CHAPTER – IX

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION IN THE FIELD OF LANGUAGE EDUCATION

"The greatness of a teacher consists in the simplicity of his language."-Swami Vivekananda

INTRODUCTION:

A multi-ethnic and multi-lingual pluralistic nation needs to evolve education and language policies in such a way that all the segments that constitute that nation develop a sense of participation in the progress of governance and nation-building. In addition, the specific aspirations of the individual segments of the nation need to be met to the satisfaction of the various ethnic, religious, and linguistic communities. Education, however, is considered a state responsibility, and while national policies exist, individual states play a primary role in the execution of language decisions. The relationship between India's language and education policies further complicate the tension between cultural preservation and economic growth. India's constitutional policies concerning the use of language reflect the economic and cultural evolution within this diverse and multilingual country. The Republic of India has hundreds of languages.

According to the Census of 2001, there are 1,635 mother tongues and 122 languages with more than 10,000 speakers. Language planners and policy makers have to grapple with the complex problems of multilingualism and of keeping the Indian languages center stage by giving them their due place in the educational process and national development. Owing to the defective planning by the policy makers both at the state level and the federal levels, the English language has emerged as the favored language in education.

Sanskrit was the link language of India for many centuries, Later Persian also coupled with Sanskrit and both were the link languages of India until the arrival of English to the nation. Not only English rulers, but English also ruled India for many centuries. English rulers went out but not English. Education policy debates in India provide an

additional lens for understanding the tensions of India's language policy. Experts have observed that "the states are supposed to arrange for the teaching of all minor or minority languages in schools having at least 10 students who speak these languages as their native tongue. But in practice, most state governments discourage the use of minor languages in schools." (Mohanty 2011) Academics such as Bruthiaux note the overarching governmental framework that further affects these education and language policies: "India is a tumultuous democracy operating within a federal system, a combination that does not facilitate smooth decision making or efficient policy implementation." (Bruthiaux 2009)

LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN INDIA: WHAT STUDIES SAY:

LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN COLONIAL PERIOD: The first language education policy of India was made for the promotion of English language that is on February 2nd in 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay"s minute on Indian Language policy was introduced. It says "we must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern….. We need a class of persons, Let them Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect".

This minute implies that English was introduced in the Indian educational system for the purpose of getting servants with English language knowledge. During the freedom struggle periods Gandhi vehemently opposed and wanted to throw out English from Indian nation, but he failed in his attempt. After independence, he proposed some suggestions to the government for the promotion of regional language for the state affairs, Hindustani for national affairs, and English for world affairs.

LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY AFTER INDEPENDENCE:

i) National Language Policy: The Indian constitution assembly was established on 9 December 1946, for drafting a constitution when India became independent. The Constituent Assembly witnessed fierce debates on the language issue. The adoption of a "National Language", the language in which the constitution was to be written in and the language in which the proceedings of the assembly were to be conducted were the main linguistic questions debated by the framers of the Constitution. On one side were

the members from the Hindi speaking provinces moved a large number of pro-Hindi amendments and argued for adopting Hindi as the sole National Language. On 10 December 1946, Dhulekar declared "People who do not know Hindustani have no right to stay in India. People who are present in the House to fashion a constitution for India and do not know Hindustani are not worthy to be members of this assembly. They had better leave." The adoption of Hindi as the national language was opposed by members from South India like T.T.Krishnamachchari G. Durgabai, T.A.Ramalingam Chettiyar N.G.Ranga. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar (all belonging to Madras) and S. V. Krishnamurthy Rao (Mysore). This anti-Hindi block favoured retaining English as official language.

ii) Official Language Policy: After three years of debate, the assembly arrived at a compromise at the end of 1949. It was called the MunshiAyyangar formula (after K.M. Munshi and Gopalaswamy Ayyangar) and it struck a balance between the demands of all groups. Part 17th of the Indian Constitution was drafted according to this compromise. It did not have any mention of a "National Language". Instead, it defined only the "Official Languages" of the Union.

Hindi in Devanagari script would be the official language of the Indian Union. For fifteen years, English would also be used for all official purposes (Article 343). A language commission could be convened after five years to recommend ways to promote Hindi as the sole official language and to phase out the use of English (Article 344). Official communication between states and between states and the Union would be in the official language of the union (Article 345).English would be used for all legal purposes - in court proceedings, bills, laws, rules and other regulations (Article 348).The Union was duty bound to promote the spread and usage of Hindi (Article 351).

LANGUAGE POLICY IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION: When developing its Constitution, Indian leaders enacted language policy that placed emphasis on both language development and language-survival. The language policy contained within Part III of the Constitution defines language rights as fundamental rights – linking these language rights to education as well. The text acknowledges the innate challenges of educating a multilingual society with the legacy of a caste system by

stating: “All minorities, whether based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.”

This policy and subsequent documents have produced a school system that encourages tri-lingual education, with students learning their mother tongue, Hindi, and English. However, while the Constitution highlights the importance of mother tongues, in practice it has proven unfeasible to protect the 22 scheduled languages it lists, let along the hundreds of additional languages spoken by significant numbers of people.

In 1950 the Indian constitution was established. Gandhi emphasized on Hindustani, and wanted it to be the official language of India. Later the concept of Hindustani was given up by the rulers. Gandhi achieved politically a lot but linguistically a little. In 1952, 15 major languages of India were recognized andplaced in Eighth schedule. Indian states were established in 1956 on the basis of the regional languages of the majority people. Thus English was introduced in the Indian education system and rooted in all the lines of education. During the freedom struggle periods, Mahatma Gandhi vehemently opposed English and wanted “Hindustani“ to be the prime language of our nation. Later in 1992 three more languages were added, and during 2002-2006 again four languages were added to the schedule. Now 22 languages are placed in the eighth schedule. They are Assami, Bangla, Boda, Dogri, Gujarathi, Hindi, Kashmiri, Kannada, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Tamil, Telugu, Santali, Sindi, Sanskrit and Urdu.

CASE STUDIES

Table -22 (Language Education institutions under Ramakrishna Mission)

Types of Institution	**Institutions of Ramakrishna Mission in the field (State wise)**	**Case Study done on**
Institutes for the Study of Sanskrit	Kerala: Kalady & Palai Belur Math: Veda Vidyalaya Kolkata (Institute of Culture)	Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Kolkata
Schools of other Languages	Andhra Pradesh: Hyderabad West Bengal: Kolkata (Institute of Culture)	

Kalady: Under this centre there functions a Sanskrit upper primary school with 286 boys and 153 girls.

Palai: The centre runs a college named Sri Ramakrishna Adarsa Sanskrit College. As Sanskrit is the Mother of Indian languages and the gateway to our culture, to preserve this ancient treasure and to hand it over to the next generation we have started a Sanskrit College here in 1983, with the affiliation of Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan(Deemed University, Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India). The College is one of its kind in the whole of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. It offers Prak Sastri(+2), Sastri(B.A.) and Acharya(M.A.) courses. Other than the college the centre has a Sri Ramakrishna Sanskrit Pathasala which was started in 1976. It is affiliated to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, and provides free Sanskrit coaching classes to school going children and public irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Coaching is provided for Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan exams like Balabodha, Prarambha, Pravesha, Parichaya and Kovida.

Veda Vidyalaya, Belur Math: Started in August 1993 in the same campus, the Vivekananda Veda Vidyalaya imparts Vedic education to the young. The students reside and study in an atmosphere similar to the ancient gurukula system. The residential system has accommodation for 22 students. Its library has 3389 books and 4 periodicals. Competent teachers taught the boys Vedic chanting and the rudiments of vedangas.

Hyderabad: The Institute currently offers courses in eight languages. The courses and their duration are as follows:

Table -23 (Language courses at Hyderabad)

Languages	**Duration of course**
Spoken English	3 - 4 sessions
Hindi	5 sessions
Sanskrit	6 sessions
French	6 sessions
German	6 sessions
Japanese	5 sessions
Spanish	5 sessions

Chinese	5 sessions

The duration of each session is three months. For all languages, including Spoken English there are three sessions in an academic year. Classes are held thrice a week (MWF= Monday, Wednesday & Friday/ TTS= Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday). It is mandatory that to avoid inconvenience students must reach the Institute at least 15 minutes before commencement of classes. Each class is of two hours duration. Classes are held in the mornings and evenings as follows:

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, KOLKATA: PROFILE OF THE SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

Sri Ramakrishna preached equal validity of all religions on earth. Religions are parts of cultures; languages are expressions of cultures. The more refined a language, the more evolved is its culture. The study of languages which facilitate intercultural understanding is an important objective of the Institute. The School of Languages offers Beginners' and Advanced – Level certificate courses in 19 languages – 14 foreign and 5 indigenous to India.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES: The following foreign languages are offered in the school – Ancient Greek, Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latin, Portuguese, Persian, Russian and Spanish.

NDIAN LANGUAGES: The following Indian languages are offered – Sanskrit, Urdu, Bengali, Hindi and Tamil.

The popularity of the courses is evident by the growing number of students that enroll every year. During the academic year 2014-15 the total number of enrollment was 22,068.

The School of Languages also offers a number of computer training courses in collaboration with NIIT.

Appropriate information as well as entry and exit points for the above courses are available to students studying foreign languages at the School.

The School of Languages employs state-of-the-art techniques to teach languages including audio-visual methods and internet based VLE for distance education. The School also has a modern and well-stocked languages liberty for students.

Certificates are awarded after the completion of the senior course in each language. Also, Advanced certificate is awarded after the completion of the Advanced course. In addition, provisional certificates may be given for the elementary course on the basis of applications submitted. Furthermore, 6-month communication courses are also offered in Chinese, French, German and Spanish and certificates are awarded after the successful completion of the courses.

FINDINGS

1. Sanskrit being the Mother of Indian languages and the gateway to the Indian culture, the Mission tries hard to preserve this ancient treasure house and to hand it over to the next generation.
2. The Mission provides free Sanskrit coaching classes to school going children and public irrespective of caste, creed and religion.
3. Students are trained in writing Devanagari script, writing answers and conversing in Sanskrit and due to the student centric pedagogy adopted by the institutions the students find it extremely easy to pursue study in Sanskrit in the higher education.
4. In addition to the regular courses, the students learn traditional Vedic accent in the institutions run by the Mission which is becoming obsolete. Further, the students familiarize themselves with the universal truths contained in the Vedas.
5. Computer literacy too is provided to the students which makes the syllabus a happy blend of tradition and modernity.
6. Ramakrishna Mission for the purpose of promoting education particularly for underprivileged, marginalized and disadvantaged section of the society has MOU with National Institute of Open Schooling, (NIOS) and has been accredited as a Special Accredited Institution for Education of Disadvantages (SAIED) to work as a Study Centre of NIOS for Secondary and Senior Secondary (without Science, i.e. without Physics, Chemistry and Biology).

7. The Schools of Languages offer the Beginner and Advanced – Level certificate courses in as good as 20 languages including 13 Foreign and 7 Indian languages.
8. The Schools of Languages also offer a number of computer training courses in collaboration with various Computer Training Institutes to bring about the professionalism within the students as a part of total skill development scheme.
9. The Mission also provide orientation programmes on values to the nonresidential students whereas the daily activities for the residential students are packed with such activities and service programmes.