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## **JOURNAL OF INDIAN LANGUAGES AND INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

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*Journal of Indian languages and Indian literature in English*, 03(01), 147-167; 2025

### **The Functionality of The Mother Tongue in Education**

**Sanaa Taha Aqeel**

Research Scholar

Department of Linguistics

Aligarh Muslim University

Aligarh India

[sanataha04@gmail.com](mailto:sanataha04@gmail.com)

+917895858067

**Submission Date: 04.03.2025**

**Acceptance Date: 24.03.2025**

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#### **Abstract**

This paper reflects on the effectiveness and importance of the mother tongue in education and how to improve the knowledge of the students on their native language and form interactive methods for independent work in teaching organized fragments of speech, referring to both oral and written speech skills of students.

The term "mother tongue" is often referred to as your first or native language. It is the language that you most commonly speak. In education, mother tongue refers to when a school or educational institution integrates the language a child is most familiar with into classroom instruction alongside the school's curriculum.

Mother-tongue education plays a vital role in the development of the personal, social, and cultural identities of a child. It reflects that the role and importance of a language express the nation's identity, distinguishing a country from the others. It is the soul of the nation.

Learning in the mother tongue, the native or first language (L1), offers several advantages in educational contexts. For example, in Yemen, Arabic is the dominant language in the education system due to using the mother tongue has been shown to promote education effectively.

This paper reflects upon the relevance and benefits of the mother tongue in education, recognizing that a nation's language is a core aspect of its customs, traditions, and way of life.

**Keywords:** mother tongue, promote education, interactive teaching methods, a medium of instruction, curriculum.

### **Introduction:**

Language is a powerful tool that connects individuals, cultures, and ideas across the globe. It is defined as a tool for communication that consists of a set of sounds and written symbols that people use for talking or writing. Language stands as a cornerstone in fostering a sense of cultural identity and heritage. Across the world, numerous languages are diminishing as individuals increasingly adopt dominant languages for communication and written expression. Nevertheless, language remains a universal thread that binds people together, transcending social status, geographic boundaries, and ethnic origins. When considering the role of language in advancing education and societal progress, its function as a medium for thought and cognitive development emerges as a critical focal point.

The mother is the first one who speaks to the child and his/ her interlocutor most of the time. The language used by her is the mother tongue. "Mother tongue" is the native or first language(L1). Also, it is known as arterial language and represents the language a child is exposed to from birth. The importance of the mother tongue for initiation into formal education in the context of increasing emphasis on knowledge in the present competitive environment has gained significance.

Mother tongue encompasses the language learned from birth, profoundly influencing an individual's understanding of the world, emotional expression, and intellectual communication. It is a critical component of a person's identity and cultural heritage. Mother tongue is the language through which individuals first understand the world around them, communicate with their loved ones, and express themselves emotionally and intellectually. It also plays a crucial role in academic contexts. Students grasp and retain information more effectively when instruction is delivered in their native language. This can lead to improved academic performance, higher levels of student engagement, and reduced dropout rates. Additionally, learning in one's mother tongue can foster a greater sense of cultural identity and pride, benefiting students' well-being.

Many researchers have consistently demonstrated that students educated in their mother tongue tend to perform better academically, develop critical skills, gain confidence, and

maintain a strong cultural identity. Furthermore, it facilitates a deeper understanding of curriculum concepts. Teaching mother tongue in schools aligns with societal development goals, enabling students to express their thoughts with grammatical accuracy, clarity, and meaningfulness. These tasks are multifaceted, and their fulfillment aims to develop students' minds by giving them ideological-political, moral, aesthetic, and labour education.

Since language and culture are interwoven, there must be a close relationship between bilingual and bicultural education. Wherever there is a high density of particular ethnic groups, schools should make efforts to offer the language and culture of that group as a curriculum option (Koul, 1983).

The importance of mother tongue is essential for a child in education. Many experts such as Pattanayak, Koul, Cummins, and others have asserted the significance and the benefits that students gain when they learn in their mother tongue. Using the mother tongue in education helps to raise the students' self-awareness and leads them to gain more confidence with solid and positive self-esteem for their learning. Mother tongue has a substantial positive impact on learning and effortlessly results in educational success.

### **Literature Review:**

Education in the mother tongue is an essential factor for inclusion and quality learning, and it also improves learning outcomes and academic performance. It is crucial, especially in primary school, to avoid knowledge gaps and increase the speed of learning and comprehension. It plays a significant role in shaping the personality of an individual, his thought processes, and his more extensive view of life and the world around him.

According to the instruction given to the enumerators in the (1961) Indian census, 'Mother tongue is language spoken in the childhood by person's mother. This instruction is not arbitrary and is in accordance with Webster's Third New International Dictionary, where mother tongue is defined as 'The language of one's mother: the language naturally acquired in infancy and childhood: one's first language' (Pattanayak, 1981).

The inspirational quote by Nelson Mandela (1992), "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart." The report of the (1953) UNESCO Committee shows that students learn more quickly through their first language than an unfamiliar linguistic medium. As a result, it states that the best medium for teaching a child is the mother tongue through which children understand better and express themselves freely. Language is one of the greatest values of a nation. Therefore, it is important to restore the value of the language to increase its prestige in the people's desire for freedom and self-realization (Fozilov, 2022).

On pedagogical grounds, there is a general consensus that pupils' mother-tongue must be used as the medium of instruction in early childhood education (Koul, 1975). Benson (2004) avers that because children already speak their mother tongue when they come to school, they can invariably learn to associate sounds with the symbols they see, thus facilitating understanding. However, the lexical capacity of indigenous languages to effectively convey modern science and technology has been questioned, which has also put in doubt the effectiveness of indigenous languages in classroom instruction (Gacheche, 2010). Language is the essence and identity of culture and is a major tool for communication. It is an ideal medium for exchanging ideas, emotions, and feelings. To know your language is the key to preserving your culture. In recent times, the idea of linguistic and cultural awareness has increased, thus allowing the mother tongue to be more culturally accepted (Warsi, 2019).

President Islam Karimov (2008) emphasizes that “Self-awareness, the expression of national consciousness and thinking, the spiritual connection between generations is a language.” It reflects that the role and importance of a language expresses the nation's identity, distinguishing a country from others. The mother tongue is the soul of the nation. All the virtues are absorbed into the human heart by the unique charm of the mother goddess, the mother tongue.

So, the importance of teaching in the mother tongue for developing ideas and thoughts has been recognized and adequately emphasized by different educationists. For instance, the research by Rajathurai Nishanti from Bharathidasan University shows that the mother tongue is vital in framing the thinking and emotions of people.

Education, therefore, causes the comprehensive development of a child. Mother tongue in education emphasizes the cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional, and academic advantages. By recognizing the value of students' mother tongues and incorporating them into educational settings, policymakers and educators can foster inclusive and effective learning environments that promote students' overall development and academic success (Koul, 1983). Recently, in the educational reforms in the country, the mother tongue in the regions plays an important role, especially in the educational system. To strengthen this, the Department of Education (DepEd) has implemented the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction (DepEd Order No. 74, series of 2009).

**Methodology:**

This paper explores the utility of the mother tongue in education and emphasizes its advantages and benefits in teaching. It is an important task that depends on many socio-cultural, political, and linguistic factors influencing its effectiveness.

Also, I have seen many scholarly articles and research studies that provide insights into the benefits and challenges of mother tongue instruction. It focuses on its impact on students' cognitive, linguistic, socio-emotional, and intellectual development.

**Analysis:**

Mother language is one of the most precious gifts that we have. Every language spoken throughout the globe represents a unique and distinct custom tradition. Losing the mother tongue means losing a part of one's identity and being unrelated to one's roots.

It is crucial to preserve mother tongues to ensure that our cultural diversity, traditions, and linguistic heritage are preserved. It helps to preserve our customs and heritage. The mother tongue is seen as a symbol of pride and a sense of belonging, playing a vital role in shaping one's identity. Furthermore, it is crucial to acknowledge its significance and encourage its use in educational settings.

Mother Tongue or first language is a source of noble qualities and high feelings. It has a unique place in human perfection. Learning in one's mother tongue, the native language or first language (L1), offers several advantages in educational contexts. Many educational systems worldwide have recognized the significance and the benefits of using the mother tongue in learning. So, they have started to adopt it into their curriculum.

There are numerous benefits to promote education in the mother tongue. Here are some advantages of mother tongue in education:

**Cognitive Development:**

Language and cognition are deeply connected, with cognitive development and language skills being closely linked. A strong foundation in the mother tongue facilitates the acquisition of a second language, as it supports the development of literacy, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities. These skills can then be applied to learning other languages and academic subjects.

The mother tongue, as the first language, holds significant importance in shaping cognitive development. Numerous studies indicate that children educated in their native language grasp concepts more effectively and develop critical thinking skills more

readily compared to those taught in a second language. This is because a child's mother tongue is deeply tied to their emotions, feelings, and overall cognitive growth.

According to Vygotsky (1978), language plays a crucial role in shaping cognitive processes, and children's cognitive development is strongly influenced by the language they acquire.

Cognitive development encompasses the cultivation of advanced thinking abilities, including the capacity to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information. When students are taught in their mother tongue, they can more easily engage in critical thinking and complex reasoning tasks. They can express their thoughts and ideas more effectively, engage in meaningful discussions, and participate actively in classroom activities. This, in turn, promotes the development of higher order cognitive abilities.

Using the mother tongue in education supports cognitive development by promoting language skills, comprehension, higher-order thinking, cultural identity, and skills transfer. In general, it enhances a strong foundation in learning and provides students with the necessary cognitive tools to succeed academically and beyond. So, by using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, students can grasp concepts more effectively, leading to better overall cognitive development.

### **Linguistic Proficiency:**

Learning in the mother tongue helps students build a solid mastery of their native language. Those with a strong grounding in their first language tend to achieve greater proficiency in additional languages. It enhances their language skills, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which can benefit them in various aspects of life. Linguistic proficiency in using the mother tongue in education refers to effectively teaching and learning academic content using the language students speak in their homes and communities. Virginia

Collier and Wayne Thomas (1997), Collier and Thomas are known for their research on language minority students. They argue that developing high levels of linguistic proficiency in the mother tongue impacts second language acquisition and academic achievement positively.

Implementing linguistic proficiency in education requires several vital components. First, there needs to be support from policymakers and educational institutions to promote and encourage the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction. Teacher training programs should include strategies for effectively using the mother tongue in the classroom, such as bilingual teaching methods and techniques for supporting

language development. It is important to note that linguistic proficiency in using the mother tongue does not mean excluding other languages from the curriculum.

Multilingual education can be beneficial, and students should also have the opportunity to learn additional languages, including the country's or region's official language(s). Linguistic proficiency in using the mother tongue in education is crucial for promoting effective teaching and learning. It recognizes the value of students' first languages and supports their cognitive, linguistic, and cultural development. By embracing linguistic diversity, educational systems can create inclusive and empowering learning environments for all students.

### **Improved Understanding:**

Learning in the mother tongue ensures students fully comprehend the subject. When students are taught a language, they are familiar with it. They can better understand complex concepts, engage in classroom discussions, and ask questions. This leads to a deeper understanding of the subjects and promotes a passion for learning. Studying the mother tongue is also greatly important in educating and developing the child.

The main task of teaching the mother tongue in primary classes is to master the knowledge system of all subjects by developing grammatical forms of words and literate writing skills. The realization of these tasks is highly complex, which requires the teacher to master various teaching techniques to teach students as much as possible creative thinking to be interested in each lesson. To increase children's literacy, it is necessary to strengthen their memory of the correct conjunction of the word to grow the ability to distinguish between the word composition and sentence parts.

Cummins (1981) is an expert in bilingual education. He emphasizes that a strong foundation in the mother tongue positively impacts overall understanding and cognitive development. Proficiency in the mother tongue provides a solid linguistic and conceptual framework that supports acquiring new knowledge and comprehension in various domains.

Using the mother tongue in education improves understanding by facilitating clear communication, enhancing conceptual clarity, providing contextualization, improving reading comprehension, encouraging active participation, and transferring knowledge. It creates a conducive learning environment where students can fully comprehend and engage with the content, which leads to deeper understanding and academic success.

## **Cultural Preservation:**

The mother tongue is integral to a community's cultural identity. Using the mother tongue in education, schools and educational institutions actively support preserving and revitalizing languages at risk of decline or extinction. This helps to ensure that cultural knowledge, traditions, and values embedded in the language are passed down to future generations. When education is conducted in the mother tongue, it allows the inclusion of cultural content specific to the community. Cultural stories, literature, folklore, and historical accounts can be shared and taught in their original language, preserving and celebrating the community's unique cultural heritage. This helps students develop a strong sense of cultural pride and a deeper understanding of their cultural identity.

Fishman (1993), a renowned sociolinguist, emphasized the importance of the mother tongue in preserving cultural heritage. He argued that language is an essential component of culture, and preserving the mother tongue is crucial for maintaining cultural traditions, values, and identity. Using the mother tongue in education plays a vital role in preserving languages, including cultural content, facilitating intergenerational transmission, promoting cultural perspectives and worldviews, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion, and encouraging community

engagement. Furthermore, it contributes to the preservation and celebration of a community's diverse cultural heritage. Employing native languages in academic environments contributes to the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage, customs, and values.

This approach facilitates the transfer of cultural legacy from one generation to the next. When educated in their mother tongue, students develop a stronger sense of cultural identity and connection to their community.

## **Enhanced Communication and Expression:**

Enhanced communication and expression through mother-tongue teaching can benefit students and educators significantly. Fillmore (2000), as a sociolinguist, has researched language development in bilingual children. Her work emphasizes the benefits of proficiency in the mother tongue for expressive abilities. He argues that a solid command of the mother tongue allows individuals to confidently articulate their views, opinions, and experiences, leading to effective communication and self-expression. Here are some ways in which teaching in the mother tongue can promote effective communication and expression:



**Clearer understanding:**

When students are taught in their mother tongue, they can better comprehend the subject matter. They are more likely to understand instructions, explanations, and discussions, which leads to improved academic performance. Clear understanding lays the foundation for effective communication and expression.

**Vocabulary development:**

Using the native language for instruction enables students to enhance their lexicon more readily. They can acquire new vocabulary, phrases, and colloquialisms within a recognizable setting, fostering a more comprehensive grasp of language and enhancing effective communication skills.

**Language fluency:**

Using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction helps students develop fluency in their native language. Fluent speakers are more confident in expressing their thoughts, ideas, and emotions, enabling them to communicate effectively and persuasively. Using the mother tongue in education facilitates effective communication and expression among students, teachers, and parents. Students can express their thoughts, ideas, and emotions more confidently and articulately, leading to better academic performance and communication skills.

**Critical thinking and creativity:**

Students can engage in critical thinking and creative expression more effectively when taught in their mother tongue. They can analyse complex ideas, construct arguments, and express their opinions with clarity and depth, fostering intellectual development and originality. Overall, teaching in the mother tongue enhances students' communication and expression skills, promotes cultural preservation, and encourages a positive and inclusive learning environment. It recognizes and values students' linguistic and cultural diversity while empowering them to achieve their full potential.

**Parental Involvement:**

Parents play a fundamental role in facilitating their child's language acquisition process. When parents consistently use the mother tongue at home, children have more exposure to the language, which helps them to develop strong foundations in vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills. When parents and children share a common language, it strengthens their communication and understanding.

Using the mother tongue allows for more effective and nuanced communication, enabling parents to express their thoughts, emotions, and values more fluently and children to comprehend and respond better. Children who have a robust grasp of their mother tongue are better able to apply linguistic abilities to other languages and achieve academic success. Additionally, it can facilitate the learning of additional languages later in life.

Cummins (1981), mentioned earlier as an expert in bilingual education, emphasizes the crucial role of parents in fostering and developing the mother tongue. He argues that parents play a vital role in creating an environment that values and supports using the mother tongue, contributing to children's language development and cultural identity.

Parental involvement extends beyond the family unit. Parents can help their children connect with others who share the same language and culture by engaging in community events, cultural activities, and language-related programs. This promotes social integration and a sense of community.

Moreover, parents can actively participate in their children's learning journey when education is conducted in the mother tongue. They can better understand their children's studies, engage in discussions with teachers, and provide support at home. This involvement positively impacts students' educational outcomes. So, parental participation in using the mother tongue is vital for preserving language and cultural heritage and facilitating effective communication. It supports children's cognitive, academic, and social development, creating a solid foundation for their growth.

### **Facilitating the Acquisition of Additional Languages:**

Initiating education in a child's native/ mother language enables a more effortless progression to learning other languages. Students can progressively become proficient in other languages, including English, without compromising their educational development. Ability in the mother tongue provides a cognitive and linguistic framework that helps students comprehend and transfer knowledge to other languages. Instead of teaching languages in isolation, aim for integration.

Use the mother tongue as a bridge to facilitate the learning of additional languages. For example, encourage students to use their mother tongue to understand and explain concepts in the additional language(s). On the other hand, it creates an immersive environment where students are exposed to the additional language(s) in real-life contexts. Incorporate activities such as storytelling, drama, songs, and games that promote language acquisition and cultural understanding. Regularly assess students'

language skills in both the mother tongue and additional languages. Provide constructive feedback to guide their progress and address any challenges they may face. Adjust instructional strategies as necessary to meet individual learning needs.

Genesee (2001) is a scholar who has extensively researched bilingualism and language acquisition. His work emphasizes the benefits of a strong foundation in the mother tongue for acquiring additional languages. Genesee argues that proficiency in the mother tongue supports the development of language learning strategies, such as metacognitive skills and communication strategies, which can be applied to learning new languages.

A smooth transition to additional languages requires a holistic approach, considering each student's unique needs and background. You can create an inclusive and enriching educational environment by embracing multilingualism and valuing the mother tongue. Thus, it is essential to note that while learning in the mother tongue offers significant advantages, a balanced approach incorporating the gradual introduction of other languages is also beneficial. Bilingual education can give students the benefits of both their mother tongue and other languages, broadening their horizons and preparing them for a globalized world.

### **Increased School Enrollment and Retention:**

When education is delivered in the mother tongue, it eliminates language barriers that may prevent children from attending school. Numerous children, particularly those in underserved or rural areas, often struggle to achieve proficiency in the official language used for instruction. By providing education in the mother tongue, schools become more accessible, leading to increased enrollment rates.

UNESCO (2022), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, emphasizes the importance of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in increasing school enrollment and retention. Their research and policy documents highlight that using the mother tongue as the language of instruction in the early years of education improves access to education, encourages children's participation, and reduces dropout rates.

Children learn best when they can comprehend and engage with the curriculum. Using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction ensures that children understand the content more effectively. They can grasp complex concepts and participate actively in the classroom. This increased understanding and engagement contribute to better academic performance, which, in turn, encourages students to stay in school. Also, when students see

their culture and language reflected in their education, they develop a stronger sense of belonging and pride in their heritage. This positive cultural affirmation can motivate students to continue their education and remain connected to their roots. It increased parental involvement in creating a supportive environment to encourage their children to enroll and remain in school. Therefore, students feel more comfortable and motivated to attend school when they understand and engage with the curriculum. This helps reduce dropout rates and improves overall educational access.

### **Higher Academic Achievement:**

Students can fully understand and engage with the curriculum content when taught in their mother tongue. This promotes cognitive development by allowing students to think critically, analyse information, and make connections between concepts. They can comprehend and process information effectively. Consequently, they are more likely to excel academically. Research indicates that students educated in their native language often attain higher academic achievement compared to those taught in a second or foreign language. Using their mother tongue as the medium of instruction enables students to become multilingual with greater ease.

Kamwangamalu (2016), a scholar in applied linguistics, has researched the impact of the mother tongue on academic achievement. His work highlights that when students are educated in their mother tongue, they can understand complex concepts easily, demonstrate higher levels of creativity, and achieve higher academic outcomes compared to those taught in a language that is not their first language. When students are taught in a language they understand well, they can better comprehend and internalize the subject matter. This deep understanding allows them to grasp complex concepts, apply knowledge in practical situations, and demonstrate higher- thinking skills. It sets the stage for continued academic success in higher grades and cross different subjects.

Moreover, when students see their culture and experiences reflected in their education, they develop a sense of pride and ownership, which can fuel their motivation to excel academically. When parents can grasp the language of instruction, they are more likely to participate in their children's education. They can actively participate in their children's learning, provide additional support at home, and communicate effectively with teachers. This collaborative effort between parents and teachers contributes to improved academic achievement. By building a solid foundation in the mother tongue, Students can acquire knowledge and skills more effectively, leading to better educational outcomes.

This increased engagement leads to a positive learning experience and a greater desire to achieve academic success. While using the mother tongue in education can positively affect academic achievement, a well-rounded education system should also consider developing proficiency in other languages for broader communication and global engagement.

### **Boosted Self-esteem and Confidence:**

boosts students' confidence and self-esteem. They feel valued and respected for their linguistic and cultural identity, which creates a positive learning environment and encourages active participation.

Feng (2007), a researcher in language and identity, explores the relationship between the mother tongue and self-esteem. Her work suggests that using the mother tongue in educational settings helps students develop a solid linguistic and cultural foundation. This, in turn, enhances their self-esteem and confidence as they can navigate the world with a sense of pride in their identity and heritage.

Students can connect more deeply with their cultural and linguistic heritage when taught in their mother tongue. This connection fosters a strong sense of identity and self-worth, positively impacting their self-esteem and confidence. They feel valued and respected for their language and culture, which enhances their motivation to learn and succeed. Additionally, students are more likely to actively participate in the learning process, ask questions, and take part in discussions when they can completely comprehend the instructions and content in their native tongue. They will understand deeply, enhancing their confidence in their knowledge and ability to think critically, making them more self-assured learners.

As students engage in discussions, read texts, and write in their native language, their language proficiency improves. This linguistic competence further strengthens their confidence in oral and written communication, which can positively influence their overall self-esteem. This success in learning reinforces their confidence in their abilities and boosts their self-esteem. Also, Students can express themselves more comfortably, ask questions without hesitation, and actively participate in classroom activities. So, this improved communication builds confidence in expressing ideas and opinions, which extends beyond the classroom and positively impacts various aspects of students' lives.

Learning in the mother tongue allows students to express themselves more confidently, contributing to increased self-esteem and a positive self-image. When students can communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively, they are more likely to actively participate

in classroom activities, engage in discussions, and develop a sense of pride in their abilities. A balanced approach that values both the mother tongue and additional languages can lead to holistic development and increased self-esteem and confidence in education.

### **Bridge Between Home and School:**

When children are taught in their mother tongue, it enables effective communication between the child, their family, and the school. It ensures that parents can actively participate in their child's education, understand their progress, and provide support when needed.

Also, it allows teachers to communicate more effectively with students and their families, fostering a stronger partnership between home and school. Mother tongue instruction can help students who speak a language different than the school's prevailing language adjust to school life more easily. It provides a familiar and comfortable learning environment, reducing the initial language and cultural barriers they may face. This, in turn, promotes a smoother integration into the school system and academic success.

Cummins (1981), as a leading scholar in bilingual education, emphasizes the role of the mother tongue as a bridge between home and school. His research suggests that when students can use their mother tongue in educational settings, it helps establish a connection between their home culture and the school environment. This bridge facilitates communication, understanding, and collaboration between families and schools, improving student engagement and excellent academically.

Education in the mother tongue helps bridge the gap between home and school environments. It enables parents to engage in their children's education by understanding the content and supporting their learning. This collaboration between parents and teachers fosters a supportive learning environment and strengthens the educational experience. Emphasizing the mother tongue in education does not mean neglecting other languages.

On the contrary, it supports the development of multilingualism. Children who have a solid grounding in their native language are better equipped to learn additional languages with greater ease and efficiency. Multilingual individuals have cognitive and socio-economic advantages, as they can communicate with a broader range of people and access diverse opportunities.

Briefly, mother tongue education strengthens the connection between home and school by facilitating effective communication, preserving cultural identity, supporting cognitive

development, easing transitions, and fostering multilingualism. It creates an inclusive and empowering educational environment that benefits students and the larger community.

### **Preserving Indigenous Knowledge:**

Indigenous knowledge is closely tied to the language of a community. It encompasses traditional practices, beliefs, ecological wisdom, storytelling, medicinal knowledge, and cultural rituals passed down through generations. By providing education in the mother tongue, indigenous languages become vehicles for transmitting this knowledge.

Smith (2016), as a prominent Indigenous scholar, emphasizes the critical role of the mother tongue in preserving Indigenous knowledge. Her work argues that the mother tongue carries cultural knowledge, traditions, and ways of knowing integral to Indigenous communities. Indigenous cultures and knowledge systems can be preserved and sustained by using the mother tongue as a medium of transmitting knowledge.

Students learn the language and the wisdom, values, and traditional knowledge embedded within it. In addition, indigenous knowledge is deeply rooted in the cultural context of a community. It is deeply intertwined with the land, natural surroundings, and distinct cultural traditions. Education in the mother tongue allows for a comprehensive understanding of indigenous knowledge by incorporating cultural differences and perspectives that may be lost in translation to other languages. This ensures that the richness and depth of indigenous knowledge are preserved and accurately conveyed to future generations.

Many indigenous cultures rely heavily on oral tradition for the transmission of knowledge. Storytelling, legends, myths, and narratives are used to pass down essential teachings, historical events, and cultural values. Mother tongue education provides a platform for the continuation of these oral traditions. Students can engage with elders and community members who are fluent in the language, listen to their stories, and learn from their experiences. This fosters intergenerational knowledge transfer and preserves indigenous communities' unique narratives and wisdom.

Indigenous knowledge often holds valuable insights into sustainable practices, ecological understanding, and the relationship between humans and the natural world. Indigenous languages contain specific terminology and concepts related to the land, plants, animals, seasons, and traditional ecological knowledge.

The connection between language, indigenous knowledge, and the environment is maintained by providing education in the mother tongue. Students can learn about

traditional ecological practices, conservation methods, and the importance of sustainable living, contributing to preserve indigenous knowledge related to the natural world. Furthermore, mother tongue education empowers indigenous communities by affirming and valuing their languages, knowledge systems, and cultural heritage.

It recognizes the importance of indigenous languages as repositories of wisdom and ensures that indigenous knowledge remains vibrant and accessible within the community. For example, Yemen is like many countries; it has unique cultural and indigenous knowledge

systems. Promoting education in the mother tongue gives a more significant opportunity to preserve and transmit this indigenous knowledge from one generation to the next. It ensures that traditional practices, values, and wisdom are not lost but instead integrated into the educational fabric of society.

### **Community Engagement and Empowerment:**

Mother tongue education encourages active community involvement in the educational process. Communities are engaged in decisions related to curriculum development, teaching materials, and pedagogical approaches. This participatory approach ensures that education reflects the community's values, knowledge, and aspirations. Community members, including parents, elders, and local experts, can contribute their expertise, cultural insights, and traditional practices, creating a sense of ownership and investment in the educational system.

As mentioned above, Smith (2016), an Indigenous scholar, emphasizes the connection between the mother tongue and community empowerment. Her work suggests that when Indigenous communities can use their mother tongue in various domains, including education and community development, it strengthens their cultural resilience, self-determination, and empowerment. The mother tongue becomes a tool for community engagement, revitalization, and asserting Indigenous rights.

By learning in their mother tongue, students gain a deep understanding of their cultural traditions, values, and customs. The curriculum reinforces this knowledge, incorporating cultural themes, literature, and historical perspectives. As a result, community members feel a stronger connection to their cultural identity, fostering a sense of pride, belonging, and cultural continuity.

Mother tongue in education facilitates a community's inter-generational transfer of knowledge and wisdom. Elders and knowledge holders, often fluent in the mother tongue, are crucial in transmitting traditional knowledge, skills, and oral histories. By



incorporating the mother tongue into the education system, younger generations have direct access to the wealth of expertise their elders possess. This strengthens the bond between ages and ensures that community-specific knowledge and practices are preserved. Also, it empowers communities by providing them with the tools to navigate and interact with the broader society. When educated in their mother tongue, they develop strong foundational skills, critical thinking abilities, and cultural confidence. This empowers community members to participate actively in social, economic, and political spheres, advocate for their rights, and contribute to the development and well-being of their community.

Mother tongue in education contributes to the sustainability of the language and the educational system. The community's language is reinforced and preserved by using the mother tongue as the language of instruction. This ensures that the language will remain vibrant for next generations by reducing language shift and loss. Moreover, when education is delivered in the mother tongue, students are more likely to succeed academically, leading to higher school retention rates, increased educational attainment, and improved socio-economic prospects for the community.

Besides, the mother tongue in education can act as a catalyst for community revitalization. It serves as a platform for cultural and linguistic revival, fostering community pride and encouraging community members to engage actively in cultural activities, language revitalization efforts, and intergenerational knowledge sharing. This revitalization process promotes community cohesion, resilience, and a sense of collective agency, empowering the community to shape its future and enabling communities to shape their educational systems actively.

### **Reduced Language Barriers:**

Education in the mother tongue enables students to understand and express themselves more effectively. When students are taught in a familiar language, they can fully comprehend instructions, engage in classroom discussions, and confidently articulate their thoughts and ideas. This improves communication between students, teachers, and peers, reducing language barriers that may hinder effective learning and social interactions. According to studies that students who are taught in their mother tongue, typically do better and success academically.

As mentioned above, Feng (2007) addresses the benefit of using the mother tongue in education to reduce language barriers for individuals from linguistic minority communities. Her research suggests that when individuals are empowered to use their

mother tongue in educational and social contexts, it enables them to navigate language barriers, assert their cultural identities, and participate more fully in society.

When students can understand the language of instruction, they can grasp concepts more readily, engage actively in classroom activities, and accurately demonstrate their knowledge and skills. This results in improved academic performance and reduced language barriers in accessing and demonstrating understanding of the curriculum.

Students feel more connected to the content when delivered in their mother tongue, motivating them to participate actively in classroom discussions, ask questions, and seek clarifications. The reduced language barrier allows students to fully engage with the learning materials, leading to a deeper understanding and a more meaningful learning experience.

Mother tongue education ensures that the educational content is culturally relevant and relatable to students. It incorporates local contexts, examples, and cultural references that resonate with the students' experiences. This cultural relevance increases students' interest and engagement with the curriculum, as they can see themselves reflected in the educational materials.

By bridging the cultural gap, mother tongue education reduces the sense of linguistic and cultural isolation that can arise from learning in a different language. Mother tongue education fosters an inclusive classroom environment where students from diverse linguistic backgrounds feel valued and respected. Students fluent in the majority language may face significant language barriers, making them feel excluded and marginalized. By providing education in the mother tongue, students are more likely to feel included, understood, and supported in their learning journey.

This inclusive environment promotes positive social interactions, cross-cultural understanding, and a sense of belonging among students. They can transfer their language skills, cognitive strategies, and literacy abilities to acquire additional languages more effectively. This smooth transition reduces language barriers when students need to learn a second or third language and enhances their overall language proficiency.

Lastly, mother tongue education reduces language barriers by enabling effective communication, improving academic performance, enhancing learning engagement, providing culturally relevant content, fostering an inclusive classroom environment, and facilitating the transition to additional languages. It ensures that students can access education without the limitations imposed by language differences, creating a more equitable and inclusive educational experience for all learners.

## Conclusion:

The mother tongue is vital to personal, social, and academic development. It shapes a person's identity, connects them to their culture and community, and facilitates effective communication. Promoting education in the mother tongue offers a range of advantages. Such as Cognitive Development, Linguistic Proficiency, Improved Understanding, Cultural Preservation, Enhanced Communication and Expression, Parental Involvement, Smooth Transition to Additional Languages, Higher Academic Achievement, Boosted Self-esteem and Confidence Bridge Between Home School, Preserving Indigenous Knowledge, and Reduced

Language Barriers.

These advantages demonstrate that education in the mother tongue can be successfully implemented in diverse contexts, with positive outcomes for students' academic achievement, cultural preservation, and linguistic development. It emphasizes the importance of recognizing and valuing the languages and cultures of different communities within a country.

Also, promoting and preserving our mother tongue is crucial. So, it is essential to teach our children their mother tongue early to become proficient and use it as a foundation for learning other languages.

To sum up, incorporating the mother tongue into education is essential for preserving cultural diversity, fostering cognitive growth, enhancing language acquisition, and upholding customs and traditions that reflect our identity. Parents, educators, and policymakers must emphasize the importance of maintaining the mother tongue to secure a more promising future for upcoming generations.

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