition and push-out ("drop-out") rates of minority language speaking students are common, likewise alienation from their cultural heritage, the language of the parents and the home community. It is educationally and economically wasteful to have schools where children do not learn. This has been known for at least two centuries, and recommendations for the use of the mother tongue as a main teaching language have been formulated countless times. A government resolution was formulated in India in 1904 when Curzon was the Viceroy. It expressed serious dissatisfaction with the organization of education in India, and blamed Macaulay for the neglect of Indian languages. The extracts below show its present-day relevance, and "perhaps suggests that postcolonial education and most minority education has failed to learn from earlier experience" (Phillipson 2006). This is what the Curzon resolution said:

As a general rule the child should not be allowed to learn English *as a language* [i.e. as a subject] until he has made some progress in the primary stages of instruction and has received a thorough grounding in his mother-tongue. It is equally important that when the teaching of English has begun, it should not be prematurely employed as the medium of instruction in other subjects. Much of the practice, too prevalent in Indian schools, of committing to memory ill-understood phrases and extracts from text-books or notes,

may be traced to the scholars' having received instruction through the medium of English before their knowledge of the language was sufficient for them to understand what they were taught. The line of division between the use of the vernacular and of English as a medium of instruction should, broadly speaking, be drawn at a minimum age of 13. No scholar in a secondary school should, even then, be allowed to abandon the study of his vernacular, which should be kept up until the end of the school course. (as cited in Nurullah and Naik 1951 by Evans 2002: 277-278.)

A UNESCO Expert group stated the same opinion in 1953, and the UNESCO book "*The use of vernacular languages in education* (1953)" consequently recommends that the mother tongue should axiomatically be the best medium of education at least during the first 6 years. Two expert papers for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Magga et al. 2005; Dunbar and Skutnabb-Kangas 2008; followed by a book, Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010) analyze official-language medium education for Indigenous/Tribal, Minority and Minoritised/ Marginalized (ITM) children as genocide, according to two of the five definitions of genocide in the United Nations' 1948 *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*[2] (the "Genocide Convention), and also as a crime against humanity. Lava Deo Awasthi's doctoral dissertation (2004) describes the disastrous situation for indigenous/tribal, minority and minoritized (ITM) children in

2 E793, 1948; 78 U.N.T.S. 277, entered into force Jan. 12, 1951; for the full text, see http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/x1cppcg.htm. Paragraph (b) of Article II defines genocide as "causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group", and II(e) as "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group". It has been updated in March 2019 by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, and xxx. Warmest thanks to xx and xxx.

education in Nepal using history, statistics, media analysis, and, above all, interviews and classroom observation.

Large-scale overviews and studies (e.g. May and Hill 2003; Ramirez et al. 1991; Thomas and Collier 2002) show the importance of mother tongue medium teaching, and the disastrous results when it is not done. The length of mother tongue medium education was in both Ramirez' and Thomas and Collier's studies more important than any other factor in predicting the educational success of bilingual students. It was also much more important than socio-economic status, something extremely vital in relation to dominated/ oppressed ITM students. The worst results were with students in regular submersion programmes where the students' mother tongues (L1s) were either not supported at all or where they only had some mother-tongue-as-a-subject instruction. This is a subtractive learning situation where the learning of a dominant language subtracts from the child's linguistic repertoire, i.e. the dominant language is learned at the cost of learning the mother tongue, instead of learning it in addition to the mother tongue, as in MLE. Dominant-language-only submersion programmes "are widely attested as the least effective educationally for minority language students" (May and Hill 2003: 14, study commissioned by the Māori Section of the Aotearoa/New Zealand Ministry of Education). **http://www.minedu.govt.nz/**

In Thomas and Collier's longitudinal study with some 210, 000 students (2002), they found that "the strongest predictor of L2 student achievement is the amount of formal L1 schooling. The more L1 grade-level schooling, the higher L2 achievement." In terms of both general school achievement and the learning of the dominant language, those students were best who had the longest number of years of learning content in their mother tongue, taught by bilingual

teachers and with a good curriculum. This is what MLE can do.

3. MLE yes – but how? A few examples

3.1 Multilingual education in India (Orissa, Andra Pradesh, Assam)

Just as in Nepal, it is legally possible in India too to organize education in the mother tongues of students. In December 2003, Parliament of India passed the 100th constitutional Amendment Bill to include four additional languages (Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali) in the VIIIth schedule of official languages. With this amendment, two tribal languages- Bodo and Santhali - were recognized as official languages. There are many mother tongue medium and MLE schools in regional official languages, but very few in "tribal" languages. In 2001, the Orissa Government started the planning process for mother tongue based education for tribal children. A model textbook in SAORA was prepared for classroom instruction at the primary level, teacher training modules and manuals were developed and teachers were trained. In 2007, the government launched a MT-based multilingual education program for 10 tribal languages in 200 schools. Another 16 languages will be added in 2009. Many of the materials are based on local folklore collected in the areas concerned and on essays by children (*Education for Tribal children in Orissa* 2007; Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Ramesh 2009). The project has been planned together with and is followed closely by researchers (Mohanty and Panda 2007). Details and progress can be followed on its website, www.opepa.in. A similar project was started in Andra Pradesh already earlier (the oldest children will be in grade 6 in 2008-2009) but the materials and teacher training are much more streamlined. In Assam, the Bodo language is used as a

medium of teaching for 12 years, Assamese is taught as a second language from the third/fifth year onwards. Hindi and English are introduced between the fourth to sixth years of school. Some Bodo schools have parallel sections in each grade for Bodo & Assamese medium classrooms. For today's (2019) situation, see Mohanty (2018).

3.2 Swedish and Saami medium schools in Finland and Saami in Norway

According to the Finnish Constitution, the citizens of Finland have the right to use their own mother tongue, Finnish or Swedish, in courts and with administrative authorities. Municipalities with both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking students must form a district for school education (the first 9 years) in each language. Children get all their education in their respective mother tongues, and study each other's languages as second languages, and English as a foreign language. All second and foreign language teachers know both the language they are teaching and the children's mother tongue extremely well. In addition, the Indigenous Saami children have the right to mother tongue medium education in the Saami administrative areas (Aikio-Puoskari 2005, 2009). There are three Saami languages in Finland and two of them have fewer than 500 speakers. In Norway, Saami children have the right to education in Saami in the whole country, not just in the north in the Saami administrative areas. For a fantastic revitalization of one of the smallest Saami languages in Finland, Aanaar (Inari) Saami, see Olthuis, Kivelä & and Skutnabb-Kangas (2013).

3.3 Bilingual education in Peru

Peru, with an estimated 42 indigenous languages, in addition to Spanish and other more recent immigrant

languages offers bilingual/bicultural education for some of the Indigenous students only, even if the laws state it as a right. Thus the situation is similar to Nepal. Some very promising teacher training is in place where many of the false conceptions and misunderstandings about mother tongue medium education are discussed in depth. Questions are asked about how education could be done in "Indigenous" ways, partially with the help of postcolonial theories, and how to move from transitional models (where children start using Spanish as the main medium as soon as they have some oral competence in it) to maintenance models (where mother tongue medium continues during the whole primary education and beyond). The teacher training wants to move beyond technical and methodological issues, to reflecting on the ideological and economic historically developed power relations behind the choice of educational and other language policies (Perez Jakobsen 2009). See also Meyer and Maldonado Alvarado 2010 for inspiration.

3.4 Some conclusions

The process of MLE has many success stories in South Asia as well as in many other parts of the world (e.g., Benson 2009; Benson and Kosonen 2010, 2012; Cummins 2009; Heugh 2009 García, Skutnabb-Kangas and Torres-Guzmán, eds. 2006; McCarty 2009; Mohanty 2000, 2006, 2018; Mohanty, Panda, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, eds, 2009; Person 2018; Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010; Tollefson and Tsui, eds. 2003; Tsui and Tollefson, eds. 2007, for examples; there are literally thousands more; see the Skutnabb-Kangas bibliography, 438 pages). For more, search in the Skutnabb-Kangas Big Bib.

Success of the programs for multilingual education depends, in addition to all those factors that are decisive for

educational success in general, on the foundation on which they are built, the sincerity with which they are implemented, and timely appropriate changes made based on extensive and in-depth research of the programs. It is essential to understand the principles on which successful MLE rests. It is NOT necessary, for example, to use the mother tongue as a main medium of education for DOMINANT-language speaking children, while it is absolutely necessary for ITM children. The language to be used as the main teaching language for at least the first 6-8 years should be the language that the students have least possibilities of learning outside school up to a high formal level. This is for ITM students always their mother tongue. Even if they may speak it at home, they will not learn it up to a high formal level without using it as teaching language in school. For majority-language speakers, e.g. native Nepali speakers in Nepal, the language that needs this support by school is a minority language. Thus, for instance, a two-way or dual-language model (see below) could be a way of making both ITM and Nepali-speaking children high-level multilingual in situations where the community is mixed. Teachers have to be bilingual for all groups who are to become multilingual. A teacher who is monolingual in the dominant language is per definition an incompetent teacher for students who are to become bilingual or multilingual, because s/he is not a good model and because s/he cannot help the children to analyze both languages and to transfer knowledge that is common to both. The following models are quite successful because they follow many of the main principles of MLE:

1 *Language (mother tongue) maintenance or language shelter programme*

- Only ITM students with the same mother tongue in a class. The mother tongue is the teaching language.
- Teachers are bilingual
- Students are instructed effectively in the majority language as a second/foreign language.
  Examples: Swedish speakers in Finland, Afrikaans speakers in South Africa; Russian speakers in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; Quechua speakers in Peru: Saami speakers in Finland and Norway.

2 Immersion programmes

- Type A. Linguistic majority students choose voluntarily to be taught through the medium of any one minority language, or
- Type B. ITM children who no longer speak the (grand) parents' languages choose voluntarily to be taught through the medium of it.
- The teachers are bilingual.
  Examples: English speakers in Canada and the USA (programmes in minority languages such as Arabic, Cantonese, Cree, French, Hebrew, Japanese, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, some type A, some type B); Finnish speakers in Finland (type A); Russian speakers in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (type A); Spanish (type A) and Catalan and Basque (type B) speakers in Spain; Hawai'ian in the USA (type B); Maori speakers in New Zealand (type B).

3 Two-way or dual-language programmes

- Students from both the linguistic majority and from one minority group are taught mainly through the medium of the ITM group's mother tongue, thus combining in the same classroom a language maintenance programme for

the ITM group and an immersion programme for the dominant-language speaking group. Both are taught their mother tongues as subjects in separate groups, and both are also often taught each other's languages as second languages in separate groups.

- The teachers are bilingual.
  Examples: many schools in the USA.

4 European Union (special) Schools

- Plural multilingual model schools controlled by the education authorities of the member states of the European Union (EU); all official languages of the EU can in principle have their own subsections with their own language as the main teaching language at the beginning. The goal is to enable all students to be not only bilingual but multilingual. Leads to the European Baccalaureate.
- Several languages are used as medium of instruction through a carefully planned progression.
- Each subsection's language is used as the main medium of instructions for all cognitively demanding de-contextualized subjects until grade 7; after this, there is more teaching through the medium of the students' first foreign language which they have studied as a subject from grade 1 and used in easy linguistically and cognitively non-demanding subjects (like physical education) from grade 3; the second foreign language starts as a subject in grade 7 and students can study non-obligatory subjects through that or any other language offered; there is again more teaching in the mother tongue in the last 3 grades, especially in demanding subjects such as philosophy.

- All teachers and other staff must be bilingual at a minimum.
  Examples: some 14 schools in various EU countries.

These are just some examples of successful educational MLE models that might be relevant for Nepal.

4 MLE-related international law and human rights obligations

4.1 Central international instruments

Many international and regional human rights documents (instruments) regulate the right to education in relation to language. Most demand "only" that nobody should be discriminated against on the basis of language. All these and many more can be found on the website of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights (http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx). The relevant international (United Nations) instruments which mention the right to education and language and that Nepal has signed and ratified are as follows:

- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966;
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966;
- Convention on Rights of the Child, 1989.

In addition, the following instruments are relevant for the right to education:

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict 2000;

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography 2000

4.2 International policies

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960, as normative policy statements, have been guiding the educational leaders and experts of the UN member states including Nepal towards framing policies to ensure free and compulsory education to every individual. So have the 1990 *Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA)* and the *Dakar Framework of Action 2000* for the same purpose. Of late, it has been almost globally accepted that multilingual education is a prerequisite for EFA.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (Article 13 and 14), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (Article 18), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28), each of them in a comprehensive manner, make the 'right to education' an obligatory responsibility of the member states. The Millennium Development Goals 2000 proclaimed by the UN have taken the issue of universal primary education further and pledged to make it a reality by 2015. The UN Declaration of Indigenous Peoples 2007, (UNDRIP) in respect of their various human rights including their rights to education in their mother tongue and to form and operate minority educational institutions, have established a new platform of action for (as elsewhere) the indigenous peoples of Nepal. Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010 is a detailed presentation of all these universal human rights instruments from the point of view of languages in education – warmly recommended (downloaded it from TSK's home page).

The EFA core document and the EFA National Plan of Action along with the Tenth Plan and the Interim Development Plan Documents of Nepal Government, which have generally endeavored to carry out the spirit of the EFA movement, recognized multilingual education policies by incorporating mother tongue education in their policies and programmes.

In addition to the instruments and policies mentioned, there are countless recommendations and declarations, etc, which condemn subtractive education of ITM students through the medium of the dominant state language and recommend MLE and bilingual teachers (e.g. *The Hague Recommendations Regarding the Education Rights of National Minorities* from OSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities

http://www.osce.org/documents/html/pdftohtml/2700_en.pdf.html).

5 Current legal framework for policy and practice in Nepal

5.1 The legal framework

Constitution of Nepal (2015) incorporates the following provisions regarding Multilingualism and Multilingual Education (MLE):

6. Languages of the nation: All languages spoken as the mother tongues in Nepal are the languages of the nation.
7. Official language:
   (1) The Nepali language in the *Devnagari* script shall be the official language of Nepal.
   (2) A State may, by a State law, determine one or more than one languages of the nation spoken by a majority of people within the State as its official language(s), in addition to the Nepali language.

   (3) Other matters relating to language shall be as decided by the Government of Nepal, on recommendation of the Language Commission.

5.2 National policies and practices

It was with the promulgation of the 1990 constitution of Nepal that the legal regime of Nepal recognized the mother tongue education as an educational right. Some initial steps in the form of designing a curricular framework and writing sample textbooks have been taken by the government. The progress in its effective implementation, however, is yet to be made. *The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007* has come forward with a better policy package. The highlights of the constitutional provisions as policy guidelines are as follows:

Each community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law (17.1).

Every citizen shall have the right to free education from the state up to secondary level as provided for in the law (17.2).

Each community residing in Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civility and heritage (17.2).

All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal (5.1). The Nepali language in Devnagari script shall be the official language (5.2).

Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (5.2), it shall not be deemed to have hindered the use of the mother tongue in local bodies and offices. The state shall get the languages so used translated into an official working language and maintain record thereof (5.3).

The State shall have the responsibility (33.d) to carry out an inclusive, democratic and progressive restructuring of the State by eliminating its existing form of centralized and unitary structure in order to address the problems related to women, Dalits, Indigenous Tribes, Madheshis, oppressed and minority community and other disadvantaged groups, by eliminating class, caste, language, sex, culture, religion and regional discrimination.

The state shall, while maintaining the cultural diversity of the country, pursue a policy of strengthening the national unity by promoting healthy and cordial social relations, based on equality and coexistence, amongst the various religions, cultures, castes, groups, communities, origins and linguistic groups, and by helping in the equal promotion of their languages, literatures, scripts, arts and cultures (35.3).

An inclusive, democratic and progressive restructuring of the state shall be made to bring about an end of the discrimination based on class, caste, language, sex, culture, religion and region by eliminating the centralized and unitary form of the state (138.1).

Section 7 of the Seventh Amendment of the Education Act of Nepal, which executes the constitutional policy provisions, has opened the avenue for MLE in the following words:

Nepali Language shall be the medium of instruction in the schools. Provided that mother tongue can be used as a medium of instruction at the primary level (7.1).

Notwithstanding anything contained in the above provision, while teaching language as a subject, the medium of instruction can be the same language (7.2).

There is, thus, no dearth of policy pronouncements. What is required is political will to carry out these policies to fruition. At a time when the speakers of the 92 plus national

languages are demanding their right to education with their respective languages as medium of instruction and as subject, it is high time that Nepal government effectively respond to the call of its indigenous peoples and all non-Nepali speaking population.

5.3 Some promising aspects for MLE in national documents

Language is more than just communication. It opens up our understanding of how we think.

The Constitution of Nepal 1990:

Primary Education can be provided in the mother tongue.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007:

All the Mother Tongues spoken in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal. Nepali language is the official language. Equal right is provided to every citizen to choose primary education in their own mother tongue.

Constitution of Nepal (2015):

Three year Interim Plan:

Tri-languages policy is allowed: Nepali language as the official language, Mother tongue, and English as an international language. Basic education can be provided in the mother tongue.

Seventh Amendment of the Education Act of Nepal:

Nepali language is the medium of instruction in the schools. The mother tongue can be used as a medium of instruction in the primary level. While teaching language as a subject, the medium of instruction can be the same language.

Primary level curriculum:

Nepali language is the medium of instruction. Local languages can be used as the teaching languages. A local language is provided as the optional subject with FM 100 and

weight 4. Curriculum for the local language can be developed locally. Textbooks for 15 different mother tongues are translated and implemented.

Secondary level curriculum:

Nepali language is the medium of instruction. An opportunity to learn own mother tongue with FM 100 is provided as an optional subject.

6 Present policies, practices and efforts related to MLE in Nepal

The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 defined Nepal as a multiethnic, multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious state. It ensured the right of every community for preserving and promoting their language and educate their children in their mother tongue. *The Local Self-Government Act, 1998* made the local VDCs (Village Development Committees) and municipalities responsible for supporting the schools and communities to manage primary education in the mother tongue. *The Education Act, 1971* (2nd Edition) formed the legal base for delivering primary education in the mother tongue.

The report of *Language Policy Recommendation Commission* (LPRC) 1994 recommended that the mother tongue should be included in the education system as the medium of instruction as well as the subject. The languages should initially be prioritized on the basis of two criteria: the population demographics and the existence of a writing system. The writing system and script should also be developed and included in the education system.

The primary curriculum (grades 1-5) includes local language as one of the optional subjects with mark 100 (the total mark is 600 for grades 1-3 and 700 for grades 4 and 5).

The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has, on a priority basis, as of 2007, developed curriculum and textbooks for grades 1-5 in 12 different mother tongues as optional subjects : Maithili, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Newari, Limbu, Tamang, Tharu, Magar, Rai- Bantawa, Gurung, Sherpa and Rai-Chamling (completed). The textbooks for grades 1-2 in Sunuwar & Rajbanshi and for grade 1 in Rai-Yakkha are being written. Moreover, CDC has also developed Guidelines for the development of reading materials in mother tongues as optional subjects. Children's reference materials for grade 1 (biographies, culture and stories) have also been prepared in 7 different languages (Maithili, Bhorpuri, Awadhi, Newar, Limbu, Tamang and Tharu) and for grade 2 in 3 different languages: Magar, Gurung and Doteli. CDC has translated the textbooks (Social Studies, Science, Math etc) for grade 1 into 7 languages (Maithili, Bhorpuri, Awadhi, Limbu, Tharu, Magar and Gurung) and for grade 2 into 3 languages (Maithili, Limbu and Tharu), but these have not been published yet (June 2008).

The Non-formal Education Centre (NFEC) has developed Basic Literacy Primers in six mother tongues (Tharu, Maithili, Bhojpuri and Tamang, Doteli and Awadhi. During 2008, a literacy primer in the Khas (Jumli) tongue will be prepared for the adults in Karnali region. Books in six mother tongues (Tharu, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Tamang, Doteland Awadhi) are being prepared. In 2008, a book in the Khas language will be prepared for the adults in Karnali region. In 2008, a pilot test of the Awadhi language materials in Kapilvastu and Bara and in Tamang language in Ramechhap districts will be implemented. - Guidelines for teaching materials in mother tongues are being prepared. The number of languages in which textbooks, self-learning materials and other educational materials are developed depends on the

annual program and budget resources allocated for each fiscal year. The numbers increase year by year. Also some other agencies and institutions working in the field of Ethnic issues develop the materials in various mother tongues. Among the documents supporting this development is *The Guidelines for the Development of Educational Materials* (2004).

News and programs in various mother tongues are broadcasted through Radio Nepal, FM and TV channels. Radio Nepal broadcasts news in different languages: Sanskrit, Newar and Maithili through central transmission and Tamang, Bhojpuri, Rai-Bantawa, Tharu, Limbu, Gurung, Mager, Pashchhima Tharu, Rana Tharu, Awadhi, Doteli, Magar Kham, Urdu and Sherpa through reginal transmission. Different TV programs broadcast several mother tongue programs. NTV 2, for example has Newar, Bhojpuri, Urdu, Limbu and Maithili programs and Nepal1 has Madhesh news. Image Channel has Newar news and other Newar program. The Government owned daily newspaper *Gorkhapatra* publishes news and reading materials in 19 different languages (Newar, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Tharu, Sunuwar, Gurung, Sherpa, Baram, Urab, Dhimal, Majhi, Thami, Maithili, Urdu and Jirel). Daily / weekly papers are published locally in various mother tongues. According to the Department of Information, the total number of registered newspapers and journals are 4871/2008 February. Among them, 265 newspapers are published in various mother tongues (28 in Newari; 15 in Maithili; 14 in Hindi; 5 in Tharu; 3 in Bhojpuri; 2 in Sanskrit; 2 in Urdu; 2 in Limbu; 2 in Doteli; 2 in Tamang, 1 in Tibetan; 1 in Rai, and 202 in other languages).

The Department of Education, DOE, together with the Finnish Government, is implementing a Multilingual Education (pilot) project in six districts in seven primary

schools with non-Nepali speaking students. The languages involved are Tamang in Rasuwa, Barahmagarant Mageri in Palpa, Athapahare Rai in Dhankuta, Tharu in Kanchanpur, Uraw+Maithili in Sunsari and Santhali in Jhapa. The mother tongue of the indigenous students will be the medium of classroom teaching. The implementation plan for the project covers development of locally based MLE & MTE materials, MLE capacity building, cascading, raising the awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity. The project is based on an action research approach (see Yonjan-Tamang, Hough & Nurmela, forthcoming; Hough, Yonjan-Tamang & Thapa Magar, forthcoming).

The following lists efforts and projects that the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) is involved in at present (2008):

- Policies concerning use of mother- tongues as medium of instructions in primary level (i.e. grade 1 to 5) and non-formal education.
- Development curricula, textbooks and other TGs, and supplementary materials in 15 languages in formal education
- Development of curricula, textbooks and TGs, in 6 languages in non- formal education. (Tharu, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Tamang, Doteli and Awadi) (Khas-implemented in 2009)
- Development of mother- tongue curricula and textbooks (and other materials) by communities as local curriculum by primary schools.
- Pilot project by DoE in six districts on 6 languages (Tamang in Rasuwa, Magar in Palpa, Aathpahariya Rai in Dhankuta, Tharu in Kanchanpur, Urau and Maithili in Sunsari and Santhal in Jhapa.
- Advocacy and capacity building on MLE by DoE.

- News and adocacy on SLC (School Leaving Certificate) materials of DEOL in Radio and Television
- News and awareness programs in newspapers especially Gorkhapatra
- Partnership on ML with NGOs/INGOs like Summer School of linguistics, UNICEF etc
- Incentives given to non-native teachers teaching via ML in government schools

7 Possible future directions for MLE in Nepal (long-term and short-term)

7.1 A Long- term goal

Access to good basic education for all citizens of Nepal (the EFA goal), with curricula, materials and methods that are based on and respect local cultures and linguistic variation. For all Indigenous/tribal children and children with mother tongues other than Nepali, access to good basic education mainly through the medium of the mother tongue for at least the first 8 years, and with good teaching of Nepali as a second language, given by well-trained bilingual teachers, and likewise with curricula, materials and methods that are based on and respect local cultures and linguistic variation.

7.2 Issues and challenges

There are many issues that have to be resolved for the long-term goal to be realized. Many of them are issues about financial resources. This includes teacher training, materials development, school buildings and maintenance, etc. Specifically in relation to MLE, we want to remind of Nobel laureate Amartya Sen's theories about material and non-material poverty where the non-material poverty in most cases is a causal factor in material poverty. Non-material poverty can be addressed through formal and non-formal

education; this can develop in children and adults the capabilities that give them choices in life. MLE can develop Indigenous/tribal children's capabilities fully whereas subtractive education through the medium of Nepali (or, for that matter, English) curtails and prevents the development of these capabilities and is, both in short-term and long-term, economically and otherwise extremely wasteful for the individuals, communities and the whole country.

There are also many misconceptions that prevent good education. One example is that some sections of the linguistic communities prefer Nepali, English and other developed and foreign languages to their mother tongue. They think that learning their native languages is the waste of time. They need Nepali and English to compete in this modern and globalized world, and believe, erroneously, that learning through the medium of the mother tongue might prevent the children from learning the other important languages well (when in fact children could learn these languages better through MLE). Some of the misconceptions can be resolved through more information and discussion.

There are also genuine more detailed issues identified below which require research and development work of the kind that the soon-to-be-appointed (socio) linguistic survey can help solving.

- Dialects of some native languages are difficult to be understood by the speakers of the same language.
- There are the constraints of expertise and resources for developing the materials in all the languages spoken in the country.
- Many of the languages do not have their script and written form.

Some of the short-term goals below are geared towards developing the background knowledge base and materials to help reach the long-term goal.

7.3 Short-term goals

1. Background data, general and specific

a. Conduction of a linguistic survey of all the languages of the country. This has been decided on already and the work will commence in 2008 under the leadership of professor Yogendra Yadava, professor of Linguistics at Tribhuvan University[3].

3 "The objectives of the Linguistic Survey of Nepal are:

1. Create a sociolinguistic description of all the languages of Nepal in order that the nation can more justly develop and implement policies and programs to benefit all of its citizens. Such a description must include information relating to the geographical location of languages, a demographic description of speakers of the languages, mutual intelligibility of dialects, efforts to develop standardized forms, languages functioning as link languages, attitudes of mother tongue speakers to their own language and others commonly used, orate/literate development within languages, their vitality and viability, and their readiness for use in education and governance.
2. Establish a complete database of the languages of Nepal, including their linguistic descriptions so that the nation, its respective governments and communities can operate and advance with a full knowledge of the languages that exist within Nepal. This collection will help to preserve the rich cultural and linguistic heritage of the nation, as specified by the constitution, through the collection of relevant material. The collection must include the recording of both oral and written texts of all the languages including dying languages, non-verbal languages (sign languages), and additional data for detailed phonological and grammatical summaries of these languages as well as their basic dictionaries through elicitation.
3. Develop an exhaustive description of the use of mother tongues in education in order to understand what language development (including the development of orthography) and mother tongue curricula development is needed for educational purposes".

b. Conduction of a demographical survey of Nepal.

c. Survey of existing (and future) teachers, their distribution, age profiles, educational qualifications, and their linguistic competence.

d. Survey of schools in relation to students' linguistic background (today's students and future students; including a comparison with the linguistic and demographic surveys). A comparison of how accurate the match is between teachers' and students' linguistic background at the moment, i.e. are teachers competent in the local languages that their students speak?

2. State language policy

a. After a massive research-based information campaign about language policy issues and MLE, involving all communities in a discussion of their needs and wishes vis-à-vis languages (Indigenous/tribal languages, minority language, Nepali, English, other foreign languages). The discussions should also include issues such as the use local languages as official language parallel to Nepali language, to encourage MLE in all federal states in future, how to get from using the various mother tongues in primary education to using them in secondary and tertiary education.

b. After comprehensive consultation with all sectors of the Nepalese society, developing a comprehensive language policy for Nepal, with an educational language policy as an important part of it. This should take advantage of all the positive aspects which are already in the Interim Constitution and in the Education Act with its amendments and have its own budget line.

This is a part of the Linguistic Survey of Nepal proposal based on National Planning Commission's TOR. Many thanks to Yogendra Yadava for the copy, and for his other comments on this concept paper.

c. Setting up structures to monitor the implementation of the policy, including complaint procedures.

3. Teachers

a. Provision of appropriate training to teachers for classroom instruction using the various mother tongues.

b. Provision of appropriate training to teachers in Nepali as a second language for those whose mother tongue is not Nepali.

c. Recruitment and deployment of teachers in accordance to the needs of education in the various mother tongues. Priority should be given to Indigenous and minority language teachers in future recruitment, deployment and training. Linguistic competence in languages other than Nepali should be financially rewarded.

d. In-service training of teachers with various modules, such as research on MLE; best practices in MLE and their compatibility with the Nepalese context; metalinguistic awareness: contrasting and comparing the languages, transfer of skills from one language to another, all teachers as language teachers; how to employ local communities as knowledge bearers and teachers in school (with appropriate honoraria); how to advocate for MLE and discuss misunderstandings that parents/ colleagues/administrators etc might have; strategies for monitoring progress in language learning and use.

4. Curricula and materials

a. Development of locally based curricula, textbooks, teachers' guides and other supporting materials in all the languages of Nepal. These should be done for both formal and non-formal education. The curriculum should also give incentives to madrasas, gumbas, gurukuls and other such institutions to promote MLE and bilingual education.

b. The curriculum should include a new subject “Nepali as a second language” for those students whose mother tongue is not Nepali.

c. Curricula should also be developed as a matter of urgency for those highly endangered languages where the intergenerational transfer has already ceased or is about to cease, i.e. where the parents no longer speak the language to their children. These models can be called Indigenous revitalization immersion models.

d. Curricula should likewise be developed for Nepali-speaking children who want to learn an Indigenous or minority language. In schools with mainly Nepali speakers, immersion programmes could be used. In mixed schools, with many mother tongues, two-way programmes could be used, but there are other models too.

e. Curricula in English should also be developed for Indigenous/tribal and minority children who have their education mainly in their mother tongue and learn Nepali as a second language, so that their bilingualism can be beneficially exploited when they learn English as their third language.

5. Evaluation and research

a. Supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the programs/activities on a regular basis, including appropriate adjustments of the programs/activities in accordance to new research findings in Nepal and internationally, and with a mandate from citizens and their organizations.

b. Plans should be developed and incentives given to conduct research on MLE. This should include MLE in all kinds of schools, both schools with a more or less

linguistically homogenous student population and schools with several mother tongues, including Nepali.

c. Partnerships with other institutions working with language policy, MLE and linguistic human rights should be promoted, both nationally and internationally.

d. Universities should have MLE-related subjects where students can major. A MLE chair should be established.

e. In language description, in addition to support for writing grammars, dictionaries, etc, so that languages which are/will be used in schools as teaching languages (or, as a start, to be taught as subjects), there should be an emphasis on the most marginalized languages before they are extinct.

3

Policy and Strategy for MLE in Nepal

TOVE SKUTNABB-KANGAS
AND
AJIT MOHANTY

1. Introduction: placing language in education issues in Nepal in a broader societal, economic and political framework

Issues on language in education are part of a broader societal framework. First we present our framework and attempt to place Nepal in it. Peace researcher Johan Galtung (1988) discusses various basic material (somatic, bodily, physical) and non-material (mental) needs, where some are direct (intended) and some structural (built into the way a system functions) (see Table 1). He also lists the main impediments/barriers that make their satisfaction difficult or impossible. During the last year or two Nepal has made decisive moves from *Repression* towards the *Freedom* which is implied in a democracy. If the Constituent Assembly succeeds in writing a positive new Constitution, basic *Freedom* and hopefully also *Security* might be guaranteed. As long as there is as much physical *Violence* as today (March 2009), schools cannot function optimally. Many schools are not even open, due to serious interruptions and many are delayed: “the courses had not been completed due to the

bandh" [demonstrations/strikes] and "district-level examinations have to be postponed" because of them (e.g. in Rupandehi, **The Himalayan Times**, March 13, 2009, p. 5, "*Bandh hits schools' calendar*"). It will take a long time before *Well-being* spreads to most of the population (editorial "*Belly shrivels*", **The Himalayan Times**, March 13, 2009, p. 6). And before Indigenous/Tribal and (linguistic) Minority (hereafter ITM) parents and children (who form around half of the population of Nepal) will have the same standard of living as the rest of the population, and be less marginalized, even more time will elapse.

Table 1. TYPES OF BASIC NEEDS vs Impediments to their satisfaction

	DIRECT (intended)	*STRUCTURAL (built-in)*
Material needs (SOMATIC)	SECURITY vs violence	WELL-BEING VS misery
Non-material needs (MENTAL)	FREEDOM vs repression	IDENTITY vs alienation

Source: based on Galtung 1988: 147.

All people of Nepal will hopefully experience less material *Misery* in the years to come. Having at least some of the basic needs of housing, food, health care, etc. met is a prerequisite for parents to be able to send children to school, for children to be able to learn and for teachers to be able to teach. This is equally true for any kind of formal (and non-formal) education.

Language in education issues, especially mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MLE), belongs specifically in the fourth quadrant in Table 1. Many ITM parents and children have experienced strong *Alienation* both in society in general and, especially, in relation to schools,

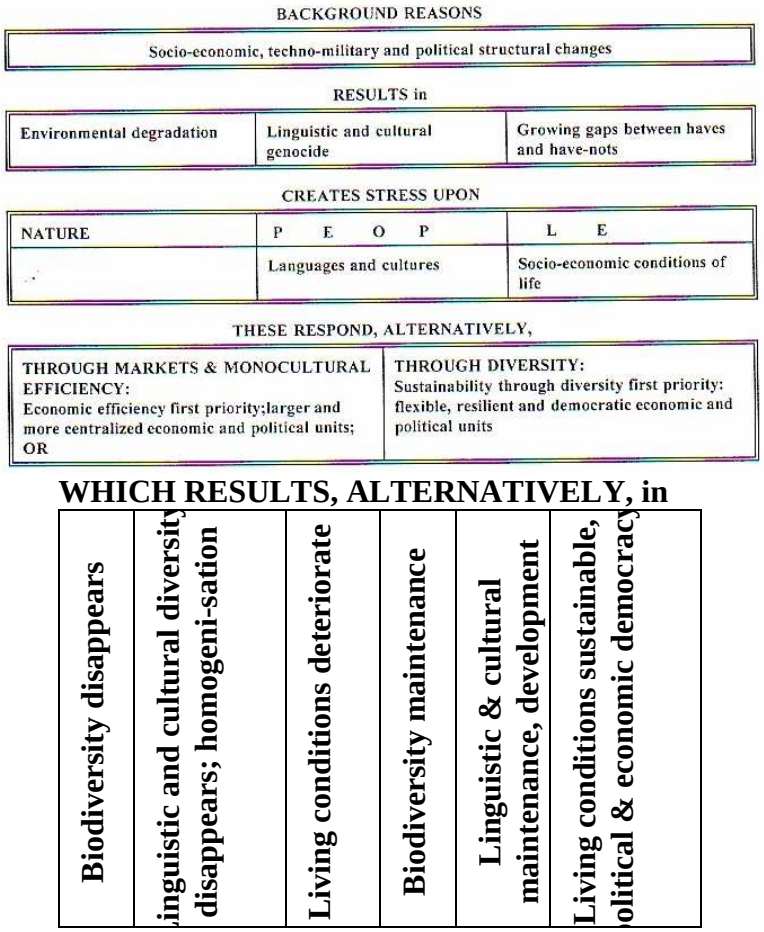
which have been using Nepali as the only or main teaching language. Their *Identity* has not been accepted or respected. Many of the "ethnic" conflicts today have to do with the non-acceptance of people's ethnic, cultural and linguistic *Identities*. A new constitution, based on federalism, acceptance of various ITM *Identities*, and the linguistic and cultural rights that should follow, can go a long way to solve some of the conflicts. Mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MLE) is an important part of this solution.

But language in education issues should also be connected to still broader issues of choices that all countries have to make when we face today's global large-scale socio-economic, techno-military and political structural choices. These choices are particularly relevant for new democracies such as Nepal. There are alternative responses to these choices. Figure 1 presents a simplified flow chart of consequences of these choices. Even if the choices and responses are here presented as straightforward alternatives, they obviously represent endpoints on several continua.

Nepal needs to choose the direction it wants to follow. In several senses, the choices so far seem to lie somewhat closer to the diversity end. It is important, though, to acknowledge that educational choices (e.g. strong or weak MLE models) are linked to all the other choices. If there are too many socioeconomic, nature-related or political choices which point in a homogenising market-oriented direction, prerequisites for good MLE also deteriorate, both attitudinally and structurally. This is an important consideration in language policy and planning (see Figure 1; source: Skutnabb-Kangas 2000: 656).

Figure 1. Alternative responses to socio-economic, techno-military and political structural choices

Alternative responses to changes



Our last Table (Table 2) in this broader framework is related to somewhat similar choices, which connect the earlier consideration and relate them to a centralisation vs decentralisation issues, relevant for the discussions about federalism. A bioregional paradigm is more conducive to decentralisation of power and decision-making, especially in

a multiethnic multilingual multicultural biodiversity-wise rich state such as Nepal, than an industrio-scientific paradigm.

Table 2. Basic tenets of the bioregional and industrio-scientific paradigms

Basic tenets of the bioregional and industrio-scientific paradigms

	BIOREGIONAL PARADIGM	INDUSTRIO-SCIENTIFIC PARADIGM
Scale	Region Community	State Nation/World
Economy	Conservation Stability Self-Sufficiency Cooperation	Exploitation Change/Progress Global Economy Competition
Polity	Decentralization Complementarity Diversity	Centralization Hierarchy Uniformity
Society	Symbiosis Evolution Division	Polarization Growth/Violence Monoculture

adopted from Sale (1996, 475)

2. Broader Language Policy and Planning Perspectives and Issues

2.1. STEP 1 in Language Policy and Language Planning: Broad-based political debates about the goals of language policy

Broad-based political debates about the goals of language policy should ideally precede decision-making, and be informed about language policy and language planning theories (as, for instance the Nepali **The Report of National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission** 1994, eds. Yadava & Grove, English translation 2008, is). Usually three kinds of language planning are listed:

1. **Status planning**: actions that formalise or elevate the status of languages; in Nepal, for instance deciding what constitutional status the various ITM languages are to have in which areas.
2. **Acquisition planning**: actions that promote the learning of languages and the acquisition of literacy, in Nepal for

instance planning good mother-tongue-based multilingual schools.

3. **Corpus planning**: actions to standardise languages, write grammars, create new words, e.g in Nepal extending the resources of ITM languages for textbooks and for teaching various subjects in ITM mother tongues.

To these, the architect of Australian language policy, Joseph Lo Bianco (2009), has added three more:

4. **Usage planning**: actions that extend the domains and usage of a language, e.g. in Nepal extending MLE from lower to higher elementary and to secondary education.
5. **Prestige planning**: actions that elevate the prestige and esteem of a language (connected with e.g. English-medium schools in Nepal; often English may be taught more for its prestige than anything else).
6. **Attitudinal planning**: actions that modify the discourse and attitudes towards language. It may be both a consequence of implementing good Acquisition planning because positive results of MLE in Nepal will influence people's attitudes towards MLE and towards ITM languages. Attitudinal planning is also needed for state-wide advocacy campaigns for MLE.

Lo Bianco (2009) also differentiates between **three dimensions of language policy, intended, implemented and experienced**. In the *intended* policy we can ask for Nepal what the government (or district or school) claim that a certain type of MLE policy intends to accomplish. On the practical arena, the *implemented* policy tells what is in fact done? Which MLE models are chosen? Do the prerequisites, the measures and the funding correspond to the intentions/aims? The *experienced* policy gives evidence about how the children, the parents and the teachers experience the policy in practice. Do they see the promised processes and the expected results? When evaluating language policy, all three dimensions should be included.

It is also important to acknowledge that **language planning is always political planning**. Language is often invested with emotional and ideological power, with cultural values and historic associations, with group and individual identity. This can be very clearly seen in the Nepalese context, and we saw it on our field trip to Rasuwa, in the various workshops and seminars, and in meetings with various organizations and individuals.

The link to politics is inevitable when the distribution of resources is one of the main outcomes of policy making processes, involving a range of often incompatible social, economic, cultural and symbolic interests. Language planning is always aiming to advance SOME interests and retard OTHER rival interests. Therefore we have to ask the question *whose interests*. It is vital to analyse and acknowledge **whose interests various models of MLE serve and whose interests are NOT served or are served less well**. Centralised homogenising assimilatory models, with no or very few years of mother tongue medium education (and with early English) may serve the interests of some Nepali-speaking elites. Decentralised diverse and diversifying integrative models, with minimally 6-8 years of mainly mother tongue medium multilingual education (MLE) serve the interests of the whole population, not only the interests of Indigenous/tribal peoples and minorities.

2.2. STEP 2 in Educational Language Policy and Language Planning: realistic language proficiency goal/aim in relation to the baseline

When planning an educational intervention that includes language, one needs to decide what a realistic future language proficiency goal/aim is, in relation to the baseline, i.e. the present language competence of learners, families and communities, teachers, school directors, teacher trainers and curriculum developers, and also educational administrators at various levels. Some of these factors have been enumerated in Table 3.

Table 3. Illustration of language competence for planning

	Language A L1=a tribal or minori-ty language in Nepal		**Language B** L2 = Nepali		**Language C** L3 = English	
	List/Spk	**Read/Wr**	**List/Spk**	**Read/Wr**	**List/Spk**	**Read/ Wr**
Learners Incoming	High	---	Low	---	---	---
Families and communities	High	---	Low	---	---	---
Teachers	High	Moderate	High to moderate	Moderate	Low	Low
School directors	High	Moderate	High	High to moderate	Moderate	Low
Trainers and curriculum developers	(*Varied*)	(*Varied*)	High	High to moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Aim	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**	**High**

List/Spk= Listening/Speaking; Read/Wr = Reading/Writing; L1, L2, L3= first, second and third language. Based on Benson (2009, Table 4.2.). We have changed the languages from Nigeria to Nepal.

When planning what a realistic short- and even middle-term linguistic competence goal in Nepal would be for school children after the first 8 years of formal education, we need to think of Nepalese Indigenous/tribal/minority mother tongue students who start school. What is the language competence goal/aim? Which languages should the child learn, and how well? Of course one might wish that all or at least most ITM children would reach the highest competence in all three languages, as indicated in Table 3.

In STEP 2, planners need to estimate the present linguistic competence of the school-starting child and all the other categories in the left column, and discuss how to get to the aim, given the starting point. What input is needed? How

many years and what kind of teacher training, curriculum and materials development etc are needed for the aims in Table 3 (HIGH in listening/speaking and reading/writing) to be reached? If, for instance, teachers' competence is not high in all three languages, we cannot expect that the children's competence will become higher than that of the teachers, before the teachers have had much more training. Do the aims need to be modified, in the light of the present linguistic competence of teachers and all the other categories? If so, how? What would be more realistic goals? What kind of input is needed for the more realistic goals? By whom? Here one needs to list the various agencies and their tasks and their present competence for doing what is needed.

The costs for doing the upgrading may initially seem high, but as compared to today's wastage, they may not be impossible (see later under Section 2.5 which is mainly on economics). Everything is not possible at the same time; thus priorities have to be discussed.

High competence in the mother tongue is a must from an identity and self-confidence point of view – we need roots to be able to have a future. The mother tongue is also the basis for *all* learning, including the good learning other languages. *High final competence in Nepali is also a must*, for further education, for the labour market and for democratic political and other societal participation.

In the short- and mid-term it might be necessary to lower the expectations for *competence in English*, though. Most Nepalis will not participate much in the kind of international cooperation where the highest possible competence in reading and especially writing English is necessary – for most, learning English has much more practical goals. Languages are learned at a high level through using them for these high-level functions. Thus a solid basic knowledge that can be expanded later might be a more realistic mid-term goal.

Carol Benson (2009) suggest likewise that the English

goals should be lowered for Nigeria. Under present circumstances where teachers, school directors and teacher trainers do not themselves have High competence in English, neither in Listening/Speaking nor in Reading/Writing, the aim cannot be "High" competence in English for students, before teachers etc have had MUCH more training, she writes. Would this be true in Nepal too? What would a realistic aim be? For how long? And what has been suggested for Nepal in relation to English? We expand the discussion about English somewhat more in section 5.1.

2.3. STEP 3 in Educational Language Planning: ideal goals and prerequisites compared with characteristics of present schools

Once the goals have been clarified, the means to reach the goals need to be discussed and decided. Here too, one has to look at ideal models and conditions and strive towards them, at the same time as the ideal models (and there are many) have to be adapted to the various contexts and realities on the ground, in different parts of the country, different districts and different schools. No models can be transferred directly. Still, we know from research worldwide what some of the ideal conditions are for reaching the four goals in the education of ITM children. These goals are listed in Table 4 (from Skutnabb-Kangas 2000):

Table 4. Educational goals

A good educational programme for both ITMs and dominant group children leads to the following goals from a language(s), identity and competence point of view:
1. high levels of multilingualism
2. a fair chance of achieving academically at school
3. strong, positive multilingual and multicultural identity and positive attitudes towards self and others
4. a fair chance of awareness and competence building as prerequisites for working for a more equitable world, for oneself and one's own group as well as others, locally and globally

Knowledge of as many characteristics as possible for a successful programme in each locality/school, in advance is vital for planning the implementation of an educational language policy, before looking at "ideal" characteristics and prerequisites; these two will then have to be matched. Table 5, inspired by Sushan Acharya's and the MLE project's Expert & Research Team's draft report (which we had access to at the end of February) presents a preliminary checklist for mother-tongue-based MLE of characteristics in elementary (1-6) or preschool classrooms.

Table 5. Characteristics of elementary (1-6) or preschool classrooms

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Students	all S. have the same MT		S. from two MT groups		S. from 3 or more MT groups	
Grades	1 grade per class		2 grades per class		Multigrade classroom	
Language of teaching	One language only		Two languages		3 or more languages	
Language of learning: (S. answer in it, interact with each other in it)	One lg, same as teaching lg	One lg, , different from tea-ching lg	Two lgs, same as teaching lgs	Two lgs, one different from teach-ing lg(s)	3 or more lgs, same as teaching lgs	3 or mo-re lgs, some different from teaching lg(s)
Teacher's language competence	T knows all S's MTs		T knows some S's MTs but not all		T knows Nepalese but no other MTs	
MTs taught as subjects	All MTs are taught		Some MTs are taught		Only N is taught as subject	
Nepali taught as a L2: second/ foreign language	N taught as a second/ foreign lg subject		N is taught as if it were all S's MT			
Teaching materials	TM in all lgs for all subjects (incl. N. as L2)		TM in some lgs for some subjects		TM in Nepali only	

Content culturally appropriate, adjusted to local context	Yes; materials locally created, not translations from N.		Some content & materials local & some translated		All materials & content centrally created	
Use of IK holders and other locals as teachers	Yes, much, and they get a salary	Yes, much, but no salary	Some are used; they get a salary	Some are used; no salary	Not used because no salary	Not used
Parents well informed & agree on MLE goals	Well informed, agree	Informed, but may prefer private school?	Somewhat informed, probably agree	Somewhat informed, may not agree	Not (well) informed but agree	Not informed, do not agree
School principals and district level school authorities, as above						
Central school authorities, as above						

S = Student; T = Teacher; MT = mother tongue; lg = language; L2 = second or foreign language; N = Nepali; TM = teaching materials; IK = Indigenous knowledge

When looking at the characteristics of various factors that are important for MLE to succeed, A1 might seem the ideal situation. But how many schools in the MLE project, or in Nepal, have those characteristics? When describing various schools, even in the MLE-project one can see various combinations, e.g. Students: C1, Grades, C1, Language of teaching, A1, and so on. Here one can already see that if a school has a combination of students with several different mother tongues in a multi-grade classroom, teaching in one language only (as in A1) is NOT good! Sunsari in the MLE project has this challenge, and the methods chosen at the point of writing pose a big challenge for both teachers and students. Planning then has to start by listing characteristics that one can NOT change immediately (e.g. what kind of

students a school has), and then planning what combination of the characteristics one might be able to change to have a better situation. If the school, for instance, has students with many mother tongues, one has to teach in several languages for it to be mother-tongue-based. Would several multigrade classrooms, based on language, be better than having one mixed-mother-tongue grade per classroom, if it makes it possible to have all Tharu-speakers (grades 1-5) in one class, all Urau speakers in another, and all Nepali speakers in a third? Which characteristics would one try to change first? And next? Why? Several other important characteristics might need to be added to Table 5 locally or in general.

2.4. STEP 4 in Educational Language Planning: what has characterized programmes with high versus low success?

When planning many of the details, it is useful to know more about what has already been tried, with what results. No models or programmes can be transferred to other contexts without localising them, but general principles about what characterises programmes with high success and programmes with low success can be deduced from experiences in many parts of the world. Tables 6 and 7 present some of these generalizations of characteristics.

In Table 6, the central factor is the dominant medium of education, the mother tongue (L1) or another language (L2). The next factor is either a low or a high degree of success (LDS or HDS). These have been defined according to the goals in Table 4 above. Children who participate in a programme can come either from a linguistic majority/dominant group, or a minority. It is clear that it is NOT necessarily so that teaching through the medium of an L1 always leads to a low degree of success: dominant group members can be taught through the medium of a foreign language, with a high degree of success (immersion programmes). But when we combine these factors (L1 or L2,

high or low degree of success, majority or minority group), this should give 8 possible programmes, and for each of them, a specific group has been mentioned. In the table there are, however, only 7 programmes. One is missing: teaching a minority group through the medium of a foreign language, with a high degree of success. Why is it missing? Because there are now examples in research of high degree of success at a group level where ITM children taught in an L2 would have succeeded. Thos who have succeeded, have done so DESPITE the school, NOT because of the way their education has been organised.

Table 6 then lists factors important for success, and gives each programme a plus (+) or a minus (-) depending on whether the demand in the factor has been fulfilled or not. It also lists what the linguistic goal and the societal goal have been for each programme. It is easy to see that the goals in the LDS have been negative for the group concerned whereas the goals in the HDS have been positive from the group's point of view.

Table 6. Characteristics of multilingual education

Name of programme Degree of success	SEGREGATION LOW (LDS)		MAINTENANCE HIGH (HDS)		SUBMERSION LOW (LDS)		IMMERSION HIGH (HDS)
Dominant medium of education (ME)	L1				L2		
Linguistic goal	dominance in L1		bilingualism		elites L2-do-minance masses: l.1-dom.	dominance in L2	bilingualism
Societal goal	apartheid	repatriation	equity and integration		perpetuate stratification	assimilation, marginali-zation	linguistic and cultural enrichment, benefits
Majority/minority	maj	min	maj	min	maj	min	maj
EXAMPLE	Africa	Europe	Asia	Europe	Africa	World	Canada
	Bantu Namibia	Turks in Bavaria	Uzbekistan	Finns in Sweden	Zambia	Western European minorities	Canada
Organisational factors 1 alternative programmes available	-	-	+	+	-	-	+

2.pupils equally placed vis-a-vis knowledge of ME	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
3.bilingual (B), trained (T) teachers	B	B or T	BT?	BT	B	T	BT
4.bilingual materials (eg dictionaries) available	-	+	+	+	-	-	+
5.cultural content of materials appropriate for pupils	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
Learner-related affective factors							
6.low level of anxiety (supportive, non-authoritarian)	-	-	+?	+	-	-	+
7.high internal motivation (not forced to use L2, understands & sympathetic with objectives, responsible for own learning	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
8.high self-confidence (high teacher expectations, fair chance to succed)	-	-	+	+	-	-	+
L1-related linguistic, cognitive, pedagogical and social factors							
9.adequate linguistic development in L1 (L1 taught well (W), badly (B) or not at all (-) in school	B	B	W	W	-	-	W
10. enough relevant, cognitively demanding subject-matter provided	-?	+?	+	+	-?	-?	+
11. opportunity to develop L1 outside school in linguistically	+?	-	+	-	+	-	+

demanding formal contests							
12. L2-teaching supports (+) or harms (-) L1 development	+	+	+	+	-?	-	+
L2-related linguistic, cognitive, pedagogical and social factors							
13. adequate linguistic development in L2 (L2 taught well (W), badly (B) or not at all (-) in school	B	B	W?	W	B	B	W
14. L2 input adapted to pupils L2 level	+	+	+	+	-?	-	+
15. opporunity to practise L2 in per group contexts outside school	-	-	+?	+?	-	-	-
16. exposure to native speaker L2 use in linguistically demanding formal contexts	-	+	+	+	-	+	+

LDS = Low Degree of Success; HDS = High Degree of Success; From Skutnabb-Kangas 1988: 24-25

Table 7 (3 pages; from Skutnabb-Kangas & García 1995, pp. 247-249) presents similar characteristics for 4 strong models of MLE, all with a high degree of success, and 2 weak forms of MLE where especially the last one, an early-exit transitional model, is relevant for Nepal. Submersion models, where ITM children are taught entirely through the medium of a dominant language (the most common model today for ITM children in Nepal, have not even been presented in this Table, because it tries to list in great detail what characterizes successful models. The "European Schools" here are NOT ordinary schools in Europe, but the special European Union Schools (14 at the

moment) for children whose parents are employed by the EU, regardless in which level of position; see Baetens Beardsmore 1995 for a thorough description of them). In the 2-way bilingual schools (over 300 in the USA; see Dolson & Lindholm 1995 and Lindholm-Leary 2001 for them) approximately half of the students are native English speakers and half represent one ITM group (most are Spanish but many other groups are also involved). The children are initially taught through the medium of the ITM group's language. The model thus represents an immersion programme for the English-speakers and a mother tongue maintenance and development model for the ITM children. Both have their own MT as a subject, and they are also ideally taught their L2 (e.g. English for Spanish-speakers and Spanish for English-speakers) as a second language subject. This might be a possible model for schools in Nepal where some children are Nepali-speakers and others represent one ITM group. (See Table 7, from Skutnabb-Kangas & García 1995, pp. 247-249).

Table 7. Comparison of Educational Programmes

Name of programme	European Schools	Immer-sion	2-way biling.	Mainte-nance		Interna-tional	Transi-tional
TYPES	strong	strong	strong	strong		weak	weak
TYPICAL CHILD	Heter Maj	Homog Maj	Maj.& Min	Homog. Min		Heter. Ma&Mi	Min
MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION							
Initially	L1	L2	Min L1 Maj L2	L1		L2 for most	L1
Subsequently	Both or all	Both	Both	L1 or both		L2&FL	L2
				F	S		
D. Progressively multilingual students							
1. Expect to become multilingual	+	+	+	+	+	+?	–
2. Informed, responsible for own learning	+?	+	+	+	+	+?	–
3. Organised for real influence	+?	+	+	+	+	–	–
II EDUCATIONAL CULTURE							
A. Multilingual surround outside classroom							
1. Goal bi/multilingualism for all	+	+	+?	+	+	+?	–
2. Goal encompasses 1-12 grades	+	–	–	+?	+?	+	–
3. All languages used							
3a. - in all spaces in school	+	+?	–	+	+	–	–
3b. - in correspondence	+	–?	+	–	–	–	+
3c. - in signs	+	–?	+?	+?	+?	–	–
3d. - on bulletin boards	+	+?	+?	+	+	–	–
3d. - in assemblies	+	–	–?	+	+	–	–
B. Multilingual languages policy							
1a. L1 has important core subject functions	+	+	+	+	+	–?	–?
1b. link to identity: same group	+	–	+?	+	+	–?	–?
1c. L1 used as medium 1-12	+	–?	–?	+?	+?	–	–?

Table 7 continued

Name of programme	European Schools	Immer-sion	2-way biling.	Mainte-nance		Interna-tional	Transi-tional
TYPES	strong	strong	strong	strong		weak	weak
TYPICAL CHILD	Heter Maj	Homog Maj	Maj.& Min	Homog. Min		Heter. Ma&Mi	Min
MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION							
Initially	L1	L2	Min L1 Maj L2	L1		L2 for most	L1
Subsequently	Both or all	Both	Both	L1 or both		L2&FL	L2
				F	S		
1d. L1 taught as a subject 1-12	+	+?	–?	+	+	–	–
1e. linguistically homogeneous groups for L1 language arts	+	+	–	+	+	+	+
1f. Expose students to different varieties of L1	+?	–	+	+	+	–	+
1g. Protect L1 from majority language encroachment	+	+	+	+	+	–	–
2a. L2 has important core subject functions	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2b. link to identity: same group	+	–?	+?	+	+	+?	+?
2c. L2 used as (one of the) media 3/4-12, according to monitored plan	+	+	+	+	+	+?	+?
2d. L2 taught as a subject 1-12	+	–	–	+	+	+	+?
2e. linguistically homogeneous groups for L2 language arts, and, for many years, for L2-medium instruction	+	+	–	+	+	–	–?
2f. Expose students to different varieties of L2	+?	–	–?	+	+	+?	+
2g. Silent period allowed	+	+	–	+	+	–	–
C. Inclusive pedagogical strategies							
1. Inquiry-based, problem-oriented	–	–?	+	+	+	–	–
2. Student-centred, interactive	–	–?	+	+	+	–?	–

Table 7 continued

Name of programme	European Schools	Immer-sion	2-way biling.	Mainte-nance		Interna-tional	Transi-tional
TYPES	strong	strong	strong	strong		weak	weak
TYPICAL CHILD	Heter Maj	Homog Maj	Maj.& Min	Homog. Min		Heter. Ma&Mi	Min
MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION							
Initially	L1	L2	Min L1 Maj L2	L1		L2 for most	L1
Subsequently	Both or all	Both	Both	L1 or both		L2&FL	L2
				F	S		
3. Whole language strategies	–	–?	+	+	+	–	–
4. Use of writing processes	–	–	+	+?	+	–	–
5. Authentic communication	+	+	+	+	+	–	+
D. Varied teaching materials							
1. Rich and varied materials	+	+	+	+	+	+?	+
2. Produce own materials with community & students	+?	+?	+	+	+	–	+?
3. Materials bi/multilingual	+?	+?	+	+	+	–	+?
4. Orature & literature equally valued	–	–	+?	+?	+	–	+?
E. Authentic & fair multilingual assessment							
1. Not compare native and L2-speakers	+	+	–	+	+	–?	–
2. Criterion-referenced/ performance- based; use portfolios	–?	–?	+?	+?	+	–?	–
3. Language of assessment same as medium of instruction, or chosen by student	+	–?	–	+?	+?	+?	–

+ Model generally has this feature
– Model does not generally have this feature
F = A Finnish School in Sweden (Upplands Väsby)
S = A Spanish School in the U.S.A. (La Luz, Dade County, Florida)

It might be useful when looking at Tables 6 and 7 to think of which factors Nepal can influence immediately? Which require more thorough reorganization of schools?

With limited resources, where would Nepal place the emphasis? One can use both Tables as a check-list. What has been done already in Nepal, in general or in the MLE Project? What needs still doing.

Since no models can be transferred as such, it is also useful to modify the Tables for Nepalese purposes. What, for instance, is impossible for financial reasons? Capacity reasons? Because there are many one-teacher schools? Because one classroom has students with several mother tongues (Table 5, Students, situation C1)? Because of the gap between policies and implementation? Which factors can be influence now? In 5 years? 10 years? Making a long-term plan, based on the knowledge in Nepal of the conditions and of Nepalese priorities is necessary.

When thinking of the priorities, it is also useful to probe into the thinking and attitudes in Nepal around the explanations that have been and are today given for the low degree of success of ITM children in school. Who or what have been blamed? In many other countries, the children themselves, their parents and their communities have been and are blamed: they are seen as deficient in relation to what school success demands; they are claimed to suffer of various "handicaps". Depending on what "handicap" one sees as the main one, various measures have been suggested and taken. All of them have in this deficiency-theorising phase been trying to change the child, parents and community to fit the school and the state, instead of changing the school so that it changes to accommodate ITM children and so that the school sees them, their parents and their communities as resourceful people and starts from building on the strengths that they have. During all stages in deficiency-based theorizing the dominant group sees assimilation of the ITMs linguistically and culturally as one of the goals of their education: the children should become dominant-language-speaking as soon as possible or at least in the next generation. This is obviously completely against a goal of respecting and

protecting the multilingual and multicultural nature of a state.

A suggestion is to place Nepal in Table 8 (next page), in relation to the most common explanations for why non-Nepali –speaking students as a group do not succeed well in school, and the remedies most commonly suggested and used. One could then ask if some Nepali thinking might still be in the Deficit theory phases even if there is constitutional support for a non-assimilationist policy, and/or if the lack of implementation so far of the very positive constitutional protection of multilingualism and multicultural might be partially explained by assimilationist attitudes? During our stay we heard a few high-placed people claim, with approval, that ITM children were ultimately going to be switching over to the dominant language Nepali. We hope, of course (and heard many of the Ministry of Education and Sports and Department of Education representatives express their wish in this direction) that Nepal has started, with MLE, moving towards Enrichment theories.

To sum up this part, then, we recommend that the linguistic goal in Nepal to be reached at the end of Grade 8 would be highest possible competence in both the mother tongues of ITM children and in Nepali, in understanding, speaking, reading and writing, and a somewhat lower but still solid basic competence in English, in at least understanding and reading, with maybe slightly lower competence in speaking English together with some basics in writing English. As soon as teacher etc competencies in English in Nepal become higher, the goals in English could be increased. At the same time the societal goal will hopefully follow the constitution so that education does not in any way participate in forced assimilation but implements fully the positive goals of maintaining and supporting the multilingualism and multiculturalism of the country. This education can also support the maintenance of the diversity, including local linguistic, cultural and biological diversities.

Table 8. Stages in the development of minority education

REASON FOR PROBLEMS	***MEASURE***	***GOAL***
Deficit theories		
1. *Linguistic L2-related handicap, learning deficit* (the child does not master L2 well enough)	*More teaching of MoL* (auxiliary teaching, ESL, introductory classes etc); compensatory	Ml is to become MaL speaking as fast as possible
	More social and pedagogical help (aids, tutors, psychologists, social workers, career advisers etc); in addition to measure 1; compensatory	Same as 1
2. *Social handicap, socially inked learning deficit* (the child's parents come from the lowest social classes)		
3. *Cultural handicap, culturally linked learning deficit* (the child has a "different" cultural background; the child has low self-confidence; the child is discriminated against)	*Inform* M1-children about MA culture/abour their own culture; inform all children about M1-culturess/start multicultural/intercultural educational programmes; eliminate discrimination/racism in teaching materials; attitudinal courses for teachers; in addition to measures 1 and 2; compensatory	MiL in the family 1-2 generations; M1-children need help to appreciate M1-culture (until they become MaL speaking)
4. *Linguistic L1-related handicap, learning deficit because of L1 deprivation* (the child does not know her own L properly and has therefore poor grounding for	*Teaching of L1 as subject; elementary education through the medium of L1 with as fast a transition to L2-medium as possible.* MiL has no intrinsic value, it is therapeutic; compensatory (more	Same as 3

the learning of L2 CALP) (the child loses content while learning L2)	self-confidence, better co-operation with home, gives better basis for MaL learning, functions as bridge for transmission of content during L2-learning); in addition to measures 1 and 3	
Enrichment theories		
5. High levels of bilingualism beneficial for the individual but difficult to attain, demands much work and energy. The primary goal is to learn MaL properly; it is a prerequisite for equal opporrunity	Teaching through the medium of MiL for several years inside MA-school; obligatory teaching of MaL; transition to MaL-medium teaching after elementary education	MiL is allowed to be maintained for private use; bilingualism necessary; MiL is allowed to exist (in a diglossic situation) as long as demographic basis exists
6. Bilingualism enhances development. If problems arise, the causes are similar to those of monolingual children; some problems may be caused by racsim/ discrimination	Separate, equal school systems for MI and MA children, L1 is medium for both and L2 obligatory (or possible to study) for both. Positive discrimination of the MI economically (smaller units allowed)	Existence of minorities is enriching for the whole society. MiL has (at least some) official status and its use is encouraged, also for MaL children
MI = minority, MiL = minority language; MA = majority; MaL = majority language.		

Source: Skutnabb-Kangas 1988: 34-35.

2.5. STEP 5 in Educational Language Planning: does it pay off to maintain ITM languages?

We need new codified Linguistic Human Rights (LHRs), especially in education. These might be developing

through UNESCO's latest plans. But LHRs are "only" a necessary but not sufficient prerequisite: we need implementation of the existing good laws and intentions in Nepal. In most of the world, the political will for implementation is mostly lacking. Neville Alexander's analysis of reasons for it in Africa (2006: 16) states:

> The problem of generating the essential political will to translate these insights into implementable policy … needs to be addressed in realistic terms. Language planners have to realize that costing of policy interventions is an essential aspect of the planning process itself and that no political leadership will be content to consider favourably a plan that amounts to no more than a wish list, even if it is based on the most accurate quantitative and qualitative research evidence.

What would, then, be reasonable costs for maintaining indigenous/tribal and minority languages, respecting children's LHRs, and should it be the state that pays them? François Grin offers through his discussion of 'market failure' (2003) excellent arguments for resisting market dominance for public or common assets/goods like cultural products:

> Even mainstream economics acknowledges that there are some cases where the market is not enough. These cases are called "market failure". When there is "market failure", the unregulated interplay of supply and demand results in an inappropriate level of production of some commodity (Grin 2003: 35).

In Grin's view, many public goods, including minority language protection, 'are typically under-supplied by market forces' (ibid.). The level becomes inappropriately low. Therefore it is the duty of the state(s) to take extra measures to increase it.

Grin (http://www.geneve.ch/sred/collaborateurs/pagesperso/d-h/grinfrancois/francoisgrin_eng.html) and his team are just finishing a Swiss National Science Foundation project on the economics of the multilingual workplace:

One significant finding of the project is that we can, for the first time, provide estimates of the share of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] due to bi-/multilingualism. As far as I know, this is a world premiere -- the often mentioned ELAN study is confined to the effects on the export sector. But this is only a very indirect approach, because exports are only a part of GDP (which roughly varies from 10% to 50% in most economically important countries), and language is used for many more purposes than only selling exports (e.g. for accessing supplies, for internal communication, etc.) and language increasingly matters domestically (clearly in multilingual countries like Switzerland, but also in any country [with large-scale] multilingualism). I can mention that even after controlling for the input of capital and labour (taking account not just of hours worked, but also of the work experience and educational level of the workforce), the net contribution of multilingualism to the Swiss economy probably represents about 9% of GDP, which is considerable. This opens up new ways to assess the relevance of investment in multilingualism (essentially macroeconomic, as distinct from the microeconomic perspective applied in rates-of-return estimation procedures). One of the advantages is that this approach, though technically more complex, is less data-hungry than the microeconomic approach, which is based on so-called "Mincerian" equations requiring micro-data that are expensive to collect. The offshoot is that estimates could in the future be produced for less affluent countries". (from a personal email from Francois Grin, 20 Oct. 2008).

When assessing the empirical question of why one should maintain minority languages, Grin uses both 'positive' and 'defensive' (or 'negative') arguments, but both are then used within a welfare-considerations based paradigm (i.e. not within a moral considerations based argumentation, such as violations of human rights). He asks both what the costs and benefits are if minority languages ARE maintained and

promoted, and what the costs (and benefits) are if they are neither maintained nor promoted. Some of Grin's promising conclusions are as follows:

- 'diversity seems to be positively, rather than negatively, correlated with welfare'
- 'available evidence indicates that the monetary costs of maintaining diversity are remarkably modest'
- 'devoting resources to the protection and promotion of minority cultures [and this includes languages] may help to stave off political crises whose costs would be considerably higher than that of the policies considered' [the peace-and-security argument].
- 'therefore, there are strong grounds to suppose that protecting and promoting regional and minority languages is a sound idea from a welfare standpoint, not even taking into consideration any moral argument' (Grin 2003: 26).

We agree. The question whether states can afford MLE should rather be: can states afford *not* to implement MLE? Mother-tongue medium MLE for Indigenous/tribal/local children and national minorities, for **at least the first 8 years** of education is necessary for the access to education and for EFA. MLE is cost-effective, both in short-term and in long-term. MLE is necessary for maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity on earth and for creativity, and, through them and Traditional Ecological Knowledge, for the maintenance of biodiversity. Biodiversity is necessary for any future for humans on the planet. The costs of NOT implementing mother tongue-based MLE properly NOW are catastrophic for humanity. The practicalities CAN be solved.

3. Scenarios

3.1. Introduction

In this part we present some of the results of the massive research results on various educational options for ITM children. We have divided them in three types; A. those where the results of the education can be (and often are)

directly harmful to ITM children as a group (mainly dominant language medium models); B. those where the results are somewhat better initially but not sufficiently good (early-exit transitional models); and C. those with good results in terms of one or mostly several of the educational goals in Table 4.

3.2. Models with often harmful results: dominant-language-medium (subtractive assimilatory submersion)

Two Expert papers for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (Magga, Nicolaisen, Trask, Dunbar & Skutnabb-Kangas 2005 and Dunbar & Skutnabb-Kangas 2008; see also Skutnabb-Kangas & Dunbar, forthcoming) have shown convincingly that mainly dominant language (e.g. Nepali) medium education (= submersion programs) for ITM children can (and often does) cause serious physical and mental harm and transfer the children to the dominant group, i.e. assimilate them forcibly. It prevents access to education, because of the linguistic, pedagogical, cognitive (CALP-related) and psychological barriers that it creates. Thus it violates the right to education. It often curtails the development of the children's capabilities, and perpetuates thus poverty (see economics Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, and Mishra & Mohanty 2000a, b).

Subtractive dominant-language medium education for IM children can have harmful consequences socially, psychologically, economically and politically. It can cause very serious mental harm: social dislocation, psychological, cognitive, linguistic and educational harm, and, partially through this, also economic, social and political marginalization. It can often also cause serious physical harm, e.g. in residential schools, and as a long-term result of marginalization (e.g. alcoholism, suicides, incest, domestic

and other violence). It is organized against solid research evidence about how best to reach high levels of bilingualism or multilingualism and how to enable these children to achieve academically in school. It may lead to the extinction of Indigenous/tribal/local languages, thus contributing to the disappearance of the world's linguistic diversity.

Dominant-language-only programmes "are widely attested as the least effective educationally for minority language students", May & Hill write (2003: 14), in a large study commissioned by the Māori Section of the Aotearoa/New Zealand Ministry of Education (http://www.minedu.govt.nz/).

In many countries around the world children from ITM groups are forced to go to schools which do not use their mother tongues (see Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000 for a discussion of the global scenario). These children are subjected to schooling in a dominant language which they do not understand. Such forced submersion education in a dominant language has a subtractive effect on their mother tongues while the development of proficiency in the language of schooling remains slow and limited. Due to the inadequate development of L1 and L2 and limited bilingual proficiency, children fail to benefit from the usual cognitive and metacognitive advantages associated with bi-/multi– lingualism. Problems of non-comprehension in the classrooms cumulate to school failure and large scale 'push-out'[1].

In Nepal, as in India and many other countries, a large proportion of ITM children joining school are pushed out during the early years of primary education. The National Language Policy Recommendation Commission in Nepal pointed to this problem as early as 1994 (Yadava and Grove (eds) 2008: 24). The children enrolled at primary level tend to

1 These are called "drop-outs" in deficiency-based theories which blame the students, their characteristics, their parents and their culture for lack of school achievement.

"drop out" from the schools. In some cases, the students leave the school and enrol again. For these students it takes nine to twelve years to complete the primary education (National Education Commission 2049 VS). This is an indication of a great educational loss. "The majority of the school dropouts are found in grade (1-2)", Yadava and Grove state (p. 24). This indicates that they find school life to be not only unfamiliar but often unbearable and useless. One of the reasons given for this for ITM children is the difference in the language they use at home and in school. It would therefore be appropriate to educate the children in their mother tongue in order to make the break between home and school as small as possible. Neglect of children's home language or their MTs in the school programs is thus a major factor in the large-scale school failure of ITM children.

In India, public education is offered mostly in the major languages of the states/provinces which are the ones recognized as 'official' languages in the Constitution. Only 26 languages out of over 350 languages are used as languages of teaching in primary education classrooms. Except for 6 tribal/indigenous languages in the North-Eastern states in India, only official languages are used as languages of teaching (Jhingran, 2009). Jhingran (2009) estimates that nearly 25% of primary school children in India face moderate to severe learning problems due to these dominant-language-only programmes. Over 84.3 million tribal peoples in India constitute 8.2% of the national population and they speak 159 tribal languages (Singh 2002). Over 99% of the tribal children are deprived of access to schools where their MTs have a place. A number of studies in India (see Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy and Gumidyala 2009, for a discussion) show poor learning achievement and low representation of the tribal students compared to the other groups of children who do not face learning problems due to the mismatch between their home language and school language.

Language barriers for children in the dominant-language-only programmes are also a major contributing factor in capability deprivation and poverty in India. A large number of schools have a majority of tribal children; still, in all these schools the medium of education is the dominant language of the state. There are 165, 869 schools with over 50% and 103, 732 with over 90% tribal children (Jhingran 2009). All these children are taught in forced submersion programs in L2 (majority language) medium with subtractive effects on their MT. Absence of MT-based MLE has serious consequences for education of these children, contributing to capability deprivation and poverty not only in relation to the individual children but also their communities (Mohanty 2008, Mohanty et al. 2009). The push-out rate for the tribal children is 51.57% by grade 5 and 80.29% by Grade 10 (Mohanty et al. 2009). This means that fewer than 20 out of 100 tribal children entering schools survive to appear for the high school examination at the end of 10 years of schooling, and of these only about 8 pass the high school examination. Thus, there is a wastage of 92% in the dominant-language school education for the tribal groups in India. Even among those who pass the high school final exam, most have a very low level of performance, and therefore they cannot even try to get to higher and technical education. As a result, despite the provision of reserved quota in admission for tribal students in India, the proportion of such students in higher and technical education is less than 5%, far below their 8.2% share of the national population. This, as Dreze and Sen (2002) argue, ensures that the tribal communities remain in the unskilled labour category which contributes to their capability deprivation and poverty. Thus, absence of MT-based MLE (except for some experimental programs which we discuss later) is a major factor in school failure and poverty among the tribal communities in India. This is also true of other South Asian countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Bhutan (see Mohanty's

Introduction to Skutnabb-Kangas 2007). We suspect that the situation in Nepal is similar to India in terms of capability deprivation and poverty.

3.3. Somewhat better but not good enough results: early-exit transitional models

Early-exit transitional programs teach ITM children mainly through the medium of their mother tongues for one, two or three years, with the dominant language as a subject. At the latest in grade 4 most teaching is in the dominant language. Often the mother tongue does not continue even as a subject after grade 4. Initially the children seem to manage quirt well, but as soon as the mother tongue medium education finishes, it transpires that it was not enough. Two central large-scale studies (Ramirez, Thomas & Collier) and one small Indigenous/tribal study (Saikia & Mohanty 2004) will be summarised.

Since Indigenous peoples in most cases are demographically very small, there are few if any large-scale comparative studies where the role of the teaching language can be seen clearly. An extremely well controlled study is Saikia & Mohanty's (2004) study of indigenous/tribal Bodo children in Assam, India. After strong campaigning they have just managed to get MTM education going. Saikia and Mohanty compared three Grade 4 groups, with 45 children in each group, on a number of achievement measures in languages and mathematics. "The three groups were matched in respect of their socio-economic status, the quality of schooling and the ecological conditions of their villages". Group BB, Bodo children, taught through the medium of the Bodo language, performed significantly better on ALL tests than group BA, the indigenous Bodo children taught through the medium of Assamese. Group BA did the worst on all the tests. Group AA, Assamese mother tongue children taught through the medium of Assamese, performed best on two of the three mathematics measures. There was no difference

between groups BB and AA in the language measures. "The findings are interpreted as showing the positive role of MTM schooling for the Bodo children."

There are hundreds of small-scale studies like this, from most continents, which show similar results[2], and the results agree with research on (autochthonous and immigrant) minority children.

The Ramirez et al.'s 1991 study, with 2, 352 students, compared three groups of Spanish-speaking minority students. The first group were taught through the medium of **English only** (but even these students had bilingual teachers and many were taught Spanish as a subject, something that is very unusual in submersion programmes); the second one, **early-exit** students, had one or two years of Spanish-medium education and were then transferred to English-medium, and the third group, **late-exit** students, had 4-6 years of Spanish-medium education before being transferred to English-medium.

A common sense approach would suggest that the first group, the ones who started English-medium early and had most exposure to English, the English-only students, would have the best results in English, and in mathematics and in educational achievement in general, and that the late-exit students who started late with English-medium education and consequently had least exposure to English, would do worst in English, etc. In fact, the results were exactly the opposite. **The late-exit students got the best results**. In addition, they were the only ones who had a chance to achieve native levels of English later on, whereas the other two groups were, after

2 See summaries and references in, e.g., Baker 1993, Baker & Prys Jones 1998, references to Cummins in the bibliography, Dolson & Lindholm 1995, García, Skutnabb-Kangas & Torres-Guzmán, eds (2006), Huss 1999, Huss et al. 2003, Leontiev 1995, May & Hill 2003, May, ed. (1999), Skutnabb-Kangas 2000, Skutnabb-Kangas, ed. 1995, and the 8-volume series *Encyclopedia of Language and Education*, especially Cummins & Corson, eds, 1997. All these references can be accessed in the bibliography at http://www.terralingua.org/Bibliographies/MultilingLingHRBib.html

an initial boost, falling progressively further behind, and were judged as probably never being able to catch up to native English-speaking peers in English or general school achievement.

Thomas & Collier's study (see bibliography under both names) is the largest longitudinal study in the world on the education of minority students, involving a total of more than 210, 000 students, including in-depth studies in both urban and rural settings in the USA, and with many different types of educational models. Across **all** the models, those students who reached the highest levels of both bilingualism and school achievement were the ones where the children's mother tongue was the main medium of education for the most extended period of time. This length of education in the L1 (language 1, first language), was the strongest predictor of both the children's competence and gains in L2, English, and of their school achievement. Thomas & Collier state (2002: 7): "the strongest predictor of L2 student achievement is the amount of formal L1 schooling. The more L1 grade-level schooling, the higher L2 achievement."

The length of MTM education was in both Thomas & Collier's and in Ramirez et al.'s large study more important than any other factor (and many were included) in predicting the educational success of bilingual students. It was also much more important than **socio-economic status**. This is extremely vital when reflecting on the socio-economic status of many indigenous peoples. The worst results, including high percentages of push-outs in both studies were with students in regular submersion programmes where the students' mother tongues (L1s) were either not supported at all or where they only had some mother-tongue-as-a-subject instruction. This is also important for Nepal when thinking of a suggestion that we often heard, namely that teaching ITM children's mother tongue as a subject only might be enough. It is not.

In many countries, there are educational programs in

which ITM children's MTs are used for few initial years of schooling with a clear goal of facilitating their early transition to the dominant language medium education. Most of these programs do not continue with the MTs beyond grade 3, not even as a school subject. Such early-exit transitional programs of MLE may be somewhat better than the non-MLE submersion programs in dominant languages but they are not very effective. In India, experimental MLE programs have started in two states – Andhra Pradesh and Orissa (see Mohanty et al. 2009, for details). These programs begin early literacy instruction in tribal children's MTs (10 tribal languages in Orissa and 8 in Andhra Pradesh) as L1 and introduce L2 (Telugu in Andhra Pradesh and Oriya in Orissa) for development of oral communicative skills in grade 2 and for literacy instruction in grade 3. Both the state programs envisage a complete switch to L2 as medium of instruction from Grade 6. The initial evaluation of the programs shows that the children in the experimental MLE schools perform better than their counterparts in the dominant L2 medium programs. But in the absence of any clear policy in respect of the continuation of the MTs beyond grade 5 - ideally as a medium of teaching, and, at least, as a school subject – these MLE programs in India seem to be heading towards developing as weak and soft assimilative forms of MLE. Such early transition to L2 go against the research evidence which make a strong case for at least 6 – 8 years of use of children's MT as the main medium of instruction in the MLE programs. This is particularly crucial since the conditions of the classrooms, the teacher preparations, and quality of the teaching-learning transactions in India as well as Nepal are quite likely to remain below the optimal levels due to severe resource constraints and several other limitations. Even in countries that do not have such constraints, the early-exit transitional programs of MLE show limited and short-term benefits, at best.

3.4. Even better results: late-exit transitional models

Do we KNOW, then, how dominated group children should be educated? YES: MT-based MLE Research results about on the one hand, the **negative consequences** of subtractive education through the medium of a dominant/ foreign language and from most early-exit transitional programmes, and, on the other hand, the **positive results** of mainly mother tongue medium education for many years for Indigenous/tribal/local and minority children are solid and consistent. The existing (fewer and fewer) counterarguments to MLE are political/ideological, not scientific. ("Minority" means here a group with little power. In many especially African countries ALL groups are often minorities demographically – no group or nation forms over 50% of the population).

ALL strong successful MLE models for ITM children use mainly the mother tongue as the teaching language during the first MANY years, with good teaching of the dominant language (which in Nepal would be Nepali) as a second language subject, taught by bilingual teachers who know the children's mother tongue. Solid research results show that the longer Indigenous/tribal and minority children in a low-status position have their own language as the main medium of teaching, the better the general school achievement and the better they also become in the dominant language, provided, of course, that they have good teaching in it, preferably given by bilingual teachers. In addition, they learn their own L1.

We present some positive examples. In Sápmi (the Saami country) in the core Saami administrative areas in Norway and Finland, Indigenous Saami children have the right to have their first 9 years of education through the medium of Saami. There are 10 Saami languages; maximally 120, 000 ethnic Saami altogether, and probably fewer than 40, 000 speakers totally of the ten Saami languages. The Saami are the only Indigenous people in the European Union (see www.galdu.org and links there). The Saami children

learn Norwegian/Finnish as a second language, and English and other languages as foreign languages. There are some Saami-medium upper secondary schools, and a Saami-medium University College (http://www.samiskhs.no/). As compared to earlier (with similar results as in India, push-out, assimilation and language shift, shame for using the mother tongue, low self-confidence, etc), the results are excellent linguistically, academically, in terms of identities. See Aikio-Puoskari (2009), Skutnabb-Kangas & Aikio-Puoskari (2003), Aikio-Puoskari & Skutnabb-Kangas (2007), and references to Aikio-Puoskari in http://www.tove-skutnabb-kangas.org/en/Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas-Bibliography.html[3].

A typical example of the many very small-scale studies with similar results is one among Finnish working class immigrant minorities in metropolitan Stockholm in Sweden (Skutnabb-Kangas 1987). The students in this study were in mainly Finnish-medium classes for 9 years. They were compared with Swedish control groups in the parallel classes in the same schools, and also with Finnish mother tongue children in Finnish-medium schools in Finland, i.e. "normal" majority children. A difficult Swedish language test, of the type where normally middle-class children do better than working class children, measured their Swedish competence. After 9 years of mainly Finnish-medium education, and good teaching of Swedish as a second language, these working-class Finnish students got somewhat better results in the Swedish language than the Swedish mainly middle-class control groups (see Table 9; maximum points 13 – the fact that the means were around 5 shows how difficult the test was). It is interesting that their own evaluation of their Swedish competence (maximum points 5) was somewhat lower than the assessment of the Swedish youngsters of their

3 In general, this bibliography (313 pages, over 5000 entries) is a good source for MLE references.

own competence – still, the Finnish children did better in the Swedish test. It is also remarkable when thinking of schools as democratisers that all the Finnish children's Swedish was at a high level, they were closely clustered around the average (they had a lower standard deviation than the Swedish children), whereas there was more variation among the Swedish children's competence in Swedish. This also shows that the medium of instruction is important as a socio-economic equaliser even in relation to competence in the second language. In addition, the Finnish of the Finnish children in Sweden was almost as good as the Finnish of Finnish control groups in Finland.

Table 9. Swedish test results and subjects' own assessment of their Swedish competence

	TEST RESULT (1-13)		**OWN ASSESS-MENT (1-5)**	
	M	sd	M	sd
Swedish control group	5.42	2.23	4.83	0.26
Finnish co-researchers	5.68	1.86	4.50	0.41

M = mean; sd = standard deviation; Finnish working class immigrant minority youngsters in Sweden, after 9 years of mainly Finnish-medium education; Swedish control group: mainly middle class youngsters in parallel classes in the same schools; Swedish test: decontextualised, CALP-type test where middle-class subjects can be expected to perform better (Skutnabb-Kangas 1987).

Ethiopia has an innovative and progressive national education policy, based on 8 years of mother-tongue medium (MTM) education. Regions have the authority to make their own decentralized implementation plans. Some regions transfer to English medium already after 4 or 6 years. A study across all the regions was commissioned by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (Heugh, Benson, Berhanu &

Mekonnen 2007). There is an efficient collection of system-wide assessment data. These show very clear patterns of learner achievement at Grade/Year 8, 10 and 12. The Grade 8 data show that those learners who have 8 years of MTM education plus English as a subject perform better across the curriculum (including in English) than those with 6 years or 4 years of mother tongue medium (see Heugh 2009).

Burkina Faso's bilingual programmes have similar good results (see Paul Taryam Ilboudo's and Norbert Nikièma's article in Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, forthcoming).

3.5. Strongest form: self-evident mother tongue medium models with no transition

The strongest form of minority education that no Indigenous or Tribal peoples have is a mother-tongue-medium model with no transition, i.e. the MT continues to be the medium in a self-evident way and protected by strong laws, from preschool to university, with other languages, including the state's dominant language and international languages studies as second and foreign languages. Only Swedish-speakers in Finland and French-speakers in Quebec, Canada, have this kind of education. Of course one might also see the education of native English and Afrikaans speakers in South Africa as representing this model too, but the colonial apartheid conditions and the fact that many Black Africans have been forced to or have chosen to start using these languages as their home languages too and that most classes taught through these languages also have non-speakers and non-native speakers, make them different.

The results in, for instance, Finland, of this education are extremely good in terms of learning the (Swedish) mother tongue fully. Finnish is also learned at a native level by many, especially in urban contexts where it is used outside school, but less well in Swedish-dominant villages in the

country. The school achievement in Swedish-medium schools is at the same level as in Finnish-medium schools. Students in these schools usually start learning English two years later (in grade 5) than students in Finnish-medium schools; still their results in English are as good as or better than the results in Finnish-medium schools. This can be explained by both English and Swedish being Indo-European languages and closely related, whereas Finnish, a Finno-Ugric language, is not related to either Swedish or English. But an important reason is also that the Swedish-speaking children are already bilingual and biliterate, often at a high level, when they start studying English. High-level bilinguals learn additional languages faster and often better than corresponding monolinguals (e.g. Swain et al. 1990).

One might imagine, though, that both the Finland Swedish and the Quebec French schools could get an even higher level of multilingualism as a result, i.e. a native-like competence in two languages and a very high competence in additional languages, if they were to use the dominant national language (Finnish, English), as the medium of instruction in upper secondary school for one or two subjects, depending on teacher qualifications in each school. These minority languages (Swedish, French) are so strong, with such good legal protection, that they would not suffer but would benefit from the transfer of knowledge from a well developed mother tongue to the second language. The same is true for at least English and possibly also Afrikaans in South Africa: native English. Or Afrikaans speaking children in mother tongue medium schools could learn some subjects through the medium of Zulu or Xhosa or some other African language in upper secondary school, instead of having one of them as a subject only (and even this is rare). Likewise, Nepali mother tongue children could use Tamang, Limbu, Rai, Magar, etc to learn some subjects in upper secondary school, when enough materials have been developed and competent teachers are available (the latter may already be

the case even if these teachers are today teaching through the medium of Nepali).

4. Experiences from Nepal: the situation today

The Nepal MLE project schools so far represent an early-exit transitional model. It seems that there are hopes and plans that MLE will be expanded both horizontally (more schools and more languages – this is what the cascading plan promises) and vertically (more grades to be included, e.g. grades 4-6). A baseline study by the Expert & Research Team, is being written up by dr. Sushan Acharya. When writing this report, we had access to a first draft[4]. It describes in detail visits to the various project schools; we will not repeat anything from it here. We have also read dr. Shelley Taylor's report and endorse all her conclusions, also supporting a formative (and maybe also summative?) evaluation study of methodologies (her suggestion is that dr. Vishnu Rai might be a good person to do it). Since professor Taylor has discussed teacher training at length, we will not touch upon it in our report.

We visited ourselves the Sri Bhimsen Primary School, Thulobarkhu (5 March 2009), one of the two project schools in Rasuwa district (both started MLE in March 2007). We were welcomed by, among others, teacher Pema Wangmo Tamang and head teacher Ram Sundar Yadav. We visited a Social Studies (geography) class with older students who had not been taught through the medium of Tamang. Then we sat in a first and a second grade classroom (mathematics, and mother tongue lessons, respectively) where the medium was Tamang. In these classes, taught by Yamlal Pamaya and Urmila Lama, we saw superb and sophisticated pedagogy and interested, motivated, eager, really happy children, with their

4 After we had finished our main report, we got the MLE Research and Expert Team's Final Draft Report, April 2009. We have incorporated some of our observations of it in Section 5.1.

eyes shining, competing to participate. When the cascading starts and schools to be modeled are chosen, this school is an obvious candidate.

In the workshop 6 March 2009, teachers from Sri Bhimsen School told about results from and challenges in the project school. Positive results mentioned were:

- the students now come regularly to school
- drop-out rates are decreasing
- students are joyful
- students are more inquisitive
- students are learning more
- student self-confidence is increasing
- school management has improved
- students and teachers are focusing on cleanliness of the school too
- the teachers are now more trained and more efficient than earlier
- parents were initially somewhat negative and suspicious towards MLE; now they feel good about it
- MLE has started in two additional cascading schools and it runs smoothly in thos schools too
- more resources have been given to those schools

The main problem that was mentioned was:

- it is difficult to translate textbooks from Nepali to Tamang; they would like to have their own textbooks in all subjects.

Teachers from the other project school in the Rasuwa district, Sri Saraswoti Primary School, Thade, echoed to a large extent their colleagues, telling about children now attending school regularly, etc.. In addition, they also told that:

- the children feel at ease and understand the classroom practices
- using Tamang helps the children to understand subject matter (social studies and creative arts, mathematics,

science, health and physical education, all is in Tamang in grades 1-3); their confidence improves
- children will be able to transfer their knowledge to other languages
- there is a lot of local involvement: the community participates, inquires about school
- a local subject curriculum has been developed.

Challenges and problems mentioned included:

- the initial phase was difficult; there were problems in switching from Nepali medium to Tamang medium
- there is interference from other languages (mainly Nepali but also English) in the Tamang language used
- there is a need for more Tamang-speaking teachers
- time and resources for MLE need to be increased
- the head teacher has an additional work load.

Teachers from both the project schools and the cascading schools also told that they and the communities are committed to preserving their mother tongues and also reflecting on the role of Nepali. They want a committee to mobilize Tamang-speaking teachers. A student (grade 5 or 6?), Santimaya Ghale Tamang was also present during the whole workshop; she presented a short piece that she had rehearsed; when she got stuck, the whole audience enthusiastically supported her. There was a very lively discussion about challenges in the workshop.

In the next subsection we present some of the challenges and questions that we read, heard and observed. These include issues from the Rasuwa workshop, the two-day workshop on 8-9 March, and the National seminar 11 March. In addition, we have looked at suggestions in some planning reports of various kinds. We also indicate some of the answers given at the workshops, and our reflections on both these and some of the suggestions in reports.

5. Specific challenges in Nepal: implementation strategies

5.1. What has been suggested for Nepal in various reports in relation to mother tongues, Nepali and English?

We start with English. Many studies show that the *demand for English*, which is obviously real and growing in most countries, nevertheless is something that has been partially constructed by a conglomeration of agents (see Phillipson 1992, 2009, and all references to his writings on English on his home page www.cbs.dk/staff/phillipson). In "developing countries" (itself a hierarchising term) these in most cases include not only language-related state and para-statal agencies in countries where English is the main native language (UK, USA, Australia) and most "development aid" international agencies, including NGOs, but also the countries' own elites, even in cases where the country has not been colonized, officially or de facto. Stephen Clayton (2008) is interested in the "unasked question… how has this high demand for English come about" (2008: 146). He shows convincingly for Cambodia how "the construction of the demand for English and English language teaching" was coarticulated with the neoliberal "reconstruction and development" of Cambodia (2008:143). Similar arguments about "the 'need' for Cambodia (and Cambodians) to be able to access global free markets and global knowledge" (ibid., 145) have been aired in Nepal. Such an "external orientation within Cambodian education" with English as "an essential requirement for successful rebuilding… has repeatedly failed to meet the needs of the rural majority". The country has been portrayed "as economically and socially homogenous, assuming English and ELT [= English Language Teaching] is accessible to all regardless of class, gender, ethnicity, age or geographic location, and that the external goods English provides access to are similarly beneficial to all" (ibid., 148). In fact, "access to English remains restricted to a minority of Cambodians and is closely related to their socio-economic position.

Likewise, the fruits of an externally-oriented economy, under contemporary globalization, are far from evenly distributed" (ibid., 148). Thus what is presented as if it was a rational choice (people 'choose' English freely) "often masks the fact that 'choice' is a marker of economic privilege. The more distant subjects are from economic necessity, the more 'choice' becomes a possibility. 'Choice' is guaranteed to those who can afford to choose" (Reay & Lucey 2003, p. 138, quoted in Clayton 2008: 144). Instead of choosing a language policy with, for instance, mass literacy campaigns, the Cambodian language planners have "chosen" a path, with unsustainable English, that has led to "leaving the majority of Cambodians functionally illiterate" (Clayton 2008: 143).

The main issue for ITM children is to what extent the goal of the school is to enable the children to add to their linguistic repertoire instead of subtracting from it so that they have a chance to become high-level bilingual (or multilingual), with maintenance and thorough development of their own language as a self-evident goal, but adding a high competence in the dominant language too. We can compare this with how children in Asia who have English (instead of one of the dominant national languages) as a medium of education fare. Andy Kirkpatrick (2009: 4) thinks that

"lessons must be learned from south-east Asia's push for English" and warns that if "English is adopted as the medium of instruction for certain subjects across whole primary school system [which he thinks is "too early"] … can have its dangers" (ibid.). Analysing several countries, his conclusion is, for instance for the Phillippines where "maths and science are taught in English in primary school [since 1974] … we encounter a common problem that the early introduction of CLIL [Content and Language Integrated Learning] can cause. Children whose mother tongue is not Tagalog (and that is the majority of Filipinos) enter primary school having to learn in two alien languages, Filipino [=

Tagalog] and English. The result is that *many Filipino children graduate from schools as semilingual in Filipino and English and unsure in their mother tongues*. The introduction of English as a medium of instruction in primary school takes curriculum time from local languages, a phenomenon that can be seen across the region. The children who benefit most from this policy are Tagalog speakers from wealthy families" (emphasis added).

Most Indigenous and Tribal children in the world who attend school in the first place are in a situation similar to the one Kirkpatrick describes. If Tribal and minority children in Nepal have to learn both Nepali and English in primary school, using Nepali as the main medium of instruction and possibly even having a few subjects in English, a situation similar to the one described above is likely – no firm competence in any language, except, maybe, for Nepali mother tongue elites from Kathmandu. This can be counteracted by teaching ITM children through their mother tongues, with Nepali as a second language subject and English as a foreign language subject. There are many similar experiences for Nepal to learn from.

What has been suggested in Nepal, then? In the older (1994; English translation 2008) National Languages Policy Recommendations (Yadava & Grove, eds) English is hardly mentioned. Likewise, in Group Report B from the Workshop on 'MLE Policy and Strategy Development' in Nepal (see Appendix 6 for this report; the group was chaired by professor Yadava), English is mentioned but no time for starting it is specified.

On the other hand, the report from group A (chaired by dr. Acharya) suggests starting English as a subject in grade 4. The **Review of non Nepali speaking children's learning environment, Submitted by MLE Research and Expert Team** (Final Draft, April 2009) suggests, though, in its *Future directions* section, under Point 2, Level and approach of MLE implementation that "Foreign language which is

English will be introduced from grade one but in limited extent and at oral level only" (p. 8 in the final draft report). The final draft report also states: "In most of other private schools except for one Newari-medium school] children are taught to read, write and speak in English from kindergarten. Nepali is taught as a subject. Use of other languages of Nepal in such schools is not considered" (p. 37 in the final draft report). There are no suggestions to change this situation in the draft report.

The **National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal** (NCF) (2007) also suggests in its Summary (p. 3) that English should be started in grade 4 and made a compulsory subject (whereas ITM languages only appear under "**Optional first**: Language/ Others", and local subjects under "**Optional second** : Local subject (vocation, business and trade and others)". On the other hand, in part **3.3.5, Medium of instruction**, the NCF has the following a bit puzzling formulation (p. 34):

Mother tongue will be the medium of elementary education. *The medium of school level education can be in Nepali or English language or both of them.* However, in the first stage of elementary education (Grades 1-3), the medium of education will generally be in mother tongue (emphasis added).

In part 5 where the suggestions are concretized in a table about the implementation of the proposed Framework, the same puzzle reappears under point *11, Language* (p. 65). Thus it seems that teaching from grade 4 onwards could also be conducted in English, and the teachers, materials, etc should be ready for this within 2 years from when the (2007) report was published, i.e. in 2009. To us the implementation timing seems in any case completely unrealistic. But more seriously, if English were to be the medium of instruction from grade 4, one can predict the same very negative results that have appeared in many similar countries: some elite children might make it, thus increasing the gap between elites

and ordinary people, but for most Nepalese children it would be a disaster.

Activities	Existing Condition	Expected Change	How to achieve that	When to start
11. Language	▪ No teaching learning in mother tongues	▪ Teaching learning (of grades 1-3) will be in mother tongues ▪ Medium of instruction in Nepali or in English or in both	▪ Formulate a policy for teacher preparation and act accordingly	Within two years

Suggestions for mother tongue medium teaching in the Nepali documents mentioned vary. There seems to be full agreement about mother tongue medium teaching for ITM children for minimally the first 3 years of elementary education and a commitment to trying to organize it for as many groups as possible as soon as possible. Suggestions for teaching after grade 4 vary, from NCF's "Nepali or English" to suggesting partial MTM teaching in grades 4 and 5 (with Nepali from grade 6). If mother-tongue-medium teaching does not continue at least up to grade 6, we have an early-exit transitional model.

The limitations of the early-exit models of MLE are quite evident from analysis of the consequences of various early-exit programs in different countries across Africa (see Heugh 2009, for a review; see also Alidou, forthcoming, Skutnabb-Kangas & Heugh, forthcoming). Early transition to the international language of wider communication across Africa is, according to Kathleen Heugh's summaries (2009) accompanied by:

- Poor literacy in L1 and L2 (SACMEQ 11 2005; UIE-ADEA study 2006; HSRC studies in South Africa 2007);
- Poor numeracy/mathematics & science (HSRC 2005; 2007)
- High failure and drop-out rates (Obanya 1999; Bamgbose 2000)
- High costs/ wastage of expenditure (Alidou et al 2006).

An ITM child can learn to use a second/foreign language fairly fluently for BICS purposes (BICS = Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills), for talking about concrete everyday things in face-to-face interaction where the context makes understanding easier. This takes a relatively short time (1-3 years, depending on exposure, the distance between the languages, and several psychological factors – see Table 6, "Learner-related affective factors"). Teachers, parents and sometimes even the child herself may think that this is enough for using the language for school purposes. It may suffice for the first dew grades – but after grade 3, requirements for language competence in school change, when everything becomes more abstract, much more reading is required, and teaching distances itself from here and now. And it is here that ITM children really start failing if they cannot continue to develop their thinking and problem solving skills through the language they know best, their mother tongue(s). It is clear from research that it takes between 5-7 years (there are also credible suggestions of 5-9 years) for a child to learn to use a second or foreign language (in this case Nepali, and even more for English) well enough for CALP purposes (CALP = Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency), so that it can be used as a language of instruction in cognitively and linguistically demanding de-contextualised situations where one cannot use the immediate context for understanding. History, mathematics, geography, social studies, etc are examples of subjects which are heavily CALP-loaded: they are more abstract, talk about issues and phenomena which the child cannot see, touch,

smell, or try out immediately. They also require a much larger vocabulary, both receptive (understanding) and productive (speaking/writing). As we have shown in earlier sections, 6 years of mainly mother tongue medium education is an absolute minimum, and 8 years would be preferable if one wants the ITM children to reach high levels in at least their mother tongues and Nepali. All proposals which suggest less are costly compromises, repeating mistakes that have been made earlier in many countries.

Many of the Nepali reports mentioned above have constructive suggestions on how to deal with other challenges, such as classrooms with several mother tongues, issues around non-formal and adult education, etc. One issue that has not been dealt with adequately in them is private schools. From a scientific point of view, there is no difference between demands that should be made on state schools and demands on private schools, in relation to the importance of ITM children's mother tongues and general school achievement. It should be possible to mandate mother-tongue-based MLE also for private schools. Having ITM mother tongues as optional subjects as is suggested in some of the reports is a symbolic act with few consequences for language learning or school achievement.

5.2. Developing a State language policy in the context of a federal polity

All languages are resources of a nation. Preservation and development of the multilingual and multicultural character of a country requires multipronged approaches, founded on respect for diversity and egalitarian social structures. The manner in which the system of education is organized in any society is among the most important factors, which strongly influence cultural and linguistic maintenance. Development and maintenance of languages are critically related to their planned use in education. Therefore, it is necessary to have a clear languages-in-education policy in

Nepal. There are already many positive features in the provisions variously made in the principles and processes of governance in Nepal, which show Nepal's commitment to a multicultural and multilingual society. Declaration of all languages of Nepal as National Languages and commitment to impart early education in children's mother tongues (which we heard several times from the highest level of educational administration) are positive steps in this direction. The National Language Policy Recommendation Commission constituted in 1993 has made clear recommendations for mother tongue based bilingual education in Nepal.

Education in a multilingual society in a globalizing world must cater to the needs for all children to develop their mother tongues for local, regional, national and even international level communication. In the context of the present day Nepal, its democratic federal structure and aspirations for an egalitarian welfare society and economic developments of the nation, the educational system in Nepal needs to strengthen the mother tongues and, at the same time, foster high levels of competence in Nepali as the official language and at least one international language (such as English) for wider communication. Therefore, educational policy must plan for quality multilingual education for the whole country.

In a federal structure it is necessary to have a balanced blend of centralized and decentralized structures and responsibilities. Often a top-heavy centralized structure is ineffective in catering to the regional diversities and community aspirations. A complete decentralization, on the other hand, runs the risk of fragmenting the national mosaic, yielding to chaos, unplanned divergences and the risk of local power struggles influencing the educational outcomes negatively.

At the *national level*, education must have a broad vision for fostering meaningful participation in the country's democratic processes, responsible citizenship and

empowerment of all communities.

At the *regional level* it must transform the communities for more effective realization of the societal goals and foster planned long-term educational development.

Decisions about materials development, including many of the content issues which have to be sensitive to and use local Indigenous Knowledges (IK) and Indigenous Knowledge Holders, including Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), are to a large extent best left to the *local levels*. Local availability of bilingual teachers with good knowledge of the students' mother tongues will also influence the speed of both horizontal and vertical extension of MT-based MLE.

However, all the levels duality of responsibility in a federal structure may lead to ineffective planning and implementation. In planning for multilingual education in Nepal, it would be necessary to have a broad national policy framework for planned development of multiple languages throughout the education system. It is also necessary to define the curricular objectives at all levels of such education. "Regions" can in a federal system be enormously varied, but regardless of what the principles for forming the regions will be in Nepal, none of them will have a "monolingual" population, with representatives of one language only. This fact will also necessitate a national educational framework, with clearly articulated principles about educational language rights for a region's dominant group(s) and both absolute and relative (depending on the size of the minority) rights for all ITMs.

Within such a national framework of uniformity, state and regional levels of educational planning and administration can foster healthy diversity, frame specific pedagogical and transactional processes to meet community aspirations.

A federal system of structured and well-defined sharing of functions at all levels, with delineated responsibilities, can

be envisaged to foster integration through promotion of diversities. Peace and conflict researcher agree that ITMs who have basic human rights, here including basic educational linguistic human rights, are much less likely to initiate or participate in conflicts. One reason for educational LHRs promoting peace and integration is the poverty reduction that these rights lead to in the middle- and long term. When ethnic and linguistic divisions do not follow divisions in terms of economic and political power, they cannot be used to mobilize people along ethnic and linguistic lines, something that is often a grave risk in multilingual societies[5]. Paul Collier, professor of economics at Oxford University and former head of research at the World Bank, warns in his 2009 book *Wars, Guns & Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* (according to Glenny's 2009 review of it, 'The problem with 'kumbaya' politics') that "elections alone

5 One could here use theories about secure vs insecure majorities and minorities. A **linguistic MAJORITY, secure** in its identity, can afford to grant LHRs to minorities, without feeling that this is a threat. A **secure linguistic minority** accepts a minority status. It is secure in its identity and does not feel any threat towards its future from the majority; its loyalty is with the state it lives in. Full linguistic and cultural human rights and a fair economic and political representation, with affirmative action, are prerequisites for this. As opposed to this, an **insecure MAJORITY** believes in myths about monolingualism being normal, desirable, inevitable and enough (monolingual reductionism). It sees, falsely, minority LHRs as a threat to the state's unity and integrity and does not trust the minority. An **insecure minority** is threatened by forced linguistic and cultural assimilation and unequal economic and political rights.

The worst combination is an insecure majority (behaving as a majorised minority) and insecure minorities (behaving as minorised majorities). We can then ask what the situation is in Nepal? Are both ethnic Nepalis and ethnic/linguistic ITMs still to some extent insecure, so that the Nepali-speaking "majority" is afraid that granting a federal status, with corresponding educational language rights, to ITMs is seen as leading to a disintegration of the state? And the ITMs may, if they feel insecure about their present and future status, make more vocal and disrupting demands than they might if they felt sure that their human rights, including the right to self-determination AND educational and cultural languages rights, will be met. In that case, both ethnic Nepalis and linguistic ITMs lose out, and so does the state.

do not amount to a strong democracy. Without institutions that promote accountability, they are exploited by cynical, greedy elites" (p. 39). Unless the citizens are well educated, they can neither demand nor understand how accountability and elite exploitation work. Good MLE works also in this way for democracy.

More specifically, a national educational structure will, as mentioned above, require a National Policy Framework for multilingual education in Nepal that defines the broad curricular framework setting targets for all levels of education and rights for every group. Within this framework, development of specific teaching-learning strategies, preparation of text materials and activities for classroom transactions and teachers can be left to the regional (and local) levels of planning and implementation, ensuring community participation and sharing, to foster children's identity and cultural rootedness.

5.3. Curriculum and materials

Development of curricular materials for MT-based MLE in a linguistically diverse country such as Nepal would require a lot of organized effort. The MLE team in Nepal has done an excellent job of developing quality reading material of stories taken from the ones narrated by community members to the children in community gatherings organized by the MLE team. Children were asked to draw pictures based on the stories they heard and selected drawings have been used to illustrate the stories in the books (see Hough, Thapa Magar & Yonjan-Tamang 2009, Yonjan-Tamang, Hough & Nurmela 2009). This is an exemplary step, which can be replicated for all Indigenous languages.

There are concerns, however, about textbooks and other curricular materials. In the workshop in Rasuwa teachers expressed concern about such materials being directly translated from the available Nepali language texts, something that has been done centrally for over a dozen

languages in some areas. This appears superficially to be an easier method of developing materials and ensuring some uniformity across different linguistic regions, but it does not meet the philosophy and principles of MLE. Many teachers rightly stressed the need for such materials to be culturally relevant and appropriate.

Two questions are important in this context: how does one, on the one hand, ensure uniformity across different languages and regions (and is this necessary, for instance for quality control?), and how can the curricular materials be embedded in the everyday experiences of children on the other hand?

These issues can be dealt with by making a *distinction between the curriculum, and text materials*. The curriculum provides a broad framework of teaching-learning objectives in any educational programme. It sets the goals for achievement at different levels of education. Thus, a curricular framework must specify the teaching-learning standards and objectives to be targeted at different grades in school education. It is necessary for these objectives to be comparable across different schools, languages and MLE programmes so that all children are enabled to develop comparable levels of proficiency in different curricular areas and school subjects. But the goals can be reached in many different ways, through different methods, and with the help of different tools, including textbooks.

The question of the curricular objectives to be meaningful and culturally relevant to children's daily life experiences is related to the linking of the processes and of the materials required and used for context specific school and classroom teaching-learning transactions. The textbooks, children's reading materials, various teaching-learning activities in and outside the schools and the classroom transactions need to be directly related to children's experiences. Thus the twin questions relating to curricula, texts and classroom transactions can be addressed by a policy

of uniformity with diversity. A national curricular framework suitably developed, and modified from time to time, is necessary so that all programmes of the "mainstream" as well as mother-tongue-based ITM education – Nepali, English, Indigenous mother tongue and other language programmes – can target comparable levels of achievement for all children at different grades. Besides specifying teaching-learning targets for each grade level in school programmes, the curricular framework must also emphasize the nature of multilingual proficiency and the goals for MT, Nepali and English (see Section 2.4), the placing of languages and their use as instructional media and school subjects, and broad approaches to and methods of curricular transactions in the classrooms. Such a national framework would effectively ensure uniform quality education for all children in Nepal without entailing disadvantages to the ITM children and other today disadvantaged segments of the national population.

Children's classroom learning can be contextualized within this common framework. Preparation of curricular materials, textbooks, other teaching-learning materials and activities and methods of classroom transaction need to be decentralized to ensure that children's learning remains rooted in their culture and daily life experiences.

The pilot programme of MLE in Nepal has made substantial headway in bringing in IK and IK-holders to the classrooms. This approach must be followed to its logical limit. It must be recognized that school learning is a collective and collaborative process rooted in children's cultural experiences. Children come to schools with a vast knowledge base about the physical world, the flora and fauna, ecology, family and community relationships, cultural knowledge systems in respect of numbers, measures, quantities and a variety of other aspects of the reality.

Such knowledge is jointly constructed through mutual participation of children and adults in cultural activities enabling the children to develop a variety of everyday

concepts. For example, children's everyday cognition of numbers, systems of counting and measurement are embedded in cultural practices such as folk games, market experiences, household and agricultural activities and many other community events, such as traditional festivals, etc.

The conceptual development of children need to be seen as an effective interaction between spontaneous every concepts and the organized system of scientific concepts which school education seeks to promote (Vygotsky 1978). The challenge for school education lies in establishing effective linkages between children's cultural experiences and classroom learning so that they can move from the everyday to the scientific concepts, which the school curriculum seeks to develop. Text materials, classroom activities and transactions can be planned at the local levels so that such linkages can be established. In an experimental programme of MLE in Orissa (India), called *MLE Plus*, teaching-learning materials were developed within a theoretical framework of cultural psychology, to relate everyday cognition of children as an epistemic system to the classroom system of mathematics so that the movement to the scientific school concepts can be facilitated through multiple points of contact between cultural experiences and organized school practices (see Panda & Mohanty 2009, for details). The cultural psychological framework offers a sound theoretical background system for MLE:

(T)hrough formal instruction, children are given access to scientific concepts that enable them to reconceptualise their everyday experiences. In this sense, scientific concepts replace children's everyday concepts and they can begin to work within the more formal and generalised conceptual framework associated with schooling. But this is possible only if children's own knowledge systems, beliefs and values are used as the basis for development of more formal scientific knowledge. The interaction between scientific and spontaneous concepts can also be described as an

interweaving process where scientific concepts grow downward through spontaneous concepts, while spontaneous concepts grow upward through scientific concepts. (Panda & Mohanty 2009: 302)

This approach necessarily requires that the task of materials development, preparation of textbooks and other reading materials, planning of classroom activities, teaching-learning materials and classroom transactions in MLE programmes in different languages must be decentralized and left to the local school authorities, teachers and communities guided by the national curricular framework and a pool of experts and resource persons to ensure uniformity amid diversity. In addition, teachers, IK-holders and others participating in this work must be paid for these efforts.

For such a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to be more effective, it would be necessary to reorient teacher-training practices and to offer teacher training in mother tongues.

Another issue in respect of language planning and pedagogical practices in MLE relates to the use of different writing systems for the languages in Nepal. We heard several claims for indigenous language specific writing systems and emotional pleas for their use in teaching children to read and write in the mother tongues. The current practice in general is to use Devanagari script to write all the language in Nepal. The development and use of indigenous and unique systems of writing are questions of identity and aspirations of linguistic communities and cannot be denied.

However, while it is unfortunate that absence of a writing system is often taken as a sign of inadequacy of a language, resulting in its stigmatization and reduction to an inferior status of a "dialect", it must be realized that writing systems are not essential and inseparable characteristics of languages. Many languages of the world use a single orthographic system (such as the Roman system which is

used for writing English, German, French, Finnish, Italian, Spanish and many other European and non-European languages, including indigenous languages). Sometimes a single language is written in several different scripts; Santhali, for instance, is written in Devanagari, Bengali, Oriya and Ol Chiki scripts.

Thus, development of a language-specific writing system for each language need not be insisted upon. It can at best be viewed as an expression of linguistic aspirations of a community associated with the political processes of identity formation and assertion.

This process needs to be separated from the pedagogical aspects of teaching children to read and write. In MLE children are required to make positive transfers of linguistic and reading-writing skills across different languages. In most MLE programmes for ITM children in different parts of the world, in the absence of a writing system for the indigenous language, a common orthographic system is used to write the indigenous as well as the dominant languages. Usually the writing system of the dominant language is adapted to write the indigenous language. This facilitated transfer of reading and writing skills developed in the indigenous L1 to learning of L2 and makes it easier for the child to read and write both L1 and L2. Often people are not even aware that different scripts can be used – there is no "ownership" connected to the script that people are used to seeing.

Without any prejudice to the question of development of indigenous writing systems, a child-perspective can be recommended for MLE in Nepal. In this perspective, in most cases, the Devanagari script can be used for teaching children to read and write indigenous languages (L1) so that transfer of skills to learning of Nepali (L2) can be facilitated. It can be pointed out that this is suggested only as an effective pedagogic strategy and that once a child learns to read and write a language using one orthographic system, she/he can

also learn, at a later stage, to use another writing system. Such learning of a second writing system for a single language is not very uncommon.

In addition, we would also like to point out that lack of written materials in a language need not postpone the starting of teaching through the medium of this language. There are good experiences of oral teaching, and teaching where the children write their own "textbooks" as the need arises. For instance many Steiner schools[6] (including the one where TSK taught one year and which her daughters attended for 13 years) do not use textbooks in anything else except foreign languages, for the first 6 years.

Before schools can be established that teach children through every language in Nepal, one might also try out the possibility of very early reading for those children who have to accept primary education in an L2, if the language has been written down and if parents or preschool teachers can read it. It is relatively easy to teach interested 2-3-year olds to read, with short sessions of less than 10 minutes daily or every second day, and where the materials (e.g. 20-30 15x10 centimeter cards that the parent of preschool teacher makes, with crayons) cost next to nothing. One of us has taught many parents to do this; the initial training takes one evening; after that, only some very short support sessions are needed. There is a wealth of literature on how to do this. If a child already knows how to read in the mother tongue when starting school in an L2, the skill of reading can easily be transferred to the L2 when the child has learned some of it. In this way, only the school language itself is new, but the child does not need to learn again the process of reading.

5.4. Evaluation & research

Implementation of successful MLE programmes

6 See, e.g. http://www.steinerwaldorf.org/ whatissteinereducation.html and links from there.

require effective monitoring, continuous policy advocacy at all levels of governance down to the parents and community, formative programme evaluation and action research. It will also be necessary to establish mechanisms for coordination, documentation and resource sharing among the stakeholders of all the MLE programmes in Nepal, very importantly including organizations representing the Indigenous peoples. When ITM parents choose to participate in these MT-based MLE programmes, their choice must be based on the prior informed consent that is emphasized in the UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous Peoples). This presupposes thorough information to parents on research results and the basic framework for MLE. These information and advocacy efforts also need to be emphasized at all levels of the management and governance of MLE in Nepal. While a National Resource Centre for MLE is necessary to organize research, evaluation, monitoring, advocacy and coordination, the local school systems also have to be empowered to participate in this process.

6. Summing up and recommendations

The question of MT-based MLE for ITM children is one linked to their identity. This is, according to Galtung (1988), a psychological need related to the broader social system (see Table 1). Therefore, ITM communities and parents experience alienation if their languages are neglected in society and in schools. Many of the "ethnic" conflicts today have to do with the non-acceptance of people's ethnic, cultural and linguistic *identities*. A new constitution, based on federalism, the option to preserve and promote diversity, an acceptance of various ITM *identities*, and the linguistic and cultural rights that should follow, can go a long way to solve some of the conflicts. Mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MLE) is an important part of this solution.

The Report of National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (1994, English translation

2008) of Nepal is a good beginning for language planning in the country. However, it is important to acknowledge that the first step in language planning is necessarily political planning which involves setting priorities among the various socio-economic, cultural and symbolic interests. The political decisions and policy-making processes must recognize that different models of educational language planning do serve different interests. Both a centralized dominant-language-medium model of education which ignores the mother tongues or one that offers a few years of transitional instruction in the MTs are assimilatory and homogenizing in nature and may, at best, promote the interests of some Nepali-speaking elites. On the other hand, decentralized, diverse and diversifying integrative models of MT-based MLE with minimally 6-8 years of mainly mother tongue medium education serve the interests of the whole population. In addition, they promote integration of the population and democratic participation, and are important factors in the reduction of poverty.

The next step in planning for educational language policy involves setting realistic short- and even middle-term *linguistic competence goals* for what school children in Nepal should have achieved after the first 8 years of formal education. These have to be based on realistic estimates of the present linguistic competence of the school-starting children, their families and communities, teachers, educational authorities, teacher trainers, textbook writers and curriculum developers.

Keeping in view the present levels of linguistic competence of children and different groups associated with school education in Nepal, it is recommended that *high competence in the mother tongue* must be targeted for quality learning as well as for fostering sense of identity and self-confidence. In respect of *Nepali*, school education must aim at *high level of final competence*, fit for higher education and effective participation in the democratic, political,

economic and social processes in Nepal.

However, *somewhat lower expectations for competence in English* may be a realistic short- and middle-term target in view of the present circumstances where teachers, school administrators and teacher trainers do not themselves have high competence in English, neither in Listening/Speaking nor in Reading/Writing. Since requirement of high international levels of reading and writing competence in English is unlikely in the near future for most people in Nepal, a solid basic knowledge in English that can be expanded later might be a more realistic mid-term goal. The goals in respect of English could be increased later when English competencies of teachers and educators in Nepal become higher.

Once the linguistic competence goals are clarified, the next step in educational language planning involves implementation of ideal models of MLE suitably adapted to various ground conditions for reaching *educational goals* of appropriate levels of classroom achievement. These include high levels of multilingual competence, strong, positive multilingual and multicultural identity and positive attitudes towards self and others and a fair chance of awareness and competence building as prerequisites for working for a more equitable world.

As Sushan Acharya's and the MLE project's Expert & Research Team's draft report (by the end of February 2009) shows, the ground conditions of early school education across different regions and communities in Nepal are quite diverse and many classrooms do have different combinations of students from different mother tongues. It is therefore necessary to plan different contextualized approaches such as multi-grading of children from one language and having single grades comprising of students from different languages (also discussed in more detail in Shelley Taylor's report for the MLE project). It is possible to follow a collaborative classroom pedagogy focused on development of high levels

of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness as a prerequisite for multilingual competence among all the students. Specific strategies can be worked out keeping in view the feasibility of different approaches[7]. Educational language planning needs to view languages as resources rather than problems and to work out models of MLE for complex sociolinguistic contexts.

While models of MLE cannot be transferred to other contexts and have to be localised, experiences from different parts of the world suggest some broad principles about the characteristics of highly successful and less successful MLE programmes. It is necessary to heed the lessons from the international experience with respect to MLE, so that education in Nepal can support maintenance of multilingual and multicultural and biological diversity and an egalitarian social order.

Yet another step in educational language planning is ensuring *protection of Linguistic Human Rights (LHRs) in education*. It must be noted that LHRs are necessary but not sufficient conditions for quality education and for maintenance of ITM languages and cultures. From an *economics point of view*, there are strong grounds for protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in Nepal; the question is not whether Nepal can afford MLE, rather it is WHETHER NEPAL CAN AFFORD *NOT* TO IMPLEMENT MLE? Mother-tongue medium MLE for Indigenous/tribal/local children and national minorities, for at least the first 8 years of education is necessary for the access to education and for EFA. Even when there are initial "extra" costs, MLE is cost-effective, both in short-term and in long-term.

7 It may be mentioned that innovative programmes of MLE for complex multilingual classrooms with students from many different language backgrounds are being developed for schools in Koraput District in Orissa (India) where children from different ITM communities in multilingual contexts of 4 to 5 languages.

Analyses of massive *research findings on the results of various models of education* show that mainly dominant language (e.g. Nepali) medium education (= *submersion programs*) for ITM children can cause serious physical and mental harm and assimilate them forcibly. It violates the right to education, preventing access to education and denying equality of educational opportunity. It curtails the development of the children's capabilities, and perpetuates poverty. On the other hand, teaching ITM children in Nepal *mainly through their mother tongues*, with Nepali as a second language subject and English as a foreign language subject prevents educational failure, guarantees their rights to education and empowers them for economic development.

Early-exit transitional programmes teach ITM children mainly through the medium of their mother tongues a few years, with the dominant language first taught as a subject and then becoming the only language of teaching latest by grade 4. Often the mother tongue does not continue even as a subject after grade 4. Such early-exit programmes lead to poor literacy both in L1 and L2, low achievement in mathematics, science and other curricular areas, high rate of school failure and push-out and high cost due to wastage.

Successful models of MLE for ITM children use mainly the mother tongue as the teaching language for at least 8 years, with good teaching of the dominant language (which in Nepal would be Nepali) as a second language subject, taught by bilingual teachers who know the children's mother tongue. Research results show that *the longer the ITM children have their own language as the main medium of teaching, the better the general school achievement as well as the proficiency in the dominant language* (provided that they have good teaching in it, preferably given by bilingual teachers). In addition, they learn their own L1.

The *strongest form of minority education* is a mother-tongue-medium model in which the MT continues to be the medium from preschool to university without any

transition. Other languages, including the dominant language of the state and international languages are studied as second and foreign languages. However, such MT-only programmes are rare for the Indigenous or Tribal peoples.

The present MLE project schools appear to follow an early-exit transitional model but there are plans for both horizontal (more schools and more languages – this is what the cascading plan promises) and vertical (more grades to be included, e.g. grades 4-6) expansion of the MLE programme. Our visits to some of these MLE classrooms and discussion with the teachers revealed excellent teaching strategies, very enthusiastic responses from the children in the classrooms and many other positive outcomes for children, communities as well as school management although there are minor problem areas and challenges, which can be sorted out.

Developing *a State language policy including a clear languages-in-education policy* in Nepal in the context of a federal polity is perhaps the foremost challenge. Nepal's commitment to a multicultural and multilingual society is evident from the declaration of all languages of Nepal as National Languages. It is also clear in the commitment to impart early education in children's mother tongues, and the recommendations for mother-tongue-based bi-/multilingual education by the National Language Policy Recommendation Commission constituted in 1993.

Educational policy in Nepal must plan for quality multilingual education for the whole country, focusing on strengthening the mother tongues and, at the same time, fostering high levels of competence in Nepali as the official language and English as an international language for wider communication. At the *national level*, education must foster meaningful participation in the democratic processes, responsible citizenship and empowerment of all communities. At the *regional level* it must transform the communities for more effective realization of the societal goals and foster planned long-term educational development. However, it is

necessary to guard against possible problems associated with duality of responsibility in a federal structure, which may lead to ineffective planning and implementation.

In planning for multilingual education in Nepal, it would be necessary to have a broad national policy and curricular framework and to define the curricular objectives at all levels of education. Decisions about materials development, including many of the content issues, which need to be sensitive to and use local Indigenous Knowledges (IK), Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Indigenous Knowledge Holders, are best left to the *local levels*. Local availability of bilingual teachers with good knowledge of the students' mother tongues will also influence the speed of both horizontal and vertical extension of MT-based MLE.

Thus the questions relating to curricula, texts and classroom transactions can be addressed by *a policy of uniformity with diversity*. A national curricular framework suitably developed, and modified from time to time, is necessary so that all programmes of the "mainstream" as well as mother-tongue-based ITM education – Nepali, English, Indigenous mother tongue and other language programmes – can target comparable levels of achievement for all children at different grades. Such a national framework would effectively ensure uniform quality education for all children in Nepal without entailing disadvantages to the ITM children and disadvantaged segments of the national population.

Preparation of curricular materials, textbooks, other teaching-learning materials and activities and methods of classroom transaction need to be decentralized so that children's learning remains rooted in their culture and daily life experiences. It is also practical and pedagogically defensible to use a common writing system such as Devanagari for the indigenous languages (L1) in the MLE programmes in Nepal. Both mainly oral teaching (where written materials do not yet exist) and teaching reading very

early (2-3-year-olds) where written materials exist but the languages are not yet used in school as teaching languages, are also useful tried-out approaches.

Teacher training needs to be reformed to reflect the fact that most teachers will have ITM children in their classrooms. *Experts in MLE* need to be trained, and the plans to start this kind of training at Tribhuvan University (Department of Linguistics, Professor Yadava) are commendable.

It will also be necessary to establish mechanisms for *evaluation, research, coordination, documentation and resource sharing* among the stakeholders of all the MLE programmes in Nepal, particularly including organizations representing the Indigenous peoples. Choices by ITM parents for MT-based MLE programmes must be based on their prior informed consent. This requires appropriate dissemination of information, research results and the basic framework for MLE. These *information and advocacy efforts* also need to be emphasized at all levels of the management and governance of MLE in Nepal. *A National Resource Centre for MLE* needs to be set up to organize research, evaluation, monitoring, advocacy and coordination, and to collect information about MLE research and practices from around the world - networking is vital. At the same time, the local school systems also have to be empowered to participate in this process.

Nepal has made a very good start with the MLE project and activities around it. As Appendix 2 (Concept paper; one of the results of an earlier consultancy by one of us) and Appendix 6 (working group report, chair professor Yadava) show, there is a wealth of knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment. This knowledge was also eminently presented in the Yadava & Grove (eds, 1994/2008) report. This makes us hopeful in relation to the future in Nepal's attempts to maintain and develop further its enormous riches of diversities.

APPENDIX

Workshop on 'MLE Policy and Strategy Development' in Nepal

Group B's Report on MLE Implementation Strategies
Group leader: Yogendra P Yadava
MLE policy: Transitional multilingual education policy, Suggestive framework

S.N.	Strategies	Activities	Remarks
1.	Develop MLE database	1. Conduct mother tongue school mapping in collaboration with DoE and other related agencies 2. Explore the possibility for integrating the survey with the GIS database that exists in Nepal.	We should be grateful if you could suggest how MLE database can enter into the GIS database which is crucial for both demographical information and pedagogical interventions.
2.	Select mother tongues for MLE	1. Conduct awareness drive for stakeholders including language communities, parents, children and teachers 2. Translate and adapt advocacy materials such as *MLE Advocacy Kit* and *First language First*	
3.	Formulate a national curricular framework for	1. Follow this hierarchy: Mother tongue > (Provincial language) >	For achieving proficiency in language(s) of wider communication for higher education and official

	MLE	(Central language) > International language	transactions and in international language (obviously English as colonial legacy) for science and technology and global communication.
4.	Introduce mother tongue as medium of instruction	1. Introduce mother tongue as medium of instruction from Early Child Development (ECD) and gradually shift to LoWC and IL.	Better to delay the introduction of languages other than mother tongue
5.	Introduce mother tongue as subject.	1. Introduce it after MLE.	
6.	Introduce sign language for children with impaired hearing	1. Carry out a basic study of Nepali sign language. 2. Adopt appropriate strategies for teaching through sign language	
6.	Launch language revitalization programme.	1. Introduce it for children who have not acquired their mother tongues due to language shift such as Baram and several other minority languages spoken in Nepal.	Note: 1. In many cases people have little or no proficiency in their ancestral languages. 2. Despite it they consider them as their mother tongues. 3. Need to redefine mother tongue as not only a first language but also an ancestral language even if they do not know it.
7.	Develop teaching materials.	1. Prepare an inventory of local customs through interaction with local communities. 2. Develop teaching materials reflecting local culture. 3. Develop supplementary reading materials including folk tales, poems, songs, etc.	
8.	Teachers	1. Deploy/recruit mother tongue/sign language teachers from	

		related language communities. 2. Conduct appropriate training for them. 3. Engage members of local language communities as teachers on full or part-time basis.	
9.	Carry out evaluation to ensure quality.	1. Carry out continuous evaluation. 2. Arrange written tests for mother tongues with written traditions and oral tests and knowledge festivals for evaluation for the mother tongues confined just to their oral traditions. 3. Adapt the existing legal provisions accordingly.	
10.	Design joint management	1. Develop joint partnership and ownership among stakeholders such as School management Committee (SMC), Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) and Mother Tongue Teachers' Association (MTTA).	
11.	Develop supervision and support system	1. Devise it with participation of joint ownership and local experstise. 2. Set up resource centres at local levels with MLE Centre as the apex body located at DoE. 3. Align local resource centres to clusters of MT schools	

		established through MT school mapping. 4. Establish rapport between MLE principles and practices in conjunction with Central Departments of Linguistics and Education at TU and other universities in order to combine both academic and practical aspects of MLE. 5. Explore support from NGOs and INGOs such as UNICEF and UNESCO.	
12.	Explore financial resources	1. Explore financial resources from Government, NGOs/INGOs, and local communities.	Local communities need to take a lead role as MLE is after all in their interests.
13.	Establish resource centres	Set up central and local MLE resource centres to regulate the MLE provisions and mobilize additional resources for the effective implementation of the MLE strategies.	This is intended to bring uniformity in implementing MLE strategies on an institutionalized basis.

4

Beyond bilingual education: Multilingual language education in Nepal[1]

SHELLEY K. TAYLOR

Key Tenets of MLE

For language education to be classified as MLE, more than two languages must be used as languages of instruction. That is, at least three languages must be used for content-based instruction, not just taught as subjects (e.g., as second or foreign languages (L2/FL), García, Skutnabb-Kangas and Torres-Guzman 2006). In the Nepali case, those languages include: children's L1, which may be indigenous/minority languages; Nepali, the official language of Nepal, and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). In the Nepali MLE program that I was involved in, all three languages were taught from Grade 1 onwards, though only the Indigenous/minority language was used as a medium of instruction in the primary grades, and Nepali and English were taught as subjects.

1. The editors acknowledge that this article published in this volume has been published before in *GIST: Education and Learning Research Journal* (The corresponding link to the original source: *https:gistjournalunicaedu.co/index.php/gist/article/view/84*)

Skutnabb-Kangas (1995) set out key tenets of MLE almost 2 decades ago. To achieve multilingualism through education for minority language children, there are six key criteria:

1. The language that is least likely to develop to a high formal level should be used as the main language of education for the first 8 years of education;
2. Children with the same L1 should be grouped together initially, especially for cognitively demanding, decontextualized subjects;
3. All children's L1s should be equally valorized and they should all have equal knowledge of the language of instruction. In dual language programs, the practice is to alternate between programs. For example, if half of the children in the Nepali MLE program spoke Maithili and the other half spoke Tharu, the teacher could use Maithili all day on Monday, then Tharu all day on Tuesday, and keep alternating like that, or the teacher could speak one language in the morning and the other one in the afternoon. In that way, both groups of children would understand the language of instruction for half of the time and not understand for the other half of the time: an equitable solution;
4. Teachers should be bi- or multilingual, though it is more important for them to be fluent in the children's L1, which is the language of instruction in the primary grades, than in their L2, the official language, until later on in the children's schooling;
5. EFL should be taught by teachers who know the children's L1; and
6. Children should study both their L1 (e.g., an indigenous/minority language) and their L2 (Nepali) as compulsory subjects all the way through to school completion so as to become biliterate in those languages. (Adapted from Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995)

MLE provides minority language children with sustained instruction through their L1, as is the case with bilingual education. Indeed, research conducted in North America and Africa supports the assertion that there is strong convergent evidence between minority language children receiving L1-based instruction in bi-/multilingual language education programs and meeting educational success (Alidou, Boly, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh and Wolff 2006; Collier and Thomas 1989, 1999; Cummins 1981, 2009a; Heugh 2009). The empirical work and reviews of related long-term studies conducted by the researchers cited above show that students who receive L1-based instruction for the longest time (e.g., 8 years) experience the most positive educational outcomes. Therefore, MLE was selected to increase the likelihood of children in Nepal staying in school for primary education; however, that was not the only reason for introducing MLE into the Nepali context.

Why MLE in the Nepali context?

Yadava (2007) claims that 104 ethnic languages are currently spoken in Nepal and that they come from 4 different language families: Indo-European (Indo-Aryan), Sino-Tibetan (Tibeto-Burman), Austro-Asiatic, and Dravidian. Some 80% of all Nepalis speak an Indo-Aryan language such as Tharu, which was included in the MLE project. There are up to 57 Tibeto-Burman languages in Nepal, which are spoken by 19% of the population. Two Tibeto-Burman languages included in the program were Limbu and Newar. Only 0.19% of all Nepalis speak a language from the third language family, Austro-Asiatic. One such language, Santhali, was included in the MLE project. Finally, only 0.13% of the Nepali population are speakers of

a Dravidian language (such as Jhangar [or Uranw], which was included in the MLE project).

Though some 48% of the population speak Nepali as their L1 (Giri 2009), over 50% of the school-aged population speak a language other than Nepali as their L1 (Yadava, 2007). This discrepancy has implications for setting appropriate language-in-education policies, developing culturally and linguistically responsive programs, teaching practices, and grouping children. For instance, Yadava (2007) cites school-level educational statistics compiled in Nepal in 2005, and states that of the 4,502,697 students who were enrolled in primary level grades in Nepal, 1,602,047 came from indigenous/minority groups, and that the majority of children who dropped out of school did not speak Nepali as their L1. As Yadava (2007) explains:

Nepal is a mosaic of linguistic diversity. However, previous centralized regimes established assimilationist policies which entrusted a single language, Nepali, with all power and prestige while minority languages were looked upon as inferior and were suppressed. With the growing awareness of individual rights there has been focus of [*sic*] minority accommodation. It is with these perspectives that we have proposed . . . a policy for transitional bilingual education. (p. 17)

Children who do not stay in school have reduced educational and economic prospects (Mohanty 2008), and children who do not understand the language of instruction and who feel that their background knowledge (language, culture) is devalued, do not stay in school (Cummins 2009b, 2009c). Indeed, the drop-out rate for indigenous/ minority children in grade 1 is 50%, which places them significantly more at risk of academic underachievement than is reflected in Nepal's overall national literacy rates (Yadava 2007).

Table 1: National *average literacy rates in Nepal in 2001 and 2005-2007 for groups other than Tribal/minority populations. (Adapted from Yadava 2007)*

2001	2005-2007
54% of overall; males: 65%; females: 42%	57% of adults; males: 70%; females: 44% 79.3% of youths (15-24 years old); males: 85%; females: 73%

The national rate for children remaining in school up to grade 5 increased from 58% to 79% between 1999 and 2004. Therefore, a 50% drop-out rate from grade 1 for indigenous/minority children is striking. This discrepancy in figures between the national average and that of minority-language children also explains the rationale behind introducing the transitional bilingual educational model (the MLE) described by Yadava (2007).

The model was, however, not only introduced for educational purposes; it was also introduced for socio-political purposes. That is, while bilingual education and MLE are intended to increase the educational and economic prospects of minority language speakers, they are also introduced to ensure students' linguistic human rights (LHRs). Indeed, there is a cyclical relationship between the educational and socio-political purposes of bi-/multilingual language education and economic prospects of minority language speakers. That is, without LHRs and L1-based instruction, their educational and economic prospects are limited (Mohanty, Mishra, Reddy, and Ramesh 2009; Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010).

Skutnabb-Kangas (1998) explains that recognition of an individual's LHRs implies being able to:

1. fully learn, use in most official situations (including schools), and identify with her L1(s) and have that identification accepted and respected by others;
2. learn (one of) the official language(s) of the country of residence and thus become bilingual (or trilingual, as the

case may be);

3. not have a change of L1 imposed, which encompasses supposedly "voluntary" language shift if the individual does not know about the possible long-term consequences of such a shift (i.e., an uninformed shift would be viewed as imposed rather than fully voluntary);
4. profit from the state education system, no matter what her L1 may be (p. 23).

When the Maoist government came into power in Nepal in 2007, it introduced an Interim Constitution guaranteeing indigenous/minority children the right to L1-based instruction (Nurmela, Awasthi and Skutnabb-Kangas 2010; Government of Nepal 2007). That is, the Interim Constitution guaranteed that children's LHRs would be respected.

Prior to 1991, Nepali-medium instruction was mandatory for all students. Policy changes for language in education came slowly because as Yadava (2007) explains, under the *Panchyat* regime (during the time of the monarchy), there was a *one nation/one language* policy and a deliberate plan to eliminate all languages other than Nepali. The status quo changed subtly in 1991 because a new constitution was passed which recognized an individual's right to L1-based instruction in primary grades; however, the policy had no "teeth." In contrast, Yadava (2007) explains how a series of events led to growing awareness of individual rights and a focus on minority accommodation. These events included:

- public demonstrations and a linguistic human rights conference organized by the Nepali Federation of Nationalities (NEFEN) in 2000;
- the involvement of the Nepali government in the Dakar Forum (Education for All/EFA), the goal of which is to make quality primary education accessible to all children (including indigenous/ minority children), and a focus on L1-based instruction to meet that goal; and

- the election of a Maoist government in 2007, which instituted a new constitution and endorsed a policy of transitional multilingual education to achieve the EFA/Nepal (2004-9) goals (Nurmela et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2000; UNESCO, n. d.; Yadava, 2007)

At present, Nepali is the official language of the country, all children's L1s are recognized as national languages, and they have the right to L1-based instruction. The population is highly politicized and demands their LHRs; however, many more schools need to offer L1-medium instruction, not just courses in children's L1 as a subject. Dhakal's (2010) newspaper report gives an idea of the numbers involved and the challenges the Nepali government faces:

Under the joint cooperation of the Nepal government and Finland, test MLE classes were held at seven schools of six districts for a period of two years and a half, starting from 2007. Now, the government has started holding classes in eight different mother languages in 21 schools of six districts . . . [The] School Sector Reform Programme . . . had planned to launch mother tongue classes in 7,500 schools by 2015 for basic level education. But according to a report, 17,000 schools have already started teaching students in their mother tongues.

While Dhakal's (2010) report does not say whether the 17,000 schools were teaching students' L1 as subjects or their L1s were the medium of instruction, the report gives an idea of the magnitude of what Nepal is undertaking. This observation begs the following question: What is the basis of such an educational program?

The MLE framework

Before describing the actual MLE framework, it is useful to explain its place within the overall MLE project in which I was involved.

The MLE project and project objectives

The MLE pilot program that I was involved in included seven school districts and nine indigenous/minority languages. The program was the result of a cooperative project between the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Nepali Ministry of Education, and was broadly supported by grassroots Nepali organizations such as the teachers' federation, the Nepal Federation of Nationalities (NEFEN), and the International Work Group on Indigenous Affairs. As Nepal is the 12th poorest country in the world, it is dependent on donor agencies for 50% of its educational budget (Collins 2006; World Bank 2001). Therefore, it was not unusual for a foreign government to be involved in an educational project in Nepal.

Nurmela et al. (2010) describe how, under the *Education for All* program (2004-09), jointly funded by the Government of Nepal and a development partner (the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Nepali Ministry of Education introduced an MLE program for model- building purposes in 2006. The formal objectives of the project were to:

1. Create a conducive policy environment for MLE;
2. Develop an institutional structure that would facilitate a bottom-up approach to the implementation of sustainable MLE, and coordinate MLE activities;
3. Strengthen the educational sector's capacity to implement MLE by focusing on institutional structural development at central, district, and community levels;
4. Create and establish models of learning environments that would facilitate non-Nepali speaking students' learning and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level, and
5. Establish models of support networks for schools implementing MLE. (Adapted from Nurmela, n. d.).

At the ground level, the program goals were to develop indigenous/minority communities' capacity to create L1-based primary level programs in the primary years in local schools and to institute culturally relevant pedagogy (i.e., teaching familiar topics to local children; Hough, Magar and Yonjan-Tamang 2009; Nurmela et al. 2010). An additional goal of the project was to develop linguistically/ culturally responsive teaching materials.

To be able to develop and teach these materials, material developers and teachers needed to understand the MLE Framework. Nepal's National Center for Educational Development (NCED), an offshoot of the Ministry of Education, prepared teacher training manuals in the original 9 languages included in the project, and then in 15 languages by the summer of 2009. I conducted two workshops for material writers and teacher trainers in the winter and summer of 2009 to introduce the theoretical and practical aspects of MLE laid out in the MLE framework. The participants needed to understand the framework well enough to lead trainer-of-trainer workshops to cascade the MLE program out gradually to all other minority language groups throughout the country.

The MLE framework

The NCED prepared the MLE framework to meet the following objectives:

1. to provide support to teachers delivering L1-based education (e.g., pedagogical training, development, and provision of L1-based materials, etc.);
2. to offer guidelines to teachers and other stakeholders to help respond to minority students' MLE needs at early stages of basic education;
3. to develop positive attitudes among MLE stakeholders towards employing mother tongues as a medium of instruction;

4. to utilize local and global knowledge on MLE principles and practices for the use of mother tongues in schools to ensure both the cognitive and holistic development of children, and
5. to develop strategies for the use of language(s) based on the additive approach to languages (i.e., adding an L2/Nepali and L3/English on to the L1 rather than replacing the L1) for intrinsic (empowerment) and instrumental (pedagogical) purposes. (Adapted from NCED, 2008).

The MLE framework was divided into seven topics:

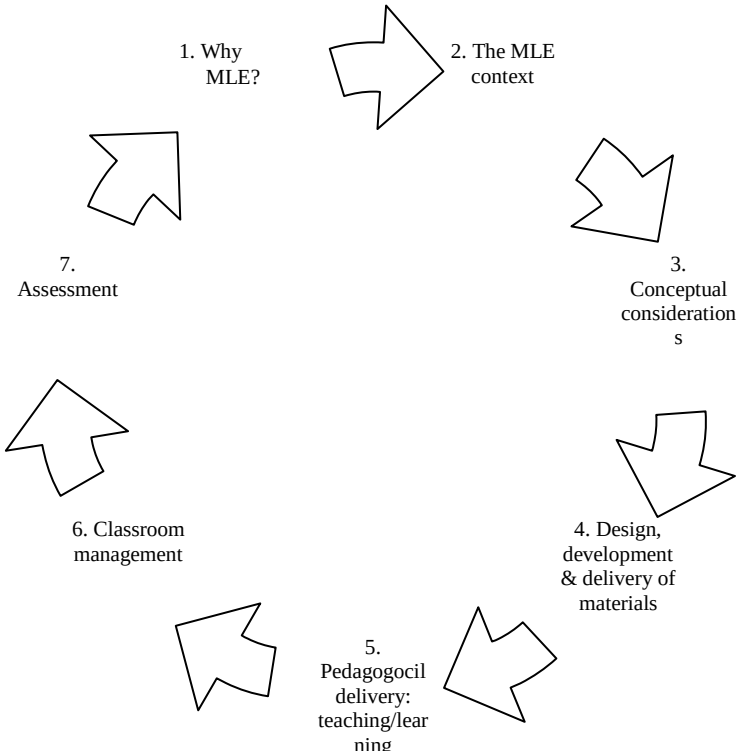


Figure 1: The MLE framework (Adapted from NCED, 2008).

For purposes of this paper, I only provide brief summaries of the content included in Topics 1 to 4 as Topics 5 to 7 are commonly discussed in the literature on bilingual education (e.g., how to scaffold activities to draw on learners' linguistic and cultural capital or what they already know; how to organize teaching in multi-grade classrooms, and how to avoid discriminatory assessment—testing children in their L2 when it is only taught as a subject, not as a medium of instruction for literacy and numeracy in the primary grades). Those aspects of Topics 1 to 4 which I describe pertain more specifically to MLE.

Why MLE? Four rationales were presented for why MLE was being introduced across Nepal. The first dealt with *enrichment*. The idea behind this notion was that by recognizing indigenous/minority children's non-mainstream Nepali home cultures and values, they would be valorized, allowing children's self-esteem to grow and encouraging them to feel as though school was for them too. Furthermore, the use of their L1 was doubly empowering: enabling them to express themselves better, and serving as a solid basis on which to build their L2 (Nepali). The second rationale dealt with language promotion. By including minority languages in the Constitution and using them as the medium of instruction, they would be further developed, in a sense, *protected* from dominant languages and, hopefully, their speakers would be less prey to language shift. Included in this focus was an emphasis on language survival, revitalization and promotion, as well as official recognition of oral traditions.

The pedagogical rationale focused on the use of the L1 in the teaching/learning process. Children who are instructed in a dominant group language that is not their L1 require time to catch up to their dominant group peers who are, however, a moving target as their L1 skills continue to develop in an age-appropriate manner. Therefore, minority

language children are at a disadvantage compared to dominant- group peers schooled in their own home language. Children who are educated in their mother tongue are at an advantage compared to their peers schooled in what is, for them, a second language. When children receive L1-based instruction, they do not experience linguistic/cultural blocks to their learning as they do not have gaps in their comprehension of lessons, do not require translation, etc. All children need L1-based curricula, textbook materials, source books, and support materials. Otherwise, they have to use resources produced in the dominant group language, which defeats the purpose of L1-based instruction to develop literacy in the L1. Another consideration is that assessment must be conducted in the language of instruction to attain valid measures of student learning.

The final rationale involves learning (the cognitive development rationale), but it could also be viewed as a linguistic rationale as it is closely linked to Cummins' (1981) interdependence hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that when children learn a concept in their L1, that knowledge will transfer to another language. For instance, if they learn about "what democracy entails" in Limbu, that knowledge will transfer to Nepali when they gain sufficient skills in Nepali to express themselves in that language; hence, time spent learning an indigenous/ minority language is not wasted. If, on the other hand, they are taught about democracy in a language they do not understand, there will be no conceptual understanding to transfer to another language.

In an MLE program, when children have established a solid basis in the language of schooling (i.e., academic language) through their L1, they can gradually be introduced to learning other languages as subjects (e.g., Nepali/L2, English/L3) and, later, when they are proficient enough in their L2 (and/or L3), they can be introduced to instruction through the medium of their L2 (and/or L3). The rationale is that

knowledge learned in a language that children know well can be linked to key vocabulary in another language and the same concept will be understood. If, however, teachers try to teach children a new concept in a language they have not mastered, they will not have the cognitive foundation on which to attach the new knowledge. Even if someone translated a few key words for them, that would be insufficient for concept formation to occur in the minds of the students.

Teachers must use children's local (indigenous) knowledge as the basis for learning; linking and widening it to regional, national, and global levels. Teachers can make links between children's indigenous knowledge and how those same concepts work in broader society (e.g., religious ceremonies learned in the home culture can be linked to ceremonies of state elsewhere as the notion of a celebration is shared in both cases, and understood by the child). They can use children's existing schemata (mental organization of how the world works) and build on them by making analogies, generalizations, categorizations, etc.

MLE context. Topics discussed in the MLE context category include global and local realities (e.g., the growth of linguistic diversity due to international population shifts, internal migration, and national indigenous/minority groups such as those in Nepal); language policies; binding international legislation to which Nepal is a signatory; local level practices; cultural-, bio-, and linguistic diversity; language ecology; and where the MLE program fits into all of these. For the section on international legislation, I discussed how international bodies such as the United Nations developed language statements in the form of recommendations, position papers, declarations, treaties, etc. that states may choose (not) to endorse. One such instrument is the UNESCO (2003) position paper entitled "Education in a Multilingual World" and another is the United Nations (2007) "Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples." In

this regard, I stressed Skutnabb-Kangas' (2000) warning: that treaties and other international instruments intended to protect indigenous/minority languages are not binding legislation, and many signatories of treaties choose to ignore them.

It was particularly important for the MLE workshop participants to understand the UNESCO (2003) recommendations as they pertain to MLE:

- UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers;
- UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies; and
- UNESCO supports language as an essential component of inter- cultural *education* in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights. (p. 27).

Other topics included in this category included: MLE *fundamentals*, teacher development, and materials development. The fundamentals discussed included the need for continued support of a child's mother tongue throughout her school years, or for 4 to 8 years (depending on her circumstances) until she has developed cognitive/academic language proficiency in the language (Alidou et al. 2006; Baker 2006; Coelho 2007; Collier and Thomas 1989, 1999; Cummins 1981, 2009a; García 2009). It is noteworthy that this fundamental was overlooked in the Nepali MLE program design (it was designed as an early-exit program) compared to the Ethiopian MLE design (a late-exit design, Heugh 2009). In the teacher development section, I stressed the need to introduce teachers to the basic principles of and rationale behind MLE, and to instruct teachers about appropriate teaching programs and practices to meet MLE goals. With

regard to materials development, I stressed that state-developed materials are not generally written in minority languages. Therefore, communities need to develop their own teaching materials and, indeed, how to develop suitable indigenous materials was the focus of my second workshop (Taylor, 2010).

Conceptual considerations. LHRs are one of the key notions introduced in this category as are issues of language and power, and key tenets of L2 teaching and learning. With regard to issues of language and power, workshop participants/future trainers-of-trainers need to understand the connection between (a) the supports received by languages that are used as the medium of instruction (e.g., literate materials developed, vocabulary expanded, etc.) as compared to (b) what happens to languages that do not receive those sorts of supports (i.e., they become viewed as unsuitable to meet the needs of "modernity" and barriers to children's academic future). These decisions are reflected in language policies, including those involving the language of instruction. They need to understand power relations in order to also grasp how children directly feel the impact of language policy decisions. For instance, minority language children who are schooled in languages they do not know or have not mastered are in powerless situations unless their communities are in a position to fight and change the status quo (e.g., by launching an MLE program).

Design, development and delivery of materials. For this unit, I stressed that MLE teachers and material developers must conduct a needs assessment to identify the sorts of materials that they should develop. I suggested that they adopt a *funds of knowledge* approach to community values and knowledge, and compare existing material to see whether it relates to local knowledge and values, or needs to be indigenized. By *funds of knowledg*e, Moll and González (1997) refer to the knowledge base and strategies that

children learn at home and in their local community. These authors also stress that minority language children and children from other marginalized backgrounds do not arrive in school with no language and no prior knowledge, contrary to the stereotypes and misconceptions that teachers hold of children from backgrounds different from their own (Moll and González 1997). This concept holds explanatory value for why teachers who do not share children's L1 or cultural/values (unwillingly) stigmatize them, leading to the 50% drop-out rate for grade 1 discussed earlier in this paper.

Discussion and concluding remarks

This paper began with a question that would likely be asked of politicians and language policy makers arounds the world if they decided to teach every child through the medium of their mother tongue: What would a countrywide MLE program look like? Though each country would develop programs that meet their local needs, the MLE framework developed in Nepal would be a good starting point for countries considering implementing L1-based instruction and has been well conceptualized, as is noted above. A political platform that offers L1-based instruction in over 100 languages would be an ambitious undertaking for any country, not to mention one without great financial reserves; the venture not only has pedagogical and materials development implications, but requires an analysis of each local context.

Additionally, the role of English as a global *lingua franca* must be considered. As Giri (2009) notes, English is at the heart of the L1-based MLE issue as parents are aware of its value and students must pass an English exam to obtain their School Leaving Certificate (SLC); however, for the 50% of indigenous/minority children who quit school in grade 1 and their parents who have a grade 5 education at best, passing a high school English exam is a moot point. To raise

the national literacy level, these children must stay in school and all of the participants in the workshops I delivered reported that full cohorts were finishing the grade 1 MLE program. People talk with their feet, and they are saying volumes by keeping their feet firmly planted in MLE classrooms and demanding double the number of MLE classrooms that the government projected would be necessary in 2010 (Dhakal 2010; Hough 2009).

The educational basis of MLE programs like their bilingual education predecessors is clear, but socio-political considerations are as likely to shape MLE as they are to shape bilingual programs, either confining them, constraining them, or supporting them and allowing them to flourish. However, politicians and language policy makers interested in meeting EFA goals and increasing national literacy rates are strongly advised to look at successful MLE initiatives, learn from them, indigenize them, and "do the impossible" just as Nepal is doing. A path that meets the needs of children in Nepal has been laid out. Other countries may now learn from this unique model in order to design a path to academic success that will best serve the future generations of their own citizens.

5

A Bottom-up approach to MLE in Nepal

DAVID A. HOUGH

What is multilingual education?

Multilingual education, or MLE, has various meanings and applications. All of them involve teaching content courses in the mother tongue, usually from the first years of schooling. This is often referred to as Mother Tongue Medium of Instruction (MTM). In addition to MTM instruction, MLE also involves the teaching of one or more other languages, often from later grades. Generally, the mother tongue language is a local indigenous or minority language or dialect, while the others are official or dominant languages within the greater society.

By way of example, in one region of Nepal, MLE could mean teaching Palpa Magar children all elementary school content courses in their dialect from preschool or grade one through grade five or later. This would be supplemented by the teaching of Nepali as a subject (i.e., as a second language), from a later period – possibly third grade. English could also be taught as a third language from a later stage.

Why is MLE important to Nepal?

Simply stated, teaching indigenous and minority children in their mother tongue is more effective

educationally. Numerous studies worldwide have proven that indigenous and minority language children educated in their mother tongue for a minimum of six-to-eight years – with dominant second and third languages added later – actually achieve higher levels of academic performance than do monolingual students from the dominant language. Deprived of mother of tongue medium of education, however, these same students either do very poorly in school or drop out altogether.

The second is the issue of human rights. Numerous international instruments, including ones signed by Nepal, give children the right to study in their own language(s). Nepal's interim constitution does likewise. This is also in keeping with the generally understood definition of Education for All (EFA).

What happens when linguistic and minority groups cannot study in their mother tongues?

From a human rights perspective, the devastating impact on indigenous and minority children who have been denied the right to study in their mother tongue has been well documented. Also as noted on the previous page, a great deal of research has been conducted which proves that teaching children in their mother tongue is educationally more efficient and cost effective. Briefly, however, let's consider what happens at the psychological level to people when their mother tongue is ***not*** taught in schools. These are some of the results:

1. **Lack of appreciation for indigenous culture, values and languages;**
2. **Feelings of inferiority and humiliation when exposed to the dominating culture;**
3. **Denial of one's culture and language;**
4. **Self hate which can be either externalized or internalized (e.g., psychological abuse to another or suicide);**

5. **Colonization of the mind (learning to perceive oneself and the world through the eyes and standards of the colonizer);**
6. **Retarded cognitive development (based on foreign benchmark educational standards); and**
7. **Increased dropout, repetition and failure rate at the early grades.**

Problems caused by the devaluing of one's mother tongue are endemic to indigenous communities worldwide. They are not voluntary but are brought about by the domination of one language over another. Skutnabb-Kangas (1999) writes, "…if people are forced to shift their languages in order to gain economic benefits of the kind which are in fact bare necessities for basic survival, this is a violation of not only their economic human rights but also their linguistic human right." As noted above, the results in terms of human psychology range from feelings of inferiority, humiliation and self hate to outright denial of one's cultural heritage.

Here, it could be argued that denying children the right to learn in their mother tongue is a form of linguistic genocide. According to Article Two of the UN International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, E793, 1948) there are five definitions of genocide:

(a) Killing members of the group;
(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in the whole or in part;
(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; and
(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Denying children the right to study in their mother tongue can be categorized as genocide under definitions II (b)

of causing serious mental harm, and (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another. In this last case, the transfer does not have to be physical, it is accomplished by denying their linguistic and cultural heritage and forcing them to assimilate into the dominant culture.

How to implement MLE in Nepal? What guidelines should we use?

- **Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

On September 13, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly passed a non-binding resolution on the rights of indigenous peoples. Designated the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, it was passed by 143 countries including Nepal. Bolivia – a country with a large indigenous population like Nepal – has now incorporated the declaration in its entirety into its constitution. In other countries, emphasis has been placed on issues of linguistic human rights and the effectiveness of teaching in the mother tongue. The declaration sets out far reaching guidelines which, among other things, attempt to protect and promote indigenous languages and cultures. Paragraphs 13 and 14 of the declaration state the following regarding language, culture and education:

Article 13, Paragraph 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit for future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 14, Paragraph 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

These two paragraphs call for the right of self-determination in indigenous education. Paragraph 13 gives indigenous peoples the right to control the content of their teaching, while Paragraph 14 states that the teaching of this content should be based in methods of teaching and learning which are appropriate to indigenous peoples.

- **Draft laws and provide funding which will:**
  - Guarantee that all indigenous and non-Nepali speaking Nepalis can be educated in their mother tongues (Mother Tongue Medium of Instruction).
  - Allow each community to develop its own curriculum based on their individual histories, customs, and traditional knowledge.
  - Allow each community to practice culturally appropriate methods of teaching and learning.
  - Use traditional methods of learning as the basis for teacher training.
  - Provide for indigenous and minority peoples with School Leaving Certificates (SLCs) to become MTM teachers.
  - Provide for indigenous and minority peoples without SLCs to become community teachers and teacher trainers.
  - Provide funding to support the above.
  - Develop advocacy programs for high level educational administrators so that they can understand the issues.

- **Understand and promote indigenous knowledge and practices**

This is often referred to as TEK, or Traditional Indigenous Knowledge. Winona LaDuke, a Native American Anishinaabe and former Green Party candidate for Vice President of the U.S., defines TEK as "the culturally and spiritually based way in which indigenous peoples relate to

their ecosystems. This knowledge is founded on generations of careful observation within an ecosystem of continuous residence [and] represents the clearest empirically based system for resource management and ecosystem protection. …Native societies' knowledge surpasses the scientific and social knowledge of the dominant society in its ability to provide information and a management style of environmental planning".

- **Develop advocacy programs which raise consciousness about MLE**

Consistently indigenous peoples have raised their voices to say they want mother tongue medium of education for their children. These voices have not been listened to. As a result, there are many misconceptions about what MLE is and whether or not indigenous peoples want it. Such misconceptions are particularly common among officials in government. Given more than 250 years of discrimination against indigenous and minority peoples in Nepal – as well as the immense size of the indigenous and minority population – it is imperative that the government implement MLE nationwide by 2015. This is in keeping with EFA guidelines. In order to accomplish this, it is absolutely vital for high-level administrators and policy makers in Nepal to understand the issues. Here advocacy programs can help them understand why MLE is necessary, how languages come to be threatened and how people are marginalized as a result.

MLE and curriculum development from the bottom-up

Articles 13 and 14 of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples give indigenous and peoples the right to develop their own curriculum based on their individual languages, histories, philosophies, oral and written traditions. This means a decentralized curriculum that can be developed from the bottom up by local communities.

The collective knowledge that indigenous and non-Nepali speaking communities possess is one of Nepal's greatest treasures. In every community there are men and women with a wealth of knowledge about herbal medicines and traditional healing practices, both traditional and modern knowledge and skills, local history, numerical systems, weights and measures, local religion, belief systems and related practices, life rituals, feasts, festivals, songs, poems, etc. By tapping into this vital resource, each community can build its own curriculum based on their individual needs, histories, customs, traditional knowledge and democratic traditions.

Here, students, teachers, parents and local knowledge holders can work together to produce classroom materials in the mother tongue – and multilingually where requested. For example, local elders can tell stories to children who can write them down with the help of parents and teachers. They can also draw pictures with paper and crayons. These materials can then be bound and printed as textbooks and distributed to schools speaking the same dialect. Additional materials can be kept in handwritten form and bound with string. They can be used as supplementary materials and library books. Such practices have already been tested in various regions around the country and have been shown to work.

Culturally appropriate methods of learning and teaching

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples not only addresses the right of children to get an education in their own language – and for indigenous peoples to control their own educational systems – it also calls for teaching in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

Again, this means a bottom up approach were each community is empowered to use its knowledge base in teacher methodology and training. Indigenous ways of

knowing include intergenerational learning strategies, the use of mnemonic devices based on oral traditions and story telling, scientific observation of local ecosystems, and cooperative as opposed to competitive teaching styles. Here, local indigenous knowledge holders, teachers and students can come together to develop intergenerational learning strategies in a non-competitive, cooperative atmosphere.

MLE and teaching methodology

Empowering a community means working with its knowledge base to build MLE programs. Rather than relying on Western educational benchmark standards based on competition, devaluing local knowledge, and individual assessment and testing, communities should be encouraged to develop teaching methodologies and approaches which reflect their traditions and values:

1. **Generosity/sharing;**
2. **Caring for each other;**
3. **Collectivism (as opposed to individualism);**
4. **Cooperation (as opposed to competition);**
5. **Relatedness to one another;**
6. **Relatedness to nature/spirituality;**
7. **Individuality (respect for difference/tolerance)**
8. **Matrilineal bonds (gender equity);**
9. **Respect for elders/wisdom;**
10. **Intergenerational learning;**
11. **Patience; and**
12. **The use of time and space as a function of the above.**

MLE and teacher training

Many certified teachers in village schools lack fluency in the local language and knowledge about the culture. Furthermore, currently all teacher training is conducted in Nepali and teachers are not encouraged to use local languages as a medium of instruction. On the other hand, those with the

greatest knowledge of the language and culture within the community rarely have teaching credentials. They often lack reading or writing skills, but possess a treasure of oral knowledge. In order to correct these imbalances, the following steps should be taken:

1. Provide assistance for indigenous and minority peoples with School Leaving Certificates (SLCs) to become MTM teachers;
2. Incorporate indigenous teaching methodologies into the certification process;
3. Provide funding for community elders and knowledge holders to become teachers or teaching assistants even if they lack reading and writing skills. Privileging oral traditions and knowledge is vital; and
4. Train teachers who speak only Nepali to become Nepali-as-second language teachers.

Job creation/funding

All of the above can be accomplished with relatively little money – but it will require some funding and a good deal of commitment. For example, multigrade and intergenerational programs can be set up which allow community knowledge holders, teachers and students from different age groups all to interact and teach each other. Here, a master carver or story-teller might be called to share his/her knowledge in the local language with students and teachers. These stories can serve as a vehicle for MLE instruction where teachers not fluent in the language and culture can learn at the same time that they are facilitating. Later, students and teachers can work together to transcribe these stories. Finally, students may take on the role of teacher as they impart literacy skills based on these stories and written materials to their elders. All of this is best done in a multigrade, intergenerational learning environment. In order to accomplish this, priority should be given to:

1. Primary funding at the local level rather than at the regional or national;
2. Local job creation which encourages the use of indigenous and minority languages in teacher training, curriculum development and local government administration;
3. the use of indigenous knowledge holders as teachers, teacher trainers and teaching assistants; and
4. the allocation of NR300 per child for locally developed MLE textbooks and teaching materials.

Cascading

In order to make MLE sustainable nationwide by 2015– the UN mandate for Education for All – local communities must take control of curriculum development, , teacher training and methodology. If each community, after developing their own program, goes on to train five new communities, the goal can be reached. This approach is known as *Cascading*. If, on the other hand, MLE program development and implementation are left to experts at the national and regional levels, only a fraction of Nepal's indigenous and minority languages will be covered – and even then it will take well over a quarter of a century.

Frequently asked questions

- ***Do indigenous and minority peoples in Nepal really want MTM/MLE?***

Yes! They have been demanding education in their mother tongue for many years. This is especially true in the villages. Even among those who have moved to the cities and lost their language, there is strong feeling that English *only* is not the answer. Mother tongue education is also necessary.

- ***How many languages are there in Nepal?***

It is not known how many languages there are in Nepal. Nor does it matter. The 2011 Nepal census lists 123. The

Indigenous Linguistic Society of Nepal lists 143. If dialects are included there may well be over 200. Whatever the number, however, children in each community have the right to learn in their mother tongue.

- ***What is the difference between a language and a dialect?***

The distinction between a language and a dialect is strictly political and economic. Dialects with power are called languages. Languages without power are called dialects. All dialects – even mutually intelligible ones – should be treated as languages.

- ***Should all dialects have mother tongue medium of instruction?***

Yes, if communities want them. All dialects should be treated as languages and have access to mother tongue medium of instruction. To include some and not others in the MLE program would be a continuing abuse of linguistic human rights. Ask each community if they want MLE. Ask what language or languages they speak. Then let them begin developing materials using their knowledge base.

- ***Aren't there too many languages in Nepal for MLE to be practical?***

No. Papua New Guinea with over 600 languages has done much the same. By producing materials locally and cascading the process– having each community be responsible to training five neighboring communities – it is not only possible, it is economically effective.

- ***Won't it cost too much?***

First, it is a linguistic human right for people to be educated in their mother tongue. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples further stipulates that content and methodology be culturally appropriate. If these changes result in children staying in school, then it *will* cost more money. More teachers will be needed. Cost for materials and facilities will also increase.

But children *will* be educated. In the long run this will be an economic advantage to the country.

- ***What should be done about highly endangered languages?***

There are some communities where few if any people still speak their languages. Even here children have the right to learn their indigenous language. Here, local knowledge holders may wish to invite linguistic documentation and revitalization experts to assist. In such cases special funding may be necessary to pay for outside experts. All decisions and control of the process should be in the hands of the community.

- ***What should be done when many languages are spoken in the same community?***

MLE programs can work where many languages are spoken. Each child can learn in her mother tongue and one or more other languages as well. Learning more than one language increases cognitive ability and academic achievement. Studying in only one language – especially if it is not your mother tongue – does the opposite.

- ***What should be done about languages with no writing systems?***

There are indigenous languages in Nepal with no writing systems and others with inappropriate ones (e.g., Devanagari script for Tibeto-Burman languages). Developing appropriate writing systems can be very expensive and time consuming. The process also usually excludes community members from meaningful involvement. Each community should decide what it wants even if these decisions contradict expert notions of what is best. For example, some communities with strong oral traditions may decide they do not want a writing system.

- ***A linguistic survey has been commissioned. How can it help?***

The survey should only be used to supplement MLE program development, not to oversee it. Each community should have the right to name its own language, and develop teaching materials and teaching methodologies based on its traditional knowledge. This material may later be incorporated into the survey as part of a national data base.

- ***How does MLE relate to Nepal's linguistic, cultural and biological diversity?***

Nepal's richness lies in its great diversities – from its plants, animals and resources on the one hand to its human resources, cultural and linguistic diversity on the other. Unlike foreign development "experts" who often destroy diversity in the name of poverty alleviation, progress and globalization, indigenous peoples know how to protect and enrich their traditional environments and ecosystems in a democratic manner. Promoting linguistic and cultural diversity helps promote biological diversity and democracy. Destroying any one form of diversity destroys the others.

Key points in support of multilingual education in Nepal:

- Multilingual education is a way to build lasting democracy in Nepal. It is a way to overcome 250 years of discrimination against indigenous and minority peoples of Nepal.
- Simply stated, when children have access to education in their mother tongue, they:
  - Understand their teachers
  - Drop out of school less
  - Don't fall behind
  - Have higher academic achievement
- Mother tongue medium of instruction is a human right!
- Local indigenous and minority communities must be empowered to take control of both the content and method of their learning and teaching, and to have voice in framing and further modifying language planning and policy at the national level. This is in keeping with the spirit and intent of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Adopt Articles 13 and 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into the Nepali Constitution:

Article 13, Paragraph 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit for future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 14, Paragraph 1: Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

6

Multilingual education program for all non- Nepali speaking students primary schools in Nepal 2007-2009

PÄIVI AHONEN

1. Program background

Nepal has a population of 27 million out of which about 40 % are under age 15. Socially Nepal is inhabited by people of diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The national census in 2001 noted 92 and more languages, *Ethnologue* (SIL website) lists 126 languages and according to the Indigenous Linguistic Society of Nepal there are 143 languages in Nepal. More than a dozen of the languages is in active use by people numbering more than one hundred thousand for each language. Population can be broadly divided into Hindu caste group (57.5%), 'Janajatis' (37.2 5) and Muslim/other minorities (4.3%). Historically there has been a strong caste hierarchy and although officially abolished in 1963, caste-based discrimination continues in diluted form.[1]

1 Department of the International Development, DFID/World Bank Unequal Citizens: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal)

Nepal's EFA National Plan of Action (2003) adopted six Dakar goals to be achieved by 2015 and given the ethnic, social and linguistic diversities of Nepal, additional goals were identified, namely ensuring the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to quality basic and primary education through their mother tongue.[2]

The Government constructed an EFA Core document in 2003 with objectives of 1) Ensuring access and equity in primary education, 2) Enhancing quality and relevance in primary education, and 3) Improving efficiency and institutional capacity. In addition, the EFA Core Document adopted four ambitious principles for implementation: a pro-poor focus; gender mainstreaming and social inclusion; good governance and decentralization.[3]

According to the *Joint Evaluation of Nepal's Education for All 2004-2009 Sector Program*, the statistics show that Net Enrollment among all school children in Nepal has increased from 84.2 % in 2004 to 91.9 % in 2008. Literacy Rate in Age Group 15-24 has also increased from 70 % in 2004 to 80% in 2008. Survival rate to grade 5 has developed well until 2007: 76.2 %in 2004, 79.1% in 2005, 80.3% in 2006, 81.1% in 2007. In 2008 the survival rate, however, declined down to 73.4% which is below the 2004 figure. The reasons for the increased dropouts in 2008, needs to be identified by research. However, language may be one of the indicators.

Out of Nepal's school -age population about 50.1 % speak a language other than Nepali as a mother tongue. The statistics disaggregated by the language of the child in relation to enrolment, literacy and drop out do not exist. Establishment of the MLE database should be the first and the most important strategy of the Suggestive Framework

2 EFA National Plan of Action, 2003
3 EFA Core Document, 2003

developed as part of the MLE Program MLE Policy and Strategy Development Workshop in March 2009.

As a general observation the evaluation of Nepal's Education for All 2004-2009 observes: "Direct statistical evidence of improved quality is less clear than that of access".

As for the provision of linguistic diversity the evaluation gives a fairly gloomy picture of the reality at schools, where children from many language groups are studying.

"Many teachers struggle, generally using effective methods and teaching strategies when teaching in classes, who do not have Nepali as mother tongue. This is particularly the case in situations where there are children from four or five different language groups in one school. In explaining how to cope, a teacher from Jhapa said "We use ECD as a strategy/ the child can learn a little Nepali before starting Grade 1. Meanwhile, however, other comments suggested a lack of either ability and sense of responsibility, on the part of the teachers, to support non-Nepali speakers. A comment by a teacher in a Surkhet school with over 60 % non-Nepali speakers, illustrates what seems to be a fairly typical view of these children:" The performance of Grades 2-3 non-Nepali children, such as Muslim and Urdu speakers and Tharu children is always bad in most subjects, as they understand only a little Nepali and cannot write it correctly"

The evaluation also discusses the wrong perception of learning mother tongue which is widely spread in Nepal. "Some perceived that learning mother tongues would hold their children back from learning Nepali and thus disadvantage them further. By extension of the same argument, quite a few people consulted wanted schools to teach medium English from Grade 1 on the assumption that this would mean that children would learn English faster, regardless of practical consideration such as availability of English-speaking teachers." "These perceptions - the

evaluation argues – "suggest a need for more awareness-raising at all levels as to how language and literacy learning takes place. Reassurance that mother tongue learning need not hinder, but can support, success in a second and third language is much needed. The evaluation invites the development of a more nuanced policy, which details a range of approaches that might be appropriate in the many different language contexts that exist across Nepal."[4]

2. Program design

The Ministry for Finance in Nepal and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland were the competent authorities representing their respective Governments in matters relating to the Program Agreement. The responsibility for the implementation of the program and for the management of Finland's support, not affecting the overall responsibilities of the Government of Nepal or the Ministry of Finance, lies with the Ministry of Education of Nepal (MOE).

MLE Program project document, indicates that TA project was primarily planned to enhance quality of education in Nepal by achieving the four main results:

1) Institutional structure, processes and coordination for sustainable MLE policy development and implementation are established;
2) Capacity at central, district and community levels to develop and implement MLE is strengthened;
3) Models of learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali speaking students' learning development, and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level are developed and tested and
4) Models of creating support networks of schools implementing MLE are developed and tested.

4 Joint Evaluation of Nepal's Education for All 2004-2009 Sector Program, page 20 and pages 43 -44).

The design of the project suggested the six –month's preparation phase which would achieve the following results:

1. The Project Document for remaining project period developed and approved;
2. Local experts and staff identified and trained;
3. The Baseline Survey Report produced;
4. A research institute identified and hired to conduct the Action Research;
5. Project schools selected and implementation of multilingual education initiated

The results were achieved with a delay of several months. Especially the selection of project pilot schools was a long process creating a lot of discussion among the program partners. Inception report included the baseline survey. Action research did not start according to the proposed plan, but the "research" was rather interpreted by the MLE program team to gather photo and video material on the process of discussing the program aims and objectives with the communities.

2.1 Program strategy

The overall objective of the program was to enhance quality education for all through the provision of MLE. The purpose of the program was to devise plans and procedures for the implementation of MLE at primary level. This would include initiating the process of preparing a national strategy for medium of instruction, ensuring budget allocations for MLE at central and local levels and increasing the capacity of all interested primary schools to adopt MLE education.

According to project core documents the purpose of the project was to devise plans and procedures for implementation of multilingual education at primary level.

During the preparation phase, aimed to take six months according to the Project Core Document, but taking about one year due to several reasons, the results of the MLE

program were formulated to five main areas each including several activities.

The program will offer technical assistance in five interconnected areas:

1. Creating a conducive policy environment for MLE
2. Developing an institutional structure
3. Strengthening the capacity at central, district and community levels
4. Creating and establishing models of learning environments
5. Establishing models of creating support networks of

The first MLE Program Annual Report indicates. "The approach of the program is bottom-up where activities between the community and central levels will be coordinated to support sustainable development of MLE." The support for a bottom-up approach is justified, according to the annual report, by the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007), which Nepal signed as soon as it was prepared. Articles 13 and 14 specifically make reference to "indigenous peoples' right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit for future generations their histories, language, oral traditions, writing systems and literatures and to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner and appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.[5]

The MLE Program in the inception report concludes that the overall MLE Program objective - *to enhance quality education for all through the provision of MLE - can be achieved by regarding indigenous education and knowledge systems as part of quality education, by offering mother tongue based MLE to all indigenous and minority children in*

5 Nepal was also one of the first Asian countries to ratify the ILO convention of 169 in September 2007. With ratification, government is committed to develop policies and programs to protect all people's rights, including linguistic rights.

Nepal and by extending MLE to secondary level and even to higher education.

In the Technical Tender of the Helsinki Consulting Group[6] emphasized the participatory planning process in developing the program modality during the inception phase.

The Project Core Document refers to the process of finalizing the program activities and implementations structure during the inception phase by saying…

"Due to the fact that mother tongue instructional and multilingual education are at their very initial stage, the TA Program will have to commence with the six month preparation phase, during which the Program will be elaborated further in close cooperation with the MOES, DOE, CDC, NCED and other identified stakeholders."

2.2 Internal logic

Logical Frame Work (**Document Annex1: MLE Logical Framework, 4-5 of December 2007)** with detailed indicators of the five components, or interconnected areas developed from four results areas, was prepared in December 2007:

1. Creating a conducive policy environment for MLE
2. Developing an institutional structure that will facilitate a bottom-up implementation of sustainable MLE and coordinate MLE activities
3. Strengthening the capacity at central, district and community levels to implement MLE
4. Creating and establishing models of learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali speaking students' learning and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level
5. Establishing models of creating support networks of schools implementing MLE

6 Company name changed to Finnish Consulting Group in 2007

The implementation of the MLE Program began with the discussion on:

- the criteria of selecting the piloting schools
- the decision on the number of pilot schools and districts
- initiating the field visit program with pilot schools
- sharing of the process with the international MLE network e.g.

According to the Project Core document, after six month's preparation phase, the plan was to start MLE Program full implementation and the intensive cooperation with the MOE, DOE and education line agencies, CDC and NCED.

2.3 Program management and its limitations

Supervisory Board (SVB) was the highest decision-making body of the MLE Program. SVB was responsible of approving the Inception Report, Annual Work Plans and the Budgets and the Annual Reports**.** Representatives of the SVB represented the following institutions and organizations: Ministry of Education and Sports, National Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland/Embassy of Finland, DOE, CDC and NCED. SVB met approximately two times a year.

The key implementing body of the MLE Program implementation has been the *Steering Committee (SC)* consisting of representatives of the following institutions: MOES, DOE, CDC, NCED, NEFIN, NFDIN, Tribhuvan University, Department of Linguistics Teachers' Union and Embassy of Finland. Deputy Director of DOE Inclusive Education Section, acted as a member secretary of the SC.

During the first implementation year the SC meetings were held approximately once in three - four months during

and the second year about every second month. In general, the SC meetings were hard to organize due to the fairly distant location of DOE in Kathmandu. Due to the general strikes the SC meetings were also often postponed and rescheduled.

Technical Assistance Team (TA Team) was in the Project Document introduced as a body being responsible for the daily management of the project including CTA, NTA and the JPO. The team is small and for the every day implementation the meetings took place ad hoc in casual manner, without the minutes. The Project document states that the TA Team needs to identify needs and provisions of the required technical advice to DOE, CDC, DOE and DEOs in pilot schools.

Under the program implementation conditions, when finalizing if the appropriate administrative location of the project had been a matter of discussion during the preparation phase, it would have been perhaps wise to include to the management structure the Project Management Unit or Team (PMT/PMU), which would have had representatives from the line agencies CDC and NCED and DOE. The lack of such a body, which would have demanded the regular cooperation of the line agencies, could have prevented the later development of the MLE Program earning the reputation of a project working in isolation.[7]

District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC)

In the original MLE Program management structure it was planned that District Level Coordination Committees

7 The original plan when the project was initiated was to locate the project team with the CDC administration. However, during the process of finalizing the Core Document, it was decided between all the MLE Program partners, that the more appropriate location is DOE. There were two main reasons for this conclusion: a) the MLE development is not only a curriculum development issue but all education policy makers need to be part of the MLE policy development; b) DOE has direct links to the district level and DEOs so DOE can facilitate the pilot school/district work effectively)

would be established in MLE Pilot districts during the period the schools and districts were selected. The above bodies were not, however, established during the inception phase. In the Log Frame workshop, the district level MLE support structure was discussed widely and the activities were included into the log frame: assist defining functions of MLE support network model at district level and assist defining functions of MLE support network model at community level. During the time of the log frame workshop it was understood that structuring of these functions would be more efficient toward the end of the project, during the Consolidation Phase, after the piloting experience.

MLE Implementation Guidelines, developed during the consolidation phase, propose that Mother Tongue Development Coordination Committee (MT DCC) will be established in every school implementing mother tongue based multilingual education – both in MLE pilot schools and new MLE schools. SMC, according to the guidelines, will take a final decision of MLE implementation at school and forward the MLE plan through MT DCC to DCCC.

2.4 Analyses of challenges in implementation

The MLE program implementation proved to be challenging starting from the inception phase. With reference to the above discussion on the focus of the Core Document, Technical Tender and the approach of the MLE Team, the following conditions/principles/approaches may have caused some contradictions, with the consequences of the resignation of the CTA of the project (April 2008) and launching the Internal Mid Term Evaluation by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

1. The strong experience and approach of the CTA in different countries, where the community, bottom up approach was implemented as part of the research programs, not as part of the government administration.
2. The Inception Phase focusing strongly on community

ownership rather than participatory program planning with all the stakeholders, including government education line agencies. The MLE team emphasized the bottom up approach which is in line with the Core Document. However, participation of the education line agencies during the Inception Phase should have been equally important for ensuring ownership and sustainability.

3. Delay in inception phase due to
    - working and travelling conditions slowed by *bandha* and long load shedding hours
    - long process in pilot schools/district selection
    - securing the financing for the mother tongue teachers from government budget in time, due to the sustainable principle of not using the project funding for teacher recruitment
4. The complex and challenging conditions of the different linguistics groups and the lack of awareness of the importance of mother tongue education
    - MLE is a very new concept both in policy and practical level
    - Education administration has not much awareness on linguistic human rights
    - Historical background of "one language – one culture- one nation" policy
    - Lack of awareness within educators on good learning achievements in mother tongue education in all subjects
    - Selection of the pilot schools/districts from vulnerable, "low voice" language groups instead of well established, major linguistic communities

2.5 Internal Mid Term evaluation of the MLE program

The Mid Term evaluation was carried out due to the poor management of the project during the first year of the

program. and finally due to the resignation of the CTA. The CTA having appropriate experience in the linguistic issues and the community-based research did not respect the project management rules and regulations and did not have enough experience in government administration. The Mid Term Evaluation records: "CTA managed the program in an authoritative fashion, which was criticized by MLE Program team members, SC members and other stakeholders." Poor management including lack of transparency, lack of understanding the project planning tools (e.g. log frame) documentation, file keeping, and reporting created the situation whereby the CTA decided to resign. The key findings of the Mid Term Evaluation were related to functional ineffectiveness in planning and prioritizing of activities, in operational and financial management as well as in implementation, monitoring and reporting. Clarity and effectiveness of decision-making procedures were seen as necessary to be revisited. The results of the Mid Term evaluation were discussed in the program Steering Committee with the shared planning and commitment to improve the well-known situation.

The Mid Term evaluation, however, also states that the MLE Program had very challenging objectives: on one hand it is addressing local communities and schools in involving and empowering them to take interest in children's teaching and learning environment and develop concrete models for MLE and preparations of learning materials; on the other hand, the program is expected to advise and recommend on MLE national policies. The evaluation recognizes the challenging political environment as well in the country, which is going through the transition from a kingdom, formerly emphasizing the one-country-one nation-one language policies in public service and education, to a federal democratic republic recognizing multiethnic and multi cultural nature.

Recommendations of the Mid Term evaluation emphasized:

1. The MLE Program should immediately link with the School Sector Reform (SSR) piloting and collaborate closely especially in Rasuwa District, which is included both in SSR and MLE Program pilots;
2. The present model of action research to be redesigned and professional research institution to be engaged
3. There are additional research needs: a) Pilot CDC produced textbooks and b) Stocktaking of current grass roots MLE practiced in Nepal.
4. Training of trainers by DOE staff and IPOs for the dissemination of cascading models
5. The need to work in a more integrated manner from within DOE, consulting regularly the DOE DG and the executive directors of CDC and NCED

2.6 Achievements of the MLE program

In spite of the challenges, achievements of the MLE program are recognized by the Government partners, INGOs, IPOs, education donors and researchers. As for the community empowerment, as soon as the decision on the pilot schools and districts was taken in November 2008, the MLE Team in cooperation with the education line agencies and SC members initiated the process of preparing mother tongue supplementary reference material to the pilot schools in the languages of the communities.

Box 1. Initiation of the reference material development in pilot districts

Members of the community, especially Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Holders were invited to the schools. They were asked to tell short stories and experiences from their culture to the students in their mother tongue. The students were selected from grades 3-5 and they were divided into groups of 5-6 students for each IK holder. For many students

it was the first time they heard their mother tongue being used at school. The students drew pictures on the basis of the story and then wrote words or sentences about the story in their mother tongue. The drawings were scanned, and the sentences were typed up on the computer. An hour's work in the school communities produced mother tongue posters and trilingual readers. The stories were translated into Nepali and English.

The material development initiated the planning process to prepare the pilot schools to begin teaching in the mother tongues in the first three grades of primary education. The mother tongue teacher recruitment started, and the DOE Education Section allocated funds for five mother tongue teachers in different pilot schools. The two other schools had teachers as part of their regular staff, who could teach in the children's mother tongue.

During the last year of implementation children of the seven pilot schools, in six districts received teaching in eight mother tongues as a medium of instruction.

As for the other achievements, the Director General of the Department of Education requested to MLE to analyze the achievements of the MLE Program with aim of giving an introduction to the education donors during the School Sector Reform Donor Mission in March 2009. The achievements were identified and shared with education donors attending the School Sector Reform mission.

*In the Consolidation Workshop early April 2009***,** the Program Steering Committee Members of the Education Line Agencies planned the last months of the MLE Program with the proposal to extend the MLE Program implementation by one or two months.

The Cosolidation Workshop also discussed and prepared a draft plan for the MLE Future Directions including objectives, opportunities, challenges, policy gaps,

SSR provision, proposed scope, strategies for expansion, teacher management and development, development and distribution of instructional material, management and mobilization of resources, institutional arrangements, provisions for partnership, technical assistance and monitoring and follow up.

3 Inputs

3.1 Program financing from both foreign and local resources

The total contribution of the Government of Finland for the total budget is Euro 1.0 million. During the reporting period, Government of Nepal had allocated a total of NPR 1.95 million for the project implementation activities. For 2008-2009, the contribution from Government of Nepal stands at NPR 3 million (i.e. NPR 1.2 million through SSR and NPR 1.8 million through EFA funding). The allocations are as follows:

Government of Finland

- 2007 Euro 295, 140.00
- 2008 Euro 361, 640.00
- 2009 Euro 156, 710.00

Government of Nepal

- 2007-2008 NPR 1, 950, 000.00
- 2008-2009 NPR 3, 000, 000.00

3.2 Overview of technical assistance personnel, institutional partners and international and national consultancies

The project hired an office manager in March 2007 and a national technical advisor in April 2007. With the resignation of the CTA at the end of March 2008, an acting CTA was first nominated and later designated as CTA for the rest of the project period. A driver was hired after the arrival of the project vehicle in November 2007. There have been

slight changes regarding staffs of the program. With the resignation of Dr. David A Hough, CTA of the program, at the end of March, 2008, Ms. Paivi Ahonen had been working as the Acting CTA for the program. Ms. Ahonen was later designated as the CTA of the program from 1st September 2008. An additional driver was also hired for a second vehicle (Maruti van). The permanent staff list is as follows:

Table 1: Permanent staff list

S.No.	Name	Duration		Position
		From	To	
1.	David Hough	15.01.2007	31.03.2008	CTA
2.	Paivi Ahonen	07.05.2007	15.09.2009	Acting CTA (07.05-03.07.2008) CTA
3.	Amrit Yonjan-Tamang	23.4.2007	25.7.2009	NTA
4.	Iina Nurmela	07.2.2007	06.2.2009	YPO
5.	Dheeraj Jung Gurung	08.3.2007	15.7.2009	Office manager
6.	Ratna Lama	19.11.2007	18.7.2009	Driver
7.	Jag Bahadur Tamang	01.06.2008	25.07.2009	Driver

National MLE Program Staff were hired through open and transparent competition. The MLE Team put an announcement in several national daily newspapers, interviewed the NTA and Office Manager candidates and the Steering Committee approved the process and the decisions.

As per the requirements of the program and in consultation with various stakeholders, a TOR for MLE Research and Expert Team was prepared in September 2008 and as per approval of the Steering Committee meeting on 27th October 2008, Team Leader Dr. Susan Acharya of the research and expert team, was designated for the program. In

addition, the following international consultancies have been carried out:

Table 2: International /national consultants

S.No.	Name/Country	Duration		Remarks
		From	To	
1.	Päivi Ahonen, Finland	12.3.2007	18.3.2007	FCG backstopping
2.	AnneAla-Poikela Finland	12.3.2007	18.3.2007	FCG backstopping
3.	Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Denmark	25.9.2007	4.10.2007	LHR specialist
4.	Dr. Mahendra Mishra, India	25.9.2007	4.10.2007	MLE expert from Orissa
5.	Dr. Mere Kepa, New Zealand	19.1.2008	15.2.2008	Indigenous epistemologies
6	Bikram Subba, Nepal	10.12.2007	13.12.2007	Log Frame Consultant
7.	Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Denmark	28.1.2008	4.2.2008	MLE policy and strategy specialist
		11.2.2008	15.2.2008	
8.	Dr. Shelly Taylor, Canada	23.01.2009	09.02.2009	MLE Teacher Training Material development expert
9.	Dr. Sushan Acharya, Nepal	21.11.2008	28.05.2009	Coordinator of Research and Expert Team
10.	Dr. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Denmark and Dr Ajit Mohanty, India	3.3.2009	14.3.2009	MLE Policy & Strategy Development based on the experiences in the pilot schools

3.3 Information of local capacity and institution building

Within the MLE Program structure the following capacity building and institutional building was part of the project implementation:

- Five mother tongue teachers were recruited within the DOE teacher quota
- Reference material in eight languages was printed by DOE budget
- Continuous support of the DOE Inclusive Education Section Staff, including three months extension period of transferred staff member at the end of the program

3.4 Equipment and facilities

Equipment was purchased in February 2007 when setting up office at the inclusive education section at the Department of Education in Sanothimi, Bhaktapur including desktops (3), mobile phones (3), printers (3), photocopier, scanner etc. The first project vehicle was purchased in April 2007 and the second in August 2007. Due to increasing electricity power-cuts, two generators were purchased along with battery back up for computers.

3.5 The relevance/effectiveness of Finland's and Nepal Governments' financial output

The Finnish Government's financial support structure was criticized by the education line agencies for not covering any activities of the line agencies and pilot schools/districts but financing mainly the Technical Assistance (TA). If the MLE program would have included both activity support and TA, the program would have reached higher achievements in capacity building and institutional development.

Nepal Government

- Additional support to the MLE Program was the Office DOE provided to the MLE Team in the Inclusive Education Section
- Delay in providing the teacher quota for pilot schools slowed the starting of mother tongue teaching and field level MLE activities
- The teacher quota was not enough in all pilot schools

- DOE provided a lump sum budget for cascading schools in pilot districts
- The annual expected expenditure of the government allocated budgets not 100%
- Planning of the annual government budget resources together with MLE Program was not sufficient

4 Activities

MLE Program carried out activities according to the Logical Frame work based on the Core Document. The Core Document original four results were developed to five result areas in the Logical Frame Workshop. The results are:

1. Creating a conducive policy environment for MLE;
2. Developing an institutional structure that will facilitate a bottom-up implementation of sustainable MLE and coordinate MLE activities;
3. Strengthening the capacity at central, district and community levels to implement MLE;
4. Creating and establishing models of learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali speaking students' learning and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level;
5. Establishing models of creating support networks of schools implementing MLE

The following tables indicate the activities conducted in the different result areas during the implementation period based on the original Logical Framework.

4.1 Creation of conducive MLE policy environment

Result 1	Log Frame Activities	Program Activities
Creation of conducive MLE policy environment initiated	1.1 Commission a working group to carry out MLE policy study at central and local level	1. *MLE Concept Paper* developed in working group supported by international MLE specialists 2. Commission of *MLE Expert & Research Team* for MLE

		pilot review and analysis of MLE policies/strategies
	1.2 Facilitate the preparation of recommendations to change or formulate MLE policies at central and local level	2. Workshops and seminars on *MLE Policy and Strategy for MLE* 3. Experiences from the pilot schools discussed and analyzed within the process of *MLE Expert & Research Team* work 3. Initiating the *MLE Implementing Guidelines process*
	1.3 Forward recommendations to concerned authorities	1. Dissemination of the recommendations of *MLE Expert & Research Team* widely: the report translated into Nepali and into eight pilot languages 2. Seminar to District Curriculum Coordinating Committee (DCCC) members 3. Seminar to higher level education officers to discuss the draft *Implementing Guidelines* to be developed national medium of instruction/multilingual education strategy
	1.4 Support the preparation of MLE implementation guidelines at central and local level	**1.** *MLE Implementation Guidelines Group*, including DOE, CDC, NCED, NEFIN, and NFDIN formed in March 09, to develop and prepare the guidelines to follow the MLE government policies and experiences and lessons learned from the pilot areas.

The MLE Concept Paper preparation started in the context of the consultancy of International MLE Education Specialist Dr Tove Skuttnab – Kangas. The MLE Concept Paper deals with the following issues:

1. Introduction. Nepal: Demographic, linguistic and socio-cultural background,
2. What is MLE? Why is MLE required in Nepal?
3. MLE yes – but how? A few examples,
4. MLE-related international law and human rights obligations,
5. Current policy, practices and efforts related to MLE in Nepal,
6. Possible future directions for MLE in Nepal (long-term and short-term)

The development of the concept paper began during the consultation of the international specialist Dr Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and it was completed with team participating in the training through email discussion. The MLE concept paper process was supporting the policy & strategy development, identifying the gaps and preparing the recommendations for the government education authorities to move forward for developing multilingual education in line with the Interim Constitution of Nepal and National Curriculum Framework. The principle of Interim Constitution (Three Year Interim Plan, 2007/0-2009/10, National Planning Commission) is “To provide education to children in their mother tongues and adopt trilingual policy”.

The policy and strategy for MLE Nepal consultation of Dr Tove Skutnabb-Kangas from Denmark and Dr Ajit Mohanty from India took place in March 2009. The field visit was arranged to Rasuwa districts and MLE pilot schools in the district to share the MLE experiences in Nepal with the international experts. The DOE, CDC and NCED directors and section officers as well as MLE Team attended the field visit.

The MLE Specialists shared their very positive observation with the members of two working groups in DOE Kathmandu. The other group was focusing on MLE policy and the other group in MLE implementation strategies. The Working Groups presented their results and recommendations for a wide audience of Government representatives, Indeginous People’s representatives and Donors working within the education sector:

- Multilingual Education Policy and -MLE Implementation Strategies

The MLE specialists presented the research results and experiences from different countries and regions similar to Nepal, where mother tongue has been implemented during many years. Dr Ajit Mohanty MLE Specialist from India introduced the MLE program implemented in Orissa, with the support of Javarhlal Nehru Iniversity and UNICEF.

The results of the MLE policy & strategy consultancy were taken into consideration in the work of the MLE Implementation Guidelines working group.

The two page introduction *WHY MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION* was prepared at the end of the MLE policy & strategy consultancy with the purpose of developing the MLE awareness-raising material for parents, education authorities, media houses and politicians. The introducton aimed at giving the *pedagogical justifications* to the mother tongue and multilingual education. When analysing the children’s learning process with the concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), it becomes clear that children’s learning process will be much more successful when teaching is given by children’s mother tongue and not in the language the child has not yet learned to speak. The children who learn to think and analyze knowldeg when their cognitive-academic language proficiency develops, will more easily learn a second and international language.

While the popularity of English language as a medium of instruction is increasing in Nepal among the general public and parents, there is not enough knowledge of the pedagogical importance of the child's mother tongue in the language learning process. According to the research results in many countries, on the contrary to popular belief in Nepal, children learn better second and international languages, if they have first learned their mother tongue well. Box 2 below deals with the issue of Mother Tongue or English as the first language, sharing the research results all over the world.

Box 2: Why mother tongue based MLE?

Why should children be taught mainly through the medium of their mother tongue (MT) in school for the first 6-8 years when they know their MT already?

When children come to school, they can talk in their MT about concrete everyday things in a face-to-face situation in their own environment where the context is clear: they can see and touch the things they are talking about and they get immediate feedback if they do not understand ("I didn't mean the apples, I asked you to bring bananas"). They speak fluently, with a native accent, and they know the basic grammar and have good vocabulary. They can explain all the basic needs in the MT: they have basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). This may be enough for the first grades in school where teachers are still talking about things that the child knows. But later in school children need abstract intellectual and linguistic skills for talking about much more demanding concepts; they need to be able to understand and talk about things far away (e.g. in geography, history) or things that cannot be seen (e.g. mathematical and scientific concepts, honesty, constitution, fairness, democracy). They need to be able to solve problems using just language and abstract reasoning, without being able to do concrete things ("if I first do A, then either D or E happens; if I then choose K, X may happen, but Y may also happen;

therefore it is best to do B or C first"). The cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) that is needed to manage from grade 3 onwards in school, in higher grades, upper secondary school and later in life, develops slowly. Children need to develop these abstract concepts on the basis of what they already know in their mother tongue. If the development of the mother tongue CALP (which mainly happens through formal education) is cut off when the child starts school, s/he may never have an opportunity to develop higher abstract thinking in any language.

If teaching is in a language that the Indigenous/ Tribal/Minority (ITM) child does not know (e.g. Nepali), the child sits in the classroom the first 2-3 years without understanding much of the teaching. S/he may repeat mechanically what the teacher says, without understanding, without developing her capacity to think with the help of language, and without learning almost anything of the subjects that she is taught. This is why many ITM children leave school early, not having learned much Nepali, not having learned properly how to read and write, not having developed their mother tongue, and almost without any school knowledge.

If the child has the MT as the teaching language, s/he understands the teaching, learns the subjects, develops the CALP in the MT, and has very good chances of becoming a thinking, knowledgeable person who can continue his/her education.

Parents want children to learn Nepali and English. If children are taught mainly through their MT the first many years, how do they learn Nepali and English?

All MLE programs teach Nepali as a SECOND language subject from grade 1 or 2. The teachers know both the children's MT and Nepali. In the CALP part of language, much is shared in the MT and Nepali (and other additional languages such as English). The child needs to learn reading

and writing only once in life, and it is easiest to learn it in a language that they know well. When the child has understood the relationship between what one hears and speaks, and the reading/writing system, in their MT, this can easily be transferred to other languages (even if the script may be different). When the child has learned many abstract concepts in the MT, s/he just needs to learn new "labels", new words for them in Nepali; s/he already knows the concepts. In this way, only parts of the language (Nepali) are new; the child already knows the content in various subjects (e.g. in mathematics). All languages share a common underlying proficiency. When the child develops this proficiency in the language she knows best, the MT, it is easily transferred to other languages. And when the child is already high-level bilingual in the MT and Nepali, she learns English and other languages faster and better than if she starts English learning as monolingual in the MT. She needs fewer years of and less exposure to English, to learn it well. All research studies in the world show that the longer the child has the MT as the main medium of education, the better the child learns the subjects and the better s/he also becomes in the dominant language of the country and in additional languages. The number of years in MT-medium education is also more important for the results than the parents' socio-economic status. This means that MLE also supports economically poor children's school achievement.

Isn't it enough if children have the first 3 years in the MT and then the teaching can be in Nepali?

3 years of MT-medium teaching is much better than having all the teaching in Nepali (or in English which is even worse), but 3 years is NOT enough. The CALP development is nowhere near a high enough level in the MT after 3 years. 6 years in the MT is an absolute minimum, but 8 years is better. Ethiopia, one of the poorest countries in Africa, has a decentralized education system where 8 years of

mother-tongue-based MLE is recommended. Some districts have chosen to have only 4 or 6 years of MT-medium. Comparing results from the whole country, a large study shows that those who have had 8 years of mainly MT-medium and who have studied Amharic (the dominant Ethiopian language) and English as subjects, have the best results in science, mathematics, etc, and also in English. Those with 6 years are not as good, and those who have switched to English-medium already after grade 4, have the worst results, also in English.

Parents want English-medium schools. What are the likely results?

Many studies in India show that children in English-medium private schools initially know English better than children in MT or regional language medium government schools. But at the end of grade 8, the knowledge in the various subjects of the students in English-medium schools is lower than in government schools, and their English is no better. In addition, they do not know how to read or write their MTs and do not have the vocabulary to discuss what they have learned in any Indian languages. They have sacrificed knowledge of Indian languages and much of the knowledge of school subjects, but they only get a proficiency in the English language that is not high-level. This is partly because the English language competence of teachers is generally not very high, but also because the children have not been able to develop a high-level CALP, neither in the MTs nor in English.

Mother-tongue based MLE for the first 6-8 years, with good teaching of Nepali as a second language and English as a foreign language, and possibly other language too, with locally based materials which respect local Indigenous knowledge, seems to be a good research-based recommendation for Nepal.

The MLE Expert & Research Team was commissioned in November 2008 with the objectives to analyze:

1. Teaching/learning environment and MLE modalities/methodologies of non-Nepali speaking pupils at MLE Program piloting district schools
2. Relevance of the Nepal Gov MLE policies & strategies and level of implementation of the policies & strategies in relation to first point
3. Implementation of the MLE related international obligations signed /endorsed by Nepal Gov

Based on the analysis and taking into consideration the results of the MLE Mapping the MLE E & R Team will identify gaps in MLE implementation and

1. Introduce practical /realistic recommendations of how to develop mother tongue / multilingual teaching in Nepal
2. Recommend changes/improvements to Nepal Gov MLE policies and practices

The MLE Expert & Research Team visited all six pilot districts during the last eight months of program implementation, in teams of two-three team members. In the process of finalizing the report Expert and Research team members and MLE Team clarified the contents of the information gathered from the pilot schools and districts. In the final Workshop of the Expert & Research Team, which took place in late May 2009 the MLE Program SC -members and Indigenous People's Organizations (IPO) participants commented the findings of the research team and the future directions based on the team members analyses.

Findings of the MLE Expert & Research Team

The table of findings below from the team's report gives a good background of the MLE policies and practices in Nepal, as it is reviewed as part of the MLE Program implementation process. Some of the findings are connected to MLE program implementation and design. Most of them, however, deal with the MLE implementation in the complex

and rich linguistic reality of Nepal. Many of the finding deal with the community member's awareness of the importance of the multilingual and mother tongue education and the teacher's capacity and skills to adapt with the child centered mother tongue teaching. One of the most challenging questions when developing the multilingual education is how to recruit and train the teachers who represent the different language groups in nation wide school communities in Nepal.

Box 3. Major Finding of the MLE Expert & Research Team

Policy, strategy level

Several government documents and legal frameworks offered a number of policies/strategies and provisions on MLE and/or use of MT in teaching/learning in Nepal. Several international MLE related human rights provisions that Nepal has agreed to comply with have also been implemented. They are however sporadic and, in some instances, incompatible with each other.

Practice level

Multiple language settings in Nepal required multiple teaching/learning arrangements. Where one language is in domination or all students belong to one MT implementation of MLE is less challenging. But inadequately prepared teachers for non-conventional teaching learning settings; inadequate classroom; and unavailability of local MT teachers make teaching/learning more challenging in multilingual situation. Moreover, inadequate attention towards quality components of teaching/learning at local community level including school and local government makes it difficult to mobilize financial resources to deal with above mentioned issues and challenges.

- Parents and community members are not at the same level in terms of their understanding and acceptance regarding MLE. Some are taking it as a vehicle for language, culture

and identity conservation and promotion, whereas some are happy that children are relaxed, so they learn better. But for some MLE is limiting children's access to the outer world.

- Language composition of students can alter constantly in schools. This is more likely to happen in multilingual areas and flat lands. Moreover, some schools are dominated by Nepali speaking children. Nepali speaking community and students can also demand alternative teaching/learning environment conducive for them. In this context one rigid plan/framework does not work.
- Financial resources to address language communities and indigenous nationalities' rights and concerns have been made available from different government and non government sources. Resources for children's schooling are also available from both sources including local government. Such sources can be utilized for improving children's learning environment in general and MLE in particular including teaching/learning material development.
- Early Childhood Education Development (ECED) and Non-Formal Education (NFE) are not getting MLE inputs. If inputs are distributed unevenly among the subsystems of education benefit will also be unevenly distributed. In this situation managing learning needs of non-Nepali speaking children, who enter regular school with ECED or NFE experiences, will be challenging.
- A permanent venue that could offer easy access to local knowledge, stories, practices and technologies and human resources for teachers and students was missing. This made MLE teachers' job more challenging.
- Teachers are not adequately informed about language transfer technique and it is commonly believed that teaching Nepali and English as subjects side by side with MT as medium is sufficient for children to adapt to

teaching/learning in second language (i.e. Nepali in most cases.)

- MLE pilot program team members and line agency personnel understood capacity development differently. For pilot program involvement in program activities, planned inputs of the international MLE specialists and exposure visits were capacity development, whereas for the latter targeted tailor-made inputs was capacity development.
- On the one hand, by design, the program's main concern was community empowerment and ownership, but on the other hand available opportunities for the line agencies to demand and design capacity development for their human resources was not fully capitalized.
- Non conventional design of the MLE pilot program did not completely fit with the bureaucratic system. The working relationship between pilot programs and district and sub district level machineries did not appear harmonious. On the other hand, approaches and innovations introduced by the MLE pilot program were hard to mainstream because of practical difficulties created by norms and measures of the system.

Future directions

The MLE Expert & Research Team had identified ten different areas to develop the multilingual, mother tongue education with the purpose of improving the quality of education and eventually achieving higher enrollment rates and decreasing the drop-out rates among all school-aged children of Nepal. Each of the ten areas has several different proposals, suggestions and recommendations on how to move forward with the MLE development. MLE Implementation Guidelines Working Group has taken the recommendations into consideration. Recommendations have been discussed with MLE Program Steering Committee members and

District Curriculum Coordinating Committee (DCCC) members of the MLE pilot districts.

The MLE Implementation Guidelines Working Group reviewed the recommendations of the *MLE Expert & Research Team* when formulating the steps to initiate the MLE. Functional linkages between the different line agencies are crucial areas in developing the sustainable MLE model in the administration. Especially curriculum development, teaching material development and teacher education need MLE harmonization. Teaching Nepali as a second language to non-Nepali speaking children still needs to be established as part of the standard curriculum. The textbooks for Nepali as a second language are as well urgently needed.

Below one selected example of each of ten areas.

1. Prerequisite for policy and statutory framework formulation

Review and revision of MT/MLE related provisions and development of a cohesive policy guideline and statutory framework is most important. In order to consolidate and regularize the existing strategies/practices, develop new strategies and to implement the constitutional right, a clearly defined consistent policy guidelines and legal provisions are necessary.

2. Level and approach of MLE implementation

With extensive discussion and support from the linguists:

- Medium of instruction/facilitation in grades 1 to 3 will be MT.
- Second language which can be Nepali or provincial/regional language will be introduced from grade 1 but only at oral level.
- Foreign language which is English will be introduced from grade 1 but in limited extent and at oral level only.

- Medium of instruction in grades 4 and 5 will be MT with partial use of second language, and introduction of third language.
- Second language will be the medium of instruction in grades 6 to 8. MT and third language will be taught as subjects in these grades.

3. Functional linkage among line agencies

An examination of the interconnectedness and institutionalization of complementary strategy development among line agencies such as teacher preparation/development (e.g. NCED); curriculum/material production/development (e.g. CDC); early childhood education and development (e.g. ECED section); NFE (e.g. NFEC) and inclusive education (e.g. Inclusive Education Section DOE) is urgently required for the implementation of MLE. Complementary strategies and implementation arrangements make the field level implementation holistic and less complicated. This kind of arrangement will provide MLE teachers with a sustainable support system and alleviate their stress as well.

4. Language structure, transition and teaching second language

Use of second language teaching techniques while teaching Nepali to non-Nepali speaking children and teaching indigenous languages and/or other MTs to Nepali speaking children, (this is applicable in multilingual schools where MT alone is taught as an option-local subject) is an immediate need. Techniques of teaching English as a foreign language will also be immediately employed.

5. Utilization and conservation of languages and indigenous knowledge system

In addition to the establishment of Language and Indigenous Resource Center local or provincial governments

will identify highly endangered language community as 'special language area', and arrangement will be made to provide education to children of such community in MT.

6. Awareness raising

A data or evidence-based discussion with parents and community-leaders to build consensus about the need for teaching/learning in MT in early grades, and help parents make informed choices are necessary. Therefore, an MLE information package to parents and community members will be prepared.

7. Capacity development: Teacher/facilitator management

Demand based training system will be utilized to identify the MLE and multi grade teaching related pedagogical and classroom management needs and provision of orientation/training as per need. Teachers hired for particular purposes (e.g. MLE) will also be provided with relevant trainings.

8. Material development

- Teaching learning materials including supplementary materials will be developed at local level as intended and guided by the National Curriculum Framework.
- District Curriculum Coordination Committee will consist of locally available representatives of language communities.

9 Monitoring and evaluation

School level database or school level Education, Management Information System (EMIS) will be designed to accurately reflect the MT related data of the students.

10. Resource management, mobilization and pooling

A community managed Language and Indigenous Resource Center adjoined with the existing Resource Center or Community Learning Center (CLC) will be established.

MLE Implementation Guidelines Group

The group consisted of members from DOE, CDC, NCED, NFEC, NEFIN, and NFDIN. It was formed in March 09 to develop the guidelines to follow the MLE government policies, experiences and lessons learned from the pilot schools/ areas.

5.2 Institutional structure, process and coordination for sustainable MLE

Result 2	Activities	Verifications
An institutional structure, process and coordination for sustainable MLE developed and functional	2.1 Assist in defining organizational structure and functions of MLE execution bodies	Discussed largely during the MLE pilot implementation in school/district levels. Recommendations in the MLE E future directions. Proposal of the organizational structure included into the MLE Implementation Guidelines
	2.2 Facilitate the formation of central and pilot district level MLE execution and organizational structure and bodies	Experiences from the piloting districts reviewed by the MLE E & R Team and future directions proposed. MLE cascading experiences to be reviewed in later stage by DOE. Recommendations for vertical and horizontal expansion are specified in the recommendations for future directions of MLE E & R Team.
	2.3 Support defining functions and form the	Pilot school head teachers, DEO Recourse Persons and Indigenous Peoples'

	cascading teams/committees	Organizations taking the leading role in initiating the cascading.
	2.4 Assist defining central level mechanism to produce MLE materials	MLE material production initiated in the pilot schools/districts. Mother tongue teachers taking an active role in the MLE teaching material. Textbooks design finalized and printed in cooperation with CDC.
	2.5 Facilitate defining functions and form local level mechanism to produce MLE materials	Local level MLE teaching material production initiated and the initial local level mechanism being developed in cooperation with CDC.
	2.6 Facilitate defining function and initiating the establishment of MLE section at central level	MLE Section in central level not supported by DOE at this point of time. However, MLE E & R T recommends a community managed *Language and Indigenous Resource Center* adjoined with the existing Resource Center or Community Learning Center (CLC)
	2.7 Facilitate defining functions and assigning MLE focal person at MOES	The defining of both MOE and DOE focal person still open and no official note available. MLE Team has developed the TORs for DOE Focal point: see the text below

Result two, the above activities to develop sustainable and functional institutional structure and coordination for MLE within the MLE Program Period 2007 -2009, was

extremely ambitious in the context of the short period of MLE Program implementation and the political conditions of the country that time.

The piloting of the MLE mother tongue education needs to continue for four to five years before the institutional structure gradually developed can be analyzed and developed to become functional and sustainable. Expansion to cascading schools was just about to start; school were selected in most of the districts but the actual mother tongues teaching has not started mainly due to the lack of mother tongues teachers and also often the lack of extra classrooms.

The MLE Expert & Research Team suggested that in the current system, DEO and/or Resource Center can facilitate in identifying and mobilizing resources made available by the Local Self Governance Act and Regulation and I/NGO support at local level for MLE. The MLE E & R T further added that a serious discussion at district level is needed on how to best utilize available resources for sustainable benefit of language communities and indigenous nationalities.

In the process of developing the TORs for the DOE MLE Focal Point, the following reference, emphasizing the importance of the MLE, were identified in the SSR Plan 2009-2015.

Focal point background

School Sector Reform Plan (SSR Plan) 2009-2015 refers directly to MLE in the following parts:

- **Quality assurance**: Introduction of mother tongue medium of instruction at early stages of basic education
- **Inclusion in education**: Introduction of multi-lingual education for social inclusion
- **Development functions. a. Curriculum integration**: Development of local curriculum, preparation for

mother-tongue and multi-grade instruction, **b. Teacher development:** Teacher preparation specialized area like mother tongue and multi-grade instruction.

- **Teacher Management and Development** is mentioning the recruitment of female teachers including dalits and marginalized groups. Mother tongues teachers could be also mentioned in this connection.
- Indirectly *inclusion in education* refers to ensuring student's learning with cultural identity and differentiated pedagogical practices catering the diverse needs. Both of the areas are connected to MLE education.

4.3 Capacity of central, district and community level to develop and implement MLE

Result 3	Activities	Verifications
Capacity of central, district and community level to develop and implement MLE strengthened	3.1 Introduce possible models for community generated material production	During the first year MLE Program produced in collaboration with the piloting schools *reference material* for mother tongue education in all eight languages, spoken in the seven pilot schools. The booklets with the stories of Indigenous Knowledge Holders and drawings by children of the schools were printed in three languages mother tongue/Nepali /English. The community generated *teaching material* production started during the last six months of the project implementation, in both subject text books and textbooks in mathematics, science and social sciences in local languages
	3.2 Organize workshop to identify local contents for curriculum and materials	The contents of the teaching material based on the national curriculum discussed in the workshops/in Rasuwa, Itahari and Bhutwal and as part of the initial school selection and monitoring visits
	3.3 Facilitate designing and production of MLE materials jointly by CDC and speech communities	Joint designing and production with CDC and school communities discussed in the Consolidation workshop in detail and finalizing the lay out and printing with the support of CDC started in July 09.
	3.4 Organize capacity building activities by international experts on best practices in MLE and indigenous knowledge and value systems	The capacity building activities continued over the project period by the visits of international experts, study tours and pilot activities.
	3.5 Organize exposure visits to pilot communities for central level officials	CDC, DOE & NCED actively participated in monitoring visits to pilot communities. Efforts to director level participation were taken during the consolidation phase; director of DOE took part in MLE teacher training in Sunsari and Jhapa in July 09.
	3.6 Organize international study tours to countries where best practices of MLE are applied	2. Study Tours to India to two states, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh were organized to central and local level offices with the purpose of learning from MLE development in another country. The study tour for policy level education directors was organized to the state of

		Orissa in India in August 09.
	3.7 Support participation of stakeholders to relevant international conferences	The MLE participation team and DOE staff participated in the international seminar in New Zealand and in India in 2008. Based on the presentations in India, the MLE development in Nepal was also part of the book "Multilingual Education for Social Justice."
	3.8 Organize planning workshop on cascading for local level stakeholders	Planning of cascading schools and information sharing with the local level education administrators took place during the monitoring visits.
	3.9 Facilitate NCED to include MLE and Nepali as L2 into pre- and in-service teacher training program	Short term international consultancy on MLE Teacher Training Manual Development (Jan 09) and Teacher Training (Aug 09) planned and developed in cooperation with the NCED. Piloting of Training Manual took place in three districts (Ilam, Jhapa, Sunsari) and four language groups (Bantawa Rai, Limbu, Urau and Rajbangsi).Nepali as L2 workshop was organized in August 2008.
	3.10 Facilitate to train teachers on how to teach Nepali as a second language	Experiences/results of the Nepali as L2 were shared in teacher training workshop in August 2008.

Capacity in MLE implementation

Capacity of central, district and community level to develop and implement MLE has been clearly strengthened during the MLE Program. The pilot districts and especially the pilot schools have benefited from the planned activities implemented in cooperation with the MLE Team, DOE, NCED and CDC. Also cascading schools have benefited from participating in MLE Program activities. However, due to the short MLE Program period, developing the capacity of all districts of Nepal during the program period was not possible.

The non-piloting district's capacity will be developed during the coming years through MOE and the central level education line agencies. *The MLE Implementation Guidelines*, developed as part of the program activities, when implemented nationwide, will also gradually develop the MLE implementing capacity in the whole country. The government and donors School Sector Reform Program (2009-2015) launched the MLE piloting in three districts; Rasuwa, Kapilvasthu and Dadeldhura. The experiences of the MLE program were shared by DEO Inclusive Section Officers and head teachers of MLE pilot schools from Rasuwa and Palpa in a one -week seminar organized in July 2009.

MLE reference/teaching material production by communities

The process of designing, preparing and printing of the reference material is very different to the process of producing teaching material. The reference material was produced based on the stories told by the Indigenous Knowledge (IK) Holders, written down by school children knowing the local language and printed by the MLE Program.

As it became evident that the teaching material production is necessary and extremely important, the production of the Grade 1 mother tongue textbook was

started by the mother tongue teachers of the pilot schools. The preparation of the books was in some districts supported by other teachers and sometimes by community members knowledgeable with the language of the medium of instruction. The teachers received guidance and advice from MLE Team, DOE and line agencies during the MLE Program monitoring visits. The main principle in the textbook designing has been to analyze carefully the national core curriculum and write the contents of the textbooks based on the curriculum. However, the most crucial principle has at the same time been to include contents of the ethnic culture and indigenous knowledge into the text and drawings.

The process of designing and printing the textbooks in collaboration with the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) started in Consolidation Workshop in April 2009 about half a year before closing the project. The key concern has been the lack of experience of teachers preparing the textbooks, validation of the contents of the textbooks and collaboration between the district level process with the national level procedures and regulations. The decision taken by all partners in the Consolidation Workshop was that the District Curriculum Coordination Committee (DCCC) can be given a role of overseeing the local teaching material production. The seminar organized for all pilot district -DCCC members discussed the issue.

Capacity building activities by international experts on best practices in MLE and indigenous knowledge and value systems were successful and developed together with the IPOs and education partners. The specialists from India and New Zealand shared their MLE experiences from their countries and region. The large group of pilot school teachers and education officials also visited two states in India with the purpose of learning from success stories from a neighboring country. The teaching material production was one of the areas to be analyzed. The visitors adopted the new

methods as soon as they returned to their schools, a hanging library being one example.

International conferences

The MLE team and DOE staff participated in the international conferences in New Zealand and in India in 2008.

The Deputy Director of the Inclusive Education Section attended the Conference organized by Language, Education and Diversity (LED). Forty-two countries attended the conference with the themes of:

- Bilingual/immersion education
- English language education
- Language Education planning and policy and
- Literacy education (including adult literacy)

Based on the presentations in India, in the International Conference on *Multilingual education: Challenges, perspectives and opportunities*, held at Zakir Hussain Centre for Educational Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University in February 2008, the MLE Nepal team was invited to write two articles about the MLE development in Nepal in the book *"Multilingual education for social justice: Globalizing the local*." The book deals with the issue on how using several languages in education can contribute to greater social justice. The main focus documents how marginalized peoples who receive culturally and linguistically appropriate education are better equipped both to maintain and develop their cultures and participate in the wider society. The articles in the book analyze the multilingual education from several perspectives in different parts of world including e.g. Peru, Canada, India and Nordic countries in relation to Sami Indigenous people.

The articles from Nepal are titled: "Privileging indigenous knowledge: Empowering MLE in Nepal" (David Hough, Ram Bahadur Magar Thapa and Amrit Yonjan –

Tamang) and "All Nepalese children have right to education in mother tongue' – but how?" The Nepal MLE program, (Amrit Yonjan-Tamang, David Hough and Iina Nurmela).

MLE development in teacher training

Cooperation between National Center for Educational Development (NCED), Department of Education (DOE) and MLE Program was very active and fruitful during the last implementation year 2008-2009. The work plan for the concerned period included two international short-term consultancies combined with the printing of training manuals and self learning materials. The aim of both activities was supporting the development of MLE expertise in teacher training.

Fifteen days MLE Teacher Training/MLE Material Development consultancy took place in January-February 2009. Dr Shelley K. Taylor from the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada supported the planning process of the material development workshop and worked as a facilitator and resource person during the fifteen days training in NCED.

The participants in the workshop were partly active writers from the different language groups in Nepal and partly the mother tongue teachers from the MLE Pilot schools. The heterogeneous mixture of about thirty participants was naturally challenging for the resource persons and facilitators. Dr Taylor writes in her report, "The format of the workshop was such that material writers and pilot school teachers divided into working groups, wrote up draft versions of their interpretations and experiences with various components of the framework. At the end of the day, they gave oral reports. I commented on salient aspects of their reports, providing feedback where possible"

The main tasks of the international specialist during the fifteen -day Teacher Training/MLE Material development were:

1. Give suggestions to NCED and teacher trainers on how to organize teacher training of MT/MLE teachers– core components were based on teachers' experiences, knowledge and skills, medium of training (which language), etc;
2. Give suggestions to NCED and teacher trainers on how to base teacher training and activities on Indigenous & minority teaching strategies and local contexts to make teacher training local specific and relevant for teachers;
3. Contribute to prepare the teacher training manual as well as self-learning materials for the NCED MLE program with emphasis on institutionalizing and reinforcing the bottom-up process and participatory pedagogy in the education system of Nepal.

Piloting of Training Manuals based on the draft written MLE Development Manuals took place in three districts (Ilam, Jhapa, Sunsari) and four languages groups (Bantawa Rai, Limbu, Urau and Rajbangsi) in June-July 2009.

The second 15-day international consultancy in teacher training in August 2009 focused on MLE teacher training according to the following:

Expert on Teacher Training: Support NCED to develop training of trainers and teacher training in MLE for 9 languages in line with the government MLE policies, based on the review and analyses of the current implementation of MLE at district/local levels. The Capacity Building Workshop, Training of Trainers for 9 languages with the support of an international expert will take into consideration the experiences of the seven MLE piloting schools in six districts.

The results of both consultancies were used in the process of developing the MLE Implementation Guidelines. Mother- tongue based MLE would benefit by developing a teacher education model for community teachers who would

represent different languages groups, who have passed SLC and who are interested in teaching in their communities**.**

Nepali as L2 into pre- and in-service teacher training programs

Recommendations of the papers presented in the seminar of Nepali as a Second Language and Second Languages teaching in Nepal will be included after the seminar in August.

4.4 Models of learning environments to continue mother tongue based MLE education after the primary level

Result 4	Activities	Verifications
Models of learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali speaking students' learning and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level established	4.1 Facilitate the establishment of MLE teacher and resource person quotas	Six teachers quotas established for five pilot schools in July 08
	4.2 Support the development of criteria for hiring MLE teachers and resource persons	Criteria was developed in July 08
	4.3 Organize orientation program for MLE teachers on indigenous methods of learning and teaching	The teachers were given the orientation in regional workshops in Chitwan and Sunsari in Sep-Dec 08
	4.4 Organize workshops for the pilot communities and schools on learning additional languages	Not possible within the project period. To be included into MLE activities after-project plans
	4.5 Carry out needs assessment and initial data collection for curriculum development	Carried out in 07-08 during the school selection period
	4.6 Provide support to the development of local resources as well as to the production and distribution of MLE materials	The pilot school teachers and community members were giving guidance on text book writing/ preparation. Cooperation with CDC in developing the print version (CRC) and identifying the printing services

The development of models of learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali speaking students' learning has been one of the most important areas in the efforts of achieving concrete results in MLE during the program period. The modality development has been carried out through piloting MLE and mother tongues education in seven schools, six districts and in eight languages. As soon as the implementation started it became clear that the reality in all the MLE pilot schools is very different from each other. Some of the schools are mother tongue -based monolingual with non-Nepali languages some have children from four language groups, which means that the schools need four mother tongue teachers for the first three grades. Modality development shows, that the different languages and status of schools including the teacher's language skills in different languages is different in pilot schools.

One of the findings of the Expert & Research Team review is that language composition of students can alter constantly in schools. This is more likely to happen in

multilingual areas and flat lands. Moreover, some schools are dominated by Nepali speaking children. A Nepali speaking community and students can also demand alternative teaching/learning environment conducive for them. In this context one rigid plan/framework does not work. The findings of the team and the reality of MLE Program pilot schools are very similar.

Six different models are in practice in seven MLE pilot schools. The reason for the MLE Program having not been able to develop clear standard models is the very short MLE implementation time in relation to the challenge of developing MLE, and the fact that the concept is very new in Nepal. For two hundred- and forty-years Nepal has been implementing the language policy of "one nation, one language". The tradition in all Nepali schools, from the beginning of starting public education has been, to teach children in Nepali language. Non-Nepali children have been simply taught in Nepalese without any separate Nepali language teaching.

The change to mother tongue -based education takes time, even if the interim constitution guarantees the rights of the all Nepalese children to learn in mother tongue. Further, the language planners, teachers and parents are given an extra challenge to move to the federal state structure, which may mean the emergence of federal state official languages.

The MLE Program, through the community -based approach and by practical necessity, developed together with the DOE, is structured to design and prepare the MLE teaching materials and textbooks at pilot schools. The pilot school teachers and community members were given guidance on text book preparation with the rule to follow the objectives of different lessons stated in the national curriculum. Further, the model of cooperating with CDC in developing the print version and identifying the printing services was developed. The School Management Committees (SMC) validated the textbook language and contents before printing.

The teaching material preparation structure was developed during the last months of the program implementation so the adoptability of the structure in all non-Nepali speaking communities will need to take place after the program implementation.

The pilot schools will continue the mother tongues and multilingual education within the guidance and supervision of the DOE Inclusive Education Section. For developing the standard model of good learning environment for non-Nepali as well as Nepali speaking children is a process which needs time –more time than the MLE Program two-and-a-half-year implementation period.

Towards the end of the Program, the MLE Implementation Guidelines were finalized. When approved by MOE and implemented in all the schools where the school/communities (SMC) have decided to move towards mother tongue based MLE, more experience will be gathered from a larger number of schools than the MLE program of seven schools represent. The model building started during the MLE Program implementation and will continue after the program completion.

School Sector Reform (SSR) Program 2009-2015 following the EFA 2004-2009 has encouraged and emphasized the need to develop multilingual education(n, based on the EFA Program evaluation. Nepal's EFA National Plan of Action (2003) adopted six Dakar goals to be achieved by 2015 and given the ethnic, social and linguistic diversities of Nepal, additional goals were identified, for ensuring the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities quality basic and primary education through their mother tongue. The *MLE Implementation Guidelines* developed in DOE especially benefitting from the MLE Program pilot school/district experiences will be an important benchmark in the MLE development in Nepal.

4.5 Models of creating support networks of schools implementing MLE

Result 5	Activities	Verifications
Models of creating support networks of schools implementing MLE established	5.1 Assist defining functions of MLE support network model at district level	District Level Coordination Committees (DLCC) in pilot districts not established. Cooperation with District Curriculum Coordinating Committees (DCCC) initiated during the consolidation phase. MLE Implementation Guidelines developed for MLE implementation all over Nepal
	5.2 Assist defining functions of MLE support network model at community level	MLE Implementation Guidelines developed for creating modality for SMC to decide to start MLE at school
	5.3 Support to establish MLE support network at district level	SMC to make short- and long-term plans to be disseminated to DCCC. Organizational structure defined in MLE Implementation Guidelines
	5.4 Support to establish MLE support network at community level	According to the MLE Implementation Guidelines MT Development Coordination Committee of 5 members to be established
	5.5 Design and operate MLE network website	Functioning as part of the DOE website
	5.6 Carry out action research: a) Document MLE activities and progress and disseminate to stakeholders b) Plan and implement regular interactions with communities to reflect on MLE	The first half of year of the MLE program Action Research was interpreted as an activity to document MLE development process at schools and communities. After the MLE Program internal evaluation MLE Expert & Research Team was initiated within the Action Research in September 2008. The team's main mission was to review the MLE piloting in school level and analyze the MLE policies and strategies in the context of pilot experiences
	5.7 Design and implement awareness raising campaign based on outcomes from action research	A leaflet about the MLE Program was designed and printed in Dec 08 in English and in Nepali. Documentary Team contracted in May 09. Awareness raising material for parents and teachers developed on the benefits of the mother tongue based MLE using the concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and the finding of the MLE Expert & Research Team achievements/ findings

Creating of models on how new schools and communities can be supported through the support networks of schools already implementing MLE, has been discussed and developed during the Inception phase and during the project implementation. Cascading modality, for initiating

two new schools in every pilot district during the last year of MLE Program implementation, was developed during the inception phase. Most of the districts have moved forward with the cascading plan and the cascading school representatives attended the last monitoring and handing over meetings.

Further, the draft *MLE Implementation Guidelines*, suggest that the school communities will initiate the discussion on the possibility to start the MLE in any school in Nepal and based on the SMC decision the schools can develop plans and move forward with the support of DEO.

Action research was interpreted during the first implementation year as a tool to document MLE development process at schools and communities. During the field visits large amount of both video and photographic material was collected. The material was used in the reports, conferences and seminars as well as in the MLE Leaflet. The material was handed over to the MLE Documentary Team, which used some of it in the MLE Documentary film.

During the last year, *MLE Expert & Research Team* carried out an extensive review on the MLE implementation in pilot schools and districts. The team analyzed the field visit experiences in the light of MLE policies, strategies and implementation, and gave recommendations for future directions as discussed in the context of Result One. The team's final workshop at the end of May 2009 was very successful in terms of good and constructive discussion on MLE in Nepal with participants from all education line agencies, MOE, NEFIN, NEFDIN, Indigenous People's organizations and donors including UNESCO.

One of the log frame activities (Result 5) proposes to "Design and implement an awareness raising campaign based on outcomes from action research". The proposal is most important and would have been extremely useful if the program implementation time would have allowed the practice. The campaign would have been very timely as well,

since the nation's Constitution building process is ongoing and the politicians and general public would need all the information generated during the MLE implementation period.

The MLE team wished that DOE and other education line agencies, MOE and different ethnic and indigenous groups could have used the material which was developed during the last 6 months of the MLE Program. *The 30-minute documentary film* was produced with the professional document team. The document was reviewed in the seminars that took place during the last months, in the MLE Program Final Conference and during the education policy level director's exposure visit to Orissa India.

Pedagogically focused awareness raising leaflet prepared based on the concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive-Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) was developed and based on the Future Direction and Recommendations of the MLE Expert & Research Team. The leaflet benefitted from Dr Skutnabb-Kangas opening words "WHY MOTHER-TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION (MLE)?"

The two concepts, CALP and BICS focus on the teaching-learning process of the individual and every child in the classroom. When children come to school they speak fluently, with a native accent, and they know the basic grammar and many concrete words. They can explain all the basic needs in the MT: they have basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS). If the child has the MT as the teaching language, s/he understands the teaching, learns the subjects, develops the CALP in the MT, and has a very good chance of becoming a thinking, knowledgeable person who can continue their education. If teaching is in a language that the Indigenous/Tribal/Minority (ITM) child does not know (e.g. Nepali), the child sits in the classroom the first 2-3 years without understanding much of the teaching. S/he may repeat

mechanically what the teacher says, without understanding, without developing her capacity to think with the help of language, and without learning almost anything of the subjects that she is taught.

During the visits to the MLE schools and discussions with the teachers, several examples of the situation where the concepts, BICS and CALP are valid, were discussed. At one classroom, a teacher told an example on how he was teaching during the science lesson about the plants and trees growing in the community. He explained how interesting it was to teach in mother tongue, when children knew the names of the plants and trees, they could tell how and where they grow, what they are being used for etc. They could even find out more information when discussing with parents in the evening and share the new information at school next day. If the lesson had been in Nepalese or English, the teacher would have been repeating the names of the plans in the language children do not speak or know, and the discussion, analyzing, thinking and sharing process would have been totally missed. Also, the discussion about the nature and use of plants with parents would have been difficult, if not totally missed.

5. Outputs/ outcomes

Results/Planned Outcomes	Achieved/Not Achieved Outputs/Outcomes	Sources of Verifications/Reasons for Deviations
Result-1 Creation of conducive MLE Policy environment initiated	1.Positive approach/attitude towards MLE has increased during the program period due to the political development in Nepal 2. Education authorities and donors are encouraging mother tongue based MLE 3. Through the MLE Program awareness of the pedagogical advantages of the mother tongue/multilingual in the children's teaching learning process has increased	1.Constituent Assembly members are from different language groups and are proud of speaking their mother tongue and developing the MLE based language policies 2.Nepal has ratified all the major international agreements referring to the child's rights in mother tongue education 3. Education authorities are well aware of the needs of mother tongue based MLE and the sector wide pooling funding plan, Schools Sector Reform (SSR) for 2009-2015, include MLE as one of the important indicators for improving the quality of education, achieving high enrolment rates and low drop out rates
Result-2 An institutional structure, process and coordination for sustainable MLE developed and functional	1. The process for developing the institutional structure and coordination initiated. 2.The institutional structure and coordination not completed due to short program period 3. Financial mechanism to cover the costs of MLE education at schools/districts need to be analyzed and agreed before sustainable MLE development is realistic	1. Based on the 7 months experiences in the pilot schools the MLE Guidelines developed and drafted to be finalized in the Program Steering Committee and forwarded to the Ministry of Education for approval 2. Based on the experiences in other countries, five-year piloting/mother tongue based multilingual education is needed for

		scientifically valid, improved learning results 3. Support from DOE, CDC and NCED from regular education budget to be guaranteed. DEO and/or Resource Center can facilitate in identifying and mobilizing resources made available by the Local Self Governance Act and Regulations and I/NGO support at local level
Result-3 Capacity of central, district and community level to develop and implement MLE strengthened	1.The capacity of the pilot districts/schools/cascading schools and the education line agencies strengthened through -MLE Program piloting -International MLE specialist visits to Nepal -Study tours abroad -Awareness raising via documents and leaflets. Information sharing in the national level not possible within the timeframe 2. NCED has developed MLE Teacher Training Manual and organized training for MLE teacher	1. The seminars and workshops during the international consultancies and before and after the study tours planned and implemented with the education line agencies. Dissemination mainly for education line agencies MLE pilot district participants 2. NCED MLE Teacher Training Manuals developed in 14 languages and tested in 4 languages. MLE Teacher

	trainers 3. Textbook material production initiated in the pilot schools to design and prepare mother tongue textbooks in cooperation with the CDC	Training based on the piloting organized. 3. The mother tongue textbooks in pilot schools designed, prepared, finalized for printing (CRC) and printed in cooperation with CDC in seven pilot school languages. Model is procedure included into MLE Implementation Guidelines
Result-4 Models of learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali students' learning and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level established	1. Standard models to adapt MLE in all schools with non-Nepali students not possible at this stage of MLE development. Six models in practice in seven pilot schools. MLE Guidelines give possibility for schools and communities to take into consideration in the best possible way the learning needs of all the children in the catchment area 2. The provision of Mother Tongue teachers for the non-Nepali students is a major challenge. The need for mother tongue teachers	1. Linguistic variations in all the MLE pilot schools vary significantly. Some schools are non-Nepali language monolingual while some have children four language groups 2. Majority of the trained primary education teachers are Nepali-speakers. NCED initiated the MLE teacher training to be included into both pre and in-service training packaged. The concept of community teachers needs to be

	depends on the linguistic background of the children. 3. Teaching material/textbooks for non-Nepali students were designed and prepared by the pilot schools teachers and community members supported by CDC	analyzed with the purpose of recruiting students from linguistic communities into either standard teacher training or to develop separate community teacher training package. 3. The teaching material production in local level needs to be standardized and the rules and regulations need to be created for the local level (SMC, DCCC) cooperation and CDC
Result-5 Models of creating support networks of schools implementing MLE established	1. Models for defining and establishing the district and community level networks achieved if the MLE Guidelines will be ratified in MOE 2. Awareness raising material developed	1. MLE Implementation Guidelines give a detailed description of the structure the schools can initiate the mother tongue based MLE 2. The documentary of 26 minutes prepared focusing on teaching-learning process in pilot schools. -Awareness raising leaflet based on MLE Expert & Research Team's Future directions/ recommendations and on the pedagogical

		concepts of BICS and CALP

6. Efficiency

6.1 Recommendations of the Internal Mid-Term Evaluation/Analyses of the MLE Expert & Research Team Findings

The Internal Mid-Term Evaluation of the Multilingual Education Program **(Annex 4.)** is reviewing the efficiency of the program implementation in June as 2008 follows.

"A substantial change towards the achievement of the overall objective of the project as a consequence of the achievement of the project purpose is possible within the project duration, but adjustments and changes are required both in terms of the approach, working modalities and collaboration with stakeholders, as well as in terms of the allocation resources and project long and short-term experts' working time. Without a more concerted and collaborative effort together with the central agencies (DOE, CDC, NCED) and combined expertise in education and language it is unlikely that the "upstream" objectives of devising plans and procedures for the implementation of the MLE at primary level and producing a comprehensive implementation plan for the phased mainstreaming of MLE nation-wide, will be accomplished. The Annual Report does not provide information regarding the progress in developing the National Medium of Instruction Strategy, implementation mechanism and cascading procedures, which is cause for concern. It has to be stated that the project objectives are very and perhaps overly ambitious in many respects taking into consideration the limited time frame and resources".

The first one-and-a-half-year period of the MLE Program was implemented according to the strong community participation and bottom up principles. The MLE Program Management's vision of planning and initiating the MLE development at schools with head teachers, teachers,

SMC members and local indigenous organizations did not commit either local or central education authorities in MLE development. Focus on strong, community based, bottom up approach finally created such complicated working conditions. that The CTA of the Program decided to resign.

The second Annual Report (Annex 9. Second MLE Program Annual Annex Report 16.2.2008 – 15.2.2009) states about efficiency the following:

"The project has reached the very important goal of launching mother tongues as media of instruction and different models of MLE are being implemented and tested in the MLE Program pilot schools. The models are developed by the schools themselves and they will serve as a good example to other schools who are wondering how to start with MLE and mother tongues. Teachers, IK holders, IPOs, head teachers, some DEO personnel and some government officers are convinced that MLE can be developed and cascaded in a bottom up way. Knowledge and motivation at the local level exists and the last job of the project and its partners is to establish a functioning link between the local level and the centre."

MLE Expert Research Team Report (Annex 2.) also analyzes the balance between the community empowerment and necessity to cooperate with the central level agencies.

- On one hand by design the program's main concern was community empowerment and ownership, but on the other hand available opportunities for the line agencies to demand and design capacity development for their human resources was not fully capitalized.

MLE Expert & Research Team uses the concept of nonconventional design, which ended up in creating unharmonious relations between the pilot schools and district/central level education authorities.

- Non conventional design of the MLE pilot program did not completely fit with the bureaucratic system. The working relationship between pilot program and district and sub district level machineries did not appear harmonious. On the other hand, approaches and innovations introduced by the MLE pilot program were hard to mainstream because of practical difficulties created by norms and measures of the system.

Towards the end of the MLE program it is possible to suggest that if the MLE Team had not been moving forward with so called "non conventional design", starting the MLE piloting could have been delayed even longer than happened. The delay of starting of cascading was connected to the delay in starting the actual mother tongue medium piloting in the first seven pilot schools.

One suggestion to overcome this is given as part of the Future Directions of the MLE Expert Research Team. The report states:

- An examination of the interconnectedness and institutionalization of complementary strategy development among line agencies such as teacher preparation/ development (e.g. NCED); curriculum/ material production/ development (e.g. CDC); early childhood education and development (e.g. ECED section); NFE (e.g. NFEC) and inclusive education (e.g. Inclusive Education Section DOE) are urgently required for the implementation of MLE.

MLE program implementation was facing the challenge of collaborating with important partners in community district and central level and further with different line agencies in charge of different development areas in curriculum development, teacher education and in general administration.

6.2 Increased cooperation with the education line agencies

During the last implementation year, the MLE Program was working closely with the education line agencies. The

staff members of the line agencies, CDC and NCED joined the field visits actively as soon as the mother tongue medium piloting started. During the time initiating of the pilot areas, the MLE Team worked more closely with Indigenous Organizations, NEFIN/NFDIN and the local IPOs than with the education line agencies, with the consequences described earlier.

During the increased cooperation the development in the pilot schools /districts was shared in the SC Meetings and in the seminars organized during the international consultancies. The Consolidation Phase workshop was as well organized in close cooperation with all line agencies with the purpose of planning together the activities of the last six months. Further, representatives of all the line agencies were included into the working group developing the MLE Implementation Guidelines. NCED also planned with the support of the Program, two workshops developing the MLE Teacher Training Manual in 14, languages and inviting the writers and pilot school teacher to be trained as MLE Teacher Trainers. An international consultant from Canada acted as an MLE Specialist and facilitator in both workshops.

6.3 National Medium of Instruction Strategy/ MLE implementation Guidelines

The Internal Mid-Term Evaluation mentioned the lack of discussion on the National Medium of Instruction Strategy, which is one of the program key objectives. The conditions due to the slow start in mother tongue piloting and cascading and due to the political development in Nepal changed, the focus on moving forward in developing national policies and strategies. It became clear during the second year that developing the National Medium of Instruction Strategy based on the very ambitious national overall policies – all children of Nepal have the right to mother tongue education -

is not possible in 2009 during the last year of implementation due to above reasons:

1. The MLE piloting/cascading periods are too short for getting pedagogically sound results of the learning process and improved achievements of the children attending the mother tongue teaching
2. The development towards a federal republic, either based on geographical or linguistic criteria, is delayed and it may take a year or two before the federal states are designed and established. The official language policy and language of education policy will be strongly linked to the structure of federalism.

Instead of National Medium of Instruction Strategy the MLE Program's final contribution in developing the MLE in Nepal, based on the piloting results, is the process of developing *MLE Implementation Guidelines*. **(Document Annex 10.**) The guidelines are developed with the intention of committing the education line agencies and Ministry of Education to move forward in MLE development in different part of the country if the schools and communities so decide. The development of the strategy will be completed after there is more experience in mother tongue based MLE implementation and after the principles and structure of federal states is completed.

As for the external factors, the national political development in the form of Constituent Assembly elections and the organization of the assembly in different working groups for the preparation of Nepal's new constitution both supported and delayed the MLE strategy and policy development. On the other hand, the public opinion created after the CA elections was very much towards encouraging multilingual development in the country both in education and government administration.

The pool of donors supporting the education sector in Nepal have also regarded multilingual education as one of the key development areas in developing the quality of education

in Nepal with increased enrollment and decreased drop out rates. The School Sector Reform (SSR) Program 2009-2015 prepared in collaboration with government and donors is encouraging Nepal's education authorities to increase multilingual education with the purpose of reaching vulnerable groups and moving forward with the objectives of Education for All by 2015.

7 Fulfillment of objectives

The overall development objective of the MLE Program, to enhance quality education for all thorough the provision of Multilingual Education is, if possible, even more important during the time of the completion of the MLE Program than when designing the program in 2006. The April 2008 elections brought many representatives from different languages groups to the Constituent Assembly. The Mid-Term Report Team in June 2008 observes:

"An illustration of the political importance of language issues is that approximately 250 members of the 601-member strong Constitutional Assembly took their oath in their mother tongues, in altogether approximately 40 languages."

Internal mid term evaluation (Annex 4.) describes the MLE Program implementation modality:

"The approach adopted by the MLE TA team is a bottom-up, community-based one, in which students, parents, teachers, and members of the community at large – including those with valuable local knowledge – are empowered to develop their own MTE, multilingual and multicultural learning materials and teaching methodologies. The plan is that they will pass this accumulated knowledge and experience on to neighboring communities through a cascade model whereby representatives from pilot schools, after having received training and gone through the process of developing local MLE capacity themselves, will go on to train other communities. These newly trained communities are, in turn, expected to train other communities. The SC has endorsed this

approach and supports the MLE program team in this endeavor. At the same time, several interviewed SC members and other informants expressed concern that this has entailed too much of an "activist approach", which is feared to cause unnecessary tensions between indigenous peoples and the administration."

In line with the results/immediate objectives MLE Program has achieved the objectives well and to the extent possible within the extremely short implementation period for an education program piloting with the children's learning achievements. It seems towards the end of the MLE program that feared tension did not materialize and at the end of the program implementation the central levels education administrators were able to benefit from the strong presence and role of the local communities and the indigenous organizations. Towards the end of the MLE program the DOE Inclusive Education section as well as NCED and CDC carried out important material development activities in close cooperation with the school communities. DOE allocate their own budget resources for developing social studies and science mother tongue medium text material in all pilot schools. CDC cooperated in publishing the mother tongue text materials. NCED developed Teacher Training Manual (TTM) and Self Learning Material (SLM)

Below the analyses of the intended results/immediate objectives and the achieved results/immediate objectives:

Box 4. Objectives fulfilled

Objectives fulfilled in creating conducive policy environment for MLE
The awareness of pedagogical advantages of the mother tongue/multilingual education in the children's teaching - learning process has increased during the MLE Program. MLE Program prepared and printed MLE material to the folder of the SSR Technical Mission in

March 09 including MLE Concept paper, WHY MOTHERTONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION MLE**,** MLE policy: Transitional multilingual education policy: Suggestive framework and Achievements of MLE Program.

Education authorities and donors are encouraging mother tongue based MLE. The SSR Appraisal Mission (June 21 to 30, 2009) development and government partners discussed about the MLE Implementation Guidelines process and the timing of completing the guidelines was clarified. These examples show that MLE is high on the agenda of the SSR mission and that both government and donors will benefit from the program achievements.

The Joint Evaluation of EFA 2004-2009 report also recognized the importance of language issues and language planning in the efforts of improving the quality of education and reaching EFA goals. The reports states:

"Developing of the more complex policy on languages in education, could be based on evaluation of the Finland-funded bi/multilingual education project and perhaps some further investigations into attitudes of different ethno-linguistic groups toward bi/multilingual education. It should specify the extent if use of specific languages in primary education. It should also cover provision of mother tongue/ bilingual teachers. Development of minority language text books, raising the awareness of language and literacy learning among all teachers, strategies of teaching Nepali as a second/additional language and teaching of English as a second or third language". (Page 78, Joint Evaluation of Nepal's Education fro All 2004-2005 Sector Program)

Strengthening Institutional structures, processes and coordination for sustainable MLE policy development and implementation

The process for developing the institutional structure and coordination was initiated but not completed due to short program period. More mother tongue based multilingual education experience in different parts of Nepal is needed, to be initiated within the Framework of MLE Implementation Guidelines, before institutional structure can be developed. Financial mechanism to cover the costs of MLE education at schools/districts need to be analyzed and agreed before sustainable MLE development is realistic.

Developing models for learning environments that facilitate the non-Nepali students' learning and prepare them to continue their education after the primary level

Six models to adapt MLE in pilot schools are in practice. These models can be applicable in other schools in Nepal. MLE Guidelines give possibility for schools and communities to take into consideration in the best possible way the learning needs of all the children in the catchment area and initiate the mother tongue based MLE. The provision of mother tongue teachers for the non-Nepali students is a major challenge. The need for mother tongues teacher/s depends on the linguistic background of the children. Manual for Teacher Training was prepared as part of the program implementation. The model of teaching material/textbooks for non-Nepali students was designed and prepared by pilot schools teachers and community members supported by CDC.

Developing Models of creating support networks of school implementing MLE

Models for defining and establishing the district and community level networks have been achieved. After the MLE Guidelines are ratified by MOE all linguistic groups

in Nepal will be able to initiate MLE and mother tongue medium teaching in their areas. Awareness raising material, including MLE documentary film was developed.

Internal mid-term evaluation concludes: "The preparation and appraisal of the SSR offers a perfect opportunity to mainstream MLE and to include policy changes regarding mother tongue use, and budgets thereof in a sector-wide setting. It is understood that the exercise piloting those plans will extend beyond the three-year project period."

The MLE development and implementation in Nepalese schools will be part of the general education sector annual planning. MLE is piloted in three districts within the SSR. One of the districts Rasuwa is also the MLE pilot district. In July the three SSR districts met in Kapilapastu and discussed the implementation plan. MLE Team members and pilot school head teachers attended the training as resource person. The example shows the networking initiatives within the MLE Program and SSR program.

8 Sustainability

The prospects of the sustainability of mother tongue based MLE within the coming years are in principle encouraging and positive. The political will is strong among Nepal's CA members supported by the indigenous organizations and the education authorities. Central Department of Linguistics of Tribhuwan University is carrying out a long-term Linguistic Survey of Nepal with the Support of National Planning Commission. The linguistic survey opens ground to the use of all languages of Nepal in both education and government administration. (**Document Annex 9: Introduction of the Linguistic Survey of Nepal)**

The finding of the Joint Evaluation of EFA 2004-2009 see the language of learning as one of the most important

indicators in improving the quality of education in Nepal and therefore the evaluation recommends the developing of the more complex policy on languages in education. The language of education and MLE policy /strategy development work can move forward simultaneously with the implementation of MLE in new districts and schools based on the MLE Implementation Guidelines. The MLE Program/DOE aim is that the draft MLE Implementation Guidelines will be approved in the MOE within a few months from the closing of the MLE Program in mid September. SSR Appraisal Mission's efforts to pressurize the DOE to finalize the draft within July, is in line the EFA 2004-2009 evaluation recommendations.

The continuation of the MLE implementation in the program seven pilot schools is most important, and the continuation of the work of the mother tongue teachers provided from the Inclusive Education quota is crucial in this respect. The MLE pilot schools need continuous support from the Inclusive Education Section from the MLE Focal Person nominated by DOE. The support is needed e.g. in developing teacher's in-service training and in producing MLE teaching material.

MLE Program Handover Plan **(Document Annex 11)** was prepared by the MLE Program/DOE with the plan of activities crucial for continuation of MLE development after the closing of the MLE Program, in mid September 2009. The plan includes both central and district/school level activities with the emphasis on the steps to move forward with the finalizing the MLE Implementation Guidelines.

The possibility of monitoring visits of the Finnish technical assistance team member to Nepal would be highly appreciated by the DOE. The monitoring visits were discussed during the last months of MLE Program Implementation especially because some of the important activities were implemented during the last months e.g. the text material production in all the piloting languages. All the

textbook printing may not be completed by the end of the program in mid September and therefore DOE and Inclusive Education Section will be continuing supporting the MLE pilot schools in these activities. Also, SSR Sector Support Program will earmark budget resources for MLE. Using these resources for continuing the mother tongue based MLE in MLE Program pilot districts should be possible. During the monitoring visits the Finnish Technical team would be able to follow the implementation of the Hand over Plan.

9 Identification of alternatives

It was noted that the original plan when the project was initiated was to locate the project team with the CDC administration. However, during the process of finalizing the Core Document, it was decided between all the MLE Program partners, that a more appropriate location is DOE. There were two main reasons for this conclusion: a) the MLE development is not only a curriculum development issue but all education policy makers need to be part of the MLE policy development; b) DOE has direct links to the district level and DEOs so DOE can facilitate the pilot school/district work effectively.

One option for avoiding the confusion due to the two possible project locations would have been to locate the MLE Program in the Ministry of Education. The location would have been neutral in the context of line agencies. MLE piloting at schools could have been initiated and implemented through DOE and curriculum/textbook development through CDC.

When the question of alternatives is approached from the teaching– learning perspective of the non-Nepali speaking children the program design, including initiating the mother tongue education in pilot schools/ districts and paralleled policy and strategy development in the central level, is a relevant project modality.

However, as mentioned earlier, the pilot process started later than planned and therefore the piloting within the program remained very short. From the teaching-learning perspective and ultimately in view of the program overall objective of improved quality of education, it is not pedagogically sound to try to draw conclusions from the mother tongue based MLE within the experience of one year.

The alternative project modality would have been to stretch the project within the five to seven years period, with the International TA input not covering full time but e.g. 3 years stretched over six- seven years. The Project Manager, the National Expert in MLE and the Project Office could have been permanent for the project period. This modality would have made it possible to continue with the piloting longer, even four- five-year period, with the proper results of teaching in mother tongue to be shared with central level agencies in the strategy & policy development

10 Further analyses

There is a tremendous need to carry out further analysis in many areas within the MLE development in Nepal. Impact study or evaluation could focus e.g. on the following areas, which are the most serious bottle necks in the mother tongue based MLE development:

1. How to develop teacher training/education so that the local mother tongue speaking well educated community members could be trained to become mother tongue teachers in the first three grades with the concept of Community Teacher**;**
2. To develop the EMIS statistics so that the number of children from different language groups, the enrollment figures, dropout rates and passing the primary & secondary level rates can be disaggregated according to the mother tongue of the child for the benefit of language/education planning in districts**;**

3. To evaluate the learning achievements of the non-Nepali speaking children in mother tongue based MLE schools and at schools where non-Nepali children learn "traditionally" in Nepali without having Nepali as second language;
4. How to develop Nepali as a Second language to improve the non-Nepali speaking children's learning in Nepali;
5. More technical assistance and information sharing by national and international experts is necessary to develop a strong institutional capacity at all levels for successful MLE implementation

The institutional capacity of district-level needs to be strengthened. Districts need more information about linguistic human rights, strong forms of multilingual education, Nepali as a second language and mother tongue as medium of instruction. Resource persons and school inspectors can actively promote mother tongue education as part of the school visits. Mother tongue teachers should be provided at schools where non-Nepali speaking children are majority.

11 Need for further assistance

The MLE Program implementation period in Nepal was two and a half years. Toward the end of the program period good and harmonious working relations were developed with the Inclusive Education Section in DOE as well s other education line agencies, CDC and NCED. The MLE Program started the pilot in six districts in seven schools and eight languages. Due to many external and internal challenging conditions the implementation of activities was extensively delayed, which means in practice that ambitious objectives were achieved only partly. In principle the main objectives of National Medium of Instruction Strategy were not achieved but the steps toward the strategy building started in the form of MLE Implementation Guidelines.

The main concern, however, was the continuation of MLE in the pilot and cascading schools. Below are the

activities which need to be actively followed up, either with the proposed Phase II or with the regular activities of MOE, DOE, NCED and CDC.

With the support of the MLE Program or within the regular activities of MOE, DOE, CDC and NCED, the following development should continue:

- Development of the MLE policies & strategies taking into consideration the constitution building process and the final contents of the new constitution including the structure of the federal state
- Monitoring the activities in pilot schools and districts, including the cascading in two or more new schools in the districts for further developing models for facilitating the Nepali and non-Nepali speaking students learning in linguistically mixed learning environments
- Through the MLE development take in part the Government efforts to increase the quality of education in all schools of Nepal both Nepali and non-Nepali students
- Analyze the enrollment rates and drop-out rate among non-Nepali children after they have received mother tongue based MLE?
- Preparation of the textbooks in children's mother tongues in school communities with the support of teachers and community members
- Continue developing the teacher training: update teacher training manuals and train mother tongue teachers as per the need of school communities
- Preparation/finalizing/using the awareness raising material for the parents and community members of the importance of the mother tongue in multilingual education and carrying out the awareness campaigns
- Building up better links with the other donors working within the MLE and mother tongues education including NGO/INGOs, IPOs, UNESCO and UNICEF.

7

Mother tongue-based multilingual education: Implications for education policy[1]

SUSAN MALONE

Defining mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-based MLE)

Discussions relating to MT-based MLE in Asia tend to use the term in one of two ways. In some contexts, MT-based MLE refers to the use of students' mother tongue and two or more additional languages as Languages of Instruction (LoI) in school. In other contexts, the term is used to describe bilingual education across multiple language communities—each community using their own mother tongue plus the official school language for instruction.

In the non-dominant language communities of South Asia, multilingual education usually follows the first definition: learning and using multiple languages in school. In some South Asian countries, MT-based MLE includes four

1 Presented at the seminar on "Education policy and the right to education: Towards more equitable outcomes for South Asia's children, Kathmandu, 17-20 September 2007.

languages—the students' mother tongue or first language, a regional language, the national language and an international language.

Rationale for MT-based MLE: The current situation

"The choice of the language…is a recurrent challenge in the development of quality education... Speakers of mother tongues, which are not the same as the national…language, are often at a considerable disadvantage in the educational system…" (UNESCO, 2003).

By the time children begin school, they have begun gaining confidence in their ability to communicate meaningfully in their mother tongue. They have built a foundation of knowledge and experience through observing and interacting with peers and adults in their community. The language, knowledge and experience that children bring to school form an important foundation for their learning in the classroom.

The educational problem faced by many children from ethnolinguistic communities is two-fold. In the first place, some have no access to education at all. Those who do have access to school but do not speak the official language when they enter the education system find that their knowledge, experience and language—rather than serving as a foundation for learning—are treated as a disadvantage. Their language skills do not serve them because their language has no place in the classroom. Instead, textbooks and teaching are in a language they neither speak nor understand. Their learning and problem-solving experiences and their knowledge of "how things work" in their own culture and social setting do not serve them because the culture of the classroom, the teachers, and the textbooks is that of the dominant society. The consequences for many students are predictable and have

been described in numerous studies, as noted in the quotations that follow.

Loss of confidence in themselves as learners

…when students' language, culture and experiences are ignored or excluded in classroom interactions, students are immediately starting from a disadvantage. Everything they have learned about life and the world up to this point is being dismissed as irrelevant to school learning; there are few points of connection to curriculum materials or instruction and so students are expected to learn in an experiential vacuum (Cummins, 2001).

Inability to learn the official school language well

My children are very good at copying from the blackboard. By the time they reach Grade 5, they can copy all the answers and memorize them. But only two of the Grade 5 students can actual y speak Hindi (Grade 5 teacher in India, in Jinghran, 2005, page 1).

High repetition and drop-out rates

Fifty percent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for Al (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition. (World Bank, 2005).

Alienation from heritage language and culture, from parents and community

The children who go to the primary schools are often teased by other students for using their MT in the classroom

when they talk to their counterparts. Teachers advise them to use L2 instead of their MT. Parents are asked not to use MT at home in order to make the children fluent in the L2. All these things have led to a negative attitude towards their language in the minds of the parents and children… (Educator in minority language community in India. 2006. Personal communication).

In addition to the damage they do to students who do not speak the dominant language when they begin school, dominant language-only education policies and programs have negative consequences for the language communities, for nations, and indeed, for the world in general. These include…

Further disempowerment of girls

Gender considerations cross cut…situations of educational risk, for girls and women may be in a particularly disadvantaged position. In most traditional societies, it is the girls and women who tend to be monolingual, being less exposed either through schooling, salaried labour, or migration to the national language, than their sons, brothers or husbands (UNESCO, 2003).

Lack of access to social, political, economic and physical development processes

Existing policies and supports have failed to reduce discrimination towards indigenous communities in vital areas related to employment, religion, language, ownership, possession or use of lands and natural resources…and access to education, health services and different institutions (Research and Development Collective, 2003, Page 17, in Paulson, 2004).

For many ethnolinguistic minority groups. .promises of…economic and social mobility are…poor compensation

for cultural subordination and language shift. …Linguistic minority groups are driven to further poverty—cultural y and economical y—because their languages, as a resource for educational achievement and…for equal access to economic and other benefits in a competitive society, are rendered powerless (Mohanty, 1990, p. 54).

Underutilization of human resources

Children whose first language is not used at school … experience lower levels of learning and are much less likely to be able to contribute to a country's economic and intellectual development (World Bank, 2006, page 4).

Loss of languages, cultures and of knowledge systems.

More broadly, the loss of language is part of the loss of whole cultures and knowledge systems, including philosophical systems, oral literary and music traditions, environmental knowledge systems, medical knowledge, and important cultural practices and artistic skills. The world stands to lose an important part of the sum of human knowledge whenever a language stops being used. Just as the human species is putting itself in danger through the destruction of species diversity, so might we be in danger from the destruction of the diversity of knowledge systems (Hinton, 2001. page 5.)

Ineffective and inefficient use of human resources

We have a few hundred years of evidence that submersion in the L2 is "highly Inefficient", if not downright wasteful and discriminatory, since such school systems are characterized by low intake, high repetition and dropout, and low completion rates… The overall costs to the society… are clearly astronomical, and must be seen as at least partial y to

blame for the lack of inclusive, participatory governing in post-colonial countries (Benson, 2001, page 7).

These quotations—and there are many more like them—indicate the concerns that are being raised in Asia and Africa, about the negative consequences of exclusionary language and education policies. The next section of this paper focuses on strong Mother Tongue-Based MLE programs as the best means for ensuring quality education for the ethnolinguistic communities who speak non-dominant languages.

MT-Based MLE: Using students' mother tongue as the foundation for life-long learning

MT-Based MLE programs enable students from non-dominant language communities to build a strong educational foundation in the language they know best—their MT or first language (L1)—and a good bridge to the official language—the school L2—and other languages of learning (L3, L4, etc.) and then encourage them to use both / all their languages for life-long learning.

Strong and well-planned MT-Based MLE programs help students to build a strong educational foundation when they…

1) Enable and encourage students to develop oral fluency in their L1[2];
2) Introduce reading and writing in the L1; help students to become fluent and confident in L1 literacy[3]; and

2 That is, children are encouraged to describe, explain, analyze, ask questions, exchange ideas—to talk rather than sit passively while the teacher talks at them. In strong programs, this "L1 time" is kept in the schedule throughout primary school.

3 This, of course, requires a library of graded reading materials, which requires a core of L1 authors. At least in the first years of the program, L1 reading materials produced at local "writers' workshops" are usually printed in

3) Build their capacity to use the L1 for everyday communication and for learning in school.

MT-Based MLE programs help learners build a "good bridge" when they…

1. Introduce oral L2 through meaningful, non-threatening activities;
2. Introduce reading and writing in the L2 by building on what the children have learned about the oral L2 and their foundation in L1 literacy;[4]
3. Build fluency and confidence in using oral and written L2 for everyday communication and for academic learning.

MT-Based MLE programs ensure that students achieve educational competencies or standards established by education officials for each grade when they…

1. Use the L1 only for teaching in the early grades, as students are learning basic communication skills in the L2;
2. Use the L1 with the L2 for teaching in later grades, as students gain fluency and confidence in using the school language for learning academic concepts[5]

Planning a "strong foundation" and "good bridge": From the theorists and researchers

Regarding the focus on building a strong educational foundation in the L1:

The most powerful factor in predicting educational

black-and-white with stiff paper covers—inexpensive to produce and, because they relate to the students' own lives, fun for the students, and their parents, to read.

4 Because reading is like riding a bicycle—we only need to learn once.

5 Most researchers and practitioners agree that it takes 2-3 years to build basic communication skills and 5-7 years to develop cognitive and academic proficiency in a new language (Cummins, 2000; Thomas and Collier, 2001)

success for minority learners is the amount of formal schooling their received in their L1… Only those language minority students who had 5-6 years of strong cognitive and academic development in their L1—as well as through [L2]—did well in Grade 11 assessments (Thomas and Collier, 2001).

Knowledge gained in one language transfers to other languages that we learn

(Cummins:http://esl.fis.edu/teachers/support/cummins.htm).

Regarding the focus on introducing the L2 through listening and responding (no speaking at first):

The best [language learning] methods are…those that supply "comprehensible input" in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students real y want to hear. These messages do not force early production in the L2 but allow students to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production (Krashen, 1981, in Wilson, 2001.

Regarding the focus on building a basic level of oral fluency in L2 before introducing reading and writing in that language:

...oral proficiency in the target language [is] of critical importance for the Development of reading comprehension among third and fourth-grade students… (Droop and Verhoeven, 2003. Pages 101).

Children should be helped to build up oral skil s in the second language before reading instruction in that language is started. Minority children's knowledge of L2 vocabulary determines their comprehension of oral text much more than mother tongue L2 speakers. (Droop & Verhoeven, 2003, page101).

Regarding the continued development of oral and written L1 and L2 (that is, both taught as subjects), at least through primary school:

When children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especial y when they develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality (Jim Cummins, citing Baker and Skutnabb-Kangas).

http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/

Finally, in strong MT-Based MLE programs, both languages are used for teaching throughout primary school. Following is an example of a progression plan for teaching and using languages in a 3-language MT-Based MLE program:

K1	K2	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Build Fluency in oral L1 L1 for Teaching	Continue oral L1 Begin Written L1 Begin oral L2 (late in the year) L1 for teaching	Continue oral & written L1, oral L2 Begin written L2 (late in the year) L1 for teaching	Continue oral & written L1, L2 L1 for teaching	Continue oral & written L1, L2 Begin oral L3 L1-L2-L1 for teaching	Continue oral & written L1, L2, oral L3 Begin written L3 L1-L2-L1 for teaching	Continue oral & written L1, L2, L3 L1-L2-L1 For teaching	Continue oral & written L1, L2, L3 L2-L1 for teaching

Language and education policies for strong and sustained MT-Based MLE

Successful MT-Based MLE programs (that is, that are sustained and enable students from non-dominant language communities to achieve their educational goals) can be described as “top-down and bottom-up”. They are part of an established education system and so enable children to achieve learning competencies developed at the “top” and they incorporate the knowledge, skills, stories, songs, and

culture from the communities into the curriculum. Success and sustainability depend on cooperation among a variety of stakeholders, with local communities working in partnership with the MOE or other implementing agency. They also require good policies.

A study of language and/or language-and-education policies in Asia reveals a continuum of policies, from those that support and affirm linguistic and cultural diversity as a national resource to those that promote assimilation and "national unity" based on the language and culture of the most dominant group(s).

Continuum of language policies—most supportive to most restrictive

Most supportive			Most restrictive
Multilingual policies	Non interference policies (or no policy at all)	One (or more) official language policies	Assimilation policies
Special rights to dominant languages but protect and ensure legal rights to Minority Languages	Maintains status quo; effectively assures that dominant languages (and their speakers) maintain their power	Provides official status to one or more languages; gives them dominance over other languages in education, government, etc.	Promotes "national unity" through a single languages; linguistic diversity considered a threat

Continuum of language and education policies—most supportive to most restrictive[6]

Most supportive			Most restrictive	
Political and financial support for language development and MLE	Unofficial language can be included as subject in the formal education system but no official/financial support given	Unofficial languages can be used only temporarily, as a "crutch" to help minority children understand what is being taught	Unofficial languages not used for teaching (minority teachers purposely assigned outside their own language areas)	Unofficial languages not allowed in the classroom or on the school grounds

"Education for All" that includes students from non-dominant language communities require language and education policies that provide…

- Clear statements of the specific purposes, goals and intended outcomes relating to the program based on a clear understanding of the language situation in the country and the educational goals and needs of the non-dominant language communities;
- Clear directives regarding the languages that are to be included in the program;
- Clear directives regarding the extended teaching of students' L1 as subject and using it as one of the languages of instruction throughout primary school
- Clear directives regarding agencies and organizations that will be involved, with emphasis on cooperation

6 UNESCO's booklet on "Language and Education Policy and Practice in Asia and the Pacific", part of the recently published *Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education*" (UNESCO, 2007) includes a brief overview of policies in South Asia (pages 4-6).

among government and non-government organizations
- Clear directives regarding implementation, including clear assignment of responsibilities
- Clear directives regarding financial support (who will be responsible; how funding will be provided)

5

Clear directives for incorporating the program into the existing education system and for providing funding for all components and personnel

Conclusion

Planning, implementing and sustaining MT-Based MLE programs in multiple language communities is certainly challenging, especially in multi-lingual countries lacking extensive financial resources. But is it worth the effort? Perhaps the best people to answer that question are the members of the ethnic minority communities themselves.

When our children go to school, they go to an alien place. They leave their parents,

they leave their gardens, they leave everything that is their way of life. They sit in a classroom and they learn things that have nothing to do with their own place. Later, because they have learned only other things, they reject their own. They don't want to dig sweet potatoes, they say it's dirty; they don't want to help their mother fetch water. They look down on those things. There are big changes in the children now. They don't obey their parents; they become rascals. And this is because they have gone to school and left the things that are ours.

Now my child is in Tok Ples school. He is not leaving his place. He is learning in school about his customs, his way of life. Now he can write anything he wants to in Tok Ples. Not just the things he can see, but things he thinks about, too.

And he writes about his place. He writes about helping his mother carry water, about digging kaukau, about going to the garden.

When he writes these things they become important to him. He is not only reading and writing about things outside, but learning through reading and writing to be proud of our way of life. When he is big, he wil not reject us. It is important to teach our children to read and write, but it is more important to teach them to be proud of themselves, and of us.

(Parent, Laitrao Vil age Tok Ples School, Buin, North Solomons Province in Delpit and Kemelfield, 1985, p. 29-30)

8

Mother tongue medium education in Nepal: Approaches and viewpoints[1]

LAVA DEO AWASTHI

In this article, I look at theoretical premises of mother tongue medium education and explore to what extent minority mother tongues have been recognized as the language(s) of instruction. I also look at why a particular language has been used as the medium of education and what are various models that are seen successful in achieving linguistic, educational, social and identity goals. In addition, I want to see how high levels of bilingualism contributes to attaining higher levels of success in school and society, ensuring harmonious bilingual and bicultural abilities, ensuring children's and opening ways for employability. In the following part, I discuss some of the approaches and attitudes to minorities in the educational process and chart the stages that have originally been identified in minority education in a specific context. First I start with UNESCO's classical recommendations for minority education from 1951/1953.

1 This article has been drawn from my PhD thesis submitted to the Danish University of Education, Copenhagen in 2004.

Medium of instruction

UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (1951, published as UNESCO 1953) looked into the issues regarding the use of language in the classroom at the global level (Fishman, 1968:711-712). The specialist committee recommendations provided a basis for the use of language in the classroom (see Mesthrie, 2000). Fishman provides a summary on the use of 'vernacular'[2] languages in education based on the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists, 1951:

1. The mother tongue is a person's natural means of self-expression, and one of his [or her] first needs is to develop his [or her] power of self-expression to the full.
2. Every pupil should begin his formal education in his mother tongue.
3. There is nothing in the structure of any language which precludes it from becoming a vehicle of modern civilization.
4. No language is inadequate to meet the needs of the child's first months in school.
5. The problems of providing an adequate supply of schoolbooks and other educational materials should be specially studied by UNESCO.
6. If the mother tongue is adequate in all respects to serve as the vehicle of university and higher education, it should be so used.
7. In other cases, the mother tongue should be used as far as the supply of books and materials permits.

2 In colonial parlance, a 'vernacular' was a local language, contrasting with the language of colonial administration. The Specialists' Committee defined a 'vernacular' as 'a language which is the mother tongue of a group which is socially and politically dominated by another group speaking a different language'. The committee also added that 'we do not consider the language of a minority in one country as a vernacular if it is an official language in another country' (Fishman, 1968; Unesco, 1951; Mesthrie 2000). See also Skutnabb-Kangas 2000:147-155, Section 3.4.2.2.2., "Language or Dialect/Patois/Vernacular?" on the origins and connotations of the term.

8. If each class in a school contains children from several language groups, and it is impossible to regroup the children, the teacher's first task must be to teach all pupils enough of one language to make it possible to use that language as the MOI.
9. A *linguafranca* is not an adequate substitute for the mother tongue unless the children are familiar with it before coming to school.
10. Adult illiterates should make their first steps to literacy through their mother tongue, passing on to a second language if they desire and are able.
11. Educational authorities should aim at persuading an unwilling public to accept education through the mother tongue, and should not force it.
12. Literacy can only be maintained if there is an adequate supply of reading material, for adolescents and adults as well as for school children, and for entertainment as well for study.
13. If a child's mother tongue is not the official language of his country, or is not a world language, he needs to learn a second language.
14. It is possible to acquire a good knowledge of a second language without using it as the medium of instruction for general subjects.
15. During the child's first and second year at school, the second language may be introduced orally as a subject or for general subjects.
16. The amount of the second language should be increased gradually and if it has to become the MOI, it should not do so until the pupils are sufficiently familiar with it.
17. Efficient modern techniques should be used in teaching the mother tongue and a foreign language. A teacher is not adequately qualified to teach a language merely because it is his mother tongue.
18. Where there are several languages in a country, it is an advantage if they are written as uniformly as possible.

19. For convenience of printing, languages should as far as possible be written with a limited set of symbols, which are written in a single line.
20. For the needs of a polyglot state, which is developing a national language, the materials for teaching the language should be simplified for instructional purposes, so that pupils may progress towards full mastery without having anything to unlearn.

The focus of the UNESCO report is that the best medium for teaching a child is the child's mother tongue. The report opened ways for introducing children's mother tongue as a medium of instruction at early stages of education. It provided a ground for making a choice of the most appropriate language for the children in a multilingual setting. The report emphasized the complementary role of the school in making a language spoken at home accessible to children and in school, in its spoken form and also in its written form if possible. It is particularly important for bringing about changes in the use of language in education in the developing countries.

It is amazing how up-to-date the recommendations still are. Only a few of them might need replacing, e.g. 15 - we now know more, with Jim Cummins' BICS and CALP, about what kind of subjects might be best for initial teaching through the medium of a second language, i.e. verbally less demanding subjects which are easy to contextualise; all "general" subjects - whatever that might mean - are not necessarily of this kind. This knowledge might also specify more what "sufficiently familiar" in 16 - is. Some might need additions, e.g. 7 - it is perfectly possible to teach through the medium of a language even if there are no or few materials initially, as many indigenous experiments have shown (see e.g. McCarty, 2002); or 13 - obviously it would be useful for all children to learn a second language). Recommendations 18-19 might also need some reconsideration; they are based on pragmatic, not scientific reasons.

However, the report has not paid attention to some of the critical issues in primary education. It has not adequately addressed the problems of practical nature related to the policies for the deployment of teachers in minority languages. Likewise, some of the corpus planning aspects relevant for acquisition planning (such as development of reading materials, and further development of the "vernacular" languages to facilitate mother tongue medium education maximally) have not been discussed much.

Reviewing the UNESCO Committee report, William Bull (quoted in Mesthrie, 2000:371) made the following observations:

The committee, rather obviously, strongly believes that what is best for the child psychologically and pedagogically should be the prime point of departure in planning for universal education. This proposition appears, however, to be somewhat unrealistic. What is best for the child psychologically may not be what is best for the adult society, economically or politically and, what is even more significant, what is best for both the child and the adult may not be the best or even possible for the society.

According to Mesthrie, Bull's remarks are echoed in the observations made by the parents who want to educate their children in the most prestigious language. Through this language, they want to ensure their children's economic success. At the same time, parents argue that the learning of one language can restrict the capacity for learning other languages.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000:597), noting that the UNESCO experts used linguistic, psychological, pedagogical, and sociological arguments in order to show why the mother tongues were to be used, agrees partially with the critics (including Bull) in that the UNESCO recommendations were politically and economically naïve. On the other hand, she shows that the political and economic arguments used by the critics to counter the recommendations were, with hindsight,

false. They built on ideas of nation-building "needing" one language only, preferably a "neutral" one, and the belief that the old colonial languages could fulfill this "neutral" role. Likewise, the economics of an education in a foreign language produces "illiteracy", promotes "drop-out" (i.e. push-out) from school and prevents children from gaining basic knowledge and from maximizing their educational potential (see e.g. Bhattarai, 2014; NASA, 2015;SSDP 2016/17-2022/23).

UNESCO (2003) publication which was supposed to be an update of the 1953 book, a booklet which, after some definitions and a short summary of recommendations and rights about multilingualism and education in international law, presented UNESCO's recommendations. The booklet, called Education in a Multilingual World can be downloaded from UNESCO's website (http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ images/ 0012/001297/129728e.pdf). Further, UNESCO 2011 publication highlighted enhancing learning language of children from diverse language background: mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education in the early years. The report can be downloaded from UNESCO's website (https://www.observatoireplurilinguisme.eu/images/ Recherche/ enhancing%20children%20unesco.pdf).

Also here, mother tongue medium education is recommended. This is in accordance with research results. Only a couple of summaries of research will be mentioned here - there are many good summaries available. May & Hill (2003), for example, summarize both theory and research results on bilingual education in two thorough reports for the Māori section of the Department of Education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Their final recommendation is also that the mother tongue should be the main medium of education for minimally the first six years, preferably longer.

There are many empirical studies showing convincingly that mother tongue medium education, with good teaching of the dominant language as a second language, and (some)

teaching at later stages of the schooling through the medium of this dominant language, first in cognitively less demanding subjects, for indigenous peoples and minorities and also for dominated majority populations, produces better results in both languages and in content learning than teaching through the medium of the dominant language only. Some of these studies are longitudinal and large-scale or both (see e.g. Thomas and Collier, 2002a, 2002b). Most of them are smaller scale studies, but their sheer numbers and the fact that they come from all over the world and render similar results make the case for mother tongue medium teaching extremely convincing.

One of the central figures in formulating the main theories about the importance of mother tongue medium education has been Jim Cummins. Cummins (e.g. 2000) claims that the cognitive development of the first language is essential for the acquisition of the second language. He holds that "the proficiency attained by bilingual students in their two languages may exert important influences on their academic and intellectual development" (2000:37). This relationship between the child's first and second language development is known as the interdependence hypothesis. The hypothesis, just like the threshold hypothesis were developed in the late 1970s by Cummins and Toukomaa & Skutnabb-Kangas (see in Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000:126; Cummins, 2000:38). The interdependence hypothesis argues that the development of the first and second languages is tied together, emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between the two (Cummins, 2000).

Cummins (2001:114) notes that in an L2 context, where proficiency is as yet inadequately developed, a wider range of interpersonal communicative tasks are cognitively demanding than in an L1 context. It has been hypothesized that the cognitive/ academic aspects of L1 and L2 are interdependent and that the development of proficiency in L2 is partially a function of the level of L1 proficiency at the time when

intensive exposure to L2 begins. According to Cummins (2001) previous learning of literacy-related functions of language in L1 will predict future learning of these functions in L2. Despite the differences between L1 and L2 in terms of the surface features of phonology, syntax, and lexicon, there is a common underlying proficiency that determines an individual's performance on cognitive/ academic tasks in both L1 and L2. Also, Cummins claims that the interdependence hypothesis would predict that older L2 learners, whose L1 CALP is better developed will acquire cognitive/ academic L2 skills more rapidly than younger learners (ibid.:119-120).

In the findings of a latest large-scale longitudinal national research carried out in the USA from 1996 to 2001, Collier and Thomas (2002) claim that three key predictors are fundamental for children's academic success. These are (1) academic instruction through students' L1 at least through class 5 or 6, (2) use of current approaches to teaching academic curricula through two languages, and (3) supportive socio-cultural context for learning in two languages. Collier and Thomas assert that these school-influenced factors can be more powerful than student background variables or the regional or community context. They further argue that these school predictors have the power to overcome factors such as poverty at home, or a school's location in an economically disadvantaged region or neighbourhood, or a regional context where an ethno-linguistic group has traditionally been underserved by schools (ibid.:15). From their study it appears that schools that incorporate all these three predictors are likely to see the language minority students gaining success academically in their secondary and university education. Collier and Thomas' studies summarize many of the additional important factors, which have to be in place for mother tongue medium education to work properly.

Mesthrie (2000), however, observes that mother tongue medium (MTM) education is beyond the reach of most

minority children. In his opinion, in most parts of the world education has been the preserve of the elite. The interests of these elites are served through the choice of language and language types. Their decision about the medium of instruction is a choice that benefits the few. It seems to be difficult to accomplish a shift in the choice of the medium of education for language minority children. The reasons are political, not (mainly) educational and not even (mainly) economic.

Despite these arguments and compelling reasons for the use of mother tongue medium education in school, Nepal's education system seems to have encountered the following problems (see also UNESCO, 2003: 8):

- Many Nepalese mother tongues are based on oral traditions and are unwritten. Standardisation (and even reduction to writing) not necessary for using a language as medium of education (see McCarty 2002).
- Some mother tongues are not even recognized as legitimate languages.
- Appropriate terminologies for educational purposes have not yet been used in most of them.
- There are shortages of educational materials in mother tongues.
- The multiplicity of languages has exacerbated the difficulty of providing schooling in each mother tongue.
- There are sharp shortages of appropriately trained teachers.
- There is resistance to schooling in the mother tongue, among all categories of persons implied: parents, teachers, authorities.

All these "problems" are common in educational language planning with many if not most indigenous and also many minority contexts. Many of them have been used by

states and educational authorities to legitimate the lack of mother tongue medium education. In many cases the problems are real, but in most cases they should not be insurmountable; it is important to analyse to what extent it is the lack of political will rather than (or more than) the actual lack of materials, teachers, etc, that is the real reason. Nepal's Constitution, however, enshrines children's right to education through mother tongue medium education and some efforts have also been made to recognize the importance of L1 for students' cognitive development and learning. Nonetheless, in recent years English Medium models have been reinforced by the anglophile elites, authorities, corporate communities and market forces, causing irreparable damage to children's cognitive abilities and academic achievements (Awasthi, 2004).

Models of bi/multilingual education

There are many ways of categorizing various models of bilingual or multilingual education. Skutnabb-Kangas (1984:121-135) presents several of the older typologies, before proceeding to her own many categorizations which she has later developed further (see e.g. in 1990).

According to UNESCO (2003:10) bi/multilingual education refers to the use of two or more languages as medium of instruction. UNESCO adopted the term 'multilingual education' in 1999 in the General Conference Resolution 12 (Implementation of a language policy for the world based on multilingualism) to refer to the use of at least three languages: the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language in education (see UNESCO, 2003).

Baker (1996: 175) provides a typology of education, which comprises weak and strong forms of bilingual education. Ten types of language education are portrayed in his typology. The descriptive labels, with the typical child,

the language of the classroom, etc, come from Skutnabb-Kangas' typologies (1984:127).

Bi/multilingual education programmes

Weak Forms of Education for Bilingualism				
Type of Programme	**Typical Type of Child**	**Language of the Classroom**	**Societal and Educational Aim**	**Aim in Language Outcome**
Submersion (Structured Immersion)	Language Minority	Majority Language	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Submersion with Withdrawal Classes	Language Minority	Majority Language with 'Pull-out' L2 Lessons	Assimilation	Monolingualism
Segregationist	Language Minority	Minority Language (forced, no choice)	Apartheid	Monolingualism
Transitional	Language Minority	Moves from Minority to Majority Language	Assimilation	Relative Monolingualism
Mainstream with FL Teaching	Language Majority	Majority Language with L2/FL Lessons	Limited Enrichment	Limited Bilingualism
Separatist	Language Minority	Minority Language (out of choice)	Detachment/ Autonomy	Limited Bilingualism
Strong Forms of Education for Bilingualism and Biliteracy				
Type of Programme	**Typical Type of Child**	**Language of the Classroom**	**Societal and Educational Aim**	**Aim in Language Outcome**
Immersion	Language Majority	Bilingual with Initial Emphasis on L2	Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism and Biliteracy
Maintenance/ Heritage Language	Language Minority	Bilingual with Emphasis on L1	Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism and Biliteracy
Two-Way/ Dual Language	Mixed Language Minority and Majority	Minority and Majority	Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism and Biliteracy
Bilingual Education in Majority Languages	Language Majority	Two Majority Languages	Maintenance, Pluralism and Enrichment	Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Notes:
L1= First Language; L2 = Second Language; FL= Foreign Language.
Formulation of this table owes much to discussions with Professor Ofelia Garcia.

Skutnabb-Kangas has developed Baker's typology further (e.g. 2000). She has added "Non-Forms" to the weak and strong forms and has given strict definitions of each model.

The Baker & Skutnabb-Kangas typologies are broad and inclusive. There are also more restricted typologies, and a couple of these will be presented. Freeman (1998:2) offers three bilingual education model types only, based on Hornberger, 1991:

Bi/multilingual education model types

Transitional Model	**Maintenance Model**	**Enrichment Model**
Language shift	Language maintenance	Language development
Cultural assimilation	Strengthened cultural identity	Cultural pluralism
Social incorporation	Civil rights affirmation	Social autonomy

According to Freeman (ibid.:3) the Transitional Model entails programmes that encourage language minority

students to shift to the majority language[3], to assimilate to mainstream cultural norms, to be incorporated into the national society. The Maintenance Model entails programmes that encourage language minority students to maintain their native language, strengthen their cultural identity, and affirm their civil rights in the national society. The Enrichment Model entails programmes that encourage the development of minority language on the individual and collective levels. These programmes also encourage cultural pluralism at school and in the community, and contribute to creating an integrated national society based on the autonomy of cultural groups. To me, the difference between the last two programmes is not clear enough here, except that the enrichment models can be applied to both majority and minority students.

Collier and Thomas (2002) also have a typology with three models, but with much more contextualisation (see the text for explanations):

Developmental bi/multilingual education

Programme Features	**Two-Way DBE**	**One-Way DBE**	**TBE with Traditional Teaching**
Cognitive Emphasis	Strong	Strong	Some
Academic Emphasis (in all subjects	Yes	Yes	Yes
Linguistic Emphasis (L1 and L2)	Develops full L1 and L2 Academic Proficiency	Develops full L1 and L2 Academic Proficiency	Develops Partial L1 and L2 Academic Proficiency
Socio-cultural Emphasis	Strong	Strong	Some

3 "Majority language" means the official language, which is used in government's legislative, executive and judicial functions. On the other hand, "language minority students" denotes students whose native language is not the official language of the society (see Freeman, 1998:3; UNESCO, 1951).

Programme Length	Sustained 6-12 years	Sustained 6-12 years	Short-term 2-3 years
Native language Academic support	Strong	Strong	Some
Exposure to L1 speakers	Yes All day	Yes Half-day	No
Extra Instructional Cost	Least Expensive	Least Expensive	Small-to-moderate (special curriculum)
Gap Closure	100% of gap fully closed by the end of school	100% of gap fully closed by the end of school	Less than 50%

In all Two-Way (or Double Immersion, as it has also been called) programmes, half of the students are English speakers, whereas the other half consists of minority language speakers where all of them have the same mother tongue, most commonly Spanish (but many other languages have been involved too). The "Two Way" implies that both groups learn each other's languages. Collier and Thomas (2002: 4) claim that Two-Way Developmental Bilingual Education (DBE) is the least expensive programme model. Their study shows that the Two-Way DBE model is the most effective enrichment programme in which the gap between the learners and native speakers is fully closed by the end of school. Collier and Thomas reiterate that the key to the success of all two-way bilingual programmes is that this is an integrated programme designed for all students to be schooled together throughout the school day. The following remarks illuminate the Two-Way DBE:

Using the natural resources of the community, speakers of the minority language are peer tutors for the native English speakers learning the curriculum through the community language, while the native-English speakers provide for the English learners meaningful and natural access to English for both language and content development. They can accelerate their cognitive and academic growth through cognitively

complex grade-level tasks that stimulate both language and subject area leaning. In two-way bilingual classes the focus is on the core academic curriculum, separation of the two languages of instruction (no translation allowed and no repeating of lessons in each language), and high quality instructional personnel. Teachers alternate the language of instruction by theme or subject area, by time of day, by day of the week, or by the week (Collier and Thomas, 2002:32)

Moreover, One-Way DBE is another enrichment bilingual programme, which fully closes the gap between the native speakers and learners by the end of their schooling. Although One-Way DBE is identical to Two-Way DBE in terms of the content and teaching methods, One-Way DBE schools are common in geographic contexts where the school is demographically very homogenous. The term "one-way" refers to one language group receiving schooling through two languages (Collier and Thomas, 2002).

On the other hand, the Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) with traditional teaching fills less than 50% gap between the native speakers and the learners. A summary of the findings of the 1996-2001 longitudinal study presented below illuminates the effectiveness of the two-way DBE programme:

Collier and Thomas (2000), provide the following criteria for effective DBE programmes:

1. A minimum of six years of bilingual education
2. Focus on the core academic curriculum
3. Instruction in L1 and L2
4. Separation of the two languages for instruction
5. Use of the mother tongues for at least 50 % of the instructional time and as much as 90 % in the early grades.
6. An additive bilingual environment that has full support of school administrators, teachers and parents

7. A balanced ratio of students who speak each language, preferably 50:50 or 60:40.
8. Promotion of positive interdependence among peers and between teachers and students
9. High quality instructional personnel
10. Active parent-school partnerships

Considering the cost-benefit ratio and the effectiveness of the Two-Way or One-Way DBE programme, Nepal could introduce either of the two, depending on the local contexts. Since, at present, there does not seem to exist any kind of formal bilingual education in the primary schools of Nepal, it is now urgent, and is already too late to embark on one of these enrichment schemes.

Nepal Language Policy Recommendation Commission (NLPRC) (1993), headed by Mr Til Bikram Nemwang – Bairagi Kainla, defines bilingual education as a means of providing education through two languages in bi/multilingual communities. NLPRC further notes that the issue of bilingual education arises when children's language is different from the language of instruction in the mainstream education system. It also recognizes that bilingual education is important to bring non-Nepali speaking children in the mainstream education without causing any harm to their cognitive development and academic achievements (ibid.: 26).

However, NLPRC (1993:22-26) has identified the following fundamental prerequisites for bilingual education in Nepal:

- Developing writing systems of minority languages
- Development of textbook materials
- Developing criteria (such as number of students, population) for bilingual education in schools
- Positive attitude and cooperation of language communities
- Availability of mother tongue teachers

- Teacher education and training
- Government's commitment

As we see, many of these prerequisites do not exist at present. One of the questions then is to what extent all of them are necessary as prerequisites for getting started with bi/multilingual education or whether at least some of them are only going to be developed once a decision to start implementing bilingual education has been made and the process has started.

Often a decision to start implementation of bilingual education is not mainly prevented by the lack of writing systems, materials, teachers, or even basic financial resources, even if these certainly are fundamental points, which have to be dealt with. The existence of these real problems is sometimes used as a legitimation for non-action in situations where a negative ideological orientation or deficiency orientation towards the continued existence of minorities may be a major background reason. In the following section some of these deficiencies will be presented and discussed.

Deficiency theoretical orientations

Pattanayak (1988) notes that linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural identities and differences cannot be considered as deficiencies. In his opinion, life is rich and beautiful precisely because it is varied and it has plurality. The child's mother tongue and cultural and social background should be a positive starting point for the school. The existence of minorities is seen by some as costly but it is enriching for societies (see Skutnabb-Kangas 1990: 23). François Grin states in his studies of the economics of minority language promotion that the costs are in fact surprisingly low (Grin, 1990)

May (2001) analyzes the 'deficit theories' with a view to suggesting alternative approaches to minority education. In the discussion on language, education and minority rights, May argues that the "increasing disenchantment among

minority groups, and a related unwillingness to continue to accept the status quo, have contributed to a growing, albeit still tentative, exploration of alternative educational approaches more accommodating to cultural and linguistic diversity" (ibid:169).

May (2001) observes that Churchill's typology (1986) provides a comprehensive account on policy responses to minority language and education. Churchill outlines the six principal policy responses to the educational and language needs of minority groups. Although the differences between the various stages suggested by Churchill are not clear-cut, he tries to rank them in an ascending order on the basis of the degree to which policies respond to minority languages and cultures. Below is a summary of Churchill's typology (1986:54-55):

Stage 1 (*Learning Deficit*): Where the educational disadvantages faced by minority groups are associated with the use of the minority language. Accordingly, rapid transition to the majority language is advocated at this stage.

Stage 2 (*Socially Linked Learning Deficit*): Sometimes but not always arrived at concurrently with stage 1, this stage associates a minority group's educational disadvantage with family status. Additional/ supplementary programmes are thus promoted which emphasize *adjustment* to the majority society.

Stage 3 (*Learning Deficit from Social/ Cultural Differences)*: Most commonly associated with multicultural education, this stage assumes minority educational disadvantage arises from the inability of the majority society – particularly the education system - to recognize, accept and view positively the minority culture. However, a multicultural approach does not usually include a commensurate recognition of the minority language.

Stage 4 (*Learning Deficit from Mother Tongue Deprivation*): While still linked to the notion of deficit, the need for support of the minority language is accepted, at least

as a transitional measure. Accordingly, transitional bilingual educational programmes are emphasized.

Stage 5 (*Private Use Language Maintenance*): Recognizes the right of national and ethnic minorities to maintain and develop their languages and culture in private life to ensure these are not supplanted by the dominant culture and language. A group maintenance approach to bilingual education is the most usual policy response here.

Stage 6 (*Language Equality*): The granting of full official status to national minority language. This would include separate language provision in a range of community institutions, including schools, and widespread recognition and use in a range of social, institutional and language domains.

According to May (2001), Churchill's first four Stages (1-4) are based on the argument that minority groups should seek the same social, cultural and linguistic outcomes as those of the dominant group. The main argument behind these Stages is that the instrumental objectives of education should be the same for all ethnic groups within the nation-state. In contrast, the cultural and linguistic values of minority groups are recognized at Stages 5 and 6. In May's view (2001) these stages raise questions about the value of a monocultural and monolingual society. At these stages, minority groups reach a position to maintain their languages and cultures.

Building on Churchill (1986), Skutnabb-Kangas (1990:23) has developed a model to show the stages in the development of minority education. Skutnabb-Kangas (1990) rejects the views that children are deficient. She claims that the main problems lie in schools and societies, not in the minority children. For her, it is unacceptable to 'see the child as deficient and lacking, and try to compensate for the 'deficiencies' in order for the child, her parents, group and culture to change, and in order to fit the school' (1990:22). She emphasizes that 'schools should be adapted to the

children, not vice versa'. Skutnabb-Kangas states in the first column how the majority educational system sees, in the various phases, the reasons for the problems that minority children face in schools. The second column describes measures that the educational system uses in each phase to tackle the problems. The third column describes the educational and societal goals that the dominant/majority society has for the minorities in each phase. The model is as follows (ibid.: 23).

Stages in the development of minority education

REASON FOR PROBLEMS	MEASURE	GOAL
Deficit Theories:		
Linguistic L2-related handicap, learning deficit (the child does not master L2 well enough)	*More teaching of MaL* (auxiliary teaching, ESL, introductory classes etc); compensatory	MI is to become MaL speaking as fast as possible
Social handicap, socially linked learning deficit (the child's parents come from the lowest social classes)	*More social and pedagogical help* (aids, tutors, psychologists, social workers, career advisers etc); in addition to measure 1; compensatory	Same as 1
Cultural handicap, culturally linked learning deficit (the child has a "different" cultural background; the child has low self-confidence; the child is discriminated against)	*Inform* MI-children about MA culture/ about their own culture; inform all children about MI-cultures/start multicultural/ intercultural educational programmes; eliminate discrimination/ racism in teaching materials; attitudinal courses for teachers; in addition to measures 1 and 2; compensatory.	MiL in the family 1-2 generations; MI-children need help to appreciate MI-culture (until they become MaL speaking)
Linguistic L1-related handicap, learning deficit because of L1 deprivation (the child	*Teaching of L1 as subject; elementary education through the medium of L1 with as fast a transition to L2-medium as*	Same as 3

does not know her L properly and has therefore poor grounding for the learning of L2 CALP) (the child loses contents while learning L2)	*possible.* MiL has no intrinsic value, it is therapeutic; compensatory (more self-confidence, better co-operation with home, gives better basis for MaL learning, functions as bridge for transmission of content during L2-learning); in addition to measures 1 and 3	
Enrichment theories: High levels of bilingualism beneficial for the individual but difficult to attain, demands much work and energy. The primary goal is to learn MaL properly; it is a prerequisite for equal opportunity Bilingualism enhances development. If problems arise, the causes are similar to those of monolingual children; some problems may be caused by racism/ discrimination.	Teaching through the medium of MiL for several years inside MA-school; obligatory teaching of MaL; transition to MaL-medium teaching after elementary education Separate, equal school systems for MI and MA children, L1 is medium for both and L2 obligatory (or possible to study) for both. Positive discrimination of the MI economically (smaller units allowed).	MiL is allowed to be maintained for private use; bilingualism necessary; MiL is allowed to exist (in a diglossic situation) as long as a demographic basis exists Existence of minorities is enriching for the whole society. MiL has (at least some) official status and its use is encouraged, also for MaL children
MI= minority; MiL=minority language; MA = majority; MaL=majority language		

Skutnabb-Kangas propounds enrichment theories and provides further theoretical ground for facilitating learning processes for language minority children in school.

Churchill's (and to some extent Skutnabb-Kangas's) typologies can be compared with Ruiz's Orientations in Language Planning (1984:15-29). Ruiz's typology is as follows:

1. Language-as-Problem (comparable with Churchill's and Skutnabb-Kangas's Stages 1-4):
   Where the targets of language policy are construed as social problems to be identified, eradicated, alleviated or in some other way resolved.
2. Language-as –Right (comparable with Churchill's Stage 5):
   Which confronts the assimilationist tendencies of dominant language communities with arguments about the legal, moral and natural right to local identity.
3. Language-as-Resource (Comparable with Churchill's Stage 6):
   Most accommodative, language and the communities, which speak them, are viewed as a social resource.

Ruiz refers to his typology as "orientations in language". He holds that orientations are "a complex of dispositions toward language and its role, and toward languages and their role in society" (ibid.:16). He claims that these dispositions provide fundamental arguments about languages and are instrumental in determining how language is perceived in society because the "orientations are related to language attitudes in that they constitute the framework in which attitudes are formed: they help to delimit the range of acceptable attitudes toward language, and to make certain attitudes legitimate" (Ruiz, 1984:16). In short, orientations determine what is thinkable about language in society.

Ruiz (1984) argues that the language-as-problem approach can be viewed in the context of a socio-historical multilingual society (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3). Drawing on Fishman (1974; 1975), he highlights language planning as an

activity to solve language problems, and as an organized pursuit of solutions to them (language problems). Also, referring to Karam (1974) and Mackey (1979) he illustrates that language problems are a necessary ingredient to any language planning, and are inherent in multilingual situations. Ruiz argues that language issues are becoming linked with the problems associated with language groups' poverty, handicap, low educational achievement, and low or no special mobility. According to Ruiz (1984:21) the orientation that language is a social problem to be resolved through treatments like transitional bilingual education is more pervasive than we think. In his opinion the language-as-problem orientation can either be represented by malicious attitudes resolving to eradicate, invalidate, quarantine and inoculate, or with remediation and improvement. He adds that in this orientation the central activity remains that of problem solving. He argues that although language problems are never merely language problems, this orientation may be representative of a more general outlook on cultural and social diversity.

Similarly, in relation to language-as-right, Ruiz looks at the issues such as civil rights, minority rights, rights on a trans-national level, language (ethnic) identification as legal entitlement and a natural endowment, and language protection (ibid.:24).

For Ruiz, language-as-problem and language-as-right orientations are crucial for policy formulation. He thinks that these two orientations are "healthy competitors" in the language planning literature. Further, he holds that these are "competing but not incompatible approaches". Yet, the third orientation, language-as-resource, which he believes is a potentially important redirection for language planning needs conceptual elaboration. He argues that it can be a more suitable approach than the other two, and feels the need for a closer look at it in order to reveal some promise for alleviating some of the conflicts emerging out of the two

other orientations. He claims that it can have a direct impact on enhancing the language status of sub-ordinate languages and can help ease tensions between majority and minority communities. He reiterates that this orientation can be viewed as a co-operative language effort (ibid.).

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) is concerned about Ruiz seeing his orientations as competing views, rather than the last two being complementary. She further argues that Ruiz does not make much effort to prevent this ambivalent interpretation. Skutnabb-Kangas claims that because of Ruiz's interpretation, it has been difficult for educationalists and sociolinguists to see languages as both rights and resources. In this sense Ruiz's 'competing' typologies tend to prevent "those who are interested in making languages function as parts of positive cultural-linguistic capital from making use of the human rights system in the struggles of linguistic minorities for self-empowerment" (ibid.:653). These arguments suggest that despite Ruiz's contributions to helping analyze languages from problem, right and resource orientations, the human rights oriented approach to language has been dampened. However, his insights into language provide us with a basis for analyzing a minority language situation in a given context.

Although Ruiz provides a basis for analyzing language situation and language planning practices in a country, in his typology a rights-based approach is seen as being "at a lower level" than a resource based approach. It is crucial to note that language-as-right and language-as-resource are not mutually exclusive- here I agree completely with Skutnabb-Kangas's criticism of Ruiz[4]. They are rather complementary to one another, and both of them need to go hand in hand. The language policy of South Africa sets an

4 There is also a thorough critique and discussion of Ruiz' orientations in the Introduction (by the editors, Kontra, Phillipson, Skutnabb-Kangas &Várady) in the book, Language: A Right and a Resource (1999).

example of how a country can address both aspects of language-as-right and language-as-resource (although the implementation of the policy statements have not been so encouraging). My own empirical study carried out in Nepal suggests the combination of both – language as right and language as resource is a possibility that also has been reiterated in Nepal's present Constitution (see the Constitution of Nepal, 2015; Awasthi, 2004).

The way forward

Based on the arguments and models presented in this article it becomes obvious that mother tongue medium education is key to children's learning, cognitive development and overall success in their lives. The report on the UNESCO Meeting of Specialists (1951) and the following studies as well as reports suggest how children's L1 provides a firm foundation for a desired level of attainment in their overall academic performance as well as in L2 and foreign language competence.

Recognizing the benefits of mother tongue medium education, the Constitution of Nepal has enshrined mother tongue education under the fundamental rights. Evidence has shown that country's linguistic, educational, social and identity goals can be met by mother tongue based multilingual education (MTB/MLE) (Awasthi, 2004). MTB/MLE, however, has not yet received the same level of resourcing and attention at federal, state and local levels as envisioned in the Constitution. The local governments, in particular, are entrusted with the responsibility for implementing school education, fulfilling the constitutional obligations to provide early stage education through children's mother tongues. There is a greater need for (re)orientations and capacity reinforcements both at policy and implementation levels to respond to the Constitutional provisions in the country.

Nepal's educational reforms lie in how adequately we embark on MTB/MLE processes, placing emphasis on mother tongue medium education at least for 4 years, including one year of early childhood education and 3 years from grade 1 to 3. Nepali and English languages need to be taught as subjects with greater intensity and reinforcements. Mother tongues as subjects should continue for students' subject-wise proficiency and vertical links.

Recent studies and research reports have shown that English medium education at the early stages of education in non-native settings such as Nepal and elsewhere in the world has proved detrimental in children's academic gains and cognitive development (British Council 2017; Awasthi, 2004). Therefore, it is much wiser for Nepal to offer mother tongue medium education at the early stage of education (including early childhood education and development) and the Nepali language can be maintained as the medium of education at the later stage of basic education. English medium education can be introduced from grade nine onwards applicable in both public and private schools. The damages incurred due to the misplaced emphasis on English medium education can be prevented as early as possible by implementing mother tongue medium education policy in Nepal.

9

Envisaging a framework for mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) in the federal context of Nepal[1]

YOGENDRA P. YADAVA

1. Introduction

1.1 Outline

Multilingual education (MLE) has commonly been in practice in multilingual communities for facilitating child's learning in schools. This educational program using multiple languages for instruction can be of two types. One of them is 'mother tongue-based multilingual education' (henceforth, MTB MLE). The term MTB MLE is often used in one of the following two ways: (a) In some contexts it refers to the educational program using learners' mother tongue (i.e. first or home language) and two or more additional languages. (b)

1 This article is a revised version of the study commissioned by Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal with the technical support from USAID/Nepal. The author would like to express his gratitude to Amanda Seel and Sadanand Kadel for their academic support in completing this study. Thanks are due to Narayan Sharma and Kumar Adhikary for assisting in accomplishing this research work. Thanks are also due to Department of Education, MoE, GoN for its permission to publish this article in this volume.

The educational program that uses two or more languages except the mother tongue of the children is called just 'MLE' and not 'MTB MLE'(UNESCO 2016:10).

In Nepalese context both of these regional trends in multilingual educational programs have been found in practice. Community schools have been using Nepali, the official language, as medium of instruction, English as a subject and/or mother tongue as subject of instruction. However, Multilingual Education Program for All Non-Nepali Speaking Students of Primary Schools in Nepal (2007-09) launched by DoE with Finnish support as a pilot could not sustain the use of mother tongues as medium of instruction in early grades due to lack of support from the government as well as language communities. In private schools, however, English is being used as medium of instruction and Nepali language as a subject. Quite recently, however, with the increasing trend of globalization and other needs such as political economy of Nepalese people English has growing demands as medium of instruction.

For the present purposes focus has been on MTB MLE program wherein learners' mother tongue has been conceived as medium of instruction (MoI) and other languages (such as Nepali, State official language(s), English, heritage and religious languages) as a subject.

The goal of this article is to envisage the MTB MLE Framework in order to cater the need for designing anarchitecture for managing and implementing this educational program in Nepal, a linguistically diverse country. It has been organized into three sections. Section 1 deals with the concept, rationale, sociolinguistic context, language-in-education policy existing in global context as well as Nepal, MLE-related issues, and challenges and the objectives of the study in question. Section 2 elaborates the core components of MTB MLE such as language typology of schools, selection, sequencing and transition of languages in school education, appropriate pedagogies, curricula and

material development, capacity building, supporting system, advocacy strategy, sustainability, functional linkage among line agencies, language preservation through MTB MLE program, and monitoring and evaluation. Finally, this framework highlights some residual issues related to this study in the current federal restructuring of the state, especially legal empowerment of Local Level Authorities, which has been entrusted with the management and implementation of this program.

In the existing fluid political scenario, however, this framework is subject to constraints. It needs to be made compatible with the upcoming constitutional and legal enactments with regard to linguistic issues. Besides, the Local Level Authorities have the right to formulate policy for managing school education (consisting of basic and secondary levels) where MTB MLE can be implemented.This right falls under Schedule 8: List of Local Level Authorities r) in *Constitution of Nepal* (2015). However, at this juncture when local, provincial and federal level elections have just been complemented local governance cannot be contacted for consultations for seeking its confirmation.

1.2 Rationale

South and Southeast Asia is the most multilingual region speaking two-third of the world's languages. Nepal, a home to more than 123 languages (of four genetic stocks) spoken in a small area (CBS 2011), is not immune to this linguistic diversity. Nepal's federalization offers an opportunity to use children's languages in education. It, however, poses a great challenge to educating children with diverse linguistic backgrounds. "Since effective teaching depends on clear and understandable communication, the language of instruction is at the heart of any learning process. For this reason, mother tongue-based instruction is crucial to providing children with early access to education and to enabling them to participate in learning processes according to their evolving capacities."

(UNESCO 2007). However, most of the countries in this region and elsewhere employ their dominant or foreign languages as medium of instruction which may not be school children's mother tongue or first language. This 'linguistic mismatch' (to use Cummins' (2002) term) compels them to learn not only a new language but also new knowledge.

Various studies on cognitive development and second language learning also provide evidence in support of MTB MLE. There exist sufficient amount of studies which argue that minority children's academic success significantly depends on how much their language and culture are incorporated into the school program (Campos & Keatinge, 1984; Cummins, 1983a, 2002; Rosier & Holm, 1980).

Multilingual education (MLE) involves use of two or more languages for teaching and it seeks to develop high levels of multilingualism and multiliteracy (Mohanty, Panda, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009). Psychological and neurological evidence show that general cognitive and intellectual performance of bilingual and multilingual individuals is better than those who are relatively more monolingual. Psycholinguistic principles of bi- or multi-lingual education (Cummins, 2009) suggest that positive transfer to a second language occurs when cognitive and academic proficiency in the mother tongue is well developed. Therefore, early support for development of mother tongue through schooling is necessary. International experience with MLE (Heugh & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2010) shows that quality education for high levels of academic achievement and development of multilingual proficiency must begin with development of proficiency in MT used as the language of teaching for at least 6-8 years of schooling and gradually develop other languages through their systematic use as language subjects and language of teaching. Research on interdependence theory has shown that many of the skills learned in the native language can be transferred easily to the second language later, thereby helping children in learning L2

through the previous acquisition of L1.To sum up, MTB MLE is 'additive' and contributes to the empowerment of children to succeed in school education. It would be apt to refer to the following citation from Cummins (2001: 661):

> Students who are empowered by their school experiences develop the ability, confidence, and motivation to succeed academically. They participate competently in instruction as a result of having developed a confident cultural identity as well as appropriate school-based knowledge and interactional structures (Cummins, 1983b; Tikunoff, 1983). Students who are disempowered or "disabled" by their school experiences do not develop this type of cognitive/academic and social/emotional foundation. Thus, student empowerment is regarded both as a mediating construct influencing academic performance and as an outcome variable itself.

Some empirical studies (especially Malone 2004, Skutnabb-Kangas 2009, Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty 2009 , Ball 2010, Jones 2012, Meiers 2013 and Seel et al 2015) carried out internationally and also nationally have clearly shown that MTB MLE schools had better educational achievement than Nepali medium schools.

1.3 Objectives

The MTB MLE Framework envisions a design for implementing MTB MLE for school children in Nepalese context. More specifically, it attempts to present this framework on the basis of the following reports and the feedbacks received from their dissemination in the six regional level workshops and one central level seminar:

a. *Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines (2009),*
b. MoI Roadmap (2014) (Linking/ revisiting the MoI Roadmap with the rolling out of federalization in education), and

c. *Medium of Instruction and Languages for Education* (MILE)*: Ways Forward for Education Policy, Planning and Practice in Nepal* (2015).

1.4 The sociolinguistic context: Characteristics[2]

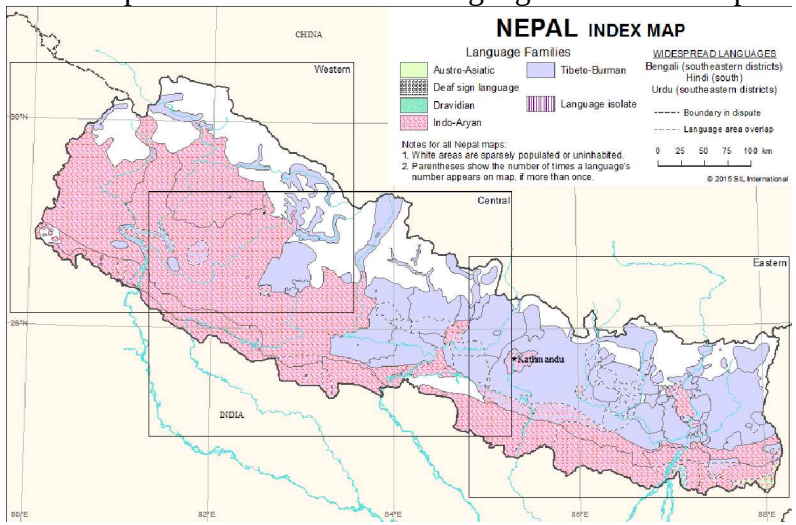
1.4.1 Language distribution

Recognizing the primary importance that people attach to their language in gaining education it seems to be in order to understand the existing linguistic context of a country for envisaging an inclusive national policy for the use of various languages in education.

Nepal is a multilingual nation with 123 officially-recognized languages according to the 2011 Census, whilst some sources (e.g. *Ethnologue* 2012) recognize even more. Of the 123 languages spoken as mother tongues, 91 are also spoken as second languages. Taken together they belong to four language families: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian. The Indo-European languages, which are of the Indo-Aryan sub-family (except for English), constitute the largest group in terms of the numeric strength of their speakers, nearly 82.1% of the total population (Census 2011; Yadava, 2014: 54-6). The Sino-Tibetan languages are from the Tibeto-Burman group. Though spoken by fewer people than the Indo-European family (17.3%), there are a greater number of languages, about 63 in total (Census 2011). Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages rank third at 0.19% and fourth at 0.13%, respectively and there are also at least four sign languages. Additionally, Kusunda is a language isolate consisting of a single language without any genetic relationship with other languages and now confined to just 28 speakers. The distribution of these language families have been shown in the following map:

2 See Yadava (2014) for further details about Nepal's language situation.

Map 1: The distribution of language families in Nepal



In terms of mother tongue speakers, assuming 100, 000 (one lakh) speakers as the cut off point for 'major' languages, their number in Nepal is 19, and their cumulative percentage of the population is approximately 96%. By contrast, the residual 104+ languages are spoken by about 4% of Nepal's total population (Yadava 2014: 58). These languages consist of 30 minor languages with 10, 000–99, 999 speakers, 37 minor languages with 1, 000–9, 999 to speakers and 37 minor (or marginalized) languages with fewer than 1, 000 speakers. Many of these languages are to some extent endangered; however others have additional speakers living across Nepal's borders in India or China (Tibet).

Nepali, spoken by 44.6% of Nepal's total population, is the largest language in terms of the number of speakers, but falls short of constituting a majority language. However, it is not evenly distributed throughout the country. Around 9.3% of Nepali speakers live in the mountains, 61.2% in the hills and 29.5% in the Tarai.

There is no simple one-to-one correspondence of language and ethnicity but there is nevertheless an overall

correlation between the two. Broadly speaking, Nepali is the mother tongue of the Brahmin-Chettri groups of the hills, as well as of many hill Dalits, however there are dialectical variations across different communities. The Madheshis of all castes of the Tarai speak Maithili, Urdu, Hindi and other Indo-Aryan languages. The indigenous 'Janajati' groups of Nepal speak many different languages, including the Tibeto-Burmese languages of the north and east (e.g. Gurung, Rai, Limbu, Magar, Tamang), the Indo-Aryan languages of the lower hills and Tarai (e.g. Tharu) and the Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian languages of the Eastern Tarai (e.g. Santhali, Uranw). One encouraging aspect of the current context is that there is much stronger acknowledgement and awareness of Nepal's language diversity than in the past. This is illustrated in Table 1which indicates the number of first languages identified in successive censuses over the past six decades.

Table 1: A comparison of census enumerations of languages (1952/54 - 2011)

Censuses	**1952/54**	**1961**	**1971**	**1981**	**1991**	**2001**	**2011**
Number of languages	44	36	17	18	31	92	123

Source: Yadava (2014: 53:)

The mother tongues enumerated in Census 2011 (except Kusunda) belong to four language families: Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Austro-Asiatic and Dravidian while Kusunda is a language isolate[3] consisting of a single language without any genetic relationship with other languages. Their number of speakers with percentages is shown in Table 2.

3. "A language isolate is a language which has no known structural or historical relationship to any other language." (Crystal 1997: 328). Whitehouse et al. (2004) mention that Kusunda has been misclassified as a Tibeto-Burman language. Instead, they claim on some linguistic evidence that this language is a member of the Indo-Pacific family though it needs to be further supported by its speakers' DNA evidence.

Table 2: Population by the language families of mother tongues (1952/54-2011)

Language families	Census Population													
	1952/54		1961		1971		1981		1991		2001		2011	
	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent	No.	Per cent
1.Indo-European	6, 351, 899	77.13	7, 449, 604	79.14	9, 062, 435	78.42	12, 417, 886	82.66	14, 701, 283	79.50	17, 982, 769	79.1	21, 753, 009	82.10
2. Sino-Tibetan	1, 795, 337	21.08	1, 813, 083	19.26	1, 982, 635	17.16	1, 811, 944	12.06	3, 098, 698	16.76	4, 183, 995	18.4	4, 584, 523	17.30
3.Austro-Asiatic	16, 751	0.20	29, 485	0.31	23, 853	0.21	28, 208	0.19	33, 332	0.18	40, 260	0.2	49, 858	0.19
4. Dravidian									15, 175	0.1	28, 615	0.1	33, 651	0.13
5.Others (including the foreign languages)	70, 340	0.85	114, 392	1.22	487, 060	4.21	764, 802	5.09	648, 627	3.51	NA	NA	25, 745 *	0.09
6.Not stated	752	0.01	6, 432	0.07					9, 157	0.05	503, 295	2.2	47, 718	0.18
Total	8, 235, 079	100.00	9, 412, 996	100.00	11, 555, 983	100.00	15, 022, 839	100.00	18, 491, 097	100.00	22, 738, 934	100.00	26, 494, 504	100 %

**This figure includes Kusunda, foreign and sign languages in addition to others.*
Sources: Population censuses (1952/54-2011) (Yadava 2014: 54:).

**This figure includes Kusunda, foreign and sign languages in addition to others.*
Sources: Population censuses (1952/54-2011), (Yadava 2014: 54:).

1.4.2 Writing systems

Most of the languages spoken in Nepal are still confined to their oral traditions. They are disappearing with the growth of language shift for reasons such as the use of the dominant language in the domains of administration, education, media and so on. It is, therefore, time to document them before they are lost to posterity to come.

Nepali, Hindi, Maithili, Tibetan / Sherpa, Newar, Limbu, Bhojpuri, Avadhi and Lapcha have long traditions of written literature, employing various writing systems or scripts. Most of the Indo-Aryan languages of the Indo-European family such as Nepali, Maithili (originally written in Mithilakshar or Kaithi script), Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Hindi and Rajbanshi now use the Devanagari script, though Bengali / Bangla has its own script, a variation of Devanagari. Newar has its own traditional script called Ranjana but it has also adopted the Devanagari script for the sake of convenience in reading and printing. Limbu uses its own Kirati Srijanga script. Lapcha is written in Rong script. Even where scripts have long been utilised, many languages lack orthographic standardisation. Since the 1950s, Nepali Braille has been

developed based on a wider Devanagari Braille which, like English Braille, uses a six-dot system.

Of late some preliterate languages have taken to modified Devanagari script. Initiatives have been taken by various language communities such as Tharu, Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rajbanshi and Kirati-Rai group of languages to develop writing systems appropriate to the sound system of their languages and practically acceptable to them. For example, Magar has developed its own script, called Akkha. Recently, these languages have started developing some written literature in the form of newspaper, magazine, textbooks for adult literacy and primary education, as well as folk literature. As in India, Santhali in Nepal is also written in Roman script. In addition, some of the languages have adopted Devanagari script. Perso-Arabic script is used for writing Urdu.

1.4.3 Further language characteristics

The languages of Nepal form a continuum in terms of mutual intelligibility and most of the more widely-spoken languages (including Nepali) have many dialectal variations.

The present census shows that the majority of Nepal's population (15.6 million people, 59%) are monolinguals, while the remaining 11 million people (41%) speak at least two languages. Of the latter group Nepali is spoken as a second language by the largest number, 8.7 mil (32.77%). Hindi ranks second with 1.2 mil speakers (4.62%). It is to be noted that there has been a drastic increase in the population speaking Hindi as a second language although the population speaking Hindi as a mother tongue has considerably declined in the last censuses. In addition, there are other languages such as Bantawa and Sherpa, which are used as the lingua franca in the eastern hills and mountains, respectively.

Nepali, being spoken by 44.6% % and 32.77 % population as mother tongue and second language, respectively, constitute 77.37%of the total population and is

thus a major language of wider communication for most of the population in the country, especially in indigenous Janajati areas. A further dimension is that there are 50 cross border languages, mostly spanning Nepal and India but also a few that span Nepal, Bangladesh and China (Yadava 2011). Some languages that have small number of speakers in Nepal have kin communities in India with a large population and cultivated written literature, rendering them vigorous and suitable for use in basic education. English is used quite widely for higher education, business, tourism and communications, but (unlike in India) few Nepalis claim it as a mother tongue.

1.5. Language use-in-education policy

1.5.1 MLE-related international law and human rights obligations

To achieve better education through children's mother tongue in a linguistically diverse country there have been made legal provisions globally and nationally.

Central International Instruments

There are several international and regional human rights documents (instruments) to ensure and regulate the right to education in relation to language. Nepal has been signatory to the relevant international (United Nations) instruments dealing with the right to education and language. These instruments are as follows:

- International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, 1966;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966;
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966;
- Convention on Rights of the Child, 1989.

In addition, the following instruments are relevant for the right to education:

- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict 2000;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography 2000

International Policies

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
- The UNESCO Convention Against Discrimination in Education 1960
- The 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All (EFA)
- The Dakar Framework of Action 2000
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 (Article 13 and 14)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (Article 18)
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28)
- The Millennium Development Goals 2000
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007

In addition to the instruments and policies mentioned above, there are countless recommendations, declarations, etc, which condemn subtractive education of minority language-speaking students through the medium of the dominant state language and recommend multilingual and bilingual teachers.

1.5.2 MLE policies and strategies in Nepal

Compared to other South Asian countries, Nepal has made greater strides in the sphere of MLE-related legal

provisions and regulations. These provisions and regulations have been explained and examined as follows:

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990)

With the restoration of democracy there has been growing awareness among non-Nepali speaking people about their culture and languages since they consider them as the symbols through which they strive to assert their identity and recognition. *The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990)* promulgated after the restoration of democracy gave constitutional recognition to all the mother tongues (Nepali as well as non-Nepali languages) spoken in Nepal and laid down the following provisions:

(1) The Nepali language in the Devanagari script is the language of the nation of Nepal. The Nepali language shall be the official language.(*Constitution of Nepal, Part 1, Article 6.1*)

(2) All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal. (*The Constitution of Nepal, Part 1, Article 6.2*)

In addition, the constitution also made a provision for the use of mother tongues in primary education (*The Constitution of Nepal, Part 1, Article18.2*). It also guaranteed Nepalese as a fundamental right to preserve their culture, scripts and their languages (*The Constitution of Nepal, Part 1, Article 26.2*).

The greatest weakness of these provisions was the lack of any explicit plan and policy to implement them. The constitution was vague about the use of mother tongues as medium or subject of instruction in primary education. It has been witnessed in the Supreme Court's verdict (March 18, 1998) judging the use of Maithili and Nepal Bhasha in local administration as illegal, which violated Article 26.2 of the constitution.

The Report of the Recommendation Commission for Formulating Policy for National Languages (1993; English translation 2007)

To tease out these constitutional provisions about languages, a recommendation commission for formulating policy for national languages was formed by the government in 1993. The main objectives of the commission were twofold: promotion of national languages and their use in local administration, primary education and media. More specifically, they are as follows:

- To make recommendations for the policy and programs associated with the development of national languages.
- To suggest working policies for imparting education through the mother tongue at the primary level and to recommend whether the language of the nation would be appropriate to be taught as the subject or used as a medium of instruction.
- To identify bases of priorities in order to impart primary education through mother tongues.
- To suggest methods to be used for the effective implementation of the afore-mentioned recommendations.

This report has recommended for introducing 'transitional multilingual education' in Nepal. To achieve this goal it has made the following major recommendations:

- Identification of mother tongue schools,
- Teaching the mother tongue as a subject,
- Mother tongue as an alternative or an optional subject,
- Mother tongue and national language in primary curricula,
- Development of curriculum and preparation of teaching materials,
- Bilingual education,
- Education through the language of the nation,
- Teachers' management and training, and

- Non-formal education

This report is the foremost scientific and inclusive initiative for language planning in the country at the government level. However, it is generic in nature addressed to corpus, status, and acquisition planning of the languages spoken in Nepal. It is important to supplement it with the specific details for introducing mother tongues as medium and subject of instruction in primary education such as materials development, monitoring and evaluation[4].

EFA National Plan of Action (2004-09)

Government of Nepal(GoN), which participated in different international fora like Jomtin Convention and Dakar Forum, is committed to making quality primary education accessible to all children including children from indigenous and minority language groups. In pursuance of this commitment, the seventh EFA goal for Nepal has been included besides other six universal EFA goals, viz. ***ensuring the right of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue[5].***

To achieve this goal a policy of transitional multilingual education policy has been put forward. According to this policy, a child will acquire basic educational skills through the medium of his/her mother tongue for achieving good and inclusive education and gradually switch to a language of wider communication (LWC) /an official language so that s/he

4 For details about these aspects of MTB MLE in Nepalese context see Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty (2009), Yadava and Bajracharya eds.(2006), Yadava (2014) and other related works.

5 The seven EFA goals are: EFA Goal 1: expanding early childhood development, EFA Goal 2 :ensuring universal access to free and quality primary education, EFA Goal 3: meeting the learning needs of all young people and adults with life skill education, EFA Goal 4: reducing adult illiteracy, EFA Goal 5: eliminating gender disparity, EFA Goal 6: improving all aspects of quality education, and EFA Goal 7: ensuring the rights of indigenous and linguistic minorities people to quality basic and primary education in their mother tongue.

can have broader communications and "feel at home in the language in which the affairs of government are carried on" and finally learn an international language (e.g. English) for global communications, access to science and technology and as a library language (Fishman 1968: 698).

According to the resulting vision of the EFA Core Document (HMG/N 2003), every child had a right to receive education of good quality in Nepal by 2015, and the schools would be inclusive learning centers of excellence that responded to the learning needs of all children. Nepal EFA National Plan of Action (HMG 2003) underlined the need of ensuring the rights of indigenous peoples and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongues. The programs that provided education in mother tongues were encouraged in order to increase access of children from diverse linguistic groups to education.

Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007)

As a result of the MLE initiatives taken since *The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal* (1990), *Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007)* has made more promising provisions for developing languages and carrying out MLE measures. It hasmade the following provisions for the national languages and their use in early education:

(1) All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal.
(2) The Nepali Language in Devanagari script shall be the official language.
(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (2), it shall not be deemed to have hindered to use the mother language in local bodies and offices. State shall translate the languages so used to an official.

(*The Interim Constitution of Nepal* (2007), *Part 1, Article 5*)

Article 17. Education and Cultural Right

Sub-Article (1). Each community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law.

Once again this provision is not explicit about the use of mother tongues as mediums of instruction or subjects of instruction.

Seventh Amendment of the Education Act of Nepal (2001)

Nepali language has been used as the medium of instruction in the community schools. The mother tongue can be used as a medium of instruction in the primary level. While teaching language as a subject, the medium of instruction can be the same language.

(*The Interim Constitution of Nepal* (2007), *Part 1, Article 17.1 Education and cultural right*)

The existing legal framework mentions the use of mother tongue in early grades but it does not explicitly states whether it should be used as medium or subject of instruction.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan 2002–2007

This Plan is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Nepal prepared by the government. The Tenth Plan identifies human development and social inclusion as the main pillars of the poverty reduction policy. In this regard, it provides two major aims for the five-year period: (i) improving access to and quality of primary education and (ii) providing education in mother tongues of communities up to primary level.

The Local Self-Government Act*, 1998*

This act made the local VDCs (Village Development Committees) and municipalities responsible for supporting the schools and communities to manage primary education in the mother tongue.

Primary Education Curriculum (2008)

It has prescribed Nepali language as the medium of instruction. Local languages can be used as the teaching languages. A local language is prescribed as the optional subject with 100 marks. Curriculum for the local language can be developed locally. Textbooks for 23 different mother tongues to be taught as optional subjects of instruction have been translated, adapted and implemented.

There have been some advances in the use of minority languages in primary education. The CDC has so far developed textbooks in 23 national languages to be taught as subject. This initiative is no doubt a welcome step; for the first time some languages other than Nepali have been introduced in primary education. However, there are two serious drawbacks with this initiative. First, these textbooks, which are essentially the translation of the existing Nepali textbooks, are not tailored to the cultural requirements of the language communities in question. This may lead to cultural imposition on non-Nepali speaking communities. Secondly, such a translated textbook with non-native content may not be easily accessible to and motivating for its learners. What is essential is to develop curricula and textbooks suited to the cultures and physical milieu of the concerning language communities.

The concept of MLE stated in the legal provisions appears ambiguous. *The Interim Constitution of Nepal* provides the right to use mother tongue in 'basic education' (Grades 1-8) while the Fifth Amendment of Education Act prescribes the use of mother tongue in 'primary education' (Grades 1-5).

Three year Interim Plan (2007/08-2009/10)

This plan endorsed tri-languages policy: Nepali language as the official language, mother tongue, and English as an international language. Basic education can be provided in the mother tongue.

***Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines* 2009**

It has been developed by Ministry of Education to provide a framework for implementing MTB MLE. However, all the MLE stakeholders (including Madheshi and some other minority language communities) were not represented in the National MLE Steering Committee, the apex body for making MLE policy and guidelines. There are no comprehensive legal provisions to introduce mother tongue-based education to children. The policy documents say nothing about teacher recruitment and teacher deployment to support primary education through mother tongue.

There is no data keeping system of the teachers and students on the basis of their mother tongues to help produce reading materials, teacher deployment and teacher training.

School Sector Reform Program (SSRP 2009-2015)

According to SSRP (2009-2015) a comprehensive MLE framework will be developed at the national level and implemented gradually in 7500 schools through the DEOs. Despite this provision no initiatives had been taken to devise and implement MLE strategies.

EFA Goal 7: "Ensuring the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue (2013)"

This is a review of EFA Goal 7 aimed to ensure the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through the strategy of mother tongue-based multilingual education**.** It evaluated the government's existing MTB MLE policy and strategies, identified gaps therein and made a number of recommendations for its improvement as a way forward. Some of the major recommendations include filling out the gaps in the existing legal provisions, conducting language mapping of school learners and teachers, framing an effective mechanism for the implementation of MTB MLE plan, carrying out

advocacy drive and achieving some success stories in this field.

***Constitution of Nepal* (2015)**

The present constitution has enshrined the following provisions for use of mother tongue in education:

"Every Nepalese community residing in Nepal shall have the right to get education in its mother tongue and, for that purpose, to open and operate schools and educational institutes, in accordance with law." (Article 31.5)

A major provision in this constitution is the organization of Language Commission. One of the most important functions of the Language Commission is:

"to measure the levels of development of mother tongues and make suggestions to the Government of Nepal, on the potentiality of their use in education." (Article 287.6c)

There have been made several international provisions for promoting MTB MLE. Of late Nepal has been signatory to many of them. Accordingly, both previous and present constitutions of Nepal have made provisions for use of mother tongue in early grade education. Some MLE policies and practices have been in existence. However, it is also important to learn official language(s) for communication with official transactions. English as medium of science and technology, library language and global communication also needs to be learned at a later phase of school education, especially at the secondary level of education.

Despite the existing provisions, there still exist certain gaps, inadequacies and lack of explicitness in the constitutional and legal provisions guiding language-in-education policy and practice. Hence, the Joint Consultative Meeting (JCM) of the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) agreed in 2014 that the Ministry of Education (MoE) would, "undertake a comprehensive study on language issues as related to medium of instruction and effective teaching of

mother tongue, Nepali and English with support of Development Partners (DPs)."

Accordingly, the study on '*Medium of Instruction (MoI) and Languages for Education*' (MILE) was commissioned by the Ministry of Education (MoE) Nepal, with financial and management support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). This study was undertaken for the purpose of informing the drafting of a policy for '*Language-in-Education'* (LiE) in Nepal. The study findings were based on a combination of literature review, consultation meetings and field visits to sample districts and schools to undertake further consultation and observation using a set of qualitative research tools. A Stakeholders' Consultation Workshop in mid-April and the SSRP Joint Annual Review Meeting in mid-June provided opportunity for further consultation and feedback on initial findings and their implications. The final report of the study based on these findings was prepared and submitted to Department of Education under Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal.

Prior to the MILE study, DoE and MoE had worked on two other documents on LiE, namely, *Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines (2009)* and the Medium of Instruction Roadmap (2014). It was, however, felt necessary that broader discussion and consultations about the LiE policy (based on *Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines (2009)* and MoI Roadmap (2014) and MILE study (2015)) with education implementers and managers working at the grassroots level would be crucial to sharing its information with the DoE and MOE and collecting their feedbacks and inputs in their preparation of a final National MTB MLE Framework. Hence, this activity, commissioned by DoE with financial assistance and guidance of USAID, was carried out to make the regional, district, and community level education stakeholders familiar with the findings of the MILE study and gather feedbacks and inputs on the recommendations of the

study to inform the development of the National MTB MLE Framework at the federal level. This Framework provides guidance for Central, State and Local level governance units to develop their own MTB MLE policy that is relevant to and appropriate for their context.

1.6 Issues and challenges

As described above, Nepal does not lack policy pronouncements for using mother tongues as medium and subject of instruction in early grade education. However, they suffer from the following issues and challenges.

- The existing legal framework mentions the use of mother tongue in early grades but it does not explicitly states whether it should be used as medium or subject of instruction.
- All the MLE stakeholders (including Madheshi and other language communities) are not adequately represented in the National MLE Steering Committee, the apex body for making MLE policy and guidelines.
- Some of the legal provisions to introduce mother tongue-based education to children are rather vague and inexplicit. For example, the expression' 'the right to get education in its mother tongue' (*Constitution of Nepal Article 31.5* (2015)*)* has been misconstrued as subject of instruction and accordingly, CDC has developed reading materials for grades 1-5 to be taught as subject and not as medium of instruction.
- Nepal has adopted the early-exit model of MLE. Like different countries across Africa (see Heugh 2009), the limitations of this model are quite evident in Nepal as well. Early transition to the language of wider communication and/or international language is accompanied by poor literacy in L1 and L2, poor numeracy/mathematics and science, high failure and drop-out rates, and high costs/ wastage of expenditure (Heugh 2009).

- The policy documents say nothing about teacher recruitment and teacher deployment to support primary education through mother tongue.
- There exists no national policy setting criteria for identifying languages/dialects for use in MLE.
- There is no data keeping system of the teachers and students on the basis of their mother tongues to help produce reading materials, teacher deployment and teacher training.
- CDC has initiated translation of textbooks in mother tongues but the translated textbooks do not represent cultural needs of the mother tongue students.
- CDC has wrongly assumed the use of mother tongue textbooks as subject instead of medium of instruction and that too as 'optional subject'.
- Multiple language settings in Nepal required multiple teaching/learning arrangements. Where one language is in domination or all students belong to one MT implementation of MLE is less challenging. But inadequately prepared teachers for non-conventional teaching learning settings, inadequate classroom and unavailability of local MT teachers make teaching/learning more challenging in multilingual situation.
- It is difficult to sustain MLE program owing to the lack of adequate operational link with the system's mechanism (DoE 2009).
- There is lack of background data for selecting languages and dialects and schools and recruiting and training teachers. Hence, there is a need to conduct mother tongue school mapping in collaboration with Department of Education and other related agencies and also to explore the possibility for integrating the survey with the GIS database that exists in Nepal. The sociolinguistics survey being conducted at Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University can help in resolving this issue

(Yadava 2008). No structure has been set up to monitor and review the implementation of the policy.

- History, mathematics, geography, social studies, etc. are examples of subjects which are heavily CALP(COGNITIVE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY) -loaded: they are more abstract, talk about issues and phenomena which the child cannot see, touch, smell, or try out immediately. They also require a much larger vocabulary, both receptive (understanding) and productive (speaking/writing). 6 years of mainly mother tongue medium education is an absolute minimum, and 8 years would be preferable if one wants the minority children to reach high levels in at least their mother tongues and Nepali (Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty 2009).
- Another issue in respect of language planning and pedagogical practices in MLE relates to the use of different writing systems for the languages in Nepal.

2. Components of the MTB MLE framework

In the preceding section we have teased out the linguistic context in Nepal and national and international provisions regarding MTB MLE. Broadly speaking, MTB MLE Program is a complex process involving a number of issues. These issues include languages used in education, appropriate pedagogy, curricula, material development, capacity building, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation, and so on. All these issues need to be addressed through well-articulated strategies and planned actions. Hence, there is a need for designing a framework for managing and implementing MTB MLE in the country. The present MTB MLE Framework has been prepared to cater the need for designing a framework for managing and implementing MTB MLE in Nepal.

The MTB MLE Framework comprises the following components:

1. Languages in Education: Determining Language Typology of Schools, Selection, Sequencing and Transition,
2. Appropriate Pedagogies, Curricula and Material Development,
3. Capacity Building,
4. Supporting system,
5. Advocacy Strategy,
6. Sustainability.
7. Functional linkage among line agencies,
8. Language preservation,
9. Monitoring and Evaluation, and
10. Implementation Strategies

Finally, the framework addresses some outstanding issues. These components are presented in detail in the subsections that follow.

2.1 Languages in education

2.1.1 Language typology of schools

From the analysis of the sociolinguistic context outlined in subsection 1.3 given above and drawing also on work undertaken for NEGRP (USAID/RTI 2012), it has been possible to develop an indicative language ‘typology’ of school students (as well as school catchment communities) according to the actual languages spoken by children as they enter ECED or Grade 1. However, this typology needs to have an empirical reality check for confirmation prior to selecting actual languages to be used in school education. The indicative language typology of school catchment has been presented in the following table:

Table 3: Indicative Language Typology of Schools

School Type	Definition (NEGRP)	Sub-type	Expanded Definition
Type 1	Learners that are homogeneously[6] Nepali-speaking on entry to ECED / G1	Type 1a	Learners are homogeneously Nepali-speaking on entry to ECED / G1 and heritage language is Nepali
		Type 1b	Learners are homogeneously Nepali-speaking on entry to ECED / G1 but possess a different heritage language that is no longer much used in that community
Type 2	Learners that homogeneously speak a language other than Nepali as their MT on entry to ECED / G1	Type 2a	Learners homogeneously speak a MT language on entry to ECED / G1 and that language is 'MoI -ready'[7].
		Type 2b	Learners homogeneously* speak a MT language on entry to ECED / G1 and that MT language is not yet 'MoI' ready.
Type 3	Learners come from diverse language backgrounds	Type 3a	Learners enter ECED / G1 from diverse language backgrounds, but there is consensus on a main LWC ('lingua franca') of which most learners have some knowledge and that language is 'MoI-ready'.
		Type 3b	Learners enter ECED / G1 from diverse language backgrounds and there is no commonly-held LWC.

Source: Seel et al.(2015: 24)

6 ***Homogeneous:*** *NEGRP indicatively defines this as a situation where over 90% speak the same language.*

7 *'**MoI ready**': General characteristics of a language that is ready to be a full MoI (including for literacy) include that the language has a script, written literature and a reasonable population base. However, as elaborated later, there is a second level of 'MoI readiness', in which the school and community is ready in terms of availability of teachers, possibility of adaptation to local dialects, agreements about scripts, local interest and so on.*

According to the Table given above, schools may be of three types: Type 1, Type 2 and Type3. Type 1 refers to the schools with homogeneously Nepali-speaking learners on entry to ECED / G1. It may be further subdivided into Type 1a and Type 1b where Type 1a schools comprise the learners who are homogeneously Nepali-speaking on entry to ECED / G1 and whose heritage language is also Nepali and Type 1b schools is composed of the learners who are also homogeneously Nepali-speaking on entry to ECED / G1 but possess a different heritage language that they no longer speak.

Type 2 schools may have the learners that homogeneously speak a language other than Nepali as their MT (e.g. Maithili, Tamang, Sherpa, etc.) on entry to ECED / G1.[8] These schools can also be divided into two subtypes: 2a and 2b. In 2a schools learners homogeneously speak an MT on entry to ECED / G1 and that language is 'MoI -ready' (see footnote 2 for the elaboration of the term 'MoI-ready'). Type 2b schools, on the other hand, consist of learners that homogeneously* speak an MT on entry to ECED / G1 but that MT is not yet 'MoI' ready.

Type 3 schools may consist of learners speaking different MTs. This multilingual type is obviously

8 A language may have different social and regional dialects. Ideally it would be reasonable to select a specific dialect of a language which learners use as their native language.

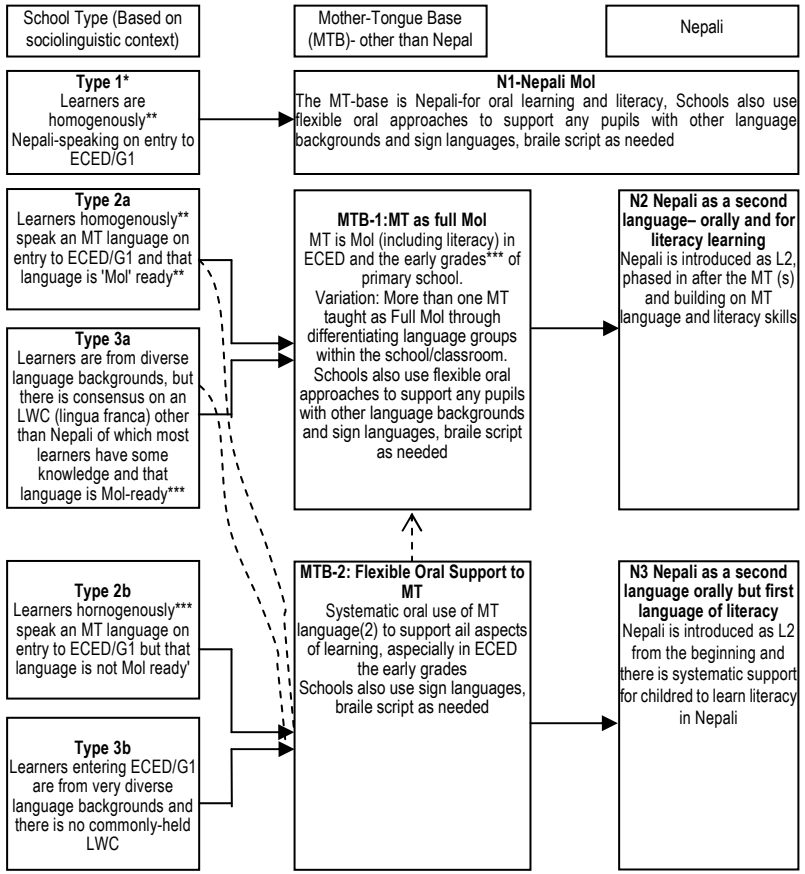
complicated from pedagogical perspective. These schools may be of two types: Type 3a and Type 3b. In Type 3a schools learners enter ECED / G1 from diverse language backgrounds, but there is consensus on a main LWC (language of wider communication; also referred to as 'lingua franca') of which most learners have some knowledge and that language is 'MoI'. In Type 3b schools, learners enter ECED / G1 from diverse language backgrounds and there is no commonly-held LWC.

2.1.2 Selection

According to the language policy recommended by MoE, the languages-in-education are usually MTs, Nepali and English. However, it can also be bilingual if Nepali is learners' MT. In addition to Nepali as official language there can also be major languages spoken within States to be adopted as official languages in the States concerned (*Constitution of Nepal* (2015), Article 7.2)[9]. The selection and sequencing of the languages to be used as MoI and subject have been presented in Table 2.

9 Indicative typology of state languages needs to be ascertained in this connection in the absence of a decision on this issue.

Table 4: Recommended Approach for Identifying the MT Base and Approach to Nepali in ECED and Early Grades According to Schools' Sociolinguistic Types:



Source: Seel et al. (2015: 52)

Taking account of the typology of schools based on linguistic mapping of their teachers and learners it is necessary to identify the repertoire of the MTs for each school and develop a bi/trilingual system of MT, Nepali and compulsory English where Nepali is MT (as reflected in the draft MoI Roadmap 2014) and a bilingual system if it is not the MT. In a

federal context where local governance has been empowered to manage school level education local leadership can engage itself in decision- making about the strategies for selecting and sequencing languages on participatory basis and be conducive for the successful implementation of MTB MLE.

Regarding the use of MTs as MoI: As shown in Table5, schools can have homogeneous MT learners and diverse MT learners with or without their heritage/religious languages. In the context of homogeneous MT learners an MT can be used as MoI if it is 'MoI ready'. In other contexts, where it is not possible to use the MT of the students (or some proportion of students) as the MoI in the early grades, there should be maximum oral use of those MTs initially to support learning but not 'MoI ready' MTs can be gradually enabled through their corpus planning which will involve development, selection and modification of scripts and orthographic conventions for a language, elaboration, creation of written literature and curriculum planning and development (Cooper 1989; McCarty 2002). The Language Commission can support this activity of language development as it has been as one of its main activities.

However, if the learners with diverse MTs have a homogeneous language of wider communication (LWC) it can be used as MoI provided it is MoI ready. In other words, all schools in the country should be required to assess their sociolinguistic situation through the language mapping of school students and articulate their approach to supporting children's mother tongues (with appropriate capacity development and MT support).

Regarding the teaching of Nepali and its use as a MoI (when not the MT): There is a need for clearer acknowledgment of the requirement for Nepali to be introduced in a sequenced and progressive manner for children who are acquiring Nepali as a second language, especially when they have not had the opportunity to learn literacy in their MT. It calls for the study how Nepali can be taught as a

second language with appropriate curricula, teaching/reading materials and teachers' training.

Regarding the teaching of State Official languages: Along with Nepali as Central Level official language, it is also necessary to learn State official languages where they are not MTs for learners. This issue is fresh in federal structure and needs to be further investigated.

Regarding the teaching of English and its use as a MoI: There will be a need to accommodate the strong desire for English, whilst taking account of the educational imperative of effective and sequenced pedagogies, and the inability of many schools to deliver this in the teaching of English. This implies the need to place greater emphasis on the effective teaching of English as a high-priority, compulsory subject as an alternative to adopt it as a MoI, as well as discouraging use of English as a MoI in ECED and the earliest years of schooling.

Table 5 presents the recommended approach for selecting options for English as subject or MoI. Depending on the varying contexts this Table suggests three options for selecting English as subject and partial/full MoI.

Table 5: Recommended approach for selecting options for English as subject or MoI

Options	Appropriate context
E1 English as a compulsory, priority subject at all levels **English is taught as a subject only, through proven effective methods.**	'Default' option for community schools, in particular, those in remote, disadvantaged areas.
E2 English introduced as a subject and becomes a partial MoI **Intensive teaching of English as a subject in early grades alongside MT / Nepali with**	Flexible option building on and systematizing existing approaches of use of MTs / Nepali in classes that are already formally 'English MoI', but lack the capacity to fully and effectively deliver the

transition to English as a partial MoI alongside Nepali from G3 or G5 upwards. (Possibly through division of subjects as per 2014 Roadmap, or bilingual approach within single classes).	curriculum through the medium of English.
E3 English is introduced as a subject and becomes a full MoI The official MoI is English.	Option only where English as MoI is already well-established and running effectively, or where schools can demonstrate 'English MoI Readiness'.

Source: Seel et al. (2015: 53)

2.1.3 Sequencing

Following the bi/trilingual approach, the two/three languages in school education: MT, Nepali/State official language and English can be sequenced as: MT ->Nepali/State Official language->English. If children's language is other than the official language of the State, the sequencing may go beyond the three language framework.

Use of MT as MoI and SoI: In homogeneous MT learners' classrooms an MT is used as MoI for all subjects. Depending on the duration of using MTs as MoI there are two educational models related to MTB MLE: early-exit and late-exit models.

- **Early-exit model:** In early- exit program, children are taught all the subjects mainly in their MTs from ECED to Grade 3 and transitioned to Nepali and/or State Official language as MoI from Grade 4 and retaining MT optionally as a subject. Nepali and/or State Official language should be considered a subject, with a focus on oral language development, and should be introduced as early as ECED in order for the student to be able to transition to Nepali and/or State Official language as the MoI in Grade 4. As pointed out in the draft MoI Roadmap (2014), transitional MTB MLE is 'additive' and better than the 'subtractive' dominant language based education in Nepalese context.
- **Late-exit model:** Late-exit program involves the use of MTs as the MoI and would be flexible to be used beyond Grade 3 or even up to 12 if they are full MoI ready. This strategy may be useful for specific languages, especially State official languages to be designated under federalism. There exists robust research evidence to show that the length of mother tongue medium education is more important than any other factor in predicting educational success of MLE programs (Ramirez et al.1991 and Thomas and Collier Heugh et al. 2010).

2.1.4 Transition

The early-exit or or late-exit educational model needs to be transitional. This implies that learners pass through a planned transition and that MT (ECED-Grade 3) is phased out as Nepali and /or any other State official language is phased in Grade 4 and that Nepali and/or any other official language is phased out as English is phased in Grade 9. However, the language tobe phased in needs to be introduced with flexible oral approach so that learners will have to start learning it from a scratch and will find it easier to learn.

Table 6: Recommended MoIs at ECED and Grades 1-12 (showing suggested amendments to the 2014 draft MoI Road Map)

Black type – existing draft MoI Road Map 2014 | Red type – suggested elaboration / amendment

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="12">Basic Grades</td><td colspan="4">Secondary Grades</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>ECED</td><td colspan="3">1 2 3</td><td colspan="2">4 5</td><td colspan="2">6 7</td><td>8</td><td colspan="4">9 10 11 12</td></tr>
<tr><td>MT</td><td>MT as MoI</td><td colspan="3">MT as MoI (Including literacy) MTB-1 or</td><td colspan="2">MTs continue as subjects as long as possible or</td><td colspan="2">MTs continue as subjects as long as possible or</td><td colspan="5">MTs continue as subjects as long as possible or</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3">MTs as MoI through systematic oral use MTB-2</td><td colspan="2">MT as MoI (or partial MoI) extended in Greades 4-5 where there is demand/or specified under federalism or</td><td colspan="2">MT as MoI (or partial MoI) extended in Greades 6-8 where there is demand/or specified under federalism or</td><td colspan="5">MT as MoI (or partial MoI) extended in Greades 9-12 where there is demand/or specified under federalism or</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3"></td><td colspan="2">Use of MTs for scaffolding/learning support as required</td><td colspan="2">Use of MTs for scaffolding/learning support as required</td><td colspan="5">Use of MTs for scaffolding/learning support as required</td></tr>
<tr><td>Nepali</td><td>Nepali as MoI when it is MT</td><td colspan="3">Nepali as MoI when it is MT N1 or</td><td colspan="2">Nepali as MoI (unless use of MT has been extended</td><td colspan="2">Nepali continues to be full MoI or</td><td colspan="5">Nepali continued as a compulsort subject or</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td colspan="3">Nepali as compulsory subject where it is ont the MT, with systematic teaching of Nepali as an additional language– N2 and N3</td><td colspan="2"></td><td colspan="2">Nepali as MoI for social sciences, language and arts ot for other designated uses as a MoI (e.g. bilingual approach within all or specified lessons)</td><td colspan="5">Option to continue Nepali as full MoI or partial MoI</td></tr>
<tr><td>English</td><td></td><td colspan="5">English as compulsory subject, with effective approaches to teaching of English as an additional language</td><td colspan="2">English as a priority compulsory subject or Englis as MoI for maths and science or other designated uses as a partial MoI</td><td colspan="5">English as MoI (except for language teaching or English as a partial MoI or English as a priority compulsory subject</td></tr>
</table>

Source: Seel et al. (2015: 54)

2.1.5 Strategies for special schools, faith-based schools and heritage languages

Sign Languages and Braille Script: For special schools / classes for users of sign language the mother tongue can be considered to be the sign language. For special schools / classes for users of Nepali Braille script, then this can be considered the language for literacy. Where users of sign language or braille are included in mainstream schools and classrooms, their language-learning needs should be supported as part of an inclusive approach.

Religious languages as subjects in faith-based schools: Religious (faith-based) schools are being incorporated into the mainstream system and many teach and use languages that are not the mother tongue of the students, but are associated with religious practice and culture. Such schools should factor these languages into their language planning and sequencing, whilst still taking account of the principle of the benefits of an MT-base and the need for careful sequencing. As was proposed for heritage languages, there should be a strong role for parents, local faith communities and leaders in supporting the teaching of religious languages.

- For Gumba, it may be important to distinguish of the actual mother tongues of children within these institutions (to enable MT-based teaching and acquisition of Nepali where it is a second language) from the forms of Tibetan language and Sambhota script that will be taught as subjects (albeit as major subjects forming a larger part of the curriculum than would be the case in a secular school.
- For Vihars, being mainly Newar, there may be a need to identify the use of Newar and Nepali as MoIs and the teaching of Sanskrit and / or Pali as religious languages, as subjects at least in the first instance.
- For Gurukuls, there may be a need to identify what are the mother tongues of the learners and plan for introducing Sanskrit first as a subject and gradually transitioning to its use as a MoI for religious subjects.
- For Madrasas, there is similarly a need to identify the MT of the children (most often Urdu) as a MoI and for

introducing Arabic as a core subject, for it to become the medium of religious instruction.

Heritage languages (and scripts) as subjects: Additionally to identification of the approach to the MT, Nepali and English, schools should be encouraged as far as possible to support the learning of heritage languages that children do not use as the mother tongue (e.g. because of migration and language shift). These should not be used as MoIs but instead can be included as subjects of study. Recognizing, however, that the 'trilingual' approach will already place demands on capacity and resourcing, opportunities should be sought for cost-sharing and partnership. Whilst the education sector should make policy provisions; implementation and financing responsibility could be shared with local language organizations and other sectors and agencies supporting linguistic preservation and cultural revitalization.

2.2 Appropriate pedagogies, curricula and material development

Appropriate pedagogies

It is necessary for MTB MLE programs to identify and detail key elements of 'good practice' (pedagogies, curricula and teaching-learning resources) with regards to generic issues and in relation to the identified options of:

- MT as Full MoI (MTB-1)
- MT through Flexible Oral Support (MTB-2)
- Nepali as MT (N1)
- Nepali as a Second Language (N2) and/or other State official languages
- Nepali as Second Language Orally but First Language for Literacy (N3)**.**

MTB MLE pedagogical strategies should reflect international 'best practice' through incorporating an approach to strengthening and formalizing the oral use of MTs in scaffolding learning of and through Nepali and English,

especially where MTs cannot be used as a full MoI (e.g. for literacy learning). Based on the similarities and differences between learners' MT and second language through their contrastive study, these strategies need to articulate measures to support structured teaching of Nepali and/or State official language as a second language for children for whom it is not their MT. In addition, it is important for CDC to adapt teachers' manuals for effective MTB MLE teaching-learning materials in classroom. A local community can provide a congenial setting for developing and introducing new pedagogies and teaching styles (e.g., immersion, critical literacy) for effective learning and teaching (McCarty 2002). MTB MLE can empower students through inculcating a sense of pride and identity in their languages, help to mitigate dropouts and failure and thus inspire them to succeed in schools.

As shown in MLE Project's report (Acharya 2009) shows, the ground conditions of early school education across different regions and communities in Nepal are quite diverse and many classrooms do have different combinations of students from different mother tongues. It is therefore necessary to plan different contextualized approaches such as multi-grading of children from one language and having single grades comprising of students from different languages (also discussed in more detail in Taylor's report for the MLE project(2009)). It is possible to follow a collaborative classroom pedagogy focused on development of high levels of metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness as a prerequisite for multilingual competence among all the students. Specific strategies can be worked out keeping in view the feasibility of different approaches. Educational language planning needs to view languages as resources rather than problems and to work out models of MLE for complex sociolinguistic contexts.

As viewed by Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty (2009), while models of MLE cannot be transferred to other contexts and have to be localized, international experiences suggest

some broad principles about the characteristics of highly successful and less successful MLE programs. It is important to take care of the lessons from the international experience with respect to MLE, so that education in Nepal can strengthen maintenance of multilingual and multicultural and biological diversity and an egalitarian social order.

Curricula and material development

For an effective implementation of MTB MLE Programs it is necessary to develop locally need-based curricula, textbooks, teachers' guides and other supplementary materials and technologies for both formal and non-formal education utilizing the knowledge and creative writing skills of local language communities and learners and as intended and guided by the National Framework and giving incentives to Madrasas, Gumbas, Gurukuls and other such institutions.

2.3 Capacity building

It is the responsibility of Local Level Power to utilize demand-based recruitment and deployment of MTB MLE teachers from among eligible persons from the respective local language communities (wherever feasible) with fluency in mother tongue in consultation with SMCs and provision of their appropriate orientation/training system. In return this strategy can help to raise local level employment and economic development as well as identity assertion in the community (McCarty 2002). However, some plausible mechanisms need to be evolved to address the existing non-MT-speaking teachers though most of them may be adjusted for teaching Nepali and English as subject languages in Grades 1-3.

MT teachers should be provided pre-and in-service MTB MLE training in collaboration with MLE Unit at the central level to effectively handle the classroom teaching of MTs as MoI and SoI.

It would be reasonable to develop a long-term plan for attracting potential candidates from the language communities to teaching and sustaining MTB MLE.For the purpose language mapping of the existing pool of teachers and redeployment accordingly could be an option.

Besides, an MTB MLE resource center should be established at NCED anduniversities.Training needs to be reformed to reflect the fact that most teachers will have MT children in their classrooms. Manuals should be developed and updated for training of trainers and teachers' training.

2.4 Supporting system

The MoE, development partners and other actors identify and support actions beyond the education sector that will complement and strengthen implementation of the MTB MLE Programs.

2.5 Advocacy strategies

It is important for MTB MLE program to integrate a strategy for advocacy, participation and communication on language-in-education that is embedded in wider dialogue around the multiple and multi-level purposes and benefits of education and indicatively incorporates the following elements:

- Strategies for advocacy and dialogue with education policy makers, implementers and partners, as well as wider government and influential stakeholders (duty bearers)
- Dialogue around the possibilities and benefits of multilingualism, costs in relation to benefits, the possibilities for reconciling different languages
- Provision of opportunities for discussion, learning and debate in non-threatening, respectful contexts, stimulating interest and enthusiasm

- Expert-facilitated mediation dialogues could be considered as a means of overcoming key bottlenecks in the Nepal context
- Further work to better document good practice and provide a stronger evidence base for MLE in Nepal context
- Identification of existing or new MLE initiatives for tracking of teaching practices and learning outcomes over time
- Support for documentation and publication of good practice and success stories
- Strategies for advocacy and participatory consultation with primary stakeholders (parents, children, communities)
- Appropriate communication of key MLE policies / options through multiple media, different MTs and at different levels of complexity, participation
- Ongoing (not just one-off) opportunities for non-threatening consultation, discussion and participation in decision-making in relation to language and education at local levels.
- Specific strategies to involve children in dialogue and discussion around language and articulate their own experiences and preferences.
- Making use of existing materials, in particular UNESCO *Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded* (2007) and *MTB MLE Resource Kit Including the Excluded: Promoting Multilingual Education* (2016) for raising awareness about the advantages of MTB MLE programs and sharing information related to them.
- Use of ICT and electronic media (radio, TV, etc.) for disseminating information about MTB MLE
- Establishment of successful MTB MLE schools in different linguistic contexts to serve as 'role models' and

motivate learners, parents, teachers and local management for promoting MTB MLE program.

2.6 Sustainability

To ensure effective implementation of the MTB MLE Framework and the programs at the school level and sustainability of the 'tri/bi-language' multilingual approach, local governance units should strengthen technical implementation units and committees, revision of guidelines and support multiple approaches to capacity development at all levels(in particular, teacher preparation, including through higher education, continuous training, redeployment, text book preparation, additional teaching-learning materials, availability of library with adequate materials in diff languages, etc).

It is also essential for these programs to identify and elaborate a range of mid-level strategies and actions such as supervision, monitoring and evaluation that will support the creation of conducive environment for effective MTB MLE practice to take root and be sustained at the school level (including links with NEGRP, Inclusive Education policy, EMIS, ECED, NFE, SDG4 and other areas).

2.7 Functional linkage among line agencies

It is necessary for the MTB MLE Framework to be implementable through the new SSDP and be implemented as far as possible through integrated, mainstream institutional structures (including links with NEGRP, Inclusive Education policy, EMIS, ECED, NFE and other areas and SDG4). The Language Commission also needs to act as a liaison government agency in establishing rapport with SSDP and DPs.

2.8 Language preservation through MTB MLE

As mentioned in *Constitution of Nepal* (2015), Part 5, Article 56.5, "Any Special, Protected or Autonomous Region

can be set by the Federal law for social, cultural protection or economic development." To implement this constitutional provision, the MTB MLE Framework should preserve seriously endangered languages through their digital documentation (e.g. corpora development, ethnolinguistic analysis, lexicon compilation, grammar sketch, etc.), development of their learning materials and their use in community children's early education (as implemented in Baram language (Kansakar et al., 2010). Such initiatives can create homely educational environment that would maintain and revitalize endangered languages and also safeguard ethnic cultural and linguistic identity. These efforts for language revitalization also constitute one of the major functions of the Language Commission; hence, they will be coordinated with the commission. Educational language planning should ensure protection of Linguistic Human Rights (LHRs) in education. It must be noted that LHRs are necessary but not sufficient conditions for quality education and for maintenance of indigenous languages and cultures. From an economics point of view, there are strong grounds for protection and promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity in Nepal (Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty 2009).

Curricula should also be developed as a matter of urgency for those highly endangered languages where the parents no longer speak the language to their children. These models can be called indigenous revitalization immersion models.

2.9 Monitoring and evaluation

Implementation of successful MTB MLE programs requires effective monitoring, continuous policy advocacy at all levels of governance down to the parents and community, formative program evaluation and action research. MTB MLE program needs to strengthen its research and development activities at different levels of the program.An independent community managed Language Resource Center adjoined

with the existing Resource Center or Community Learning Center (CLC) is necessary to be established to conduct research regularly in the field and ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the functioning and implementation of the MTB MLE strategies for maintaining consistency and uniformity.

Partnerships with other institutions working with language policy, MLE and linguistic human rights should be promoted, both nationally and internationally. Universities should have MLE-related subjects where students can major. In language description, in addition to support for writing grammars, dictionaries, etc, so that languages which are/will be used in schools as teaching languages/as subjects in the beginning, there should be an emphasis on the most marginalized languages before they are extinc**t**. While a National Resource Centre for MLE is necessary to organize research, evaluation, monitoring, advocacy and coordination, the local school systems also have to be empowered to participate in this process.

School level database or school level Education, Management Information system (EMIS) will be designed to accurately reflect the MT-related data of the students.

2.10 Implementation strategies

It is important for the Local Level Educational Cell to outline an implementation plan based on the MTB MLE Framework and building on the foundation provided by the previous piloting interventions and other experiences in Nepal.Wherever required support can be sought from MoE, Language Commission, local language communities and so on. An earlier version of the MLE implementation plan has been discussed and revised in *Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education Implementation Guidelines (2009)* published by DoE.

2.11 Residuals

In the preceding sections an attempt has been made to address the core aspects of MTB MLE in Nepalese context. There still remain some unresolved issues which need to be sorted out in the present political context. The greatest hurdle is the impending structural changes in governance due to occur in the light of federal restructuring especially local level power which has been constitutionally entrusted with the management of both basic and secondary education including the implementation of MTB MLE programs. Some of these important issues include the following:

i. According to *Constitution of Nepal* (2015) Article 7(2), **"**A State may, by a State law, determine one or more than one languages of the nation spoken by a majority of people within the State as its official language(s), in addition to the Nepali language." Along with Nepali as Central Level official language, it is also necessary to learn State official languages where they are not MTs for learners. This is a fresh issue in federal structure and needs to be further investigated.
ii. It seems cumbersome for the Local Level Governance to handle school education in its entirety; so it is important to articulate how Local Level Governance will interact with State and Central Level educational agencies to effectively implement the various aspects of MTB MLE program.
iii. There is a need to develop an indicative list of State official languages for educational purpose though these languages will be determined constitutionally by a State itself at the recommendation of Language Commission.
iv. To help the implementation of MTB MLE at Local Level it is essential to arrange for prompt assistance mechanism at the district, State and Central levels.

3. Conclusion

Like other countries in South and Southeast Asia Nepal is also characterized by linguistic diversity where children

have to learn through Nepali, a single dominant language and English, an international language. Various studies have, however, shown that children should begin their education through the language they first understand, i.e. their home language or mother tongues as this type of education makes learning easy and also supports their cognitive development. Later children should gradually shift to an official language for official transactions and wider communication and even later switch to English for global communication and library language and learning science and technology. This approach is known as MTB MLE.

In this report an attempt has been made to discuss MTB MLE framework consisting of its core aspects in Nepalese contexts such as selection, sequencing and transition of languages in school education, appropriate pedagogies, curricula and material development, capacity building, supporting system, advocacy strategy, sustainability, functional linkage among line agencies, language preservation, and monitoring and evaluation.

According to the indicative school typology in terms of the languages used, schools may be of three types. Type 1 refers to the schools with homogeneously Nepali-speaking learners on entry to ECED / G1 with/without Nepali as their heritage languages. Type 2 schools may have the learners that homogeneously speak a language other than Nepali as their MT (e.g. Maithili, Tamang, Sherpa, etc.) on entry to ECED / G1. These schools can have 'MoI -ready' mother tongues or not. Type 3 schools may consist of learners speaking different MTs with/without a common LWC. Appropriate strategies have been recommended for these types of schools.

This framework, however, needs to be supported through the upcoming legal enactments (especially related to Local Government) for its effective management and implementation with a view to attaining children's better educational achievement.

10

Multilingual education in Nepal: Democratizing children's language education

MAHENDRA KUMAR MISHRA

Nepal, as a liberal democratic country, initiated Multilingual Education (henceforth, MLE) in 2006 to provide equal educational opportunity to all children irrespective of linguistic and ethnic diversities. Historically, Nepal was maintaining an autonomous model of literacy adopting a restrictive linguistic policy where children from non- Nepali language background were denied their mother tongue in the classroom. After the democratic government formed, Nepal decided to adopt an inclusive linguistic model for the linguistic minority children, by familiarizing a meaningful context-explicit curriculum in schools in which the intellectual development of the children could be ensured vis-à-vis maintaining linguistic and cultural identity. Admiration of languages of the most disadvantaged people is a sign of a healthy democracy. Now, the Nepal MLE programme has completed its 14 years and has framed a language policy involving the representatives of linguistic minority organizations; developed culturally sensitive teaching-learning materials; trained the teachers on MLE

approach and adopted government schools under MLE approach (Govt. of Nepal, 2007) I had an opportunity to be a part of the Nepal MLE programme in 2007, to share my experience of MLE in Odisha in Nepal.

I want to share my experience of planning and implementing Multilingual Education in Odisha during 2005-2014. The MLE Odisha is a holistic programme based on MLE theories and approaches. As a new education programme, it has its strength, challenges and weaknesses. Simultaneously, Nepal also initiated MLE in 2006 with similar experience. I had the opportunity to be a member of the consultative team with Tove Skutnabb-Kangas during 2007 to share my experience of Odisha MLE and learn from Nepal MLE programme. In 2009 MLE team of Nepal government visited Odisha MLE programme and there was a mutual sharing of MLE plan and implementation strategies.

MLE is a significant paradigm shift from the current educational practice. My discussion in this paper will focus on my narratives, coupled with the MLE theories and methods. I will focus on that part of the implementation which strengthened MLE in Odisha. The four features of Odisha MLE were based on the following theories:

1. Standard monolingual ideology to multilingual democratic ideology
2. MLE as a combination of multi-discipline
3. Curriculum and textbooks in the first language through community knowledge
4. Teacher's professionalism for MLE pedagogy

1. Standard monolingual ideology to multilingual democratic ideology

During the past three decades, there has been a paradigm shift from a standard language ideology to multilingual educational ideology across South Asian countries. The upsurge of mother tongue education has been derived from the western world to most of the South Asian

Countries after 1991. Jhingran, analyzing the language learning outcomes of South Asian countries, in early grade classes, writes:

It is common knowledge that children in early grades in many South Asian schools are not able to read and write at the levels expected in these grades. In addition, there are large disparities across regions, social and ethnic groups and schools within each country or province.

Even within the same class, a multilevel learning situation is very common, with some children at an advanced level of reading and writing, while some others are struggling to acquire basic literacy skills. The low learning outcomes in early grades result in continued low learning levels in later primary and middle school grades, (Jhingran 2018)

Historically, South Asian countries had assumed the western colonial educational model over a century, charted by the nation-state ideology to defend the hegemony of the power devaluating the minority languages in schools. The imperialist ideology continued in the attitude and behaviour in the psyche of the people in power even after colonization. Therefore, the introduction of multilingual education in schools has become a momentous challenge to the people in power in South Asian countries. MLE is a new ideology that promoters socio-cultural and linguistic inclusion of the mass guaranteeing equitable quality in education. Therefore, the need for understanding the linguistic background and the educational need of children in their mother tongue necessitates more clarity among the state political system and educational system.

In the post-colonial period, 'national integration' after the colonial rule was necessary for the governments to protect democracy. Therefore, the provisions were made in the constitutions, and policies were made for their execution. After the 1990s teaching children in their mother tongues was initiated in South Asian schools. There was a need for a clear

goal and objective of MLE implicit in the system. MLE is not just a time-bound programme to teach mother tongue for 3- 5 years in schools. Instead, it is a regular and systematic plan to serve all the children with linguistic diversities in the country and uphold the national goal for human development to strengthen democracy for the future.

Christopher Stroud writes that the 'Standard language ideology is monolingual, structured and ordered, maintains singularity, emphasizes ownership and focuses on expert voices whereas multiple language ideology is a 'social phenomenon, par excellence, a form of social action comprising one of the most important ways by means of which individuals and groups construct personal identities, negotiate social relationships, articulate social categories and contest or acquiesce to power relations' (Straud, 2002).

But, post-independent Indian union and its states continued the colonial schooling system. Gandhi's Basic Education disappeared from the national discourse. Instead, a mainstreaming mantra in higher education was dominant in post-independent India. The Kothari Commission (1966-68) was in favour of 'mainstreaming' for a 'national integration' laterally with the 'social integration'. National integration led to submerging the cultural and linguistic diversities, and only the modern Indian languages were constitutionally directed as a medium of instruction in modern states. The creation of states in India was also a part of nation-state ideology for which many traditional tribal territories having a geopolitical identity (e.g. Santhal Parghana, Gondwana, and Bhilwara) were dispersed into many modern states and lost their cultural identity. Belonging to one tribal community, they were bound to learn the state languages and scripts. For instance, Santhali is the dominant community in Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha had to learn the respective state languages ignoring their language. When the new states were formed in free India, the dream of formation of a Santhal Parghana was mingled in the wave of nation-state ideology. Similarly,

about thousands of minority languages had to sacrifice their linguistic and cultural identities for national integration. The historical delusion of nationalism submerged the tribal patriots who sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the country.

In 1986 the National Policy of Education was framed. Acharya Ramamurthy Committee elaborated it. The Programme of Action, 1992 of National Policy of Education-1986 discussed the mother tongue education in the school curriculum. In 2000 and 2005, the National Curriculum Framework-2000 was drafted and operated in which the necessity of multilingual education and education for linguistic minority was discussed.

Meanwhile, the Government of India introduced Education for All in 1993-94 under the aegis of District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) supported by the World Bank. In Education for All, the traditional curriculum and teacher training were rejuvenated to accommodate the education of the children of disadvantaged groups. Therefore, the question of teaching in mother tongue took a prominent place in the national education programme for eradicating the illiteracy of developing countries.

The long-term advantage to foster cultural democracy under the MLE approach is diverse. These are:

I. To explore how formal educational institutions can either reaffirm community marginalization or empower minority language speakers

II. Multilingual education should take place in a discourse of language and power, which would shift the terms of the debate away from an emphasis on the details of educational programmes to the more important and also more elusive framing conditions for multilingual education.

III. Issues of language and education are fundamentally issues of power and marginalization of minority language speakers in globally transformed economies.

IV. Emphasizing equity, social justice, democracy and citizenship, which force us to conceptualize solutions to educational problems in non-traditional and non-educational terms of power and politics, is also gaining full acceptance (Stroud 2002).

2. MLE as a composition of multi-discipline

The theory and objective of MLE are not just language-education, but it is a comprehensive knowledge that captures the individual, social and cultural magnitudes. MLE is multidisciplinary, which contains three domains, viz. linguistic, socio-cultural, and cognitive (Cummins: 2000).

Linguistic domain

i. In the linguistic domain, children acquire oral proficiency in terms of sentence formation, word use, word meaning when necessary in a particular situation. They make statements, negate, interrogate, exclaim, and order and request. They also acquire poems, stories, riddles, and styles of conversation from the elders as a part of oral language competence. The child is exposed to other languages and cultures, which are learned and assimilated by him/her in a natural mode. The child learns more than one language through the mother tongue and uses the words of both the languages interchangeably depending on the situation. In the linguistic domain, the child learns about the principles of language use scientifically. What is important in Linguistic domain is to learn the language skill, i.e. reading and writing through a systemic and scientific method to ensure that the child has acquired the competency of acquiring academic language in a given time.

Socio-cultural domain

ii. In the socio-cultural domain, the children acquire what to speak to whom, how, why, when, and where along with social etiquette and manners. They inherit culturally

acknowledged values and behaviour using language use, for example, respect for the elders, devotion to God, affection to pets, and observation of nature and environment. Children make their worldview and accord with social standards and norms. The child also realizes her/his identity in the network of relations in family and society through the native language. When the socio-cultural domain represents the visible and invisible matter around the child in her environment, it is associated with the mind, and cognitive development of the child occurs.

Cognitive domain

iii. The cognitive domain is related to knowing about the world around the child, which is a specific process that starts from the beginning of mother tongue acquisition till the last breath. The child begins knowing about the names of the objects, events, entities, processes, colours, light, time, place, darkness, day-night, flora and fauna. Further, the child relates his/her mind with the substance in a meaningful way in a real environment and associates him/herself with them. Later the child starts correlating the visible world with the invisible. The context of the child shapes his/her thinking, imagination, creativity, reasoning, memory and inquisitiveness through experience and active participation. Thus, he/she constructs his/her knowledge inherited from the ancestors and elders in family and society.

Briefly, these three viewpoints contribute to the learning of the child in the MLE approach. It specifies that education is a natural phenomenon, cognitively individualized, socio-cultural constructed, and linguistically exhibited.

At present, monolingual classrooms dispossess the children of the opportunity to expose his/her capabilities. Unless an appropriate learning environment with the above standpoints is created in the classrooms, no expected outcome could be imagined. This includes a whole range of

transformation in policy, curriculum, teacher education, classroom transaction, and assessment system for which MLE is necessary.

3. Curriculum and textbooks in the first language through community knowledge

Children should find their prior experience from the text in their language. Community knowledge is collectively created, shared and understood as a part of their communicative practice, fulfilling the social role, bear values and morals. Referring Vygotsky, Kozulin has discussed the inevitability of community knowledge in the school curriculum. (Kozulin, 2003). Norma, Moll and Amanti, (2005) discussing the use of community funds of knowledge in teaching suggests that children find their memory and imagination from their community knowledge and develop critical thinking and reasoning to correlate these with realities. The knowledge from culture is a validated oral-performative text the community practice. Both heritage knowledge and everyday knowledge represent their past and present. Excluding their cultural expertise and induce an unknown understanding to create strain among the children. In some cases, the curriculum designers are desirous of translating the standard textbook written in a target language into children's mother tongue. However, this practice is not helpful to children.

If the socio-historical experience of the child and his/her environment is unrepresented, restricting the children from their cultural values and homogenizing the curriculum, then, inevitably, the learning of the child is not culturally responsive. Formal psychology respect 'a standard knowledge' prescribed by the state, and 'other' knowledge are not. By perpetuating the one knowledge and ignoring the diverse indigenous knowledge inherited from generations, the state fails to maintain a cultural democracy.

The curriculum also has to be democratic. Today the oral genre like tales and songs, the proverbs and riddles, the way of farming, the type of soil, and the types of rain are not available in standard textbook since the purpose of such standard textbooks is to impart reading and writing skills with a standardized knowledge of the elite model. Without a situated knowledge of the children, the cultural cognition of the community would not emerge, and denial of such cultural knowledge would lead to cultural discrimination. Knowingly or unknowingly the cultural attitude of the superior elites is imposed in the curriculum. Therefore, in Odisha MLE, ten independent curricula were developed based on the cultural practices of linguistic communities. Uniformity of curriculum must be found on the learning outcome the nation aspires to, but the multicultural content should be included to create a national culture where the small community is also provided space in knowledge construction. Cultural democracy stands for the diversity of culture and language. (Darder:) Coexistence of culture is the breathing character of a nation like India and Nepal, and it is indispensable to introduce the community language and knowledge in the school curriculum. Particularly in early grade, the big books, story chart, picture story must be prepared, drawing the funds of knowledge from the community. Odisha MLE materials were authenticated by community checking, which was developed by government teachers from the tribal community. Due to modernization, the traditional culture of the tribal population is speedily replaced from the memory of tribal youths. Teachers from the tribal community are also unable to explain their respective cultural knowledge. This generational gap has created a moribund state among the educated tribal teachers. When the tribal teachers developed the teaching-learning materials on language and environmental science for class III- V, it was found that they do not know their cultural resources which their elders know. Therefore

they learnt from the community and prepared the curricular materials.

In most cases, teachers are asked to write a story or a poem for early grade children. The purpose is to involve the community teachers. The teachers, who have not been a writer during their service, try to create such texts to teach a specific alphabet or word. The artificiality of creating literacy texts is well known to those who create children's literature. Does the community create their oral language to teach the children to prepare for some word or letters? They tell the story or sing the song in a context, and naturally, the children learn words and sentences. Therefore, the purpose of teaching language in the classroom is different from the purpose of a community storyteller. The storyteller tells the story to generate knowledge and wish the children to enjoy the story with meaning. Teachers in the classroom read the story to teach the child a particular word or a letter. Therefore, when the natural learning of young children becomes artificial for teaching literacy, the classroom becomes artificial and monotonous. Therefore, it is essential for a curriculum designer and the textbook writers to reflect the prior knowledge of the children and correlate literacy in a manner that both the teacher and students can enjoy learning together. In the conventional classroom, the conscious effort of teachers to teach reading and writing discourages children. Therefore, in early grade, multilingual education, more focus on oral language development has been emphasized. It is highly essential to orient the community teachers on skills and techniques of writing children's literature, collecting folklore and learn how to make the community texts into a classroom text. The community methods of learning should be adopted along with the examples from the cultural context.

Community school linkages:

MLE curriculum emphasizes on community ownership on the materials produced in their language. Generally, the

blame is inflicted on the parents for their incapability to provide learning space to the children at home. The parents are non- literate, but their oral tales, myths, legends, songs, and riddles could be textualised, then the parents can participate in the curricular activity. Therefore, it necessary to contextualize the texts for the literacy of the children. Children's folklore, festivals, music and dance, traditional games (indoor and outdoor, games for girls and boys) and some material culture like art and craft could be beneficial where the community resource persons can take part with the teacher and children in curriculum development. A tangible scaffolding of community resource could be created, and then parents can teach the children through oral communication. School museum, storytelling festivals, art and craft, music and dance are some theme to connect the school with the community (Mishra, 2012).

MLE programme links the parents and community with the community texts in the printed form introduced in schools. Once the community recognizes that their oral knowledge has been introduced in the classroom in their language, they will regain their confidence that their knowledge can also be a part of education, and get involved in school activities with the teachers. The parents and children can discuss the text together, and the parents will have the scope to know about the learning of their children. MLE in India and Nepal need such community participation where a teacher should have a keen interest to learn from the community, collect local knowledge and prepare reading – writing materials, create the storybooks/big book in which community takes part. Today' communitising learning society' is widely discussed in the educational domain. First of all, to make this approach fruitful, teachers must be community researchers to link the school with the community. The teacher should explore what the cultural methods of teaching and learning is followed in the community.

4. Transformative teacher education in MLE

In the South Asian context, teachers are multilingual and multicultural. Their knowledge has also been shaped from the cultural context, but once they are trained on a teacher education course, they believe in written standard knowledge prescribed in the textbooks and deliberately ignore the experiential knowledge. The standardization of knowledge in schools and classroom texts limit the teacher's perception to look beyond the classroom. Further, the direct purpose of teachers either focus on teaching the child reading and writing to validate their teaching profession before the authority or to complete the course within a time frame. Therefore the teachers are compelled to be an information provider than a knowledge creator. In such a system, innovation becomes an exceptional case in teachers' teaching.

The formal psychology of the 19th century still dominates the teachers teaching practice. The formal psychology rests on behaviouristic theory. Formal psychology is context-free, uncritical about the socio-historical consciousness, whereas post formal psychology highly depends on the socio-cultural context and emphasizes the prior experience of the child. (Joe and Steinberg and Villaverde, 2001) A language is a human act with mutual interaction in a given socio-cultural context for a productive and meaningful purpose. It is not just a practice of trial and error, stimulus and response, or reward or punishment.

Non-participation of teachers in curriculum design and textbook preparation is another factor which keeps the teacher away from understanding the way of teaching. Teachers are considered as the agency of action without elaborating the purpose of action. The uncritical teaching act in the classroom, with an uncritical information delivery for rote memorization, can at best take the students to

meritocracy or competitions, but never help the education process to be democratic. Post-formal psychology does not categorize the intelligence of the children with a standard measurement ignoring the inner potentialities and capabilities of the children. Post-formal psychology respects the situated cognition of the children and believes that the environment of the children contributes substantially to the development of children's cognition in their cultural context. Construction of knowledge is not limited to the classroom only, but it has a broader social context. Teachers have to understand the trend of post-formal psychology, and the type of 'knowledge' children experience in their informal learning and then to connect those experience with the school knowledge (Joe and Steinberg and Villaverde, 2001).

The cultural attitude of teachers towards an unwritten society is not favourable. They do not explore that the world of oral culture is the mother of written society. Even the knowledge that the community creates is the rich depository of experience that the modern school is ignorant of it. The social divide created between oral and written lead to an ignorance of the educated elites about the cultural diversities of the country.

Teachers do not acquire new knowledge of language teaching and learning or the principles of pedagogy. What type of teachers does state need for its schools and how does the state consider the community knowledge as a resource for learning in the primary stage? Given proper orientation, a teacher can understand that the village where he teaches is the storehouse of knowledge and out of that knowledge she must have the vision to prepare a lesson plan to teach the cultural knowledge in the classroom. Teachers are not responsible if they do not teach, but it is the responsibility of the state machinery which creates them. The state should accept that the educationist, linguists and psychologists have established the theory that the cognitive development of the children is shaped from their experiential knowledge through

their mother tongue. Learning of the child in a second /foreign language needs a lot of parental and institutional scaffolding for which the home or the school is not well prepared. Therefore, English could be introduced in class III or IV.

If teachers have freedom with a positive attitude with professional knowledge of theory and methods, along with the practice, they can create knowledge. Creation is the ultimate goal of education. Compelling teachers teach in a framework of course completion with limited exposure to provide cumulative knowledge reconstruction. They also discourage innovation. Teachers repeat the same information in the class for years together to provide textbook information without an enquiry of why and how of their teaching. Teachers, as the director of his classroom, keep the students in the culture of silence (Freire: 1970, 2005). Freire wished that teachers, as a citizen of a democratic country, should have the responsibility of shaping a liberatory democracy. The nation needs a teacher to be a constructor of knowledge. The teacher's professionalism should not be limited to information delivery. Instead, teachers should be allowed to create meaningful activities with the children to learn in the classroom collectively and make the classroom a joint productive activity.

MLE in Odisha, India

The National Policy of Education 1986, National Curriculum Framework -2005 and *Right to Education Act -2009*, have provided guidelines for adoption of mother tongue education. The state curriculum framework- 2007 of the State Council of Educational Research and Training, Odisha (SCF, SCERT- 2007) has made provision for using the mother tongue of minority children since the state is thickly populated with 62 tribal communities, highest in India.

Though the mother tongue education in Odisha started for six tribal languages under DPEP during 1996- 2004, it was aborted due to the apathetic attitude of the bureaucracy, but the experience gained during these eight years helped us to reimagine the mother tongue-based MLE. In 2005 the National Curriculum Framework -2005 was published, and the Government of India officially declared the introduction of mother tongue-based multilingual education in Indian states. In 2004 Andhra Pradesh started MLE in 8 tribal languages led by the Department of Tribal Affairs, but it was limited to use mother tongue as supplementary primers in class I and II without replacing Telugu as a subject. The remaining subjects were taught in Telugu. Besides, there was a lack of coordination between the Education Department and the Tribal Welfare Department. Therefore, though the programme was started with much enthusiasm, it continued until 2010 and then collapsed. Other states like Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Assam, West Bengal and Gujarat initiated the MLE programme. Most of them undertook MLE as preparing bilingual picture dictionary and storybooks and distributing them as supplementary readers in tribal areas. The primary objective of MLE and its process of plan and implementation were misled and misunderstood.

In Odisha, two major activities were commenced in the MLE programme. The first one was the orientation of tribal area teachers on tribal language and culture, induction of teaching methods and approaches of first language and second language acquisition from the cultural context.

The next activity was to frame culturally responsive bilingual textbooks in 10 tribal languages involving the existing tribal teachers in government schools. The Odisha Child Census 2005 tracked the access, retention and achievement of the children along with the children's languages in 72000 schools. The outcome was illuminating to realize how linguistic diversities in a state contribute to

children's learning. Nineteen thousand three hundred forty schools are having 20+ students of linguistic minority groups. A total number of such students in these schools were 10, 99, 240. Nearly 2/3rd of them (711607) belong to Santhal (150680) and other Tribal languages. (560927). 10 Districts account for over 92% of these children were from common language families. From the above linguistic data, the state inferred the type of linguistic diversity in schools, which were the authentic evidence to adopt MLE. This disaggregated data helped the administrators to realize how the children face linguistic difficulties in learning where the teachers are nontribal, and the textbooks are monolingual (Odisha Child Census 2005, www.opepa.in).

There were 17 hundred thousand tribal children in the state and 16900 teachers from tribal communities during 2005. In July 2006, the State-Tribal Advisory Committee approved ten tribal languages to be included in the MLE programme for 1000 schools over five years. Later on, Santhali language was included, and 100 schools were also adopted for Santhali language. At present 2500 schools have been adopted under the MLE approach. There is a target to introduce MLE in 19305 schools in a phased manner.

MLE in Nepal: A paradigm shift

Nepal is a multilingual and multicultural country. The rich culture and language maintained by many indigenous communities have a socio-historical background. They have also created their knowledge system that is important to their life-world, which constructs the identity of Nepal. The social integration is organically multilingual and relational in Nepal. In socio-cultural and economic reasons, they use more than one language for their sustenance has shaped the nature of their experiential learning. The multiplicity of languages has never been a problem or a burden to their individual or society.

In Nepal a proverb runs, *Ek Raja Ek desh, Ek bhasha Ek Bhes* (one king, one kingdom, one language and one dress) justified the dominant ideology adopting a restricted monolingual policy which marginalized many minority languages in schools. Additionally, knowledge in school was also decided by the state. Power decides the language and content of the curriculum to propagate their political ideology upon the people to keep them subjugated. Their institutional support denigrates community knowledge, folklore, and indigenous wisdom to make education as a state apparatus. In a democratic system, the marginalized wisdom of the people get recognized, but not at the cost of denigrating the major languages. Democracy respects both the written and oral language equal and provides space for the people's voice.

Nepali is the official language spoken by 44.64% of the population. The medium of instruction is Nepali. Yadava (2007:3) writes, "nearly one-fourth of Nepalese languages are liable to be threatened due to reasons such as lack of intergenerational language transmission, marginalized number of speakers, the dearth of materials for language education and literacy, negative government and institutional language attitudes and policies including official status and use."

Nepal National Education Planning Commission (1956), All Round National Education Committee (1962), and The New Education System Plan (1971-75) had adopted Nepali as a medium of instruction. *The Education Act* (1971) was amended in 2002, ensuring the mother tongue-based education followed by Education for All/National Plan of Action (EFA/NPA) 2003). *The Interim Constitution* (2007) recommended the right of each community to receive primary education in their mother tongue. This has been manifested in prevailing School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2015), which stipulates that mother tongue has to be the medium of instruction up to grade three and in grades

four and five transitions from the mother tongue as medium of instruction to Nepali as a medium of instruction (Yimphu).

International and national MLE experts like Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, (2007, 2009), Shelley K. Taylor, (2010) Ajit Mohanty (2009) Yogendra P. Yadava, (2007) Dhir Jhingran, (2005) Lava Deo Awasthi (2004) David Hough (2007), Miranda Weinberg (2013) Amrit Yonjan Tamang, (2007) Prem Phyak, Puskar Kadel, IndraYimphu, and many others have studied the policy and implementation strategies for MLE in Nepal and have substantially contributed to language research and planning. Skutnabb-Kangas and Mohanty have helped in the preparation of language policy in Nepal. Since I was a part of these historical processes during 2007-2009, to have an educational exchange programme between Nepal and Odisha, I can estimate the gradual development of MLE in Nepal.

A nation may have a policy, but it may not ensure the implementation of MLE. In Odisha first of all the government did not have a policy until 2014, but a robust programme was in operation. Chhattisgarh State has an MLE policy since 2009, but till date, the plan of MLE has not been implemented. Unless education guides the government, the government cannot guide education. Therefore, the people in power should understand the spirit of education and implement the programme with commitment following the policy to safeguard the constitutional mandate and develop human resources of the state.

1. Education and 'conditions of education'.

Democratic education is not just providing a positive atmosphere like infrastructure, teachers, mid-day meal, uniform, textbooks and salary to teachers in which educational authorities are engaged throughout the year. However, these are conditions of education, not education (Alexander 2008). In democratic education, teachers as a majority should decide the nature of their education with the

policymakers to safeguard the national goal abided by the constitution and wisdom of the society. In other words, teachers should play a major role to safeguard the national interest in their classroom.

2. Elite's curriculum versus curriculum of the mass

In many cases, the elites decide the curriculum and textbooks to uniformly consider that the elitist model of education is suitable to the upper class/caste people and also to mainstream the marginalized. Multilingual education stands for a democratic education where not only the language but the diverse knowledge of the people is also equally important to shape the objective of the curriculum in which the spirit of the constitution is reflected in thought and action. By adopting this, people irrespective of elite and mass, can learn from each other and explore the unexplored knowledge of the people which is sustainable and adaptable for maintaining cultural and national values.

3. An assimilative language in education

Integration of monolingual ideology in multilingual ideology is a process where all the languages have appropriate space. MLE is not against any standard language but to walk together with all the languages. Teacher's professional development with a sense of shouldering the citizen's responsibility to teach with freedom of thought and knowledge will make the classroom more cooperative with mutual respect. Democracy will begin from the classroom. Development of curriculum in multiple languages and cultures for social integration and national identity are inbuilt in multilingual education.

4. Language and power

The changing ideology in politics and power determines the nature of education in the state. (Cummins, 2000).South Asian countries have realized that monolingual

model of education has not been successful, and in any way, it would not fulfillthe equitable quality education. Current academic system has felt the necessity and feasibility of multilingual education in schools. The global research validates the necessity of adopting MLE and provides evidence to the government to safely implement the successfully implemented projects.

5. Language maintenance plan

The Nepal Transition plan aims at using mother tongue as medium of instruction for teaching language, maths and environmental science. However, the use of Nepali to non-Nepali children in class-I, along with English, appears to be a difficult task. In the case of Class I and II, the state may use community story and prepare thematic lessons where the culture of the community could be transacted in the mother tongue of the children. If the children achieve the core competence of early literacy (Jhingran 2019) in Class I and II through innovative methods and approaches, adopting the community story, and prepare songs and lessons are lessons from the community songs and tales, then these culturally responsive learning will be more acceptable to the children to reflect upon their culture in orality in reading and writing. Both the knowledge and skill tract could be combined, adopting a balanced approach in class I and II. By then it would be possible to improve the access, retention and develop literacy with meaningful learning where the teachers of these classes would release their inner potentialities, and they can witness a successful teaching and learning environment.

6. Teachers' attitude

Teachers' attitudinal and professional growth is necessary to develop their classroom teaching activities. Teachers and students belong to almost the same cultural background. The social and cultural superiority shapes the

teacher's belief and concepts (Brinkmann, 2019). Teachers want to be the authority of power following the administrative model of their immediate authorities, which is the negative effect of the colonial model. Teachers should be the authority of knowledge, and the bureaucrats should know that there is a fundamental difference between the education department and other departments. Administrators need to be oriented towards the objective of MLE as a national goal. For this, teachers' stereotypes, belief, knowledge and attitude are, therefore, required to be proactive towards the state and community which will help them to understand the children of the minority communities and understand the need of the child. Therefore, a teacher must know the background, need and interest of the children in the classroom (Brown, 2000). Unless a continuous interpersonal and emotional relationship is established, children cannot get connected to the teachers and teachers cannot be connected to the community.

7. Professional growth of teachers

Professional orientation of teachers should be developed with topics like the basics of pedagogy, principles of teaching and learning of mother tongue and second language, addressing language classroom by knowing the history of language teaching approaches. Teachers find contrast rather than a connectedness in the changing theories of language teaching and learning. Teachers must understand that every plan has invisible connections and differences — the one hundred years of language teaching theories and approaches. Once the teachers know these approaches, they can distinguish them and feel how the children's prior knowledge is applied in the classroom. The clarity in theory and methods and strategies of language teaching is highly essential for early grade learning of language. The relation between the mother tongue and second language acquisition is most important in the context of multilingual setting to prepare the teachers as language teaching professionals.

8. The orientation of teachers on cultural knowledge

Besides the applied linguistic, teachers may also be oriented on the cultural knowledge of the village from where they can visualize the materials to use them in the classroom. Once teachers are sincerely empowered, they will voluntarily involve in the act of teaching to use their valuable time in the classroom using the culture and language of the child.

9. Scaling up

The initial preparation and productive result will help the system to scale up the existing schools of Nepal to adopt the MLE approach. It is a general conception that people always oppose new ideas and new programmes. Even though they know the issues and problems, they feel reluctant to adopt new ideas. It is also found that the programme is in its formation much efforts are made and the focus is visible with multiple support, but when after some years when the programme is scaled up the initial interest and intensity of the programme are reduced to a mechanical routine. Therefore, the initial model and its visible results determine the nature of a long-term educational goal. The process and its classroom input would result in the quality outcome in future.

Many global MLE experts have prescribed the models of MLE. The major challenge is how to go ahead with a systemic process where the state can create a pathway on which the programme will be well designed and implemented. A continuous praxis, followed by a blend of constant top-down policy and bottom-up practice, can help to achieve the MLE innovation.

11

Integration of local language and cultures into the education policy and program in Nepal

CHUDA MANI BANDHU

1. Introduction

Literacy is one of the most important indicators of human development. We have been trying to eradicate illiteracy from the world by providing "Education for All". Nepal's efforts to increase the rate of literacy has reached 53.5% in 2001 (CBS, 2002) and the most recent statistics show an increase of literacy rate to 63%. So, 37% of the total population cannot read and write. In 2010 UNESCO Confucius prize for literacy was given to Nepal "for its ability to reach the most disadvantaged communities …" (UNESCO, 2010). It is also reported that 17% of the children are not attending the school and 12% are dropping out early. They are the children of ethnic minorities and those living in the remote places of the country. This paper discusses integrating local languages and cultures into the education policy and programs with particular emphasis on oral medium in the beginning. with short term programs and then go for long term planning in the context of recent developments in MLE in Nepal.

2. Diversities in topography, language and culture

Nepal presents diverse and rich topographical heterogeneity ranging from the Tarai to the top of Everest. The total area of 147, 181 square km. of Nepal can be divided into three main geographical regions: the plain of the Tarai in the South, the Himalayan mountain ranges in the North and the mid-mountain region inbetween them. There are over 100 languages and dialects (Nepal census 2001 lists 92 languages, *Ethnologue* gives 126 languages and Michael Noonan writes 140 languages) and all the languages belong to four language families except Kusunda which is a language isolate. The highly populated area of the Tarai is occupied by the speakers of Indo-Aryan (Maithili, Bhojpuri, Avadhi, Tharu, etc.), Tibeto-Burman (speakers of various languages migrated from the mid-hills), Munda (Santhal or Satar) and Dravidian (Dhangar/Jhangar) languages. The mountain region, which is least populated is inhabited by the speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages. The mid-mountain region is occupied by the people of various ethnic groups speaking different Tibeto-Burman languages as well as Nepali language.

3. The written and unwritten languages

Nepali, Nepal Bhasha, Maithili, Bhot Bhasha, Lapcha and Limbu are the languages with written records and literature. The first three of these are taught in the university up to the higher level and the Bhot Bhasha is used by the Buddhist in the monasteries while the Urdu is used by the Muslims in the traditional type of Madarasa in some Muslim populated locations. These and other languages of Nepal have been written down in Devanagari and some reading materials are published. The Indo-Aryan languages like Avadhi, Bhojpuri, Tharu, and Rajbansi are also written in the Devanagari script.

4. Importance of mother tongue education

The importance of the use of mother tongue in primary education was promoted by UNESCO in early 1950s (UNESCO, 1953). As the language reflects its own culture, use of mother tongue in childhood education becomes a symbol of group identity. Mother tongue is also a means of socialization in early childhood. The use of mother tongue in primary education leads to bridging the gaps between the home and school and learning becomes smooth and meaningful. A child learns faster in her mother tongue. He/She can think creatively and can react logically to the environment. "It is the mother tongue that every human being first learns to formulate and express his ideas about himself and about the world in which he lives." (UNESCO, 1953). So, mother tongue education is not merely a political demand; it is a social, educational and psychological reality. Research has proved that the use of mother tongue accelerates the process of learning of the children while the use of other tongues may cause retardation and stagnation.

5. Use of mother tongues in the education system of Nepal

The constitution of Nepal (1991) granted primary education in the national languages of Nepal and the Interim constitution of Nepal (2003) reinforced it But all the languages are not efficient for the use in Primary Education as there are no textbooks for many of the languages and no alphabets for many other languages. For giving education in mother tongues the languages have to be used in written and oral forms. While oral form of the language is basic and the written variety is secondary, the unwritten status of many of the languages of Nepal compels us to find ways and means to use these languages effectively in primary education. Even the users of the written languages with rich traditions cannot manage without using them in oral communication. This makes a parameter of language use as a medium and as a

subject of study (as literature) in its oral and written forms as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Language use in education

	Oral	Written
Language	Is fundamental for wider communication and for use in instructions, explanations and discussions.	Is basic for developing literacy skills such as reading and writing for the transfer of knowledge beyond the time and space.
Literature	Is an integral part of particular linguistic group and an import-ant aspect of oral education .	Is basic for teaching language arts in the mother tongues which reflect the creative genuine of the speakers of the particular language.

6. Use of oral medium in the beginning

There is a general feeling of the people involved in policy making that unless a standard orthography is prepared and textbooks are printed minority language cannot be used in schools. This causes us to wait for the minority language speakers to start teaching in their mother tongues (Noonan, 2006). My argument is that preparation for written use of the language is important but the more important is to start the oral use of the mother tongues in education. As Malone (2003) suggested the written medium should follow the oral one as soon as possible. The use of mother tongue in primary education should not be delayed. The spelling system has already been devised for many unwritten languages. Standardization of the spelling system takes time. Even the Nepali language is going in the process of orthographic revision. Writing systems can be devised with the help of linguists if ethnic communities are ready to work for the development of their languages. There are two steps:

(a) Form a committee of the community members, collect local folklore materials in the local language/dialect,

hire a local teacher for local school, give short term training to the teacher(s) with teachers' guides, to use oral language with contents from local culture.

(b) Request the government to develop the language (devise orthography, write grammar and compile a dictionary), prepare the curriculum, textbooks, and reading materials and train the teachers to use written languages with various activities.

7. Development of minority languages

The minority languages of Nepal need to be developed as written languages in order to make them capable of effective medium of education. For this the languages which are yet unwritten should have their scripts and standard spelling systems. Many languages can use a common script but each of them must have their own spelling systems. In order to devise orthography for a particular language we need to analyze the phonological system of that language. In addition to this, the grammatical structure of the language should be described and a dictionary should also be compiled. So, the studies of the structure and vocabulary are also part of language development which is pre-requisite for further use of the language in various fields including primary education.

There are various issues that need immediate attention for effective implementation of mother tongue education. They are of four types: Linguistic, Literary, Educational and Administrative. Making and standardizing the orthography, writing of grammar, and compilation of a dictionary are linguistic issues while collection of materials from oral literature and developing creative writing as well as translating resources into the local language are the literary issues. The problem should also be handled educationally by designing curriculum, preparing text books and reading materials as well as teachers' guides. There are also the issues to be solved administratively by appointing or replacing

teachers for teaching in local languages.The teachers must know the languages of their children. It is certainly possible if all new teachers are the speakers of local languages and old teachers are properly trained to teach in local languages.

8. Integration of local languages can be made easy

In the present context local language means the particular language/dialect of the locality spoken by the local community. Sometimes languages are broadly identified like Rai language in Nepal. In the census of 1991 Rai was listed as one language group, but in 2001 the census reported 23 Rai languages. The number of Rai languages is already increased to 32 (NLPRC 2008: p.5) and the linguists believe that there may be more. There are other languages with local variations such as Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Tamang, Magar and Limbu. Reading materials developed for one variety will not suffice for other varieties of that language. But if the teacher is trained to teach the children of the local variety, S/he can integrate the local language and culture effectively.

9. Integration of local culture

We can talk about the culture of the minority language speakers as the culture of the common people which is understood as folklore. Folklore is divided into four domains: (a) Oral Traditions (b) Performing Arts (c) Customary and (d) Material Folklore. The oral traditions are poems, hymns, ballads, epics, folk tales, riddles, proverbs, myths and legends. **V**arious types of folk music, folk dances and dramatic performances can be understood as folk performing Arts which are performed by individuals or groups. The life cycle rites and various types of rituals, social practices as well as ceremonies, and festivals are all aspects of customary folklore. In Nepalese traditions, various types of songs, dances and myths and legends are closely linked to rituals and festivals. Artistic as well as functional objects are made

by folk groups, such as musical instruments, household furniture. (Diwasa, Bandhu and Nepal 2007)

Folklore is sometimes defined as "a small group interaction". The linguistic minorities constitute such small groups. It is handed down from generation to generation. It contains the beliefs, customs and thinking of a group of people. They can tell the history of their community and have good command over their knowledge and skills. The nursery rhymes that the children sing, the play songs that the children recite and the folktales that the elderly persons tell the children are great resources for children's literacy.

In Nepal, the ethnic minorities and cast groups have their own folklore with which the children grow. They contain their identity, their values, customs, knowledge, skills and practices. If proper attention is given to the local culture, which is same as local folklore, learning of the children becomes meaningful. The folklore communicated in the local language will be profitable for the children. As most of the folklore is transmitted orally as well as through behavior and skills children will be learning not only the language but also the culture in practice.

Local language and culture are important in Nepal because the sense of locality is contextual and meaningful. The hills and rivers have separated people and their speech from one another. If one walks for the whole day from the lowland to the heights of a high mountain s/he would find varieties of flora and fauna in different environments, languages and life styles. Children are accustomed to their own culture. The children of the mountain area do not see elephant, and the children of the Tarai do not find Yak around them. The children of the different geographical localities have different types of perceptions about their environments. As the local teachers possess good knowledge of the local language and culture they can make children's learning highly effective.

10. Appointing and training the teacher.

The idea of integrating local languages and cultures in the educational system of the country can be implemented successfully if the teachers are trained to teach children in their mother tongues. Emphasis must be given to appoint the local teachers because the outsiders do not know the culture of the locality and cannot perform the task successfully. The outsiders cannot use the language as the local people do. The experts can tell how efficiently the local language can be used, but only the local teachers know the language. The teachers should be trained to use the language orally in varieties of situations.

11. Teachers activities: Storytelling, singing and reciting poems in the local languages

The teachers who know local language and culture can instruct children for good habits and manners and can praise them for their creative works, their sense of obedience and discipline in their own language. The teachers must be trained to tell stories, folktales, to sing songs and recite poems talking to the children about the things they already know.

Story telling is a part of children's socialization. It will be most useful if it is done in the local language. The reason is that the children can understand not only the content but also the art of story telling. Some children like singing and reciting poems. The teacher can teach the children to sing songs and recite poems in the local languages which will also help to develop their power of expression.

12. Local language teachers for local children

Teachers play lead role in integrating local languages and cultures in children's education. As the teacher must know the local language/dialect, s/he should be appointed with necessary trainings. In the context of Nepal, local educational administration or even the village development

committee can appoint local teachers who can teach in local language. If they need they can minimize the qualification of the teacher. If this idea is accepted at the policy level, the government has to appoint large number of new local teachers. But the problem is that there are teachers already appointed and many of them are not from the locality and do not know the local language and culture. The government has to transfer and place them in appropriate places. This is a great task that the government has to do to make MLE program successful.

13. Short term and long term programs

After policy decisions are made for successful implementation of integrating local languages and cultures into the education system, some short term and long term preparations should be made. Short term preparations are meant for training the teachers to use local language in oral medium and long term preparation for using the local language in written medium. For oral use the teachers need to be trained to use the language/dialect/in various styles of spoken form. They should be trained to collect folktales, local history, legends and use them effectively. They should also be trained to teach the students to sing and recite poems, riddles and other items of oral traditions.

Long term preparations have to do with the preparation of teachers to teach local languages and cultures in written forms. Government or other institutions devoted to the promotion of languages and cultures can help to devise orthography, to compile a dictionary and to write a grammar. The local teachers with the help of community members can write down the folklore of their own and prepare big books for little children.

Recently, Nepalese Society for Children's Literature organized a workshop to prepare big books for children from locally available materials. Folktales, songs, legends and local history were the sources for contents. The teachers of

Tamang community were invited in a workshop to prepare books for children. Writers and illustrators helped them in writing and illustrating the books. This has shown that there are possibilities of preparing learning materials for children from local resources if the teachers are encouraged with innovative ideas.

14. Policy decisions on the use of local language

Before the use of the mother tongue as a medium in primary education is practised, it is desirable to make policy decisions regarding the right choices from alternatives to solve the problems. The main decision that has to be taken is about the model of the mother tongue education. The model that Malone (2003) presented for MLE is appropriate for the multilingual situation in Nepal as well. The local situation of the minority language speakers of Nepal may demand for some modification, the design itself is excellent. In the multilingual situation the children need to the standard variety of their language and also the language of wider communication.

At the primary level teaching becomes meaningless if the teacher does not know the language of his or her students. So, the knowledge of the language of the children should be essential for a primary school teacher. For all new appointments of the primary school teachers, it would be worthwhile if decisions are made at the policy level that they should be qualified in mother tongue teaching and know the local language and culture.

15. Policy level decisions for the choice of right script

Another policy level decision to be made is selection of a script for unwritten languages. Devanagari has been used for Nepali, Nepal Bhasha and Maithili and for many other languages. Attempts have also been made to use Devanagari for Tamang, Magar, Gurung, Rai, Limbu and some other languages though the spellings are not standardized and made

acceptable to all the native speakers. The advantage of the unwritten languages is that they can select a more practical script or devise new one. For example, we can use Devanagari, Roman or a Tibetan script for Thakali language.

In the context of Nepal, suggestions are forwarded to choose Devanagari script for the minority languages. It is claimed that a common script develops national integration and facilitates inter-group understanding. It also helps to transfer from the mother tongue to Nepali or other languages. If a different script is used in the mother tongue education at the primary level, Devanagari has to be learnt at the later stage to use Nepali. The members of the community, who are the speakers of the language, are the final decision makers about the script and spelling system of their language but benefits of the local communities should be taken into consideration. As selection of a script is basic for further works in language development this problem needs to be solved as early as possible.

16. Contribution of community members

It is certainly time consuming to analyze all the languages of Nepal and develop them for the use in primary education. In order to integrate local languages and cultures into the education policy of the mother tongue the native writers should work hard to develop reading materials.

The members of the minority languages have important roles for integrating local languages and cultures in the educational system. They can decide the form of language to be used in teaching. As they are the bearers of tradition, they know the oral literature, the customs, practices and performances. They can develop the writing system, write grammar and compile dictionaries. Linguists can analyze languages, but the members of the communities should be ready to develop reading materials in their languages. Since promotion of the languages and literature is one of the state policies guaranteed by the constitution of Nepal, it is

desirable that the people involved in promoting the minority languages should be helped and encouraged. For this government should either establish an institute or give grants to the non-government organizations. Suggestions have been made on various occasions to establish a national level institute for the study and promotion of the national languages and folklores.

17. Conclusion

In conclusion, the paper focuses on integration of local languages and cultures in education policy of Nepal. For this local teachers have to be appointed with necessary training and members of the local communities should be encouraged to collect and create reading materials in their languages and be helped to integrate their languages and various forms of folklore in the education policy and programs of Nepal.

12

Reconstructing the local: Exploring 'a sense of place' in mother-tongue education in Nepal

UMA PRADHAN

Introduction

The Constitution of 1990 declared Nepal a multi-ethnic (*bahu jatiya*) and multi-lingual (*bahu bhasik*) country. This was reiterated in the subsequent constitution of 2007. This gave a new language of inclusion and diversity in the imagination of Nepal. Since then, the Government of Nepal (GoN) has made several provisions to open up spaces for minority groups. Multi-lingual education (MLE) programme in primary school is one such programme. MLE is used in Nepal to indicate a model that involves starting education in the medium of the language that a student already speaks, that is, the mother tongue. The mother education guideline refers to this language as 'local language' (*sthaniyabhasa*). Inside a classroom this meant learning school subjects like maths, science and social studies in the student's first language (usually mother tongue – L1), then introducing a second (Nepali – L2) and third (English-L3) language as

'subjects', and gradually transitioning to L2 and L3 as mediums of instruction, if needed.

This chapter draws on the fieldwork in Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHSS), a government school running MLE programme, to discuss the ways in which the notion of 'the local' (*sthaniya*) played an important role in this process. JKHSS is located in Kapilbastu district, southern area of Nepal, had been running MLE using DangauraTharu and Awadhi language in the grade 1-3 for the last 3 years during my fieldwork in 2014. I draw on everyday language exchanges, teaching-learning activities, and textbook excerpts to draw attention to the ways in the school relied heavily on the locally popular stories, names and practices in its everyday practice of MLE. This notion of local was used particularly for three purposes: as a pedagogy, as diversity, and as the redefined notion of the national. These ideas and practices around local languages in MLE schoolswas not only utilised to establish the legitimacy of these minority languages in school, but also produce similar construct around the ideas of local identities in the new, plural vision of the Nepali nation.

This chapter argues that in the multilingual context of MLE schools such as JKHSS, where different languages and forms of knowledge come together, the discourse of 'local' can emerge as an important process in the ongoing construction of relevant knowledge. Given contemporary Nepal's socio-political context withnascent spaces for the language of diversity and inclusion, these dynamics are both a response to historical development and local relevance. In this chapter, I have paid close attention to localised practices relating to language use, while at the same time attending to broader historical contexts. Instead of focusing only on the production of ethno-linguistic identities by minority language schools, I have found it more helpful to focus on localised

language practices in these schools. It is in these localised exchanges that people can position themselves while mediating with the larger structures, and find space for constructing their lifeworld. This vantage point of everyday language practices also allows for identification of the ways in which people draw on their linguistic and cultural resources to position themselves in relation to each other.

A Sense of place

The Constitution of Nepal 1990 opened up space for the introduction of multi-lingual education (MLE) programme after Nepal was declared a multi-ethnic and multilingual country.Within this historical-political context, the impetus for multi-lingual education (MLE), especially in primary education, emerges from the concern of making the school curriculum relevant to local context (*sthaniyapariveshanurup*) and, therefore, effective for the teaching-learning process. According to the Guidelines of Local Curriculum Development 2007, developed by Government of Nepal's Curriculum Development Centre, one of the objectives for local curriculum is to 'make curriculum more useful and relevant'. It is within this space that Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHSS) officially introduced their local language (*sthaniyabhasa)*: DangauraTharu and Awadhi language in Grade 1-3, with technical and financial support from United Mission to Nepal (UMN). Even though JKHSS had been using these languages in their teaching learning practice, the official introduction of MLE programme gave the much-needed encouragement not only to continue the exiting practice but also to develop these languages further, publish textbooks in DangauraTharu and Awadhi, and prepare these local language for legitimate use in education.

This 'sense of place' in government policies, curriculum, and school textbookswhile on the one hand, responds to the complex demands developing effective education. On the other hand, it also creates specific forms of place-makingin the ongoing construction of relevant knowledge in a given history and social context. As Doreen Massey explains, 'What gives a place its specificity is not some long internalised history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus' (Massey, 1993: 66). This sense of place, in the context of Nepal, emerges at the moment where the country has recently transformed from a unitary to a federal, where decentralised system of governance seeks to build a more just an inclusive society. Thus, a place cannot be understood merely as "a physical setting or a passive target for primordial sentiments of attachment.…places are politicized, culturally relative, historically specific, local and multiple constructions" (Rodman, 1992: 642). It is, therefore, important to understand sense of place as a site of struggles and contestation; the explorations of which can reveal socially constructed, contested and dynamics meanings attached to such places.

This sense of place in different localised practices have been the subject of analysis in a growing body of research on language education. These studies show thatthis sense of place in different social groups could animate different ways of organising themselves, claiming space in education institutions, and implement variety of arrangements to legitimise the use of minority language in educaiton. Drawing on the everyday practices of the Srilankan English as Second Language classroom, Canagarajah (2002) argues that when various forms of knowledge come together, the discourse of 'local' can emerge as an important process in ongoing

construction of relevant knowledge in a given history and social context. Heller (1996), in her study of Canadian French school, illustrate that the bilingual classroom discourse allows us to see how people draw on their linguistic resources establish different dimensions of legitimate language in making meanings of the school knowledge. These researches argue that discursive exchanges in the education institutions can tell us about how particular practices help to advance or marginalise the interests of different groups. They illustrate the ways in which particular practices help to advance or marginalise the interests of different groups and in the process alter the relations of power between these groups.

As Appadurai (1995:208) argues the locality is, therefore, primarily 'relational and contextual' rather than merely spatial. It is through the sense of social immediacy and the relatively of contexts that locality as a category is produced and distributed. He further argues that 'much of that has been considered local knowledge is actually knowledge of how to produce and reproduce locality under a variety of condition.' The locality of local knowledge is not only, or even mainly, its embeddedness in a non-negotiable here-and-now, nor its stubborn disinterest in things at large (Geertz 1975). Responding to the complex demands on school curriculum, Sassen (2001), therefore, calls for a new spatio-temporality to education, one that includes simultaneous fixity and mobility, local and global, presentism and futures orientation of schooling and pedagogies. Cangarajah (2002) in his study in Sri Lanka argues that the local has been changing its positionality in relation to the changing practices of the global. In these contexts, he suggests that we need to adopt the position that the 'local is a relational and fluid construct'. This framework allows us to understand the seemingly contradictory dynamics that I present in this section.

In the context of Nepal, the discourse of 'local' also has various socio political functions. First, it was helpful in establishing local language as the relevant language; especially in a situation where the new generation is gradually shifting to Nepali and ethnic languages might no longer be their first language. Second, the discourse of 'local language' is also aligned with the potential imagination of then-possibleTharuhat as a distinct local provinces state in potential federal arrangement. At the time of research fieldwork, various groups advocating identity-based federal state had been demanding for some parts of the Terai to be declared as Tharuhat. It was expected that such provinces will have Tharu as potential regional official languages. In 2017, the Government of Nepal announced seven-province federal structure, with placed basic and secondary education under the jurisdiction of local government. Many urban and rural municipalities are exploring the possibility of local language in education, and other state institutions.In the following section, I illustrate the symbolic struggle within the knowledge-making process in JKHSS in order to position minority identity in the national education framework and in the new vision of the nation. And in doing so, I will discuss three distinct ways in which the notion of local emerges as a legitimate way to institutionalise minority language: local as pedagogy, local as diversity, and local as the national.

Local as pedagogy

The vast body of educational research has now confirmed the importance local language for the better learning achievement of the students. This pedagogical centrality of 'the local' is one of the most established justification for the use of local language in schools. In line with the National Curriculum Framework Guidelines, the

primary school curriculum of 2003 (2060 BS) has made the provision of local curriculum at the primary level education, by offering one subject as a local curricula. The provision for 'local subject' has been made in addition to other regular subject – Nepali, English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. Here school can choose local language as a subject or any other need based subject. This provision allows for the entire curriculum based on mother tongue and/or local subject matter can be developed at local level(GoN, 2010: 7)

JKHSS introduced DangauraTharu and Awadhi within this provision for 'local subject' (*sthaniyabishaya*), in addition to using it as medium of instruction in Grade 1-3. Teachers used local languages to explain subjects such as Maths and Science. They often explained to me that if we teach them only in Nepali they struggle to learn the concept. But when they are taught in their mother tongue, they learn better and faster because they have strong foundation in that language. This makes teaching easier and, thereby, limits the drop-out and improves literacy rated. This perspective also aligned with the Ministry of Education and International Organisations such as UNESCO and United Mission to Nepal (UMN) policy to develop Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) programmes. According to one of the high officials in the Ministry of Education, the local language such as Tharu was accepted as an important tool to deliver the school curriculum. He emphasised,

> MLE needs to be understood as a pedagogic intervention. In Nepal, we have an assumption that everybody knows and speaks Nepali…In many places, Nepali is learnt as a second language. MLE is meant to facilitate this process.

This was especially true in JKHS, where the student population was made up of 95% Tharu speakers. The use of

mother-tongue textbooks had direct instrumental value. Most of the students till Class III used Tharu language for communication. In many of my teaching sessions in Class II or lower, I often observed that the children explained the stories or essays much better in Tharu language. This was especially true in *Balbikas*classes (entry-level nursery cohort of 4-6 years age group usually referred as early childhood development group), where all school-related learning took place only in Tharu language.

During my visits to the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), I had learnt about the publication of textbooks in 21 different languages. I understood from the government officials that these textbooks were published in Kathmandu and were provided to schools that used mother tongue as a local subject. However, as I met more people working in this field, I found out that the textbooks published by CDC had not been very successful. School administrators in JKHS complained that the contents of those books were translated from Nepali textbooks. The schools such as JKHS, therefore, realised that CDC books not only lacked proper contextualisation of the material, the language used in the book did not match with the local variant of that language. Seven schools, where government piloted MLE programme, had rejected the government-provided books outright. Moreover, since the printing and distribution of these books were coordinated centrally, the schools always faced problems in its timely distribution and shortage in its availability. Because of these ongoing issues, both the CDC and the school felt that local publication of books was both relevant and practical. It is within this context that JKHSS developed their Tharu and Awadhi textbooks.

Inside the JKHSS classroom, the teachers utilised these textbooks to teach students local stories, and words,

while also introducing them to concepts related to Maths and Science. One early morning, I was looking at the colourful posters and pictures drawn on the walls of *Balbikas*(early years) classroom. There were posters of animals, with the names written in English. I was looking at this poster when the students started to come in. When they saw me, they gathered around me and started telling me the names of the animals. Though this particular poster was in English, they pointed at the animals and told me their names in Tharu - *Chagariya* (Goat), *Harana* (Deer), *Bilariya* (Cat), *Bhaisi* (Buffalo). *Bhaisi mane Bifello ho* (Bhaisi means Buffalo). Most of the students knew what these animals were called in Tharu, they were also beginning to learn the equivalent words in English. If any student was unsure, the other would join in to tell me the name. Some knew more than one name for the same animal.The teaching practices of this nature are highlighted in publications such as MLE Advocacy Material developed by UNESCO which states,

> 'when children come to school they can talk in their MT about concrete everyday things in a face-to-face situation in their own environment where the context is clear: they can see and touch thing they are talking about and they get immediate feedback if they do not understand' (UNESCO, 2011).

These practices also respond to the findings in multiple education-related studies that indicate the systemic exclusion' experienced by ethno-linguistic groups. These studies primarily criticised the highly centralised and top-down mechanisms in the education system that undermined local realities. Ragsdale (1989), discussing the third grade test in the Tarai region, demonstrated that the school curriculum often required an abstract understanding of Nepali. This

curriculum and examination had an inherent cultural content: while comprehensible to students in the Kathmandu Valley, it was sometimes outside the experience and vocabulary of Gurung students. This study, while it did not problematise the use of Nepali in school, illustrated the implicit cultural biases in the school curriculum. He asserted, 'Nepal's small, elitist system of education had been expanded without regard for its suitability to the country's needs, leading to its functioning as a mere psychosocial adornment' (Ragsdale 1989: 15). Webster (1994) conducted a study on Nepali proficiency in rural Nepal using the Nepali Sentence Repetition Test.17 He concluded that 'those who are uneducated and illiterate are nowhere near as proficient in Nepali as those who are educated and literate' (Webster, 1994: 45). Yadav (2007) cites school-level educational statistics compiled in Nepal in 2005, and shows that the drop-out rate for ethnic minority children in grade 1 is 50%, which places them significantly more at risk of academic underachievement than is reflected in Nepal's overall national literacy rates.

Further broad-based support and advocacy for local language as an education pedagogy was also bolstered with an upsurge of ethnic assertiveness in the in 1990s, with the demands for mother-tongue education and the use of local language in public offices. This was further taken up by the School Sector Reform Plan 2009-2015, which placed a target of 7500 schools using mother tongues in grades one to three. In line with this, the Government of Nepal launched a pilot project on Multi-lingual education in seven primary schools in 2009 (mother tongue, Nepali and English as mediums of instruction). Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Ministry of Education, also developed textbooks in 21 different languages. The draft education bill (2010) states that the local state authority will recommend the medium of

instruction appropriate for the locality.The Flash Report (2014), the Government of Nepal's education statistics, reported that a total of 69 local languages have been used as a medium of instruction in primary level. According to this report, 6081 schools used one local language, 422 schools used two local languages, 23 schools used four local languages, and 10 schools used five local languages. The report, however, doesn't clearly discuss if these schools use mother-tongue textbooks. The Department of Education has, however, also committed to collect information on local curriculums, textbooks, and the use of local language training skills in the next school census, 2015-16 (GoN, 2014).

Local as diversity

Nepal's large language and cultural diversity means that the country's children have diverse learning needs – but also to learn about diversity of the nation.As Hutt (2012, 307) points out in his analysis of the new national anthem, the celebration of multiple ethnicities, languages and religions has served as 'symbolic shorthand for inclusive and progressive nation'. Ensuring 'harmony in socio-cultural diversity' has therefore been one the important objectives in the national educational plans of Nepal (SSDP 2016:vi). Similarly, Guidelines of Local Curriculum Development 2007 mentions that one of the objectives in the school curriculum is to 'promote contents based on the social diversity'. Exploring the possibility that the country's diversity could be a developmental resources, the Consolidated Equity Strategy for the School Sector in Nepal, SSDP, 2016: 150 states that

> As Nepal's population is in several ways highly diverse and is still in the transition phase from a country with deeply rooted foundations for inequitable participation of its citizens to public life to a democracy that values and embraces this diversity, it seems crucial to intensify efforts to strengthen equity with education being the obvious medium for this.

The evaluation report on local contents in school curriculum, commission by the Ministry of Education(GoN, 2010. Local contents: 29) mentions that the 'Local curricular contents can address the diversity avail at the local level. A more diverse curriculum acknowledges and affirms the experience and heritage of diverse groups and their participation in education. It also helps to promote greater acceptance and understanding of diversity, improve community cohesion and respect the local identities'. This representation of locality is different than its representations in the previous versions of the textbooks. As Pigg (1992) analyses the ways in which school textbooks present the ideology of modernisation and the politics of representation that places village locality as incompatible with the notion of progress. Precisely because of this ideological nature of school education, language can form one of the key sites for the construction of legitimate knowledge in the social and political struggles of a given country. Many ethnographic and sociolinguistic researches, studying language education, have thus discussed the ways in which introduction of a minority language in school education could allow for the possibility of revaluing languages within the same institutions (Gal, 1995; Heller, 1996; Martin-Jones and Heller, 1996). They illustrate the ways in which particular practices help to advance or marginalise the interests of different groups and in the process alter the relations of power between these groups. The discursive exchanges in the education institutions can tell us about the specific kinds of language practices that are legitimised.

The closer look at the images used in the textbooks show that these books also portray a diverse representation of geographies and the people of Nepal. Bhola Ram Chaudhary, a teacher who contributed to the textbooks told me during one of my many conversations with him, 'we have made a deliberate effort to show the geographies of the Tarai (southern belt of Nepal) in this textbook. The pictures in the book look like places around us. The characters in the illustrations wear clothes that we wear every day. The images look similar to what children see every day'. As he rightly pointed out, these representations attempted to affirm students' lived experiences and local practices as a source of knowledge. This stands in sharp contrast with the Nepali-language textbooks that consistently represented hills as the most common background pictures and people wearing *daurasuruwal*(the official national dress) as characters in the story, which is far from the local context of the school.

Several recent researchers on ethnic politics in Nepal (Bennike, 2013; Rai, 2013) have analysed these 'place-making' practice as a way of expressing political identities of people associated with these spaces. By locating it within the contexts of the historical trajectory of Nepali state and contemporary demands of federal states, they argue that the specific discourse of space is also linked with the interrelated production of knowledge about this space. Drawing on the local realities, that the students could easily identify with, this process shifted the contextual setting of the lessons by using different pictures. It challenges the idea of Nepal that is popularly represented by a hilly landscape and people wearing *daurasuruwal*and expands the geography of Nepal by including the plains of Tarai or the valleys of Kathmandu and people wearing other kinds of clothing. The knowledge that was produced in these textbooks did not limit

itself to the idea of Nepal as a hilly country inhabited by the people belonging to a particular community.

These discourses also shift the logic of deficit discourse, where the languages like Tharu, Awadhi and Nepal Bhasa is seen as inherently pushing them to backwardness, and articulate 'local' as a way to reposition mother-tongue education, as shown in previous textbook researches in Nepal. Through the processes of textbook production, the schools sought to firstly engage with the state and, secondly, shaped the school curriculum with the local contents and local languages. This sense of locality did not simply map an identity into a place but presented a heterogeneous representation of Nepal's geography. Though this portrayal of diverse geography of Nepal was limited only in mother-tongue textbooks, it nonetheless offered an alternate imagination that contrasted with the mainstream representation. And in this process, these representations not only make claims of relevance in the locality, but also make more overtly political assertions on national space.

Local as the national

While these textbooks served as spaces for language standardisation and localisation of education, they also made closer interaction with the state possible. Both of the schools worked very closely with the Government of Nepal (GoN) Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and followed its guidelines, both when publishing the textbooks and also when shaping these textbooks by including local contents. It is also important to note that the schools, at no point, sought to establish themselves as separate from the state. On the contrary, their efforts were geared towards engaging with the state more effectively. For the schools, strong engagement with the state was essential for gaining both recognition and

legitimacy for mother-tongue education and strengthening the relationship with the state. This emphasis on working with the state is also prominent in the diamond jubilee souvenir book, 2011, published by Jana Kalyan Higher Secondary School (JKHS) begin with the letters of commendation from then Prime Ministers: Dr Baburam Bhattarai.

As 'the local' continued to develop as an integral part of MLE, this notion was not limited only to the locality. The negotiation over different languages however represented various ways in which new idea of being a Nepali was being constructed. The local was also effectively positioned as the national, in the textbooks and in teaching-learning practice. The emergence of local is, therefore, also historically situated. In Nepal, this imagination of nation has been mainly been through the monolithic historical narrative through 'self-conscious fostering of the Nepali language' and the 'celebration of selective historical icons' (Onta, 1996: 214). Drawing on the perspective of students in primary school, Ragsdale (1989) notes that school curriculum and examination often required students to demonstrate an abstract understanding of Nepali. The curriculum and examination had inherent culture content, which (while comprehensible to students in the Kathmandu Valley) was frequently outside the experience and vocabulary of Gurung students in a hill village where he conducted his research. These everyday representations of the nation play an important role in building as sense of national belonging, that Billig (1995) calls 'banal nationalism'.

In the MLE textbooks, however, expanded the notion of local by connecting it with the national. The Mother Tongue Textbook Guideline (CDC, 2064 B.S.) mentions that one of the important objectives of primary education is to build the moral character of the student by instilling the values of

national unity and democratic culture. This usually meant that the contents of the school textbook respected both ethnic identities and national identity. Through this process of selecting, classifying and distributing school knowledge, the Nepali state delineated the boundaries of the ways in which certain stories and representations could be expressed as public knowledge.However, the possibility of pitting the ethnic identity against national identity was completely ruled out. The vigilance on the issues of national sovereignty and integrity was evident in various guidelines published by the government, and in the school textbook that was finally published.

As discussed in the previous section of this chapter, the school textbook displayed diverse representations of geography and people. However, it is also notable that these books retained most of the familiar stories from the 'history of Nepal': martyrs of Nepal, the great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota, and the history of the monarchy in Nepal. Since the contents of these lessons were regarded as important knowledge in itself, these were retained its place in most of the mother-tongue textbooks in addition to Nepali and Social Studies textbooks. The school iconography also displayed various symbolic affirmations to the nation. Both JSB and JKHSS school walls had painting of national symbols such as the national bird *Danphe*, the national flag, the national flower rhododendron, the national animal cow and national colour crimson. Inside the classroom, as presented in the picture above, one could see pictures of national flags pasted on the windows. These images in the school premises, though not part of the formal school curriculum, represent the ways in which school depicts the idea of the nation to its students.

This process of knowledge construction was not without conflict and contestation. the MLE and its emphasis

on the local curriculum has also faced a variety of criticism, mainly that that 'local curriculum is accelerated as a political slogan rather than academic and pedagogical slogan and thus lack political commitment among the major political parties (GoN, 2010: 15).In the several sections of this chapter, I have highlighted some of the tensions between formal and informal knowledge systems and the ways local language had transform into new forms in order to be accepted a legitimate knowledge. The national education framework prioritised scientific and written modalities over creative and oral expression of mother tongue. These limited the ways in which various local languages could be represented. While the language activists might have preferred to retain more 'traditional and 'authentic' expressions of the language, these processes were necessary for the local languages to be legible to the state. As a result, the logic of authenticity and local utility used in these textbooks needed to move beyond the intellectual practise where minority languages were seen as unchangeable reminiscence of the past.However, as the emerging scholarship on Nepal has pointed out that the key characteristic of ethnic movements in Nepal is the attempt to seek redressal within the nation- state framework (Subba, 1999:129) and to make state institutions more inclusive (Lawoti and Hangen, 2013, Hangen, 2012). As schools exemplify the most visible symbol of the state, the dynamics in this school highlight the important for educational institutions to open up spaces where plural notion of nationalism can be imagined.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted three distinct ways in which the notion of 'the local' played an important role in multi-lingual education in Nepal. The everyday practices and

school textbooks used in JKHSS shows that local languages were discursively positioned as i) pedagogically important for teaching-learning activities in school, ii) as a representation of diversity in the Nepali nation, and iii) as simultaneously a national language because it is a language that belongs to Nepal and spoken by its citizens. These ways of appreciating the use of mother-tongue in education opens up a new ways to understand the complex co-production of 'the local' as an education category at different levels. The discussion in this chapter also illustrates that the construction of knowledge is intimately linked with changing not only content of the knowledge but also terms of knowledge construction.

What emerges strongly from the practices in these schools is a knowledge-making process that has to constantly confront the challenges posed by local, national, and global knowledge and identities. The knowledge-making process in these schools demonstrate various levels of negotiation between different sources of knowledge and a variety of ways in which people draw on various resources to construct legitimate knowledge. It also points out that these individual and collective experiences are inevitably framed, and constrained, by wider historical and ongoing social relations. And while there might be no cohesion and consensus, it nonetheless generated a process where the production of school knowledge was seen to be possible through the use of local languages and local knowledge.These dynamics of local knowledge and local language is even more pertinent in the current context where the Nepal's new state restructuring has transferred education related decision making to the local bodies. Increasingly, large degree of autonomy for provinces and local governments in terms of allocating resources and planning and implementing education programmes.

13

School-level language policy: Three cases from Southeast Nepal

MIRANDA WEINBERG

Introduction

This chapter investigates the space between national language policies and school-level decisions and practices. Nepal has made great strides toward inclusive educational language policies in recent years. Since 1990, Nepal's constitutions have provided some level of multilingual education rights, and have been bolstered by additional policies and guidelines. Practice, though, has been slow to catch up to the promises of written policies. Multilingual education is a challenge to implementin an extremely diverse populace where many languages not previously taught in school should now be offered by constitutional right. Technical challenges abound: developing orthographies, publishing books, identifying and preparing teachers, building curricula and more.

Beyond technical challenges, multilingual education faces ideological challenges. Language policies are not neutral, technical decisions but rather tied to ideas of

nationalism, ethnicity, and aspirations for the future, created in situations of unequal power distributions (Tollefson 1991). After decades during which Nepali language served as a symbol of national unity, attempts to teach in other languages appear to some as threats to the national integrity of Nepal (Burghart 1984; Pradhan 2016). Phyak (2011, 2013) has identified monolingual ideologies hampering moves toward multilingual education even at schools committed to using students' mother tongues in the classroom. As in many global contexts, in Nepal "schooling has been explicitly and implicitly a site of rejection of indigenous knowledge and language" (May & Aikman 2003: 143). Nepal's schools were established with the intention of preventing children from learning indigenous languages. The report of the Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (1956), the blueprint for Nepal's school system, stated this goal explicitly:

> The study of a non-Nepali local tongue would mitigate against the effective development of Nepali, for the student would make greater use of it than Nepali – at home and in the community – and thus Nepali would remain a "foreign" language. If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language, then other languages will gradually disappear, and greater national strength and unity will result (NNEPC 1956: 97).

The challenge for MLE includes transforming schools from a means of preventing children from learning indigenous languages to a site where those languages are not only taught but celebrated and valued. This will require not only new textbooks but also new mindsets for teachers, guardians, communities, and administrators. While there are undeniable technical challenges to implementing multilingual

education across Nepal, ideological and political barriers are also a significant obstacle (Phyak 2016: 141-144).

In this chapter I draw from a larger ethnographic study of language policy to examine decisions about language policy at three schools, two of which have started to offer a course teaching Dhimal language and a third school that better fit the profile of a school that could, and perhaps should offer the language course, but did not. Through these three cases, I identify some common challenges faced by advocates for teaching minority languages of Nepal in school. The permissive rather than active stance of government policies has given space for schools to maintain the linguistic status quo rather than follow directives to change school language policies. In each of these three schools, the head teacher and School Management Committee chair acted as language policy arbiters, "individuals who have a disproportionate amount of impact on language policy and educational programs" (Johnson & Johnson 2015: 222). Advocacy by an ethnic organization was also necessary for introducing a language class into schools. Only at schools with a receptive head teacher and School Management Committee chair combined with ethnic organization activism were rights guaranteed at the constitutional level fulfilled in educational practice.

This chapter focuses on the introduction of language subjects, rather than changes in the medium of instruction. Schooling in the medium of the mother tongue is a constitutional right in Nepal (Government of Nepal 2015) and supported by multiple additional policies (Yadava 2017; Yonjan-Tamang 2012). More broadly, mother tongue-medium schooling fulfills students' linguistic human rights (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1994) and is important for their educational success (Ball 2010; Benson

2004; UNESCO 2005). Nevertheless, few schools have adopted a mother tongue-medium approach, and several that piloted mother tongue-based multilingual education in a project from 2007-2009 have switched to Nepali or English mediums of instruction (Seel, Yadava and Kadel 2015). The Curriculum Development Centre produces language subject textbooks 23 languages, but does not publish texts to support subject instruction through the medium of all those languages (Yadava 2017). Thus, while I agree with advocates that changing the medium of instruction is crucial for achieving quality inclusive education for all, the case of languages taught only as a subject is central to the discussion of multilingual education in Nepal. The language policy processes discussed in this paper are relevant to changing the medium of instruction as well as to introducing language subjects.

Ethnography of language policy

This chapter is based on research in the tradition of the ethnography of language policy. This research approach views language policy as not only the documents and plans produced by the government, but also as a set of practices and decisions created by actors at multiple levels. Local government officials, teachers, School Management Committee members, guardians and even children make decisions about appropriate language behavior. Thus, drawing from McCarty (2011), I view language policy as "processual, dynamic, and in motion, " a mix of "overt and covert, top-down and bottom-up, *de jure* and de facto", which can be "inferred from people's language practices, ideologies, and beliefs" (p. 2). Hornbergerand Johnson (2007) articulated the ethnography of language policy as a method to investigate the agents, contexts, and processes involved in language

policy at levels of organization from national governments to individual teachers or families. The findings from ethnographic studies of language policy contribute to the understanding of policy processes around the world, including attention to multiple scales of processes and the situated, contingent nature of language policy decisions and effects. Ethnographers of language policy share a common concern with social justice, especially related to the rights of speakers of minority and Indigenous languages (Johnson & Ricento 2013). In addition, ethnography of language policy recognizes the political and ideological nature of language policy and planning, which is shaped by and in turn influences structures of power and inequality (Tollefson 1991).

Drawing from organizational theory, educational systems have been described as "loosely coupled systems, " in which different units (whether districts, schools or individual classrooms) may function nearly independently (Fusarelli 2002; Goldspink 2007; Weick 1976, 1982).School systems tend to have significant latitude for actors at various levels to act in ways that may differ from written policy. Research in the ethnography of language policy and planning demonstrates that official language policies travel in unexpected and unpredictable (Hornberger, Tapia, Hanks, Dueñas and Lee, 2018). Understanding language policy and practice therefore requires research conducted at multiple levels of scale to understand how policies written by government bodies are taken up, modified, ignored, rejected, or otherwise treated by a range of policy actors.

This study follows in the tradition of language policy research that views policy as not only documents produced by the government but also the full range of documents, decisions, and practices that shape where and how languages

are distributed. Ethnography, a research methodology characterized by long-term field research, a range of specific methods including participant observation, and an attempt to understand research participants' interpretations of actions and events, provides a means to understand how policies are made, translated, and implemented in contexts such as schools.

Methods

In the tradition of the ethnography of language planning and policy, this project emphasized long-term engagement, multiple methods, and an attempt to understand emic categories. The major elements of my research methods were participant-observation, interviews and surveys, and document collection. Participant-observation, a core method of ethnography, can cover a range of actual activities, varying along an axis of more participatory or more observation-oriented (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw 2011). Mary Des Chene (1996:107), in a discussion of ethnography in Nepal glosses participant-observation as the Nepali term *gaph*, or chatting. Much of my participant-observation indeed took the form of *gaph*, informally talking with the people whose lived experiences inform this study.

I conducted this research in 2015-2016 AD, primarily in the eastern *Tarai* districts of Jhapa and Morang. On most days, I attended one of the focal schools in my study, spending time in classrooms, on the playground with students, and in the break room with teachers. Outside of school, I visited the houses of teachers and community members; attended events ranging from community meetings and school awards ceremonies to weddings. At each of these sites and events, I wrote brief jottings (Emerson, Fretz and

Shaw 2011) either in a field notebook or on my phone before expanding them in full typed field notes.

In addition to observation, I conducted interviews and focus groups with teachers, School Management Committee members, activists and education officials in Jhapa, Morang, and Kathmandu. I collected documents related to the study, including textbooks (or photographs of textbook pages), newspaper articles, and publications by language activists. In order to analyze my data, I read through all of my notes, interview transcripts, and other documents and noted themes, patterns, and key incidents. Repeated iterations of this process allowed me to develop analyses and claims supported by the corpus of ethnographic data.

A core tenet of ethnographic research is that the researcher is the primary instrument of the research methodology. As a researcher, I was embedded in the research site and in the relationships I formed. The range of things I observed and my interpretations were shaped by my prior experiences and the ways I was viewed by the people around me.Another researcher would be perceived differently by research participants, have access to a divergent set of information, and interpret events through other theoretical lenses. This acknowledgement does not make the research less empirically based or rigorous, but instead is an attempt to be transparent about the ways that this research, like all research, is shaped by the person who conducts it.

Research context

In this chapter, I focus on three schools near the border of Jhapa and Morang districts, in the southeastern corner of Nepal, and decisions made at those schools about whether to teach a Dhimal language course. Dhimal is a Tibeto-Burman language spoken by approximately 20, 000 people, primarily

in these two districts (Khatiwada2017; King 2009; Regmi, Khatiwada and Regmi 2014).The three schools are located near the East-West highway, on the outskirts of two bazaar towns. Until the mid-1950s, this plains area was so heavily malarial that the only people willing to live in what was then thick jungle were the Dhimal community. Following a USAID-funded malaria eradication project in the 1950s, there has been a huge influx of settlers from the hills of Nepal into traditional Dhimal territory. While today's middle-aged Dhimals remember a time when their only neighbors were Dhimal, now Dhimals are a small minority in their historical homeland (Rai 2013, 2014). One result of this demographic change, and of the introduction of widespread schooling, is bilingualism, and now, increasingly, dominance in the Nepali language.

As in communities across Nepal, the Dhimal community was undergoing language shift. Where daily communication had once taken place exclusively in Dhimal, Nepali was increasingly employed as the code for daily interactions. Younger people were dominant in Nepali language and rarely if ever spoke Dhimal, while older people preferred speaking in Dhimal with other middle-aged or older Dhimals. This process was influenced by large-scale changes such as in-migration of Nepali speakers from the hills regions, the spread of Nepali-medium (and later English-medium) schooling, and the prevalence of labor migration. In a survey of residents of the area surrounding these schools, over half of Dhimal households had family members who were working abroad at the time or had worked abroad in the past. Exposure to the value accorded to English in international contexts, and the importance of English for access to better, safer, and more lucrative jobs, meant that many members of the community saw English

proficiency as the main purpose of attending school (Weinberg 2018). The rapid decline in the use of Dhimal, and the fear that future generations would not speak the language, concerned community leaders. In this context, the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra (Dhimal Ethnic Development Centre) was working to build a school that could teach Dhimal language and traditional knowledge. They also supported the publication of books and pamphlets in the Dhimal language, and, as we will see, advocated for the introduction of Dhimal language in government schools. In Kathmandu, Dhimal language activists led by Som Bahadur Dhimal worked with the Curriculum Development Centre to produce Dhimal language textbooks for Class 1-5. This effort was an important precursor for the introduction of the language classes that this paper details.

Cases and contexts

In the following three sections, I detail the introduction, or non-introduction, of a Dhimal language subject at three government schools in Jhapa and Morang districts. In each example, I focus on specific actors and their explanations of what happened, as well as my observations during months of research in these communities. Each school was governed by the same national policies, but the actions taken by specific people led to different outcomes for the Dhimal language course. By going into some detail with these three examples, I aim to demonstrate the importance of the agency of individuals in particular positions, and the alignment of central individuals with one another for the successful implementation of a language class. These descriptions emphasize local understandings of the legal and policy landscape, demonstrating that educational policies on paper may look significantly different from practices at school.

Pashupati Lower Secondary School

Pashupati Lower Secondary School (PLSS)[1], located almost directly on the East-West Highway near the border of Jhapa and Morang districts, was one of the older schools in the area. For many years, their teachers and leadership had included several teachers and School Management Committee members from the Dhimal community. These teachers and SMC members included founders and committee members of the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra, the national Dhimal organization (Rai 2013). Teachers and neighbors recalled that the student body in the past was largely Dhimal, but the student body I observed was much more mixed. The declining proportion of Dhimal students was in part due to demographic changes. Before the malaria eradication project of the 1950s, there had been few non-Dhimal residents of the area, while settlement by other ethnic and caste groups left them a minority in the region (Rai 2013, 2014). More recently, private schools were drawing students away from PLSS. These days, teachers and SMC members told me, only the poorest families sent their children to government schools. As one long-time teacher said, “even those who carry firewood [i.e., do manual labor] send their children to private school.” The influx of settlers, which converted a lightly settled homogeneous region into a densely populated, diverse area, and the draw of private schools meant that Dhimal students were now only a small part of the student body at a school that used to largely serve Dhimal students.

Despite the decreasing proportion of Dhimal students, PLSS was the first school to introduce a Dhimal language

1 All school names are pseudonyms.

subject. This move was enabled by the presence of several Dhimal speaking teachers, including some from other backgrounds who had learned Dhimal from friends and neighbors. One of these was a Bahun man recognized by Dhimal teachers and other community members as a fluent speaker of Dhimal. This teacher attended Dhimal language teacher training and eventually taught the Dhimal language subject at PLSS. In addition to having several Dhimal and Dhimal-speaking teachers, the chair of the School Management Committee was also Dhimal. While the rest of the SMC membership came from other backgrounds, the SMC chair has more power and responsibility for the school's management than other members of the committee (Bhatta 2005; Edwards 2011). This may have been what allowed PLSS to be the first school to introduce a Dhimal language subject. As the head teacher put it in an interview: "The headmaster, I myself am Dhimal, the [SMC] chairman is also Dhimal. Because of that there was some cooperation."

In addition to their shared ethnic background, both the head teacher and SMC chair were involved in the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra, the central ethnic organization of the Dhimal community (Rai 2013). During the time of the study, PLSS's head teacher, SMC chair, and another senior teacher were all central committee members, which meant that they devoted significant amounts of time and effort outside of their work time attending meetings and organizing events. Several active members of Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra were also teachers or SMC members, but no other single school had so many key personnel involved in Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra's central committee. These three men's involvement in theDhimal Jāti Bikās Kendrameant that they stayed abreast of political and policy developments that would allow them to offer the language at school. While teachers and SMC members at

other schools may have been unaware of policies supporting multilingual education, the head teacher and SMC chair at PLSS knew their rights about language and schooling due to their involvement in the Dhimal organization.

The government of Nepal offered the opportunity and even right to schooling in multiple languages beginning in 1990; however, it took many years after the passage of those laws and policies for the Dhimal language class to be introduced in even one school. In an interview with the head teacher at PLSS, he emphasized that while multilingual education was a constitutional right, it required initiative on his part to implement the course. In his experience, local educational offers did not consider the legal provisions about multilingual education to be "really mandatory." Instead, he said in an interview, educational officials treated the right to MLE as something "just in a book." He elaborated on the gap between the interim constitution, which was in place at the time of the interview, and actions by Ministry of Education:

At the primary school level, it says in the interim constitution, that we can teach in the mother tongue… If the community here said that there needs to be a local language, then I have to do it. The government also says, about children, their multilingual, MLE, multi-language. That is necessary. Whatever their own mother tongue is, whatever it is, the requirement to teach them in their mother tongue is a matter of their rights now…

If the government did it at every school, according to wherever whatever caste is, whatever language, they put in local language that would work. If they did that it would be good. The government needs to implement this. Instead of being about your own interest, if the government did that it would be a simple policy…but even if the government says it,

here they, the officers haven't done it. They haven't needed to. They haven't felt like they need to do it.

This head teacher was aware of the linguistic rights provided by the Interim Constitution, and later by the 2015 Constitution. He wished for a widespread adoption of these policies, which would make it "a simple policy." Instead, local education officers, in his experience, hadn't "felt like they need to do it, " effectively denying student's rights provided at the constitutional level. Facing inaction from the local educational offices, the head teacher decided bringthe matter up at an SMC meeting, where they decided to start with Dhimal in the earliest grades.

The small number of Dhimal students at PLSS put the supporters of the Dhimal language class in a somewhat uncomfortable position: the arguments for teaching Dhimal at school largely focused on teaching the language to children of Dhimal ethnicity, whether it was to provide linguistic support to students who spoke Dhimal at home or to provide an opportunity for children to learn a language they had not acquired at home. Supporters of a Dhimal language class thus had to turn to arguments that addressed why students from other backgrounds would benefit from studying Dhimal at school. One of the Dhimal language teachers emphasized that students enjoyed his Dhimal language class, an impression that I shared when I observed his classes. In addition, he argued in an interview that learning more languages is always good because a wider linguistic repertoire will create opportunities for communication: "If we learn all languages, if we get the opportunity to teach them all, tomorrow…nowhere will be uncomfortable." The head teacher also emphasized the value of learning more languages, but also felt that people living in the area, no

matter their individual background, should learn to speak Dhimal because it was the local language:

Our hope is not just that Dhimals learn the language but that those children from other castes will also learn it. Because locally the language is spoken. Others will also learn it. They'll enjoy it. It's not bad to learn another language, it's good… That is our hope. Now how many people say, "Why learn someone else's language?" But learning every language can be done. It's good for oneself.

Supporters of the Dhimal class emphasized the value of language learning for all students and the connection between the Dhimal community, language, and the region, to argue for teaching Dhimal language at a school where few students belonged to the Dhimal community.

The implementation of PLSS's Dhimal course was largely a result of the actions of two key players: the head teacher and chair of the School Management Committee. That they were able to collaborate successfully was in part a result of their shared ethnic background, a rare situation in a context were there were few Dhimal head teachers and few Dhimal SMC chairs. While the Dhimal language course was permitted by law, and a step toward fulfilling a constitutional right, it would not have been implemented at PLSS without the determination and action of teachers and SMC members.

Saraswati Secondary School

Saraswati Secondary School (SSS) was located farther from the East-West highway than the other focal schools, on the edge of one of the largest Dhimal communities. The school's location meant that the student body drew not just from the Dhimal village but also adjacent settlements, forming an ethnically mixed student body. The head teacher and most teachers at this school were not Dhimal, a fact that

surprised me when I learned that it had become the second school to offer a Dhimal subject. The School Management Committee was chaired by a Dhimal community member, though, and several past SMC chairs and members were also Dhimal.

The general secretary of the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra explained in an interview that the presence of a Dhimal subject at SSS was a result of advocacy by the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra. In an interview, he recounted bringing a group of Dhimal leaders to talk to the local Resource Person about offering a Dhimal language course at SSS. The Resource Person was supportive but said that the activists should speak with the School Management Committee. The group then convinced the SMC chair to support a Dhimal course, in the secretary general's words, by saying, "You belong to Dhimal, then this Dhimal curriculum that is already made, it should be implemented here." After convincing the SMC chair, the group from the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra accompanied him in meetings with the school principal. With the principal, the Dhimal activists emphasized their constitutional right to mother tongue education and the importance of teaching Dhimal in school in order to preserve and respect this local language. Finally, after many meetings and visits between activists and education officials, teachers, and community members, the school introduced a Dhimal subject for pre-primary and Class 1 students.

At both schools of the schools discussed so far, the demand for Dhimal language classes came from a small group of politically involved Dhimal speakers. When I spoke to guardians of children who were studying Dhimal at school, they were usually unaware that such a course existed. This speaks to a broader issue of the gaps between schools and guardians, but more specifically, demonstrates that

information about rights and benefits surrounding multilingual education has not been widely distributed at least in this community. In the case of SSS, representatives from an ethnic organization held repeated meetings with the resource person, head teacher and SMC chair to convince them that they should offer a Dhimal language course. Their arguments were successful because of their persistence in pursuing repeated meetings, and because of an ultimately receptive head teacher and SMC chair. In addition, the school had recently hired a teacher who spoke Dhimal and had attended a training for teaching the Dhimal language subject, making the course simpler to implement than it would have been without her.

The case of SSS demonstrates the importance of the Dhimal ethnic organization in promoting the Dhimal language class, as the class was only implemented as this school as a result of advocacy by members of the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra who were not otherwise affiliated with the school that the class was implemented at this school. In addition, this example demonstrates that one explanation for why schools and even mid-level education bureaucrats such as Resource Persons (who oversaw clusters of around a dozen schools) did not implement a local language subject was a lack of information about multilingual education policies. Due to the central government's position of permission without action, implementing a course that was promised in the constitution and multiple educational policies required concerted action by Dhimal language advocates. Once the Resource Person, SMC chair and head teacher knew about the policy and the reasons for its importance, they were able to begin implementation.

Gyan Joti Primary School

Gyan Joti Primary School was a small primary school located about a twenty-minute walk south of PLSS. The seven-person teaching staff at GJPS included two Dhimal teachers, both of whom grew up near the school and had taught there for many years. Of the schools I observed, GJPS was the one where I heard the most spoken Dhimal language. This was partly because two teachers frequently spoke with each other in Dhimal, but also because parents spoke with the two Dhimal teachers and amongst themselves in Dhimal when they came to drop off or pick up students, discuss their children's performance, pay for textbooks, or attend meetings.

In contrast to other schools, even students at GJPS occasionally spoke in Dhimal spontaneously. This was not something that I observed at other schools in the area. For example, young children sometimes used Dhimal language kinship terms to talk about family members, or answered teachers' questions using a Dhimal word when teachers expected answers in Nepali or English. On one occasion, I observed second grade students, Dhimal and non-Dhimal, testing each other on Dhimal vocabulary, and showing off the various words and phrases that they knew in Dhimal. Given that it was rare for children to speak Dhimal in any context, even these scattered tokens of Dhimal language produced by children were notable.

GJPS seemed to fit the profile of a school that could, and even should, offer a Dhimal language subject. There were many students from Dhimal backgrounds, two teachers from the Dhimal community, and students knew some Dhimal and had at least occasional interest in learning to speak. In the recent past, it could even have been a good fit for Dhimal medium, as teachers and community parents

reported that Dhimal students used to arrive at school speaking fluent Dhimal but limited Nepali. Despite this seemingly promising environment for a Dhimal language class, though, there was no serious discussion of its introduction while I was there.

Indeed, the head teacher of this school seemed unenthusiastic about the prospect of teaching a local language. While he told me in an interview that he had learned bits of other languages in order to communicate with students while posted at schools in hilly regions of eastern Nepal, those languages were never used in a formal context. The head teacher had recently moved to the area and he had not yet learned any Dhimal. In a discussion of national language policy, the head teacher emphasized the importance of knowing English, "the international language, " and Nepali for national unity. Local languages, he argued, limit their speakers to communication within their local areas. He made this claim despite the many guardians and community members of the school who spoke Nepali, Hindi, English, and sometimes other languages in addition to Dhimal.

Like the head teacher, the SMC chair at GJPS emphasized that schools must teach English, calling English the "main subject" that students needed to learn. He also argued that Dhimal language instruction was unnecessary because children today arrive at school more proficient in Nepali than in Dhimal. While the two Dhimal teachers at the school talked with each other about wanting to implement a Dhimal subject at the school, they felt that the opposition of the head teacher and SMC chair meant that they would never be able to get permission to do so.

Throughout my research, several people mentioned GJPS as an optimal site for implementing the language class. With a skeptical SMC chair and head teacher at GJPS,

though, there was no movement toward offering a Dhimal language class, and as in the other school cases, the two policy gatekeepers at this school were the head teacher and SMC chair. It is possible that the school leadership could have been convinced by action from leaders of the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra. To date, though, this has not occurred, and this school is a prime demonstration of the ways that the government policy of tolerance coupled with inaction led to maintenance of the language policy status quo, despite the written provision of the right to instruction in additional languages. In this case, the government policy of requiring school decisions to be made in collaboration with the school management committee, a policy passed in support of local control of schooling (Bhatta, 2005) acted to prevent the implementation of a policy that supported languages of Nepal being taught in schools.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have discussed the status of the Dhimal language class at three schools. At one, the Dhimal language was adopted relatively quickly due to the enthusiasm and leadership of politically and ethnically aligned key players: the head teacher and SMC chair. In the second case, the Resource Person, SMC chair and head teacher were convinced to offer the course due to the concerted efforts of ethnic activists from the Dhimal Jāti Bikās Kendra. In contrast, the Dhimal class was not introduced at the third school despite the interest of some teachers and the relatively high proportion of Dhimal students that would make the school a promising site for the inclusion of a Dhimal language subject. This was a result of an SMC chair and head teacher uninterested in offering the subject. In the absence of concerted activism, there was no

official mother tongue presence at the school. For policy makers and researchers, I hope to demonstrate the importance of looking at language policy beyond official policies. While Nepal's constitution and additional provide the ideological and implementational space for multilingual schooling (Hornberger 2002, 2005), fulfilling these rights continues to require concerted effort by language activists.

This discussion points to the ways that a policy environment that allowed for but did not actively promote the inclusion of minoritized languages in schools left the adoption of the policy to rely on individuals' decisions and actions (Johnson 2012; Johnson& Johnson 2015) on language policy arbiters). The right to education in the mother tongue is provided as a permission rather than a requirement. While the Ministry of Education has produced textbooks in a number of languages, it remains the school's responsibility to request books from Curriculum Development Centre. Similarly, while schools have the option to teach languages of Nepal as a subject, or to change the medium of instruction to a community's mother tongue, currently these changes must originate at the school or community level, rather than from the actions of government officials. The determining factor in these cases for the implementation of a language class was not the concentration of Dhimal language speakers or broad-based community demand, but rather whether there were strong community advocates for a language class. Without champions of the language class, the language policy status quo reigned. The local subject timeslot was filled with English, Nepali or General Knowledge despite policies stating that the topic of the local subject should be locally relevant language or information.

The examples in this case come from schools that did not have significant intervention from external organizations

to support multilingual education. In each of the cases above, the attitude of the head teacher and SMC chair toward mother tongue subjects determined whether a Dhimal language class was offered. In the case of PLSS, the two arbiters were both Dhimal activists predisposed to supporting the course. At SSS, Dhimal activists successfully targeted these key individuals, convincing them to become supporters of teaching Dhimal at school. At GJPS, teachers who supported the Dhimal subject found that the SMC chair and head teacher blocked their chances of offering a Dhimal course. These examples suggest that future government or non-governmental interventions to support MLE may be particularly effective if they target people in the positions identified as language policy arbiters in this study: head teachers, School Management Committee chairs, and perhaps local education officials such as Resource Persons.

It should be noted that this discussion has not talked about teaching and learning of the Dhimal language, but instead focused on the existence of any time devoted to Dhimal in schools. In the schools where Dhimal was offered, it occupied one class period on a few days of the week, insufficient time to promote real learning of the language. In addition, talk in Dhimal class sessions that I observed took place largely in Nepali and English, rather than in Dhimal. Teachers asked to teach the language were working from a brief training, which may not have been sufficient for them to effectively support student language learning (Weinberg 2018).

One argument for the importance of offering Indigenous languages in school is that the language's presence in formal school spaces will boost the status of the language (Hornberger 2008). Indeed, Dhimal people who knew of the language course said that it gave them a feeling

of pride to know that their language was taught at even one or two schools. The status planning benefits, however, were minimized due to the lack of knowledge by many community members that a Dhimal language course existed. Even some parents of children who were enrolled in the Dhimal language course were surprised to learn of its existence. This information gap speaks to a wider issue of the gulf between school and community, but for purposes of status planning for Nepal's languages may point to the need for other routes to promote the prestige of Indigenous languages.

There are many challenges for implementing the constitutional rights of all Nepalis to attend school in their mother tongue. Nevertheless, both policies and practices have opened significant ideological and implementational space (Hornberger 2002, 2005) for the advancement of Indigenous languages and their speakers. On a sunny afternoon in 2015, I asked a group of second grade students what they consider to be their favorite subject. In turn, all but one of the students in the class reported that their favorite subject was Dhimal. The one exception reported that she favored GK, or General Knowledge. This exchange should certainly not be taken as a transparent reflection of students' feelings, as their teacher was hovering behind them and they knew I was particularly interested in their Dhimal class. However, it is notable that these students all identified Dhimal language as their favorite class. This exchange was remarkable not just in their selection of the subject as their favorite, but because they had always had a Dhimal language class as part of their school experience. There may be a long way to go to ensure quality multilingual education for all Nepali students, but these students are experiencing, and enjoying, early steps toward that goal.

14

Multilingual education in Nepal: Retrospect and prospect

DUBI NAND DHAKAL

1. Introduction

'Multilingual education entails teaching and learning of multiple languages' (Lotherington 2004: 710). There has been a long debate on whether the language of 'small language' communities should be incorporated in the school curriculum in addition to the language of the nation. This is an issue in Nepal still today, which was also the subject of debate in the west (Cummins 1979: 73). Cummins (1979) refers to the educational failures of children in US and Sweden to the gap between the language of home and schools.

There are a number of rationales behind the bilingual education. It is assumed that the best medium for teaching a child is his mother tongue or any other language a child understands well. The mother tongue is the natural means of self-expressions of the experiences and thoughts learnt in childhood (UNESCO 1953). There are other considerations for multilingual education such as academic and educational considerations (Bunyi 1999), increasing the confidence in learners (Cummins 2001), reducing the drop-out and failure

rates, or for better educational performance. The opportunity to learn in the mother tongue is also related to linguistic human rights of children (Skutnabb- Kangas 1998). He (Skutnabb- Kangas 2012: 1) mentions that teaching the mother tongue is "valuable teaching/learning resources instead of a mere source of interference…and hence may bear constructive implications for L2 instruction, especially in homogenous contexts where both teachers and learners share the same mother tongue (MT) and target language (TL)". Furthermore, the medium of teaching also transfers the culture of the language used. It is, therefore, significant to select their mother tongue as the medium for teaching the children. Teaching the children through mother tongue at the primary level is very meaningful to make education accessible to children and involve them in the learning process (cf. Awasthi 2004; Yadava 2011, Yadava and Dhakal 2011).

This article is organized into seven sections. Section one briefly outlines significance of mother tongue education and section two discusses the languages included in the recent census. Section three surveys the language policy as stated in some relevant reports, and policy papers. Section four makes a survey of the provisions of MLE stated in the policy papers and national documents after 1990. The current status of MLE is briefly mentioned in section five. This paper discusses two main challenges of MLE in section six. Finally, the paper is summarized in section seven.

2. Languages in recent census

Nepal is rich in cultural, ethnic and ecological diversity. The previous census has recorded 123 national languages in addition to 'other' languages. The language situation thus shows that Nepal is a multilingual country. Since the country is multilingual, the education opportunity should also be given to the children of different language families (Awasthi, 2013). Language is also an emblem of identity. People

belonging to different ethnic groups intend to show their distinct identities through their mother tongues. The gradual increase in the number of languages in Nepal can be attributed to the linguistic awareness among ethnic groups in Nepal. In addition, there are still some languages, and linguistic groups in different parts of the country which have not been well-documented, and recorded. Let's take a Gyalsumdo language spoken in Manang (cf. Hildebrandt and Perry 2011). The language is spoken in the three different villages in Manang, viz. Chame, Thonce and Danaque. However, the language is not recorded as a distinct language in the recent census. Thus, different censuses show that there are ethno-linguistic minorities in Nepal.

3. Indigenous languages in education in Nepal: A historical overview

This section reviews how the indigenous Nepalese languages faced stigmatization and devaluation in the history of Nepalese education system. The stigmatization was commonplace until the Constitution of Nepal (1990) was promulgated. In this context, this section concentrates on the language issues as mentioned in reports in Nepalese education system earlier to 1990 and post-democratic period following people's movement in 1990. This data can be taken as a demarcation between the monolingual and bilingual education policy in Nepal.

3.1 Monolingual period

During a long period of time, indigenous Nepalese languages were stigmatized. They were neither chosen as the medium of instruction, nor were they assigned any educational values. It was during the period of institutional monolingualism, in which they designated just one of the languages spoken by their citizens as the medium of instruction. This policy continued for a long time. This was guided by the contemporary politics and socio-political

milieu of the country. In order to understand whether the mother tongues should have a place in curriculum, we need to see how the 'mother tongues' were viewed from the perspective of planners and educationists in the past. The debate on language use in education is included in the education reports commissioned by Government of Nepal.

Education in Nepal (2011B.S.)

The Report of *Education in Nepal* mentions[1]

> The medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle, and higher educational institutions, because any language which cannot be made *lingua franca* and which does not serve legal proceedings in court should not find a place. In the same way English, which is merely taught as a foreign language cannot be considered as an important medium of instruction in educational institutions. The use of a national language can bring about equality among all classes of people, can be an anchor-sheet for Nepalese nationality, and can be the main instrument for promoting literature (2011vs, p.53).

It is obvious that the language policy intends to promote a single language (Nepali) in this report. It was assumed that the monolingual language policy strengthened the national integrity. Despite this, the following advantages are pointed out if the children are taught in their mother tongues:

(a) Children can easily be made literate if they are taught in their mother tongues.
(b) Love of mother tongue instead of distaste for the national language will be the emphasis.
(c) The less advanced tribal languages will be developed and this will go a long way in helping to bring about an overall progress in the country by mutual good will of all concerned.

1 The committee for this commission consisted of 3 members, viz. Sardar Rudra Raj Pandey, Keiser Bahadur K.C, Dr. Hugh B. Wood. Dr. Hugh B. Wood was appointed as an Educational Advisor.

(d) The government will be credited for preserving the right of its people to publish books in their own mother tongue for the medium of instruction.

As mentioned earlier, pedagogical advantages of the mother tongues have been pointed out in the report. It is argued that it is easy to use a single language in education than to use a number of languages. Secondly, there is a clear indication that the 'local' or 'tribal' languages can be developed if the domains of the use of these languages are extended. The report also noted some practical problems if more than one languages are used in education.(a) If the national language is made the medium of instruction, the government will tide over the immediate difficulties of preparing textbooks in many languages, and implement their plan at once. Local languages generally lack written grammars and dictionaries and it takes a long time to prepare them. (b) In a small country where languages are spoken, it will not be practicable to give the same status to all the languages simultaneously. Therefore, it will be imperative to adopt a general policy to give status to a language which is spoken by the majority of the people. Some of the challenges of MLE at present are the same as they were pointed out in 1960s.

National Education Committee (2018 B.S./1961)

Although the report in 2018VS recommends using Nepali as the language of instruction, there are opinions that the medium of instruction may also be the local languages[2]. We find two different views in it. Firstly, the main body of the report favours a single language in education. However, the opinions of the committee members also reveal the importance of using the local languages in education.

2 The committee consisted of 12 members led by Bishwo Bandhu Thapa. While some members argue for only a single language, there are other members who also speak for the mother tongue education.

Although the Report emphasizes the use of English and some foreign languages, it ignores the use of the local languages in education. The report mentions, "The instruction should be in Nepali except English or other languages in primary and secondary level". In addition, the preference is also given to other international languages. By stark contrast, the local languages were not preferred. Moreover, it was argued that the library in schools should also contain more books written in the Nepali language.

The views expressed in the report accept the fact that teaching in the mother tongue is effective despite the practical problems in managing the multilingual situation. One of the reasons of not choosing the local languages in education was assumed to be the fact that it may not strengthen the national integrity.

There are opinions included in the appendices that the mother tongues should also have places in the education system. Thus, the pedagogical importance of the mother tongue is also acknowledged.[3] Similarly, other members realize the importance of mother tongue teaching theoretically (p.142). By contrast, there are opinions[4](2018: 138) disfavouring the use of local languages in education. One of the members argues, "The children can learn the mother tongue at village. In addition to this, there is also an

3 Bal Chandra Sharma in the same report mentioned that "Regional languages should also contribute to the country. The culture and language of different regions are different….The language of some ethnic people should be taught in the primary level if the community constitutes certain population (percentage) of people in the country. Imparting education in the mother tongue in the primary level is good." Similarly, Vedananda Jha, one of the members of the committee noted, "It is better to promote other language in addition to the national language (Nepali). I accept the importance of imparting education in the national language, regional languages and mother tongue. There are also a number of challenges…If we teach in the mother tongue, there will be the full growth of the children's personality. We should not promote the national language at the cost of the other languages existing in the country (p.142)."

4 Dhruba Chandra Amatya

opinion that that the local languages may be used as optional subjects in the primary level. The opinions reflected in the report show that teaching the children in the mother tongue can be very significant in the multilingual country like Nepal.[5] On close examination, the report incorporates both kinds of views towards MLE. While the main report disfavors the use of local languages in education, personal views of experts also have positive views towards it. As a whole, this report is a regressive movement in MLE.

The National Education System Plan (1971-76/2028B.S.)

The report accepts Nepali as 'the language of the nation'. One of the national goals of education is "to preserve, develop, and propagate the national language and literature, culture and arts". This statement itself lays an emphasis on the importance of the national language (or Nepali) at the cost of all other languages. This is further emphasized as the report further adds,

Words and phrases from different regional languages will be assimilated into the national language so that it may be further enriched and so develop into a more effective medium of instruction.

The language policy mentioned in this report is assimilatory as it intends to assimilate other languages into Nepali. This also indicates that the report has no room for the discussion of the importance of the local languages in education. One language and culture was encouraged for promotion during the Panchayat regime (Weinberg 2013: 66).

3.2 Multilingualism accepted after restoration of democracy

The post-1990 period moved towards pluralistic language policy (Weinberg 2013: 76). The linguistic awareness that the culture and language are the symbols of

5 This was the opinion expressed by Mrs. Chandra Gurung.

their (ethnic) identification increased among the speakers of mother tongues other than Nepali following the People's movement-1 in 1990 (2046VS). This was reflected when *The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990)* was promulgated. The constitution framed after the restoration of democracy recognized languages other than Nepali and made the following provisions about the non-Nepali languages:

(1) The Nepali language in the Devanagari script is the language of the nation of Nepal. Nepali language shall be the official language (Part 1, Article 6.1)
(2) All the languages spoken in the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages of Nepal. Nepali language in the Devanagari script is the language of the nation of Nepal. Nepali language shall be the official language (Article Part 1, Article 6.2).

The constitution thus made the provision for the use of mother tongues in the primary education (Part 1, Article 18.2). It also guaranteed Nepalese as a fundamental right to preserve their culture, scripts and their language (Article 26.2).

High Level Committee in Education Report (2049B.S./ 1992)

This report is in line with the spirit of the *Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal* (1990) and it accepts all provisions made in the constitution. Despite the fact that the widespread use of Nepali is acknowledged, the minority languages are also given priority in educational use. It recommends (Section, 2, Primary education):

To permit the use of a language other than Nepali as the medium of instruction in areas where Nepali is not the mother tongue, basically, as is advisable, reading and writing are conducted in Nepali with instructions and explanations given in the mother tongue of the area, provided that the reading materials become available in sufficient quantity.

Thus, the linguistic diversity of each community is well-accepted. Regarding the textbook preparation, it states,

There are no textbooks in most of the native languages of Nepal, and there are some languages which have no scripts. Nevertheless, in view of the rights conferred by the Constitution, scholars of the languages concerned should be motivated to prepare requisite textbooks (p., 221).

Language Commission Report (1994)

These provisions made in the constitution gave an impetus to multilingual education. Similarly, the Report of National Languages Policy Recommendation Commission (1994:41) made the following recommendations:

(1) It would be appropriate to adopt bilingual education particularly in schools located in the urban or rural areas with a predominantly bilingual context and multilingual context. The teacher would use both the language of the nation and the mother tongue as required in such an education system.
(2) In bilingual education, teaching mother tongue as a subject in the mother tongue and teaching of other subjects in the language of the nation would also be possible. But the teachers should be competent in both languages.

There are some good provisions in the constitutions and other related official documents. The opinions and provisions included in the documents finally leads towards the multilingual education in Nepal.

MILE (2015)

The study titled "Medium for instruction and language education: Ways forward for education policy, planning and practice in Nepal" is a comprehensive study that assesses the issues surrounding the policy and practice issues with regard to medium of instructions. This study (Seel, Yadava and Kandel 2015:XII) mentions:

It was found that MTB-BLE initiatives and projects have had considerable positive impact on children's learning and enjoyment of school but face challenges in terms of ensuring a clear and logical sequencing and respective use of different languages as subjects and mother tongues, development of materials of good quality and quantity, teacher competences and systerms for ongoing technical support and monitoring. Howver, some of the most critical problems faced by these programs was relatedto the use of project style implementation modalities to attempt to effect a long term change in a complex area.

This study highlights a number of issues, such as issues of using English as medium of instruction, socio-economic changes that would demand English as medium of instruction among others, constitutional guarentee of using mother tongue in education among others.

4. More central role in minority languages in education

The fact that the children should be taught in their mother tongue gradually was gradually introduced. The constitution which endorsed the federal state based on equality and social inclusion was framed in 2063. *The Interim constitution of Nepal (2007)* makes the following provision for languages:

(1) All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal.
(2) The Nepali Language in Devanagari script shall be the official language.
(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (2), it shall not be deemed to have hindered to use the mother language in local bodies and offices.

With these constitutional provisions, there have been some advances in the use of minority languages in primary education. In addition to the documents mentioned earlier, a number of documents related to languages in education made recommendations and processes for the use of mother tongue

in education, such as *National Curriculum Framework, Multilingual Education Guidelines* etc. There are of course some provisions in order to fulfill the objectives set by *Education for All*.

The School Sector Reform Plan (MOE 2005:.20) notes that, "the school management committee (SMC) will make necessary arrangements for the development of learning materials in different languages". It also makes further arrangements for MLE in schools. It maintains,

To ensure that children learn in their mother tongues at least in the early grades up to three, school management committee (SMC) can determine the language(s) of instruction in consultation with the local body. Grades four and five can follow a transition from the mother-tongue medium of instruction to Nepali medium of instruction. From grades six to eight, the medium of instruction can be fully in Nepali. English will be taught as a subject from grade one onwards (82).

These provisions were responsible for the initiation of MLE in Nepal (cf. Eagle 2000, 2008: 226). However, even after all legal provisions and commitments of the government, the effective implementation and outcomes of the MLE are yet to be obtained.

5. Current situation

After the MLE was implemented in 2007 with the financial and technical support of the Finnish government, the debates about MLE education is going on. In the beginning, MLE programme was implemented in 8 different languages, viz. Uranw, Tharu (eastern), Santhali, Rajbanshi, Athpariya Rai, Magar (Palpa), Tamang (Rasuwa) and Rana Tharu. The textbooks have been prepared in different languages (in more than two dozens of languages) by the government of Nepal, and some I/NGOs. Central Department of Linguistics, Tribhuvan University is also preparing some textbooks for MLE. Despite this, the results are not very

encouraging perhaps because of lack of appropriate model of MLE in Nepal. Ghimire (2014) discusses that it is relevant to find and implement appropriate model for managing the heterogeneous classrooms where the children of more than two linguistic backgrounds are present in the same classroom. There are arguments for and against MLE in Nepal. On the one hand, scholars are pointing out the importance of MLE, (see section 1) and some positive changes brought about by it (Yonjan and Rai 2013). By contrast, there are also opinions that the MLE is now surrounded by a number challenges. The following section summarizes two of the main challenges, which may be crucial to implement MLE programmes in Nepal.

6. Main challenges

MLE is surrounded by a number of challenges. The dissenting voices of MLE are even stronger even today as there are a very few success stories of MLE. Some of them include the lack of commitments for MLE from various stakeholders, parents' expectation of educating the children in English, lack of teaching resources, lack of confidence in teachers, the time limits to make an evaluation of MLE achievements, lack of orientation in teaching in the mother tongue, multilingual setting in classroom, among others. Among these challenges, there are two challenges which are really crucial in implementation of MLE. They include the multilingual setting in the classroom and parent's preference to teach their children in the language with wider communication.

Firstly, the sociolinguistic situation of the country across the country poses difficulties in implementing MLE in Nepal (cf. Malone, 2010, Ghimire, 2014, Regmi 2069, Rai et al. 2011, p.33, Phyak 2012, p.42). The administrative regions or geographic regions in Nepal are multilingual. The multilingual in Nepal is unique in the sense that we can't

simply choose one language in a specific geographic or administrative region[6].

There are arguments, however, that some languages, particularly minority languages are confined within a small geographical territory. The speakers may be monolingual in such rural settings. This is true in many cases but this argument does not apply in all situations. Let me present the cases of three different languages spoken in Manang district. The isolated villages in Manang districts are characterized by monolingualism. For example, the children in some villages, such as Gherang and Dharapani are typically Gurung monolingual before they are enrolled at schools. There would be no difficulty in teaching them in the mother tongue as the classes in these places are typically monolingual. Similar is the case with the children who grow up in Nar and Phu. By contrast, we find a different case when we look at the linguistic group called Gyalsumdo. Although there are a few hundred speakers of this linguistic group, all of them are mostly bilingual as all Gyalsumdo villages are located in the trekking routes in Manang. This adds up the complexities in choosing the mother tongue as a medium of instruction.

This situation leads to the classrooms with students from heterogeneous linguistic background (Ghimire, 2014). This is interlinked with the development of resource, teacher training and ultimately linked with the financial management. Taking into consideration the heterogeneity nature of the classroom, we need to find an appropriate model to handle this situation (Ghimire, 2014).

Secondly, one of the challenges is related to the perception of the MLE among parents. The parents feel that their children will achieve good education in their lives. They want their children to speak not only the local language but also Nepali and English. As they see that their children spend

6 Nepal presents a unique bilingualism/multilingualism and it differs from other south Asian countries (cf. Mohanty, 2008, Mansoor, 2004).

more time on the local language and spend less time in learning/reading the language in the language of wider communication, they are frustrated. Despite their support to MLE, they see that learning English would give their children additional benefits of jobs and other opportunities. They sometimes feel that the local language has very limited use as this cannot be used to establish the contact with the people of outside and with the rest of the world. The local language is confined to the local communities. Rai et al. (2011, p. 33) also noted that the parents are in doubt whether MLE schools will sustain. They feel that learning the local language confines the children only to their communities (cf. Annamalai, 2003:. 126). Rai et al. (2011:33) further note “The most crucial challenge is that parents, teachers, children and other stakeholders are still resistant and suspicious about the sustainability and effectiveness of the policy.” Weinberg (this volume) furthter mentions that "enthusiasm and leadership of politically and ethnically aligned key players" made it possible to initate the Dhimal classes in the schools in eastern Nepal. She has discusses that the implementation of the MLE policies in the schools at local level is not seen possible in her case study in absence of 'concerted activism'. She mentions a case in which the combination of a Dhimal head teacher, School Management Committee chair combined with ethnic organization made the MLE a success story. By contrast, it is not easy to convince the parents merely by activism.

The parents want to get benefits from the improved education system. As mentioned earlier, the local language is used only in the local context. This shows that parents feel the benefits of the language of the wider communication. Because of these reasons, the previously MLE schools are also switching to English. Almost similar case has been noted in the Philippines (Burton, 2013). Burton (2013:.100) mentions “A major finding was that teachers and parents focused primarily on benefits with a

short-term lens and disadvantages from a long-term perspective". This argument is very crucial in the environment when overwhelming majority of children are enrolled at English medium schools (locally known as boarding schools). It is commonly claimed that all participants of MLE- planners and policy makers, educationists, community leaders, almost all members of the community- want their children to be taught in English (cf. Phyak 2012, p.42). This adversely affects the MLE programmes.

7. Conclusion

The debates on whether the local languages (or local mother tongues) should be used as medium of instructions in schools began as early as 1960s in Nepal. Owing to socio-political reasons, the teaching of the mother tongue in schools could not be materialized for long. Interestingly, even the government was prescribing a monolingual policy during the Panchayat regime, the educationists and experts expressed the views that mother tongue education is really useful from pedagogical point of view. Even after the legal provisions are made in national documents, the MLE programmes are surrounded by a number of challenges. The heterogeneous nature of classroom situation and the beliefs and attitudes of the parents towards MLE are two main challenges for its effective implementation. While the former of these two cannot be avoided, we need to find an appropriate methodology to handle this situation. Moreover, one more crucial factor is the belief of parents and stakeholders towards MLE. Unless these two challenges are properly addressed, the MLE programmes will lag behind.

15

Local perspectives on mother-tongue education in Nepal

NAOMI FILLMORE

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2019 the International Year of Indigenous Languages. The declaration aims to raise awareness of the crucial role languages play in people's daily lives, including in early learning, as well as promoting and protecting indigenous languages and improving the lives of those who speak them. Access to education "in and about indigenous languages" is a major objective of the international year.

Despite the now overwhelming consensus in the literature that learning occurs best in the language a child speaks most fluently, many indigenous groups globally are still fighting for their right to linguistically-inclusive education to be upheld (including recently renewed calls in Australia).

In Nepal, *Adivasi Janajati* is a broad term for 'indigenous nationalities', and covers a diverse range of caste, ethnic, and language groups in Nepal. The most recent census reported a total of 126 ethnic groups and 123 languages, but this number likely underestimates the true scale of the country's multilingualism. With less than half of

the population speaking the national language of Nepali as their mother tongue, and with literacy rates among the lowest worldwide, the issue of language in education is a pressing one for Nepal's *Adivasi Janajati* and other linguistic minorities.

The Maoist Insurgency of 1996-2000 capitalised on the dissatisfaction with monocratic rule and policies of linguistic assimilation, suppression, and neglect that characterised the 19th and 20th centuries, garnering the support of many Indigenous and minority groups.The democratic government established in the wake of the Insurgency period promised to better represent the nation's cultural and linguistic diversity. Though not without its issues, the new Constitution ratified in 2015– for the most part – comes good on this promise. Among several new provisions for cultural, religious, and linguistic rights, the 2015 Constitution mandates that all children the right to receive basic education in their first language.

Implementing the constitutional commitment in over 100 languages is the next hurdle for country. While any education reform is a difficult undertaking, implementing mother tongue education, with the added complexities and sensitivities of language and culture, is undoubtedly a 'wicked hard' development problem. To solve these types of problems, we need to start from a solid understanding of local attitudes, beliefs, resources, and capacities.

With this in mind, and against the backdrop of the International Year of Indigenous Languages, a recent study in Nepal offers an insight into the perceptions and practices of parents, teachers and students in six primary schools in remote Nepal. Implemented by the Language Commission of Nepal (the national government body setup to advise the President on constitutional provisions related to language, including mother-tongue education), and with financial and technical support from VSO International, the study takes a

magnifying glass to selected schools in the local municipalities of Temal and Phidim.

Findings show that, overwhelmingly, parents and teachers support the new constitutional provision, with 90 per cent of parents and 98 per cent of teachers agreeing that children have a right to education in their mother tongue. Clearly, the government's decision to include mother-tongue education in the 2015 Constitution reflects the desires and beliefs of local stakeholders.

Parents and teachers almost universally agree that using the mother tongue helps students acquire information faster. However, this understanding did not translate to a preference for early education to be taught in the mother tongue in all areas. In Phidim, 100 per cent of parents stated that they preferred their children to learn in the mother tongue, however, in Temal, only 50 per cent of parents shared this preference.

The discrepancy in parent preferences between locations highlights the need for localised approaches to advocating for and implementing mother tongue education. Panchthar district, of which Phidim is a part, is the birthplace of a number of notable politicians, poets and authors, and the current President of Nepal is from the neighbouring district of Bhojpur. With such strong role models available, parents in Phidim may be less concerned that their children need to know Nepali or English to be successful outside of their community, while parents in Temal, located within a day's drive from Kathmandu, may feel the pressure to assimilate with the national language more acutely given their proximity to the capital.

Turning to teachers, the study found that most were positive about the potential role of the mother tongue in education (95 per cent agreed that children should learn in their mother tongue first). This shows that any implementation of the policy at the teacher-level need not focus on advocacy activities aimed to convince teachers of

the value of utilising the mother tongue. However, although teachers understood the importance of the mother tongue for learning, 80 per cent felt that they didn't have the resources and 44 per cent felt they did not have the abilities to switch to a mother-tongue based program at this time. Teacher-level activities therefore may focus on developing teachers' skills, capacities, and resources for mother tongue-based teaching. Being at the chalk-face of the education system, addressing teachers' concerns about their own skills and the resources available to them will be vital to the success of Nepal's mother tongue education policy.

Students in both locations were generally positive about their schooling experience, with all students confirming they enjoy coming to school and learning new things. When asked about language, 69 per cent of non-Nepali-speaking students in Temal and 79 per cent in Phidim agreed that their teacher encourages them to use their mother tongue.

Classroom observations provided an interesting insight into current teaching practices in early grades. Though the local languages of Limbu (in Phidim) and Tamang (in Temal) were used to varying degrees in both locations, Nepali was the most dominant language used in classrooms in both locations (used 72 per cent of the time by teachers in Temal and 56 per cent of the time in Phidim), followed by English. Similarly, teaching materials in the mother tongue were limited in Phidim, and non-existent in Temal.

Other studies in Nepal, such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) study and the government's own National Assessment of Student Achievement (NASA), have highlighted language as an important factor in poor learning achievement. The present study looked at the relationship between mother-tongue education and student engagement. Unsurprisingly, it found that use of the mother tongue (either by the teacher or the students, and either orally or visually) was predictive of greater student engagement.

Education policy implementation is a 'wicked hard', highly contextual, and non-generalizable issue. With this in mind, this study offers a glimpse into the local-level attitudes, practices, and capabilities of local teachers, parents, and children in two remote Nepali communities. The road ahead may be long, but by understanding and respecting local perspectives, the Government of Nepal stands a better chance of delivering a stronger, more inclusive education system for Nepal's *Adivasi Janajati* and linguistically diverse children.

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