

CHAPTER-13

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and regional language education: scope for the Kosli language

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ABSTRACT

Under the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, the use of regional and mother tongue-based education system is stressed to bring about inclusive, equitable and culturally-oriented education. Against this background, it may be stated that in the western region of Odisha, there is Kosli (Sambalpur), whose speakers number 10 million as per the census of 2011. In this respect, it is relevant to conduct an analysis of Kosli language within the perspective of NEP-2020. The significance of doing so would be in enhancing the linguistic identity and improving the educational and cultural condition of Kosli speakers. Even though there are clear guidelines given by NEP-2020 concerning the incorporation of regional languages within mainstream education, it may be noted that there is insufficient academic discussion that considers the issue of incorporating non-scheduled languages and regional languages into formal education, especially when one considers the case of Kosli language. In this regard, the first objective of this paper is to analyse the provisions made in the NEP-2020 concerning the regional and mother tongue-based education. The second objective of this study is to identify the scope for including the Kosli language in education. The present study uses qualitative and descriptive approaches to research. Its theoretical basis is an analysis of policy documents about the NEP-2020, relevant literature sources and previous works concerning language learning, teaching and regional languages. According to the findings, NEP-2020 offers a favourable context for introducing Kosli language through mother-tongue instruction, multilingual teaching and promoting local languages. Nevertheless, several issues such as absence of governmental interest, absence of a standardized curriculum, textbooks, and teacher training prevent the process from becoming effective. To conclude, there is a necessity of having certain measures at the policy level for successfully integrating Kosli language into the education sector.

KEYWORDS: National Education Policy 2020, Regional Language Education, Kosli (Sambalpur) Language, Mother-Tongue Instruction, Linguistic Inclusion, Cultural Preservation

1 Introduction

The power of language lies in its significance for learning, individual identity, and knowledge building. In the context of a multilingual country like India, the issue of language and medium of instruction in education has always been a matter of discussion. Scholars of education and commissions time and again have stressed on the fact that children will grasp concepts better when taught through their native languages. Not only does it help them understand better, it

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even helps develop emotional connect with learning in the class (Cummins, 2000; UNESCO, 2016).

As cognitive psychologists suggest, early learning in one's first language helps improve comprehension abilities and also develops critical thinking skills and literacy. On the other hand, learning in an unknown language during this crucial period increases cognitive load and results in reduced learning output. Learning in the known language helps with better memory, engagement in classroom activities, and even transferring knowledge to new languages (Vygotsky, 1978; UNESCO, 2016). Therefore, the power of language goes beyond being simply an instrument for instruction.

In view of these facts, India has now decided to focus on multilingual policies and empower the local languages. One such landmark step was introduced in the form of the National Education Policy 2020, which calls for the strong adoption of mother or regional languages as the language of instruction up until at least grade 5, and even preferably grade 8 and onwards. The policy focuses on multilingual education, Indian languages and incorporation of local linguistic knowledge into the syllabus (NEP, 2020).

India is among one of the most linguistically diverse countries around the globe with hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects used in India. Although there is some constitutional recognition of scheduled languages through institutional support, there are several other languages and dialects that are popularly used but have no official place in any part of the education system.

An example of such languages is Kosli, also called Sambalpur, which is spoken extensively in western Odisha. The language is highly valued culturally and socially as it is depicted through folklore, music, theatre, and daily conversations. It serves as a tool that identifies the speakers' sense of belonging to a particular community and culture. Though the language is prevalent in social and cultural contexts, its presence in classroom instruction, textbook material, and teacher education curricula is relatively meagre.

Western Odisha has a multi-language environment wherein Kosli exists alongside Odia, Hindi, and English. Many children in Western Odisha speak Kosli at home and join schools without any knowledge of other languages, thus creating a disconnect between what is spoken at home and in school. The disconnection poses some challenges for the children's comprehension and performance in class.

In this context, the current research aims at exploring the impact of recently introduced policies on providing scope for incorporation of regional languages, such as Kosli, in educational systems. Although NEP 2020 gives comprehensive direction about mother tongue and regional languages instruction, there are few academic studies dealing with the actual possibilities of implementation of these provisions, especially concerning the non-scheduled regional languages. Most of the existing literature talks about major languages or multilingual policies in general without taking any region into account.

In this research, the aim is to analyse the provisions given regarding the promotion of regional languages and mother tongues through NEP 2020. Furthermore, it also focuses on discussing the feasibility of integrating the Kosli language in the education system and its benefits in promoting inclusive learning.

In the structure of this paper, several chapters will be discussed. First comes the introduction; then follows discussion on the theoretical and policy aspects of regional languages education. Then comes the chapter on Kosli language profile, literature review, methodology, policy analysis, implementation issues, and conclusion.

2 Conceptual and Policy Background

2.1 *Regional Language Education*

Regional Language Education involves the use and promotion of the local language of the learner in education. The concept of Mother tongue-based instruction assumes that the child comprehends, analyses, and expresses ideas effectively when using the language used during the initial years of life. Studies have found that conceptual learning is most effective when instruction starts in the native language of the learner, after which additional languages can be incorporated into the educational process in a multilingual or bilingual instructional model (Cummins, 2000; UNESCO, 2016).

Mother tongue-based instruction should not be misconstrued as being confined to the native language only; instead, it acts as a basis for developing multilingual proficiency. Multilingual education programs enable the integration of more than one language into the school system, starting with the local language and gradually introducing regional languages, national languages, and global languages. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education has been implemented in various countries, resulting in higher literacy rates, increased class participation, and lower dropout rates among early learners (UNESCO, 2016).

The connection between language and learning results is also quantifiable. With foreign mediums of instruction, pupils tend to learn by rote memorization, lacking the concept and confidence to succeed academically. Research in multilingual nations demonstrates better performance and ease in subsequent learning of additional languages for students educated in their native tongues throughout their early years (World Bank, 2021; UNESCO, 2016).

Moreover, the use of local languages is also critical because language serves as an essential component of identity. Languages carry one's culture, history, worldview, and sense of belonging. By being instructed in the learner's mother tongue, the individual finds validation in their identity, thus enhancing self-respect. Exclusion from schooling of local languages would alienate learners psychologically.

2.2 *Policy Orientation toward Mother Tongue Education*

The evolution of language policies in Indian education has gone through several committees. From early policy papers, emphasis on mother tongue as the preferred medium for schooling at the elementary level was clear. The University Education Commission (1948-49) and Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) both favored use of regional languages as the means of instruction. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) advocated for mother tongue-based education and diversity as a strength of the country.

One policy approach that developed out of these policies is the Three Language Formula, which is included in the National Policy on Education (1968) and subsequent policy papers. The formula included the following in order: (1) mother tongue or regional language, (2) Hindi or any other language of India, and (3) English. The aim was to achieve a balance between national unity, regionalism, and global integration. Nevertheless, the implementation of this policy approach in most Indian states was inconsistent, and mother tongues, especially of minority regional languages, rarely found their way into schools.

In recent decades, policy thought has progressively moved towards multilingualism instead of language stratification. The educational discussion has come to realize that multilingual proficiency is valuable and that excluding the home language early on leads to disparity. Reports at both national and international levels have focused on language policy that is inclusive, culturally relevant teaching, and linguistic rights in education (UNESCO, 2016). This development paves the way for policy reconsideration concerning regional languages.

2.3 *NEP 2020 and Language Vision*

The National Education Policy 2020 makes a very clear statement in regard to mother-tongue-based multilingual education. First, it refers to India's language diversity as its asset and speaks about the concept of Bharatiya languages in order to point out the importance of Indian language heritage. Besides, it states that language is an efficient instrument in terms of education and that students acquire knowledge in a more efficient way if lessons are taught in their native languages (NEP, 2020, Sec. 4.11).

One of the most significant features that refer to language in general concerns foundations of literacy and numeracy skills. In particular, the NEP underlines a direct dependence between language proficiency and educational performance. Accordingly, if possible, the language of instruction until Grade 5 and, ideally, Grade 8 should be the mother tongue/local language (NEP, 2020, Sec. 5.6).

With regard to the medium of instruction, it is necessary to say that no language is imposed on schools and colleges. There are recommendations for flexible use of language in various situations; in particular, it is suggested using bilingual teaching materials and recruiting teachers who can teach in the local languages.

The policy also provides targets for promoting regional languages through developing learning-teaching materials, translation projects, digitization, and documentation. These include proposals for institutional structures such as national bodies for language promotion, translation through technology, and promotion of classical and regional languages. This vision aims to establish an educational system based on Indian languages but connected to the world. These theoretical and policy innovations provide a solid base to study how regional languages, even those not included in the schedule, and community languages can be incorporated into formal educational systems.

3. Profile of Kosli (Sambalpuri) Language

3.1 Historical Background

Kosli/Sambalpuri language forms a part of the Indo-Aryan branch of the larger linguistic classification called the Indo-European language family. Traditionally speaking, Sambalpuri has been classified under the category of Eastern Indo-Aryan languages because of its closeness to Odia. Many scholars consider this to be one of the dialects of Odia that has certain features of its own. The speakers of Sambalpuri, on the other hand, prefer to consider it a separate language altogether, due to their distinct regional identity.

The name Kosli is based upon a historical association with the ancient kingdom of Kosala, more specifically Dakshina Kosala, which includes some parts of Western Odisha as its territory, and thus gradually, the people living there started calling their language Kosli.

It is important to mention that though Sambalpuri possesses a very high degree of resemblance with Odia, as it shares nearly three quarters of its basic lexicon with Odia, it still retains its individuality in many aspects.

3.2 Geographic Distribution

The Kosli dialect, which is alternatively called Sambalpuri, is predominantly spoken in the western and some parts of the southern Odisha district. The dialect is commonly spoken in the districts of Sambalpur, Bargarh, Balangir, Jharsuguda, Subarnapur, Sundargarh, Kalahandi, and Nuapada.

Based on the 2011 national census survey results, there were approximately 2.6 million individuals who claimed Sambalpuri to be their mother tongue. There have been variations in the figure provided by the government due to varying methodologies. However, some sources

claim that 15 million speakers from approximately 11 districts speak Kosli as their first language. These speakers span a wide geographic area referred to as the Kosal region.

3.3 Cultural and Literary Significance

Kosli plays a pivotal role in the cultural affairs of western Odisha. The folk literature, folklore songs, proverbs, and folktales of the language are an integral part of the expressive culture of both rural and urban populace. Oral expressions like festival songs and agricultural songs form an important part of the folk traditions of the language.

Kosli is also an active participant in the modern linguistic and literary affair. Short stories, poems, dramas, and even dictionaries are written by the writers in the language. Their contribution has largely helped in the development of the literature of the language.

Moreover, the language is also of great significance in terms of the process of identity formation. There have been cultural activists who push for the use of the language so that they can showcase their culture and heritage. This is clear from the demands made to include the language in the curriculum as well as in the language policies and even the constitution of India.

In contemporary media, Kosli finds expression through folk music recordings, theatre, local cinema, social media content and language primers developed for schools. Such usage has helped popularise the language beyond traditional contexts and has introduced it to younger generations in new forms.

3.4 Current Status in Education

The involvement of Kosli within the framework of the formal schooling curriculum remains minimal. In the case of the schooling institutions in western Odisha controlled by the government, the language that dominates the schooling institutions is Odia. Hindi and English are made compulsory subjects for learning. Kosli finds no place either as a subject to learn or as a language of instruction.

Nevertheless, there have been some experimental learning programmes that acknowledge the usefulness of mother tongue learning. For instance, bilingual readers and literacy books in Sambalpuri have been developed in district administrations to introduce children to the study of Odia, Hindi, and English after learning their native language.

Kosli also plays an important role in non-formal educational settings. Workshops, language clubs, and non-formal educational institutions often utilize Kosli as the language of communication, especially in cases involving young children and adults keen on maintaining their linguistic tradition.

Concerning orthography and standardization, Kosli has its script, which is Odia, linking the language to other regional orthographies. However, it raises questions regarding the necessity for Kosli to develop its unique standard or orthography for academic and literary purposes.

4. Objectives of the Study

- 1 to analyse the provisions of the NEP-2020 related to regional and mother-tongue education.
- 2 to examine the scope for integrating the Kosli language at different levels of education
- 3 to assess the role of language education in preserving cultural identity and promoting inclusive learning.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

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This research adopts a qualitative and descriptive methods. The research aims at analysing policy aspects, theories, and discourses about regional language learning rather than quantifying any research variables through data from the field. Qualitative methods are suitable as the study involves interpretation of the policy aspects concerning provisions of Kosli (Sambalpur) in NEP-2020. The description in the design facilitates the systematic explanation of policy aspects of regional language inclusion opportunities and challenges.

5.2 Data Sources

This research will only rely on secondary and documentary data sources. Mainly, the data will be sourced from the National Education Policy of 2020 issued by the Government of India that outlines guidelines concerning the provision of mother tongue instructions, multilingualism, and inclusion of regional languages in the educational system.

Other data sources used include:

- 1 Documents published by the Indian government concerning language policies and mother tongue instruction
- 2 Published literature on mother-tongue and multilingual education
- 3 Peer reviewed articles on the inclusion of regional languages and language inclusion in the curriculum
- 4 Scholarly books and edited volumes on language policies, curricular inclusion and cultural heritage preservation

These sources were chosen for their relevance, credibility, and academic reliability.

5.3 Method of Analysis

Document analysis will be used as the primary methodology for conducting this research. Some key policy texts and scholarly sources have been analyzed and coded in terms of their relation to the topic of language education in the region, mother-tongue language instruction and multilingual policies.

The thematic policy analysis revealed the following major themes in the studied policy texts and sources:

1. Medium of instruction
2. Multilingual education
3. Language development in the region
4. Development of teaching professionals and instructional materials

Further conceptual interpretation has been carried out in order to reveal the connection between the above-mentioned themes and the possibility of implementing Kosli into the education system.

5.4 Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this paper will be the analysis and interpretation of the language policy provisions included in NEP-2020, with particular focus on Kosli language (Sambalpur). Educational and cultural opportunities will be explored in regard to the reviewed policies.

The study will not involve any fieldwork, interviews, classroom observation or any other data collection technique and methods. Hence, this study is theoretical and its conclusions are based on interpretation of policy documents and sources.

6. NEP 2020 Provisions Relevant to Regional Languages

The National Education Policy 2020 gives strong emphasis to the use of mother tongue and regional languages in education, especially at the early stages of schooling. The policy connects language with learning, inclusion, and cultural continuity. Several specific provisions directly support regional languages such as Kosli (Sambalpur). The major provisions are explained

below in clear terms with reference to the official policy document issued by the Government of India.

6.1 Medium of Instruction

One of the most critical aspects of NEP 2020 is about the medium of instruction in early education. According to NEP, it is recommended to adopt the mother tongue or local language as the medium of instruction till Class 5, and preferably up to Class 8 and onwards.

It has been stated in NEP that students would grasp concepts easily if the language used is familiar to them. Early education through the medium of the mother tongue would help students learn concepts better and become more engaged in the process of learning.

This provision would be particularly helpful for students from rural or regional backgrounds since they face difficulties learning concepts in a foreign language from the very beginning of their academic career.

6.2 Multilingualism and Flexibility

It should also be noted that multilingualism is actively promoted by NEP 2020 as an objective for national education. The use of multiple languages enhances cognitive development and knowledge of cultures. Instead of the strict language model, a flexible multilingual education system is encouraged.

The principle of teaching three languages remains relevant, but it is carried out more flexibly and provides for additional options for students and states. In particular, students are advised to study Indian languages, and there is room for designing language courses according to the needs of specific regions and individuals. No language can be imposed on any state or individual.

Thus, it becomes possible to introduce regional languages to the school curriculum as subjects, optional papers, or languages. It will also be easier to create bilingual and multilingual textbooks and training aids.

6.3 Bharatiya Language Promotion

The policy highlights the necessity of promoting and preserving the languages of India. Language is considered to be a medium for carrying cultural values and identity along with knowledge systems. In NEP 2020, there is a call made for the institutional support for Indian languages through education, research, and documentation.

In this regard, the following steps are proposed under the policy for Indian languages:

1. Strengthening of institutions related to language
2. Language translations
3. Digital archiving and language resource centres
4. Universities should give support for Indian languages, regional languages, and classical languages.

Some important language development measures are mentioned in the NEP 2020 that include:

1. Production of quality learning material in Indian languages
2. Translation of knowledge-based material into regional languages
3. Contribution to literature and knowledge systems using local languages
4. Using technology to preserve languages

6.4 Teacher Preparation and Materials

It is evident from the NEP 2020 that mother tongue and regional language learning cannot succeed without qualified teachers and suitable teaching-learning material. The policy stresses the need to recruit teachers who are fluent in local and regional languages, particularly in the foundational stage.

This policy recommends that teacher training programs should train teachers to deal with multilingual environments and the pedagogy of local languages. Teachers must be trained to deliver instruction by using children's first language and other languages.

The policy also emphasizes the critical importance of creating teaching-learning materials in local languages. These include:

1. Local language textbooks
2. Foundational literacy books
3. Story books
4. Activity-based learning material
5. Regional language digital content

Otherwise, the implementation of policies will not become possible in class. Hence, language policies and curriculum policies are directly related to one another.

7. Scope for Kosli Language Integration

7.1 Foundational and Primary Education

Primary opportunities for including Kosli in the educational process may be found in primary and foundational classes where students are still in the process of grasping basic concepts and knowledge. Students are more likely to grasp concepts when they start their education in the language spoken by them at home. Many children who study in western Odisha begin their education speaking Kosli but then switch over to Odia or even English within the same class. This creates a communication barrier at the very beginning stage.

One such method would be to follow a bridge language model for learning. A bridge language model involves teaching initial learning concepts using one language (in this case Kosli) while gradually introducing students to another language. This way, students will not be forced to change their native language of instruction. For instance, books for teaching foundational literacy skills will include both Kosli and Odia vocabulary. This strategy has been successfully used in other parts of India.

7.2 Upper Primary and Secondary Levels

In the higher primary and secondary school education system, Kosli can be taught as a second language or a regional language enhancement course. It need not affect the primary medium of instruction; however, it will allow children to learn their native language along with its grammar and vocabulary, folklore and oral traditions. Teaching the language as an option is practical for administration and consistent with the flexible approach to multilingualism advocated by contemporary national policies.

The other strategy could involve bilingual books, readers, and texts. Extracts from poetry, prose, folktales, and indigenous knowledge systems can be translated to Odia and Kosli. As such, the learners will retain their conceptual clarity while acknowledging their linguistic identity. Vocabulary and history lessons in the Kosli language can also be incorporated into social science subjects. These kinds of learning materials will be very helpful for rural settings where Kosli is commonly used.

7.3 Teacher Education Programs

The success of implementing Kosli into schools would require teacher readiness to embrace it successfully within multilingual situations. Educational organizations can create training courses for teachers that include Kosli modules that would help the teachers to adopt and apply Kosli in an effective manner in their teaching. The modules can cover issues such as classroom translation, classroom instructions using multiple languages, story-telling and cultural responsiveness in education. Courses in certificate level or workshops can also be created to aid teachers to gain the confidence to use Kosli.

One other method that is affordable and feasible is to involve community resource people into the whole process. Local activists of language, story-tellers and writers among others can contribute toward creating classroom exercises and educational programs.

7.4 Higher Education and Research Scope

There is considerable potential within universities for incorporating Kosli into language documentation and research efforts. Universities may carry out various projects concerning the documentation of the oral literature, songs, proverbs, indigenous knowledge, and history of Kosli language. This documentation would include the creation of digital libraries and annotated collections that would go into the documentation of language heritage and would act as a resource for researchers in linguistics, education, and cultural studies.

The universities may consider offering certificates and diplomas in Kosli language and culture. These certificates and diplomas would include modules on language grammar, writing practices, translation services, folklore studies, and journalism. These programs would help create language resources and language curriculum experts in the future.

Moreover, the language can be introduced into university programs related to regional studies through various programs in tribal languages and cultures, regional knowledge systems, and folklore. The inclusion of the language in academics need not involve extensive changes and can slowly lead to academic recognition of the language.

8. Implementation Challenges

In spite of clear policy intention in Favor of mother tongue and regional language instruction under the National Education Policy 2020, implementing provisions related to Kosli (Sambalpuri) language education poses significant challenges on-ground, particularly in western Odisha. The barriers exist on various levels such as structural, educational, administrative, and political.

Lack of official recognition status

Though Kosli/Sambalpuri language is widely used in western parts of Odisha, according to some experts in the field, it has an estimated 1 crore (10 million) number of speakers if considering dialect clusters. However, it is not recognized as a separate language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. Consequently, there is no specific policy for Kosli/Sambalpuri language education at the school level because it is subsumed under Odia. Due to the lack of recognition, curriculum development authorities and examination committees rarely include it in classroom instruction programs.

Absence of standardized grammar and orthography

Despite Kosli having a well-developed oral and folk literature, it has not reached the stage of a fully standardized literary language. There are differences in spelling and grammar structure in Kosli literature because of various styles of Odia scripts used by different authors. No one particular style is officially approved by any state educational body as school grammar or orthography. Standardization of language is necessary for preparing textbooks and assessing students' performance in classrooms.

Shortage of trained teachers

No formal course is available for training Kosli language teachers either before or after taking up teaching positions. Institutions providing teacher training in Odisha train students only for Odia, English, Hindi, and Sanskrit. Even if teachers have Kosli as their mother tongue, no effort is made to prepare them for using Kosli in teaching. Mother tongue-based multilingual education is recommended in NEP 2020.

Limited curriculum and textbooks

At present, the amount of Kosli school books that have been approved officially is extremely small. Most of these books are literary compilations, songs, or community books and not school textbooks based on particular grades. The requirements made by official organizations such as SCERT Odisha and NCERT include syllabi for different grades and relevant literature for them, which has not been written in Kosli yet. Such items as primers and workbooks are essential yet lacking.

Administrative and political constraints

The implementation of the status of Kosli as a school language depends entirely upon the administrative decisions on the state level because this language is considered administratively to be just a dialect of Odia and not a language itself. Thus, initiatives related to Kosli language as an individual subject often face bureaucratic challenges due to its controversial nature. This is why even though there are favourable policies established in guidelines, they might still remain unfulfilled in states.

Funding and institutional support gaps

The creation of a new instructional language stream involves the need for conducting studies, preparing documentation, training teachers, writing textbooks, translating materials, and using digital technologies. At present, there is a lack of specialized funds and centres that deal exclusively with developing the Kosli language in educational institutions. Higher education establishments and research centres have not still created any Kosli language centres or projects.

9. Policy and Practice Recommendations

For regional and mother-tongue education to move from policy intent to classroom reality, concrete and locally grounded steps are needed. In the context of Kosli (Sambalpuri) language education especially in western districts of Odisha the following practical and policy-level measures can support meaningful implementation.

State-Level Recognition Initiatives

A major enabling step is formal recognition of Kosli as a regional instructional language at the state level. Even without inclusion in the Eighth Schedule, state governments have the authority to support regional languages through administrative orders, optional subject status, and cultural–educational boards. The importance of recognition lies in the unlocking of funding and space in curricula. States like Odisha have been supporting tribal language primers at lower grades; the same approach can be taken for Kosli-speaking areas as well.

Curriculum Development Committees

Specialized curriculum committees should be established that include linguists, teacher educators, local writers, and practitioners from schools. The committees will be able to:

1. Formulate graded objectives in language learning
2. Design bridge curricula connecting Kosli to Odia and English
3. Ensure alignment with foundational literacy objectives
4. Adapt the existing primary curriculum to make local-language versions

Rather than developing curricula afresh, it would be prudent and economical to adapt the present foundational stage competencies to local languages.

Teacher Training Programs in Kosli

Teacher competency remains the key determinant of success. Various short-duration certificate and in-service training programs can train teachers to implement the medium of Kosli in the classrooms, especially at lower grades. These programs must cover:

1. Multilingual approaches to pedagogy
2. Mother-tongue-based early literacy approaches
3. Classroom-based translation and bridging techniques

4. Pedagogy based on local folklore and orality

The DIETs along with departments of education in universities may collaborate in conducting such programs. Another immediate approach could be engaging para-teachers who speak Kosli for teaching the foundational stage children.

Development of Primers and Textbooks

First-grade readers would be the most pressing needs. Studies on mother-tongue based education clearly indicate that children are able to read better using literacy books containing familiar language. The Kosli primers must contain:

1. Tales and folk stories
2. Examples relating to the region
3. Writing from spoken language practice
4. Word bank between Kosli and Odia/English

Open source text book models can lower costs and facilitate continuous refinement by feedback from teachers.

Digital Language Resources

Digitized formats will make it easier to spread language materials. These priorities include:

1. Audiobooks of folk stories in Kosli
2. Dictionaries and vocabulary apps in Kosli
3. Teacher portal with downloadable worksheets
4. Audio versions of folk songs and historical accounts for classrooms

Audio and PDF files can be particularly useful in rural settings with limited bandwidth. Working together with educational technology organizations can help expedite their creation without expensive infrastructure.

Community and University Collaboration

Kosli has a rich oral and cultural base preserved by community scholars, artists, and writers. Schools and universities should actively collaborate with them to create authentic learning materials. Possible actions include:

1. Community storytelling sessions in schools
2. Student documentation projects of local folklore
3. University-led language documentation and orthography workshops
4. Joint research and publication initiatives

Such collaboration ensures that language education is culturally rooted rather than artificially constructed.

Pilot Mother-Tongue Schools / Projects

Before large-scale rollout, pilot projects should be started in selected Kosli-speaking clusters. These pilots can test:

1. Kosli-medium instruction in Grades 1–3
2. Bilingual teaching models
3. Locally developed primers
4. Teacher training effectiveness

Pilot evaluation should track attendance, reading readiness, and learner engagement rather than only exam scores. Evidence from small pilots can guide policy refinement and funding decisions.

10. Conclusion

This research explores the opportunities that can be availed through the use of regional languages as well as mother tongue languages using the NEP 2020, and the particular prospects

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that exist for incorporating Kosli into the educational institutions. In view of the language policies and existing literature about language education, it can be seen that some of the components that make up the foundation of the policy are as follows: mother tongue based learning, flexibility in multilingualism, and promoting the Bharatiya languages. Kosli has more than ten million speakers according to the census of 2011, and has sufficient socio-cultural and linguistic tradition, especially in the western part of Odisha.

The policy context is relatively more conducive in the present than previous decades. As the policy promotes early education in the native language, local language teaching-learning resources, and multilingual pedagogical practices, there is considerable room to introduce Kosli in at least the foundational and primary levels of education. Provided that the provisions are appropriately implemented, they could significantly enhance comprehension and class participation skills of students with Kosli-speaking families.

But intent is not enough, structured implementation of such policies is needed. Language standardization, preparation of level-based textbooks and primers, teaching of local-language pedagogy for teachers are part of structured implementation. In the absence of proper curriculum designs, trained teachers and administrative support, implementation of any such policy may remain on paper only.

Use of Kosli in education system of India can be a good example of implementation of a policy of multilingual education for languages that do not find place among scheduled languages. Looking into the future, regional languages used in education will bring about linguistic justice and equitable access to education and knowledge. Education becomes significant, meaningful and just if children are allowed to learn in their native language.

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