

Recent Development in Multilingual Education in Nepal



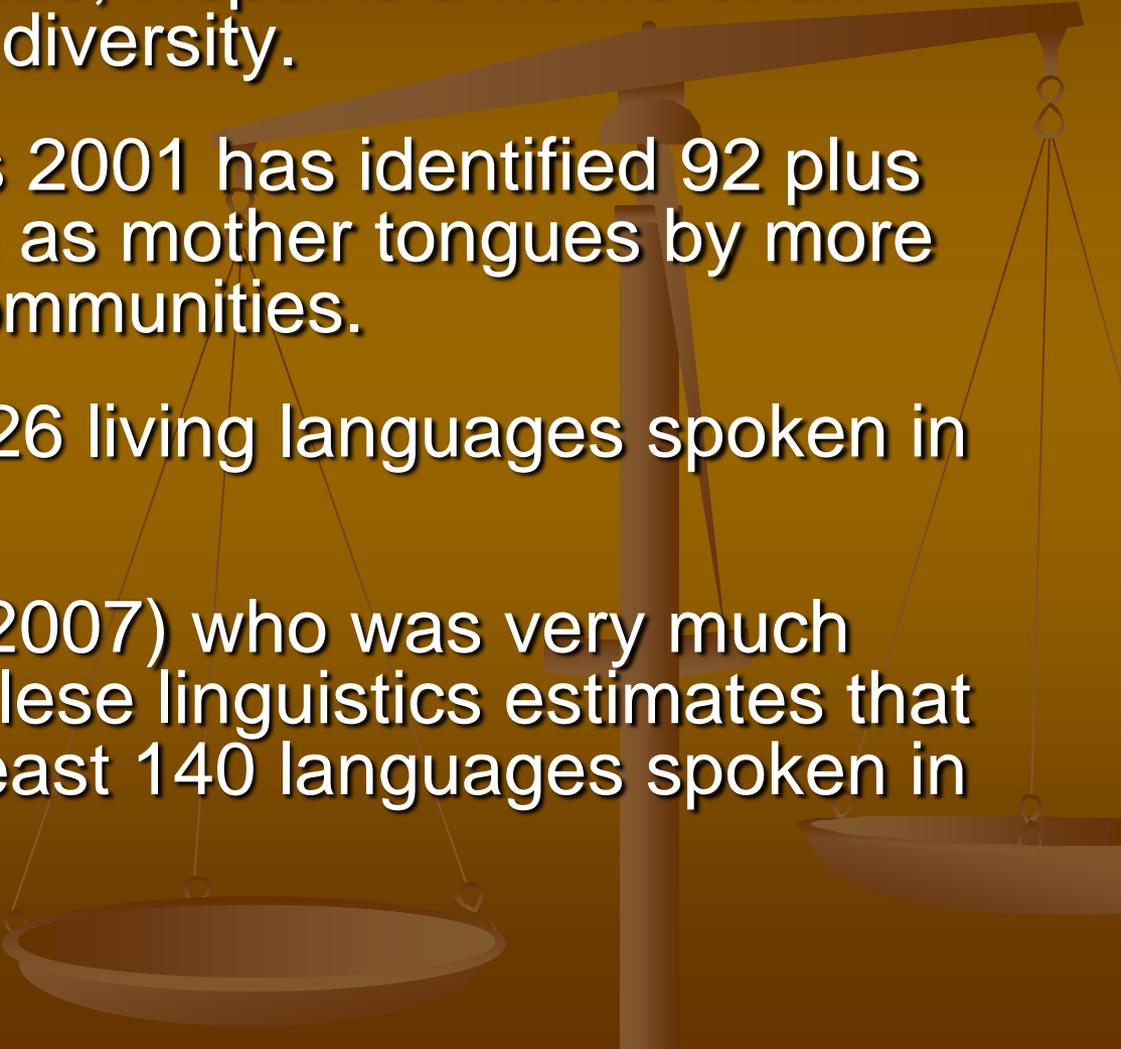
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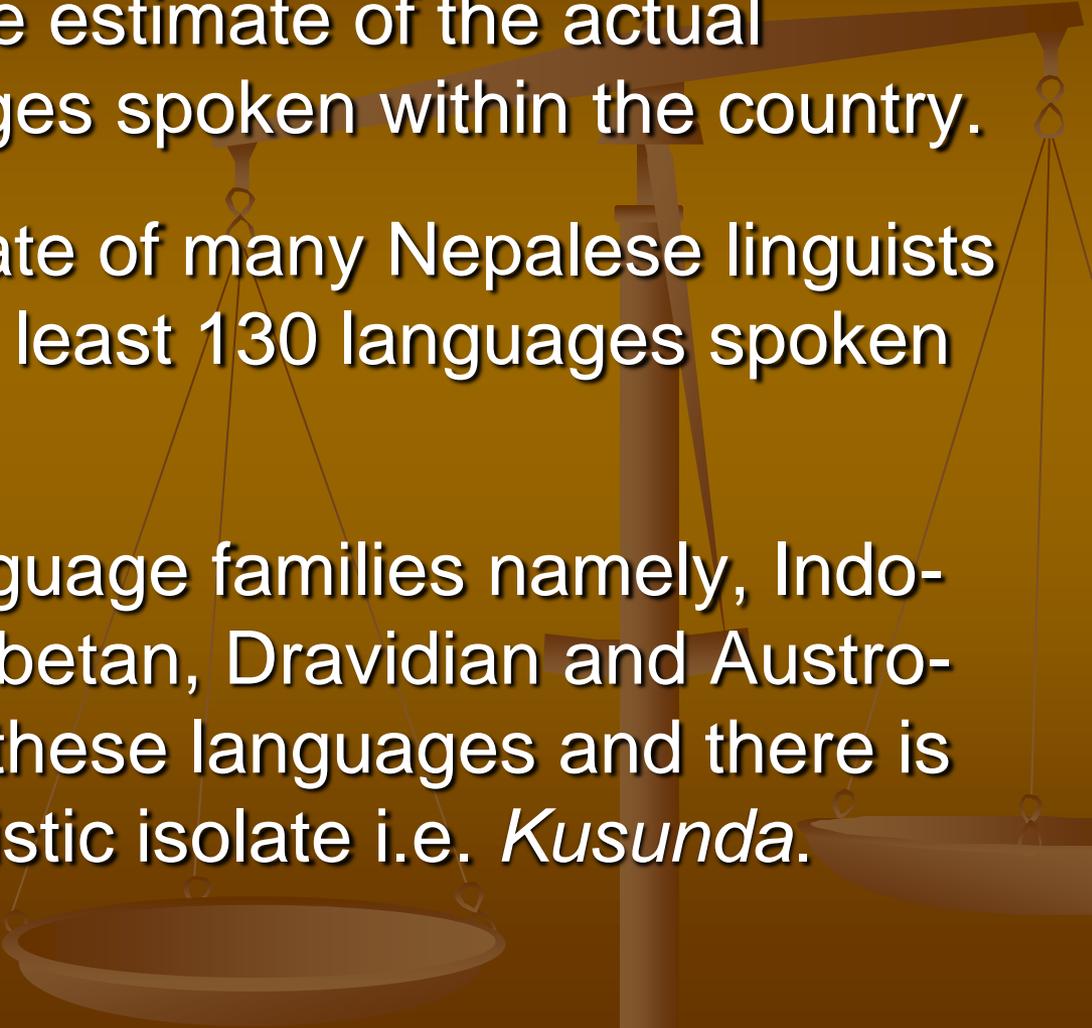
Linguistic Survey of Nepal (LinSuN)

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Background

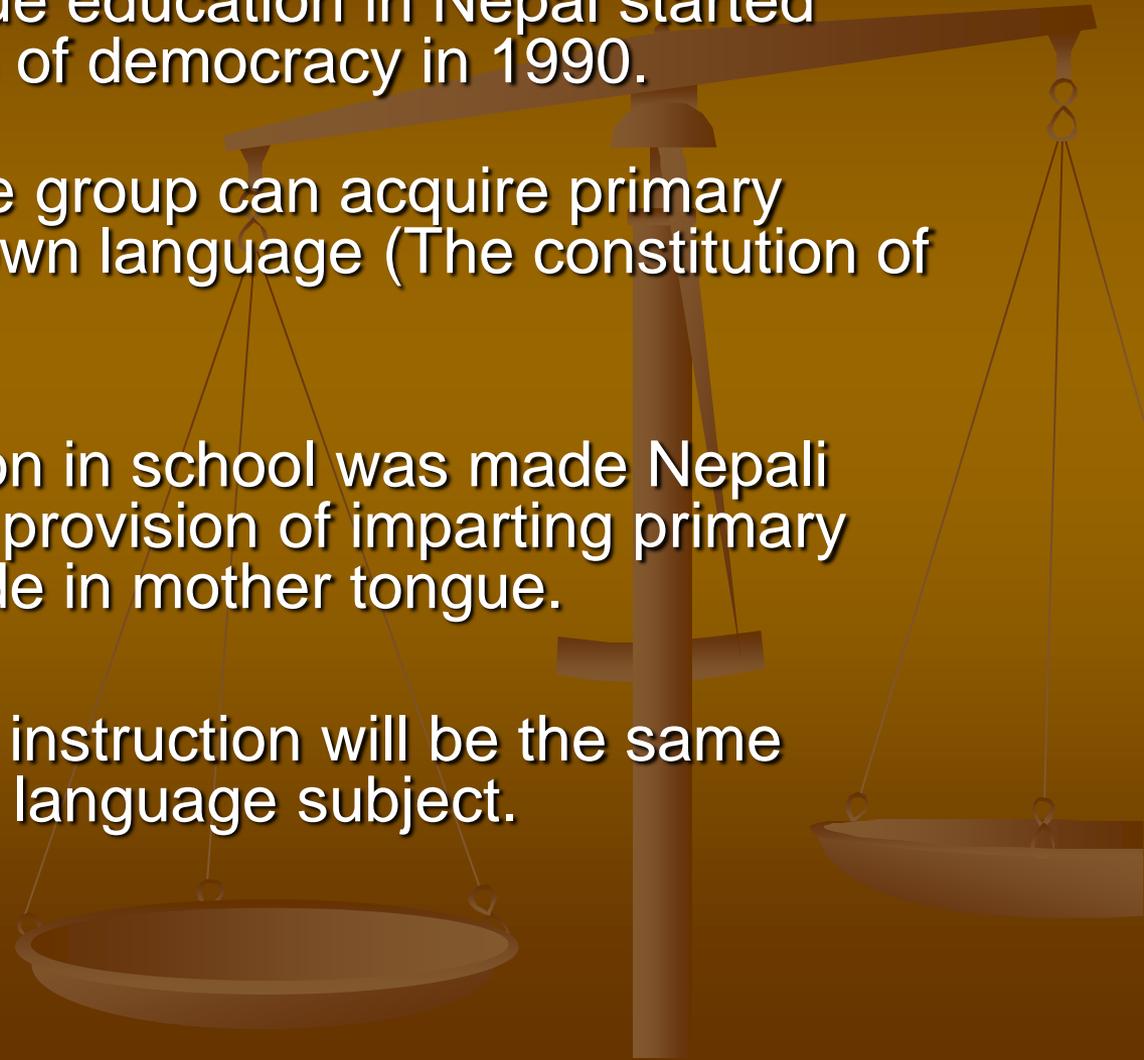
- Despite its small size, Nepal is a home of an amazing linguistic diversity.
 - The recent census 2001 has identified 92 plus languages spoken as mother tongues by more than 102 ethnic communities.
 - Ethnologue lists 126 living languages spoken in Nepal.
 - Michael Noonan (2007) who was very much interested in Nepalese linguistics estimates that there must be at least 140 languages spoken in Nepal.
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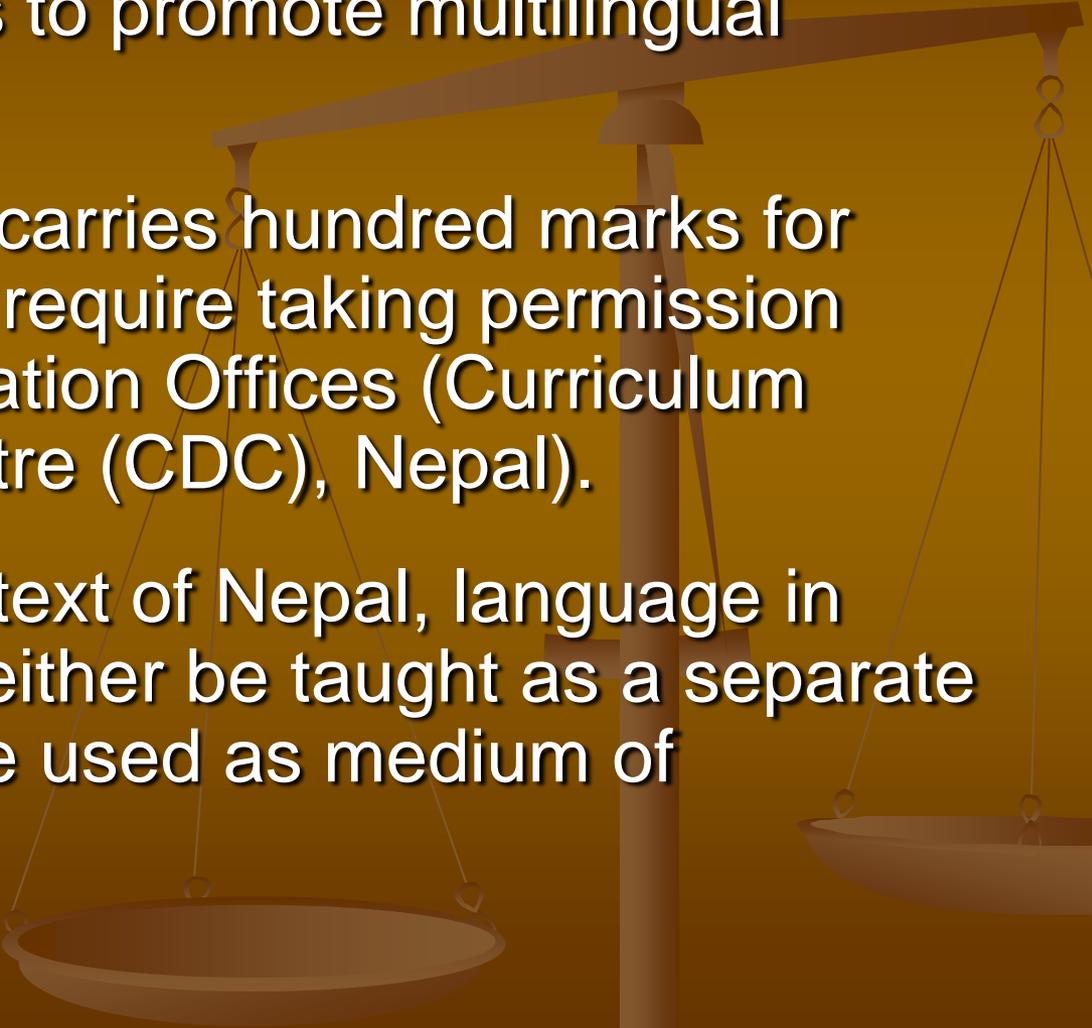
- There is no reliable estimate of the actual number of languages spoken within the country.
 - The current estimate of many Nepalese linguists is that there are at least 130 languages spoken in Nepal.
 - The four great language families namely, Indo-European, Sino-Tibetan, Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic include all these languages and there is one possibly linguistic isolate i.e. *Kusunda*.
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- A faint, stylized illustration of a balance scale is visible in the background of the slide. The scale is positioned on the right side, with its vertical post and horizontal beam extending across the upper right portion of the frame. Two pans are suspended from the beam by thin lines, one on the left and one on the right. The scale is rendered in a dark brown color, matching the overall theme of the slide.

Provisions of mother tongue education in various documents

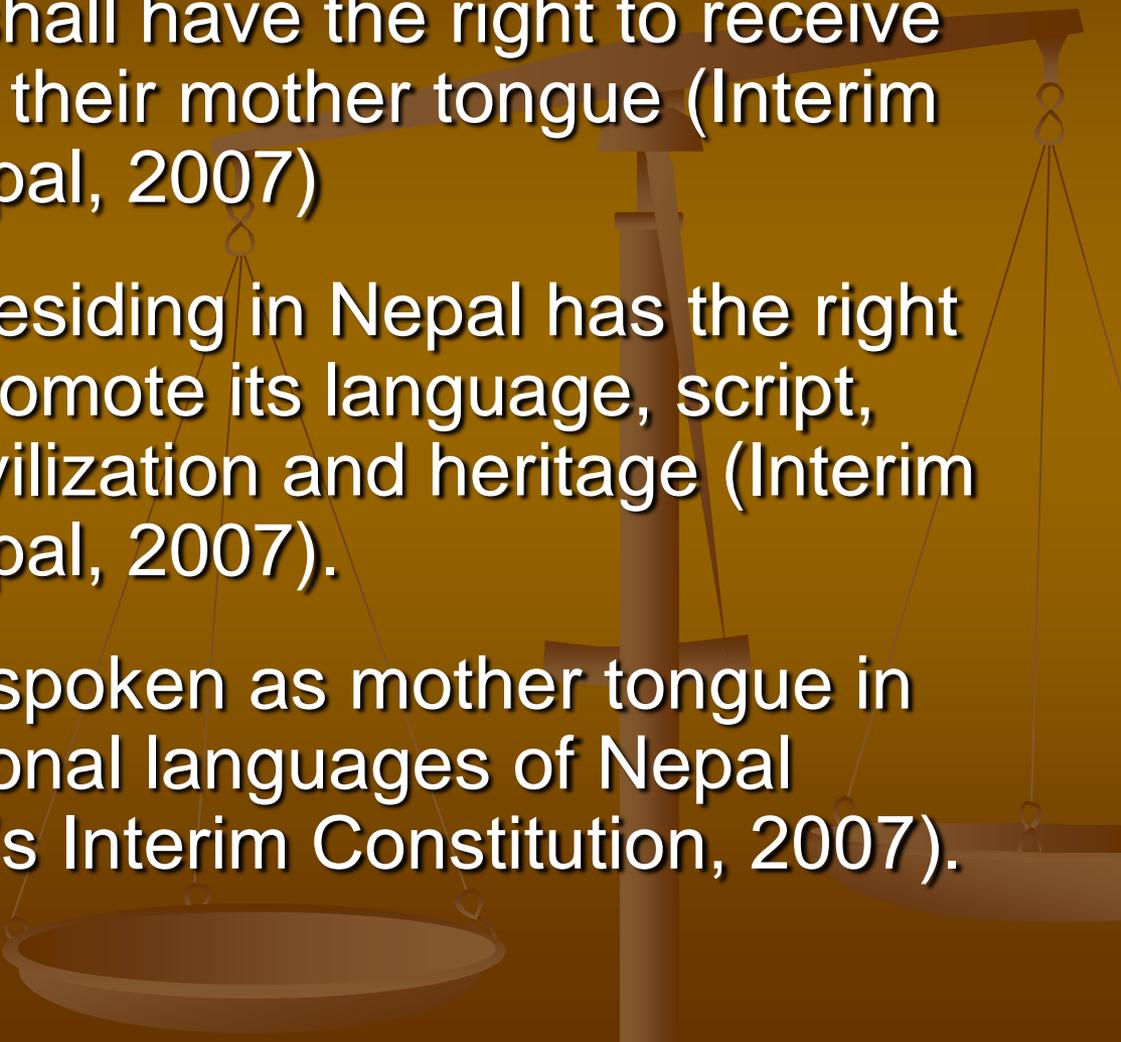
- Initiation of mother tongue education in Nepal started only after the restoration of democracy in 1990.
- Every ethnic or language group can acquire primary level education in their own language (The constitution of Nepal, 1990).
- The medium of instruction in school was made Nepali language. However, the provision of imparting primary level education was made in mother tongue.
- Similarly, the medium of instruction will be the same language while teaching language subject.



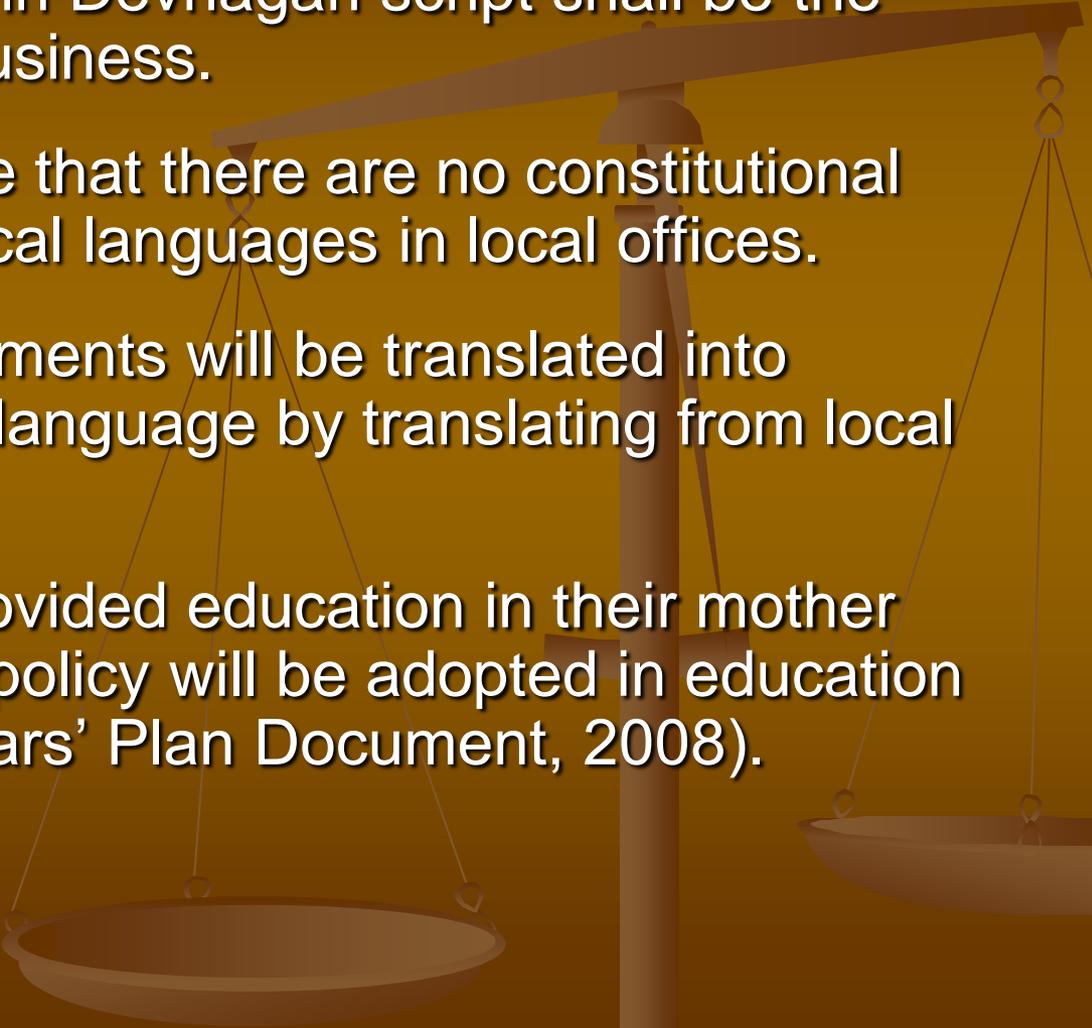
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- This law still exists to promote multilingual education.
 - Local subject that carries hundred marks for which the schools require taking permission from District Education Offices (Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Nepal).
 - In the present context of Nepal, language in primary level can either be taught as a separate subject or it can be used as medium of instruction.
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- Each community shall have the right to receive basic education in their mother tongue (Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007)
 - Each community residing in Nepal has the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civilization and heritage (Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007).
 - All the languages spoken as mother tongue in Nepal are the national languages of Nepal (Article 5 of Nepal's Interim Constitution, 2007).
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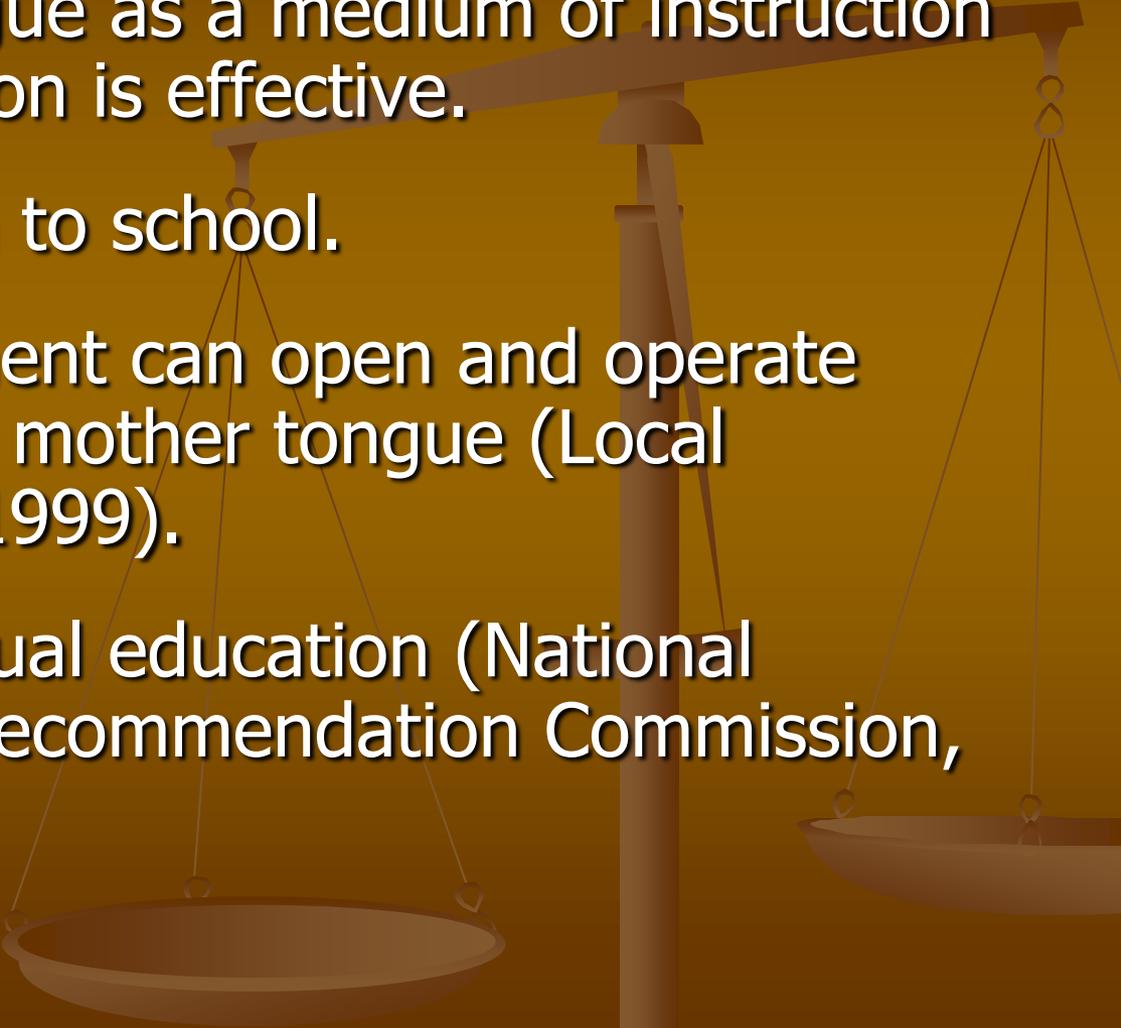
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- The Nepali language in Devnagari script shall be the language of official business.
 - It is interesting to note that there are no constitutional limitations in using local languages in local offices.
 - However, these documents will be translated into government's official language by translating from local languages.
 - Children would be provided education in their mother tongue and trilingual policy will be adopted in education (The Interim three years' Plan Document, 2008).
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Rationale of Multilingual Education

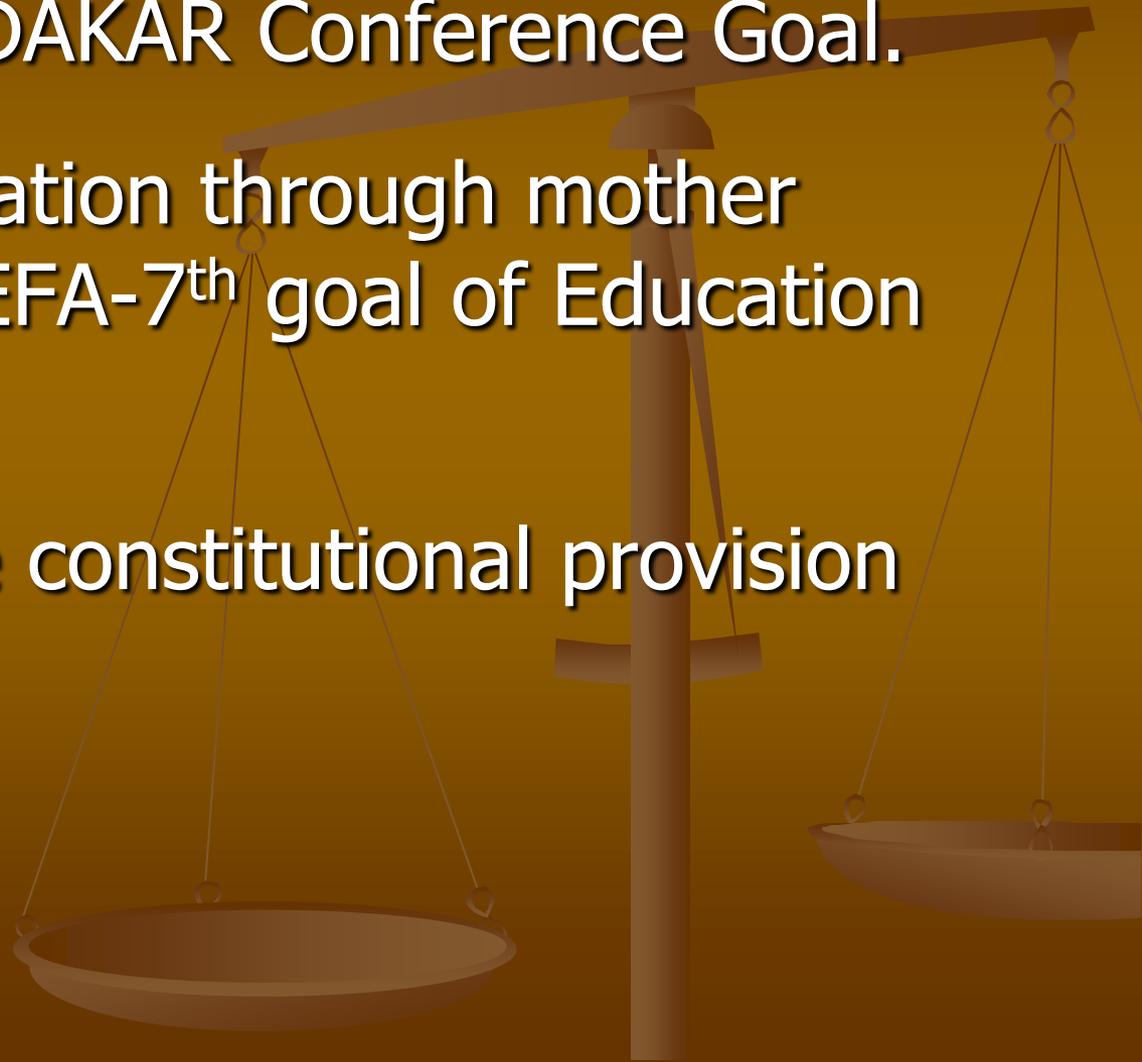
- When children come to school, they can talk in their MT about concrete everyday things in a face-to-face situation in their own environment where the context is clear: they can see and touch the things they are talking about and they get immediate feedback if they do not understand. They speak fluently, with a native accent, and they know the basic grammar and many concrete words (Tove, Skutnabb-Kangas,).

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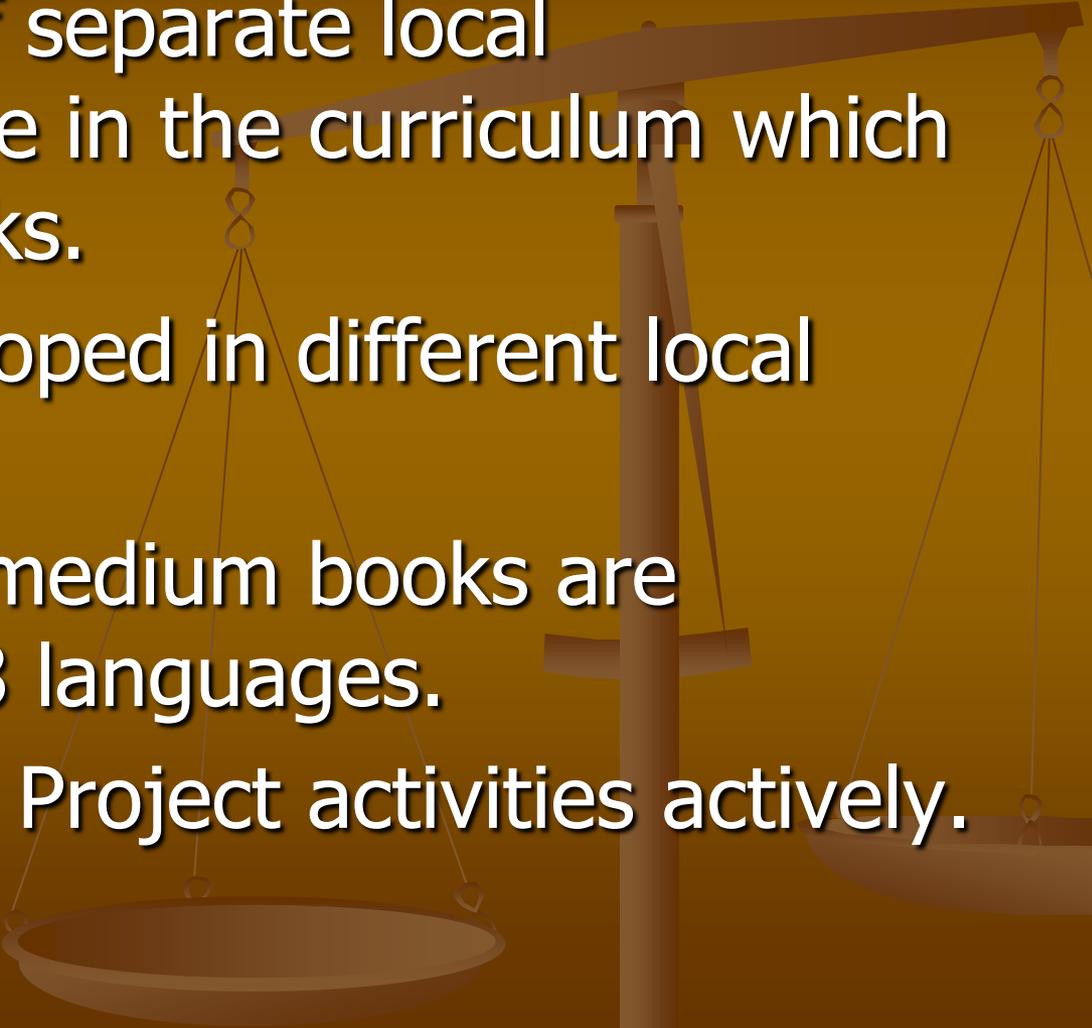
- Using mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary education is effective.
 - It attracts children to school.
 - The local government can open and operate primary schools in mother tongue (Local Government Act, 1999).
 - Necessity of bilingual education (National Language Policy Recommendation Commission, 1994).
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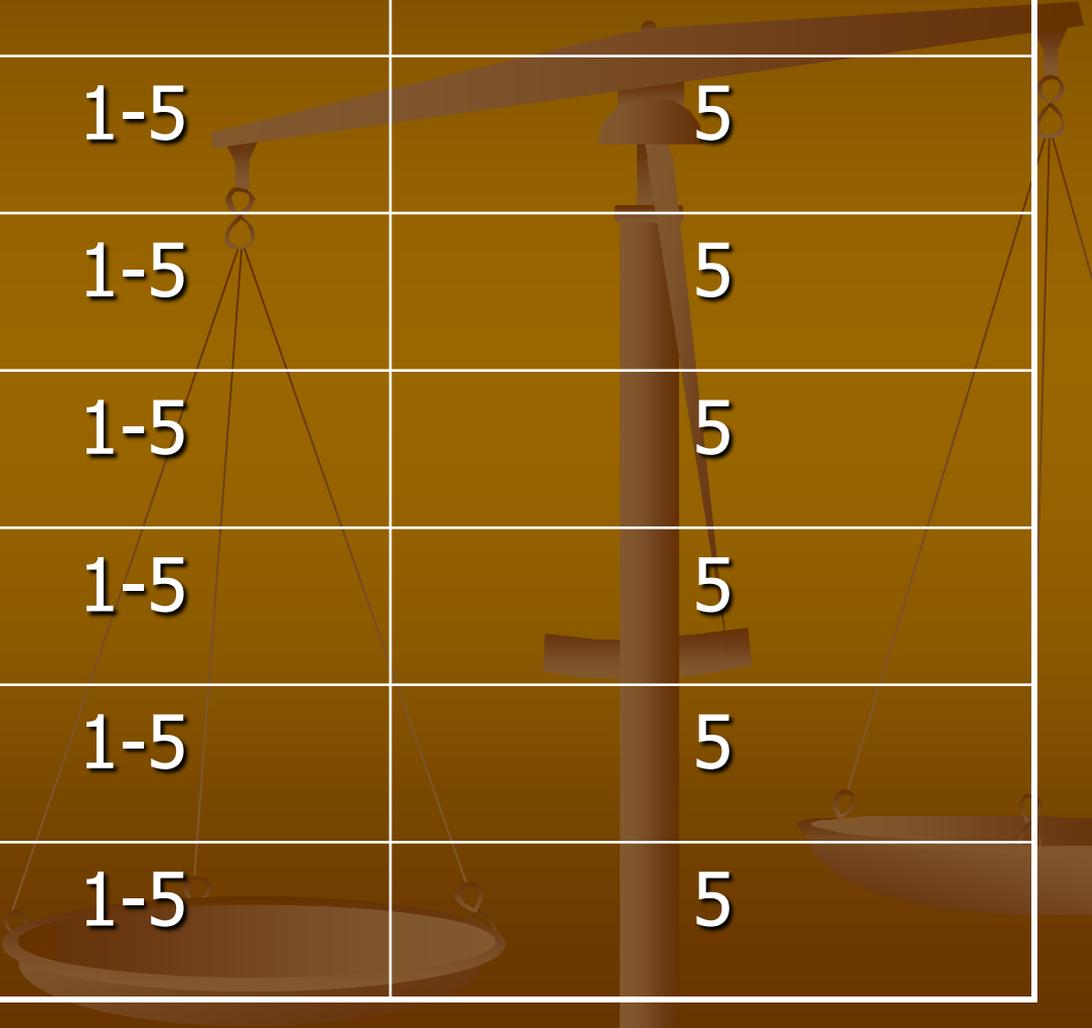
- To accomplish DAKAR Conference Goal.
- To ensure education through mother tongue (Nepal EFA-7th goal of Education for all.)
- To translate the constitutional provision into practice.



Efforts made by CDC

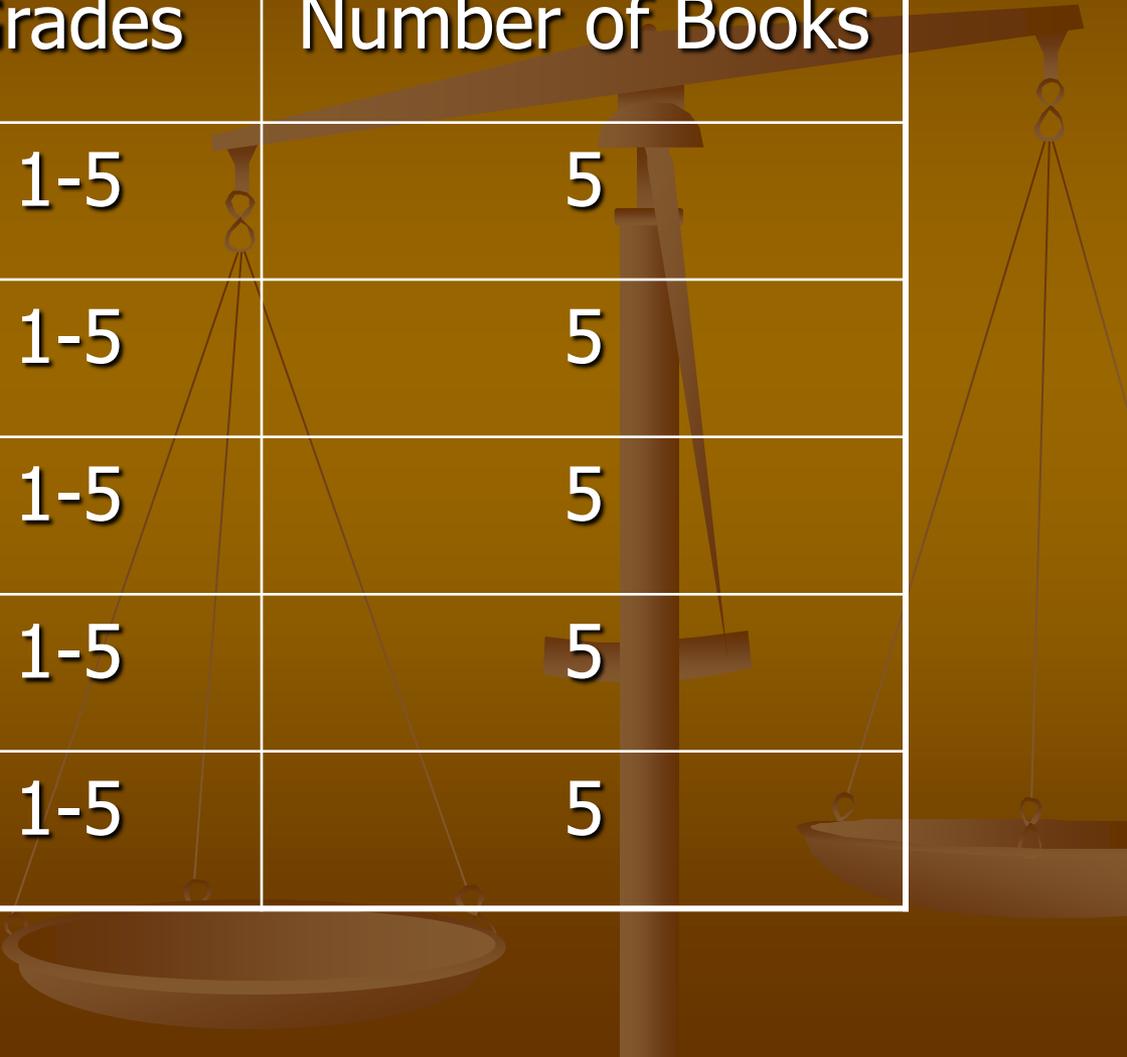
- The provision of separate local subject/language in the curriculum which carries 100 marks.
 - Books are developed in different local languages.
 - Grade 1 Nepali medium books are translated into 8 languages.
 - Involved in MLE Project activities actively.
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Languages	Grades	Number of Books
Maithili	1-5	5
Bhojpuri	1-5	5
Awadhi	1-5	5
Tamang	1-5	5
Limbu	1-5	5
Bantawa Rai	1-5	5

Contd...



Languages	Grades	Number of Books
Chamling Rai	1-5	5
Sherpa	1-5	5
Gurung	1-5	5
Magar	1-5	5
Nepal Bhasha	1-5	5

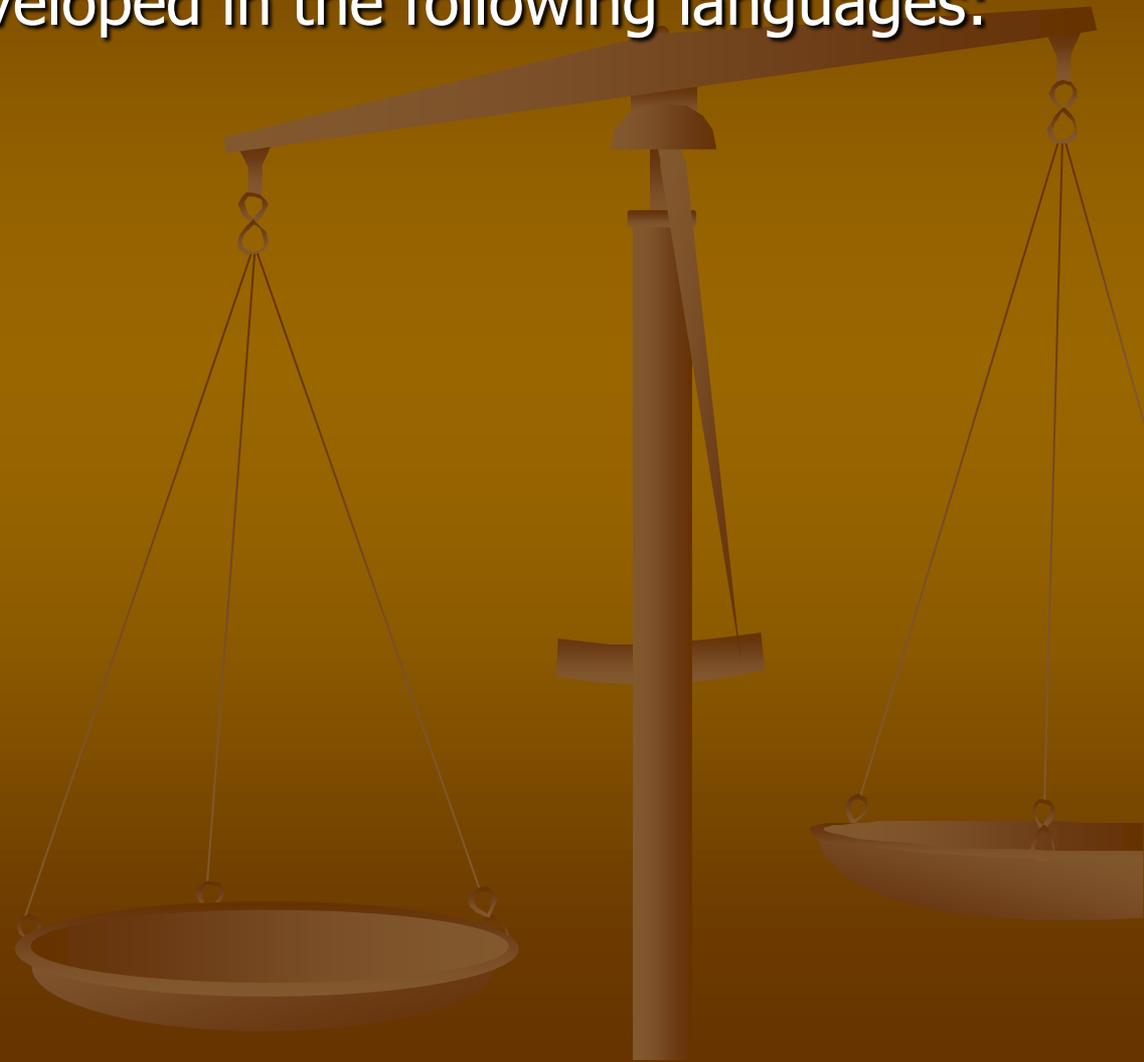
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Languages	Grades	Number of Books
Sunuwar	1-3	3
Rajbansi	1-2	2
Tharu	1-2	2
Mugali	1	1
Yakkha	1-2	2
Gumba education (Bhot Bhasha)	1-5	5

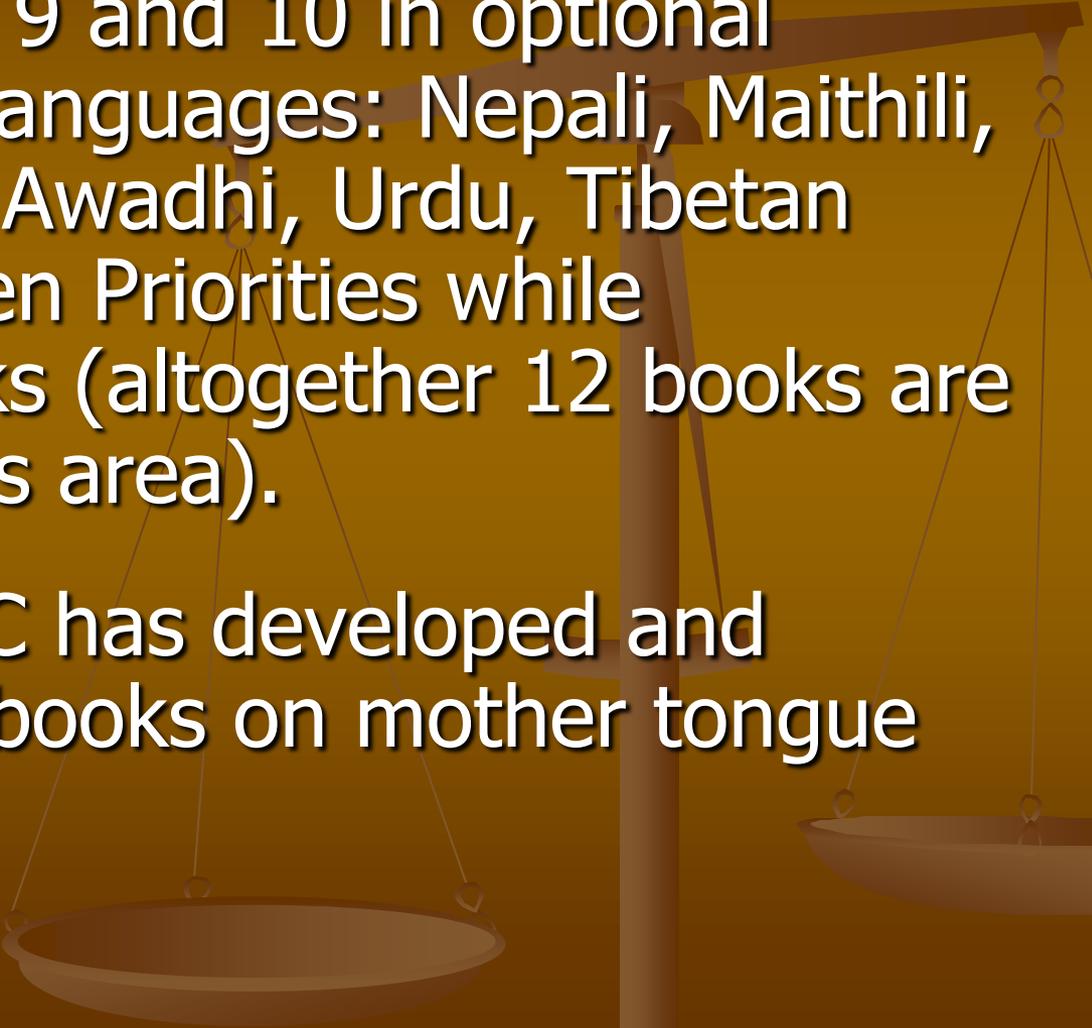
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Reference materials developed in the following languages:

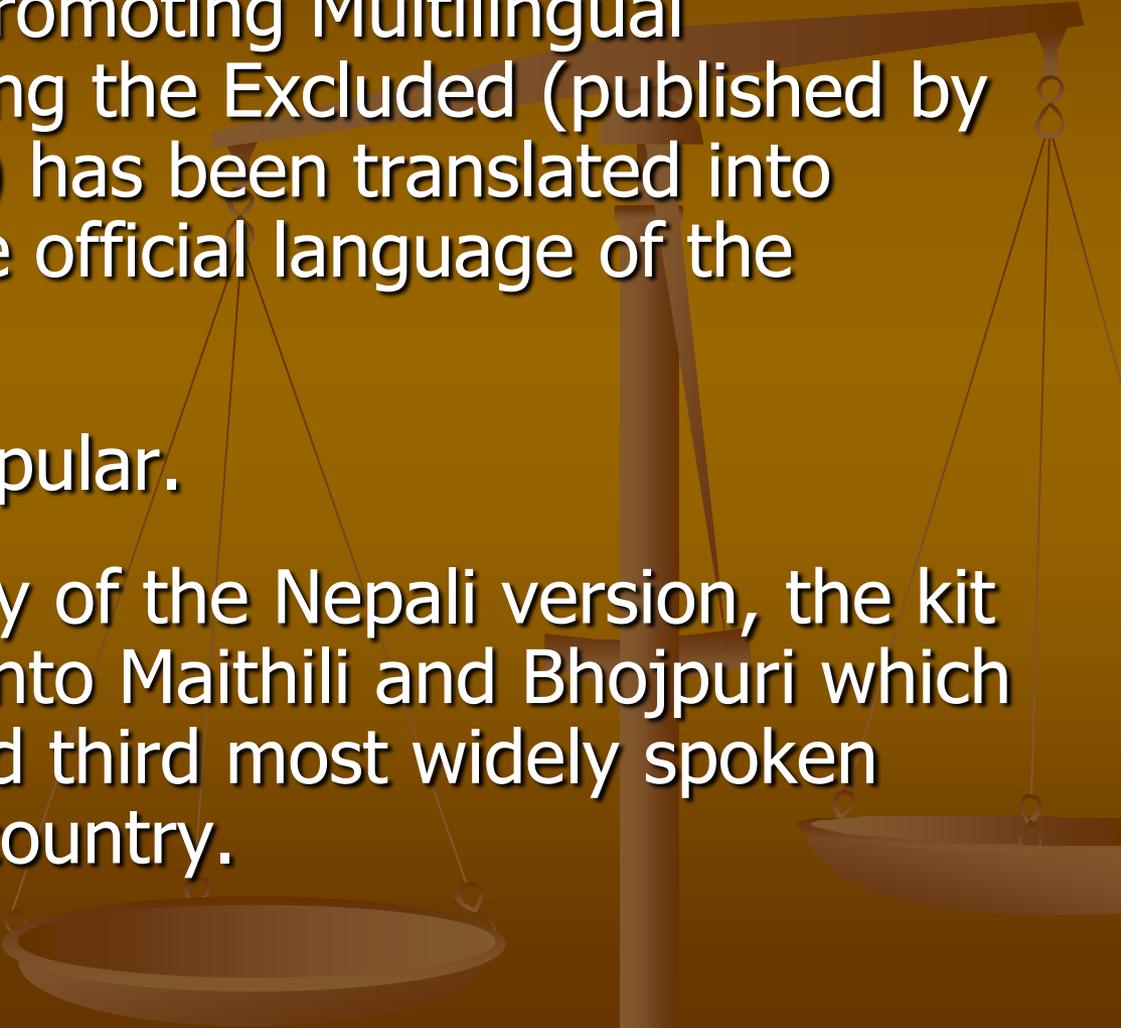
- Maithili
- Bhojpuri
- Awadhi
- Limbu
- Tharu
- Gurung
- Magar
- Doteli
- Chamling
- Thakali
- Sanskrit
- Nepal Bhasha



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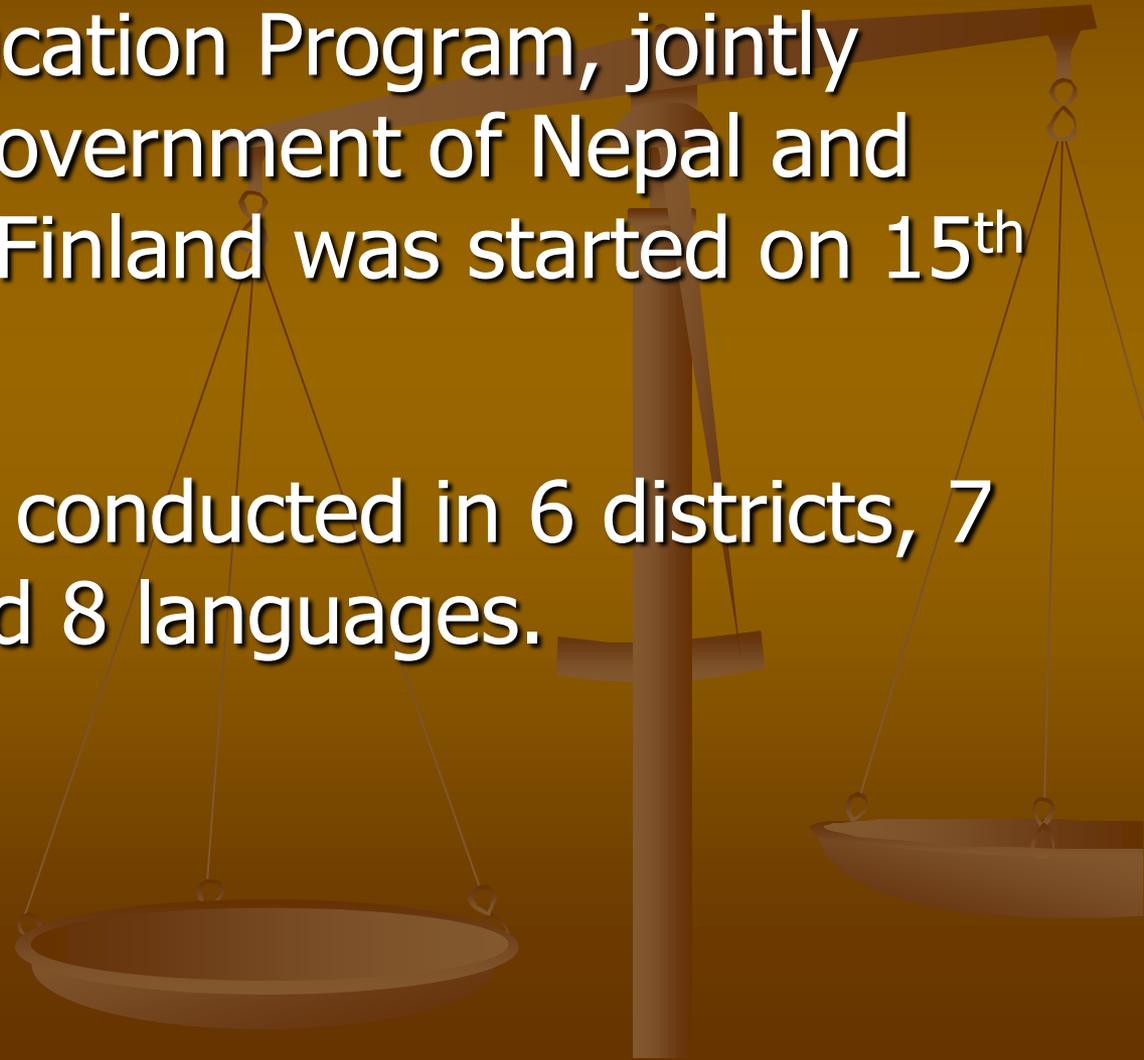
- Books for grade 9 and 10 in optional subjects of the languages: Nepali, Maithili, Hindi, Bhojpuri, Awadhi, Urdu, Tibetan and Pali are given Priorities while developing books (altogether 12 books are developed in this area).
 - In total, the CDC has developed and distributed 123 books on mother tongue education.
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Efforts made by UNESCO Nepal

- Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded (published by UNESCO Bangkok) has been translated into Nepali which is the official language of the nation.
 - It became very popular.
 - After the popularity of the Nepali version, the kit is also translated into Maithili and Bhojpuri which are the second and third most widely spoken languages of the country.
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Multilingual Education Program in Nepal

- Multilingual Education Program, jointly conducted by Government of Nepal and Government of Finland was started on 15th January, 2007.
- This program is conducted in 6 districts, 7 pilot schools and 8 languages.

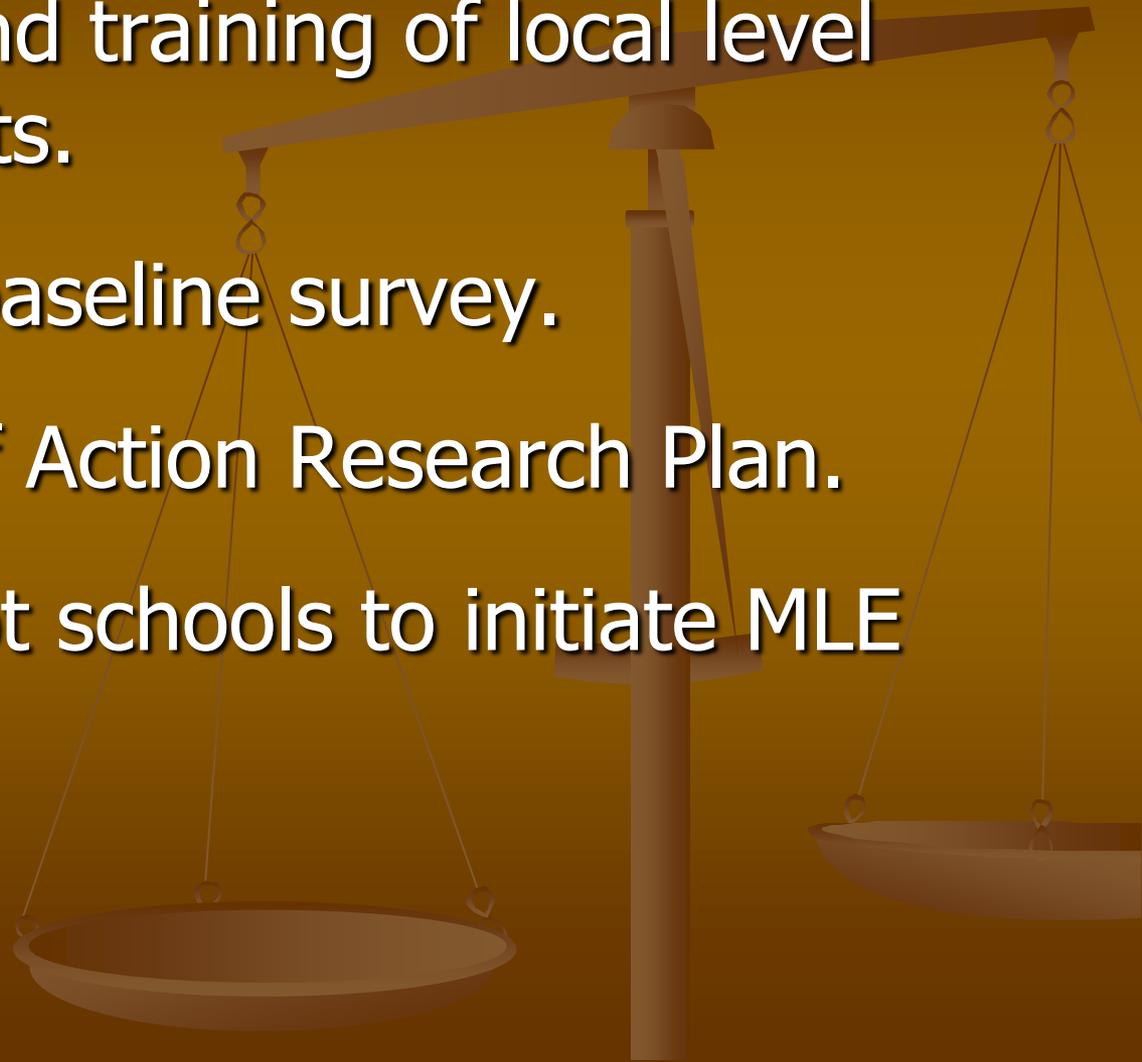


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Districts	Pilot Schools	Language
Jhapa	Rastriya Ekta Pra.Vi, Haldibin	Santhali, Rajbansi
Sunsari	Sarda Pra.Vi. Simichriya	Uraw, Tharu/Maithili
Dhankuta	Devrahi L.S. Santang	Athpahare Rai
Rasuwa	Saraswati Pra.Vi., Thade Bhimad Pra.Vi, Thulo	Tamang
Palpa	Nava Jyoti Pra. Vi, Chidepanee	Magar Dhoot
Kanchanpur	Rastriya Pra.Vi.	Rana Tharu

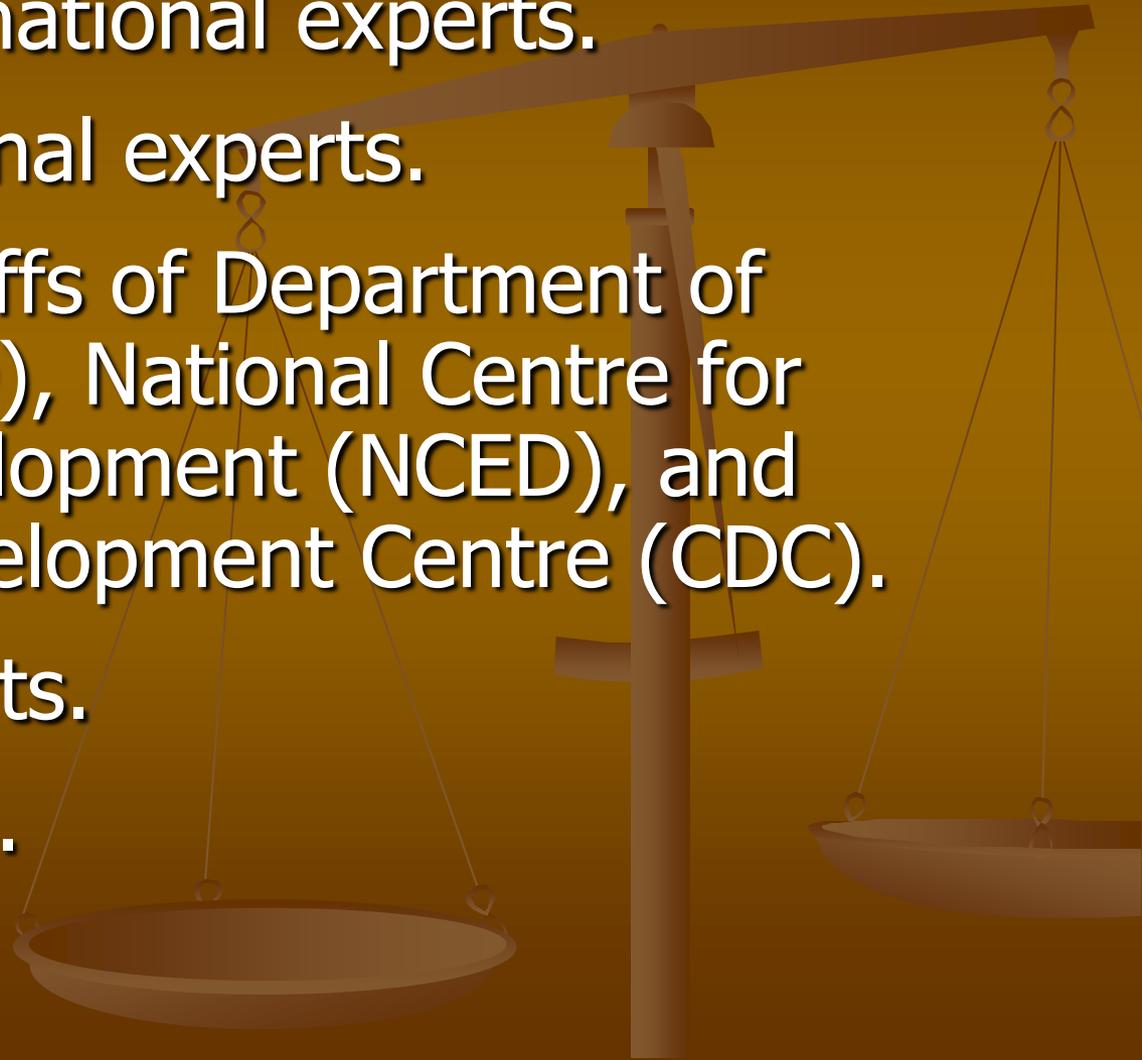
Activities undertaken

- Identification and training of local level language experts.
- Completion of baseline survey.
- Development of Action Research Plan.
- Selection of pilot schools to initiate MLE program.



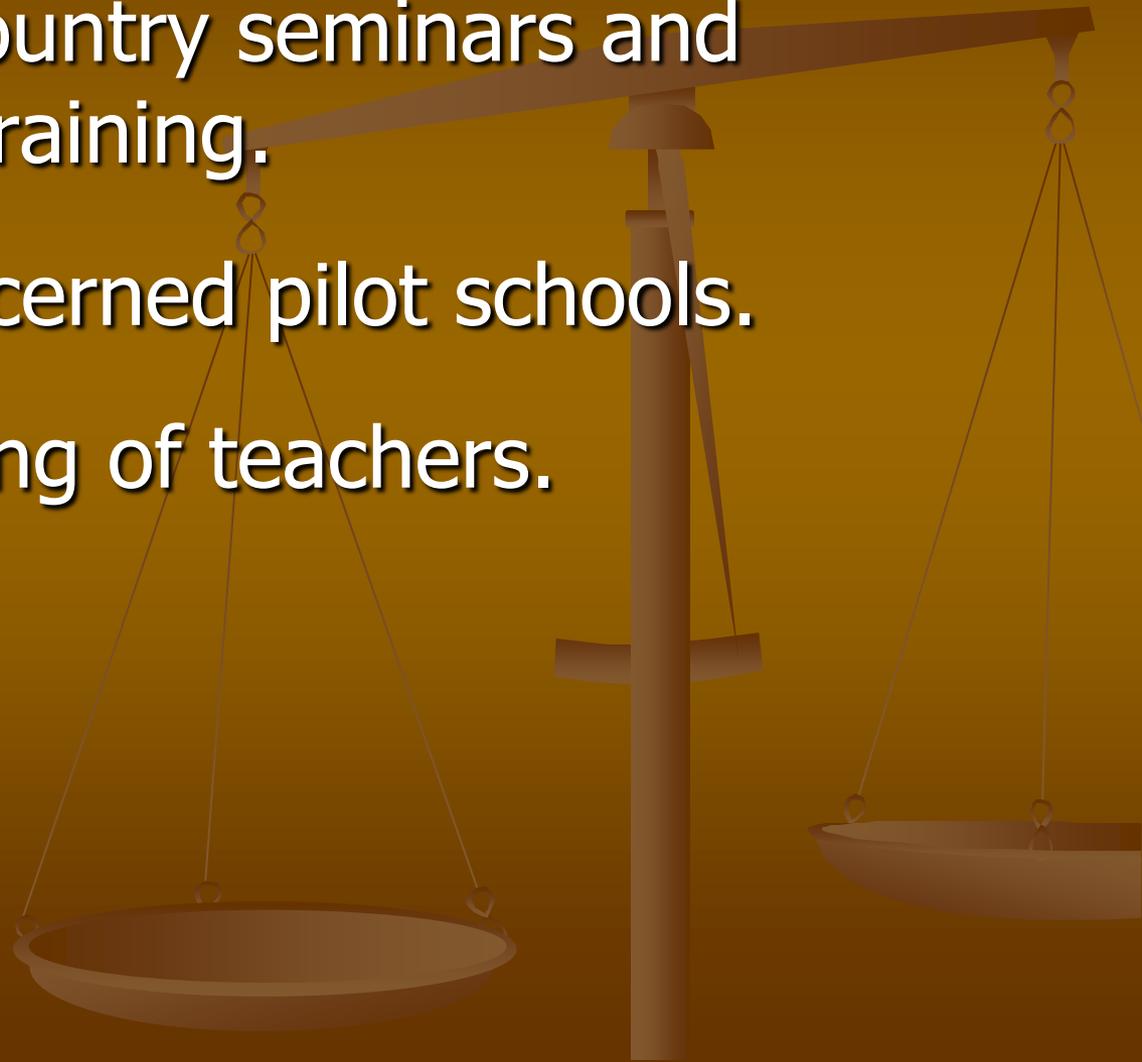
People Involved

- A team of international experts.
- A team of national experts.
- Professional staffs of Department of Education (DEO), National Centre for Education Development (NCED), and Curriculum Development Centre (CDC).
- Periodical experts.
- School teachers.

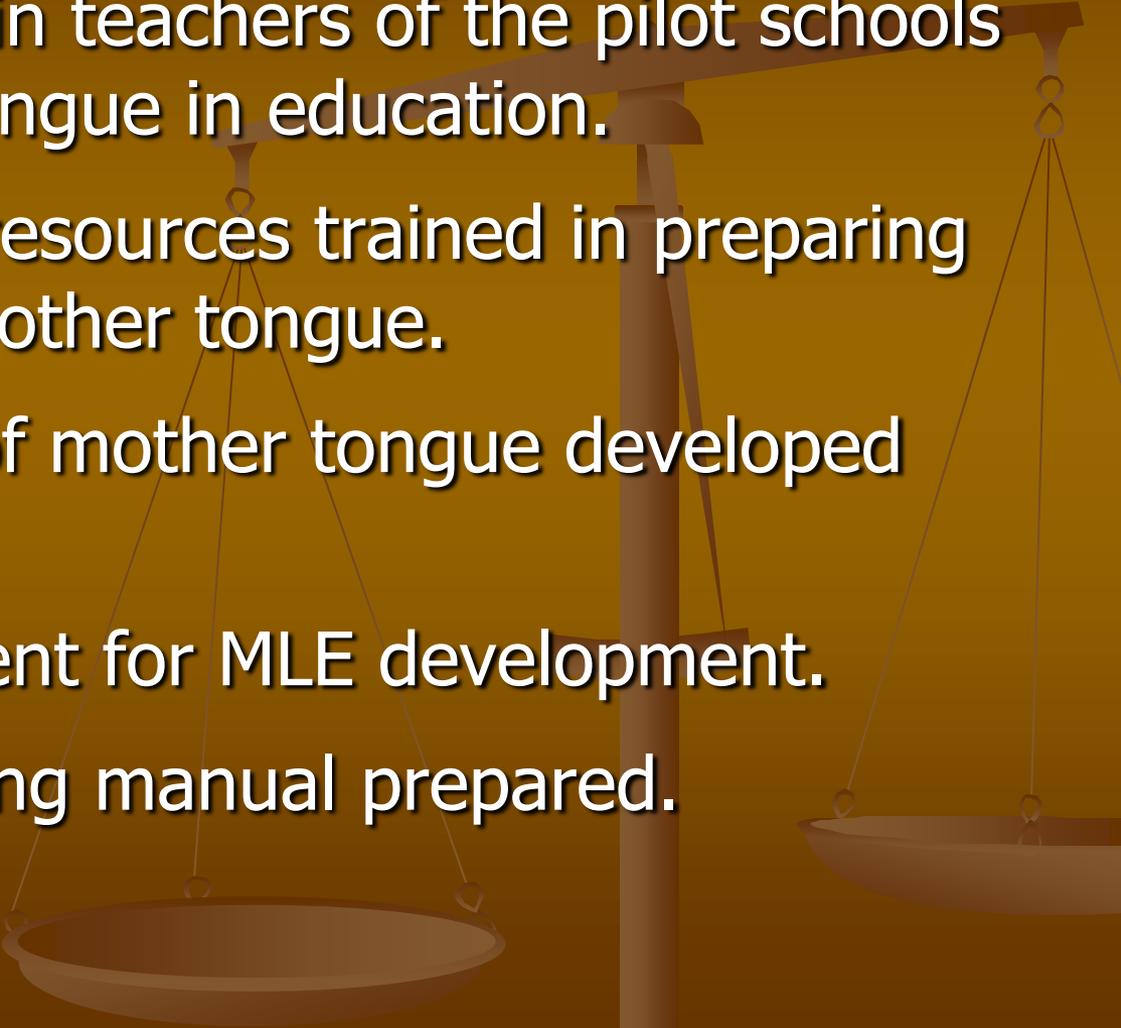


Inputs provided to national authorities through:

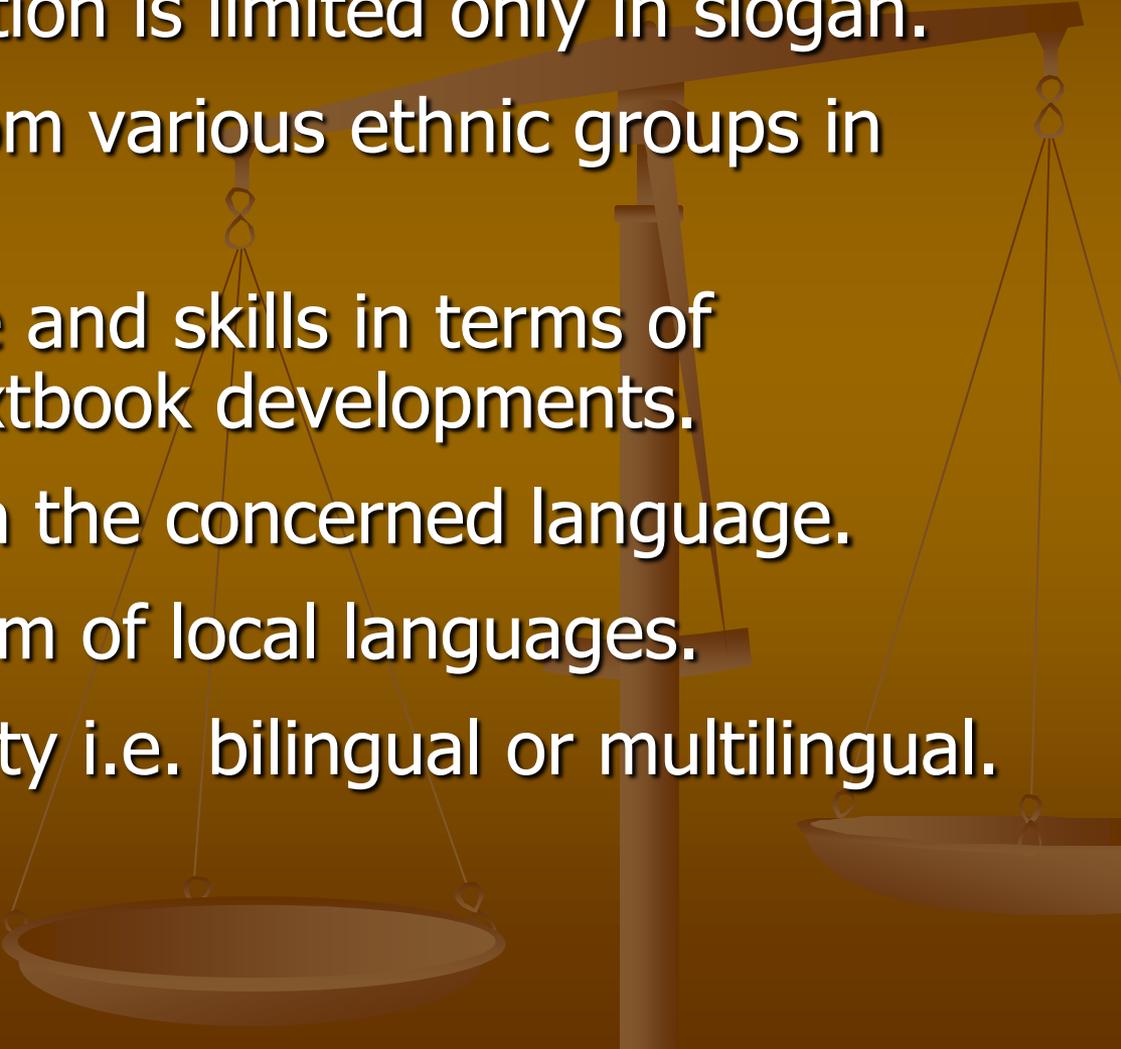
- Organizing in country seminars and workshops for training.
- Visiting the concerned pilot schools.
- Reporting training of teachers.



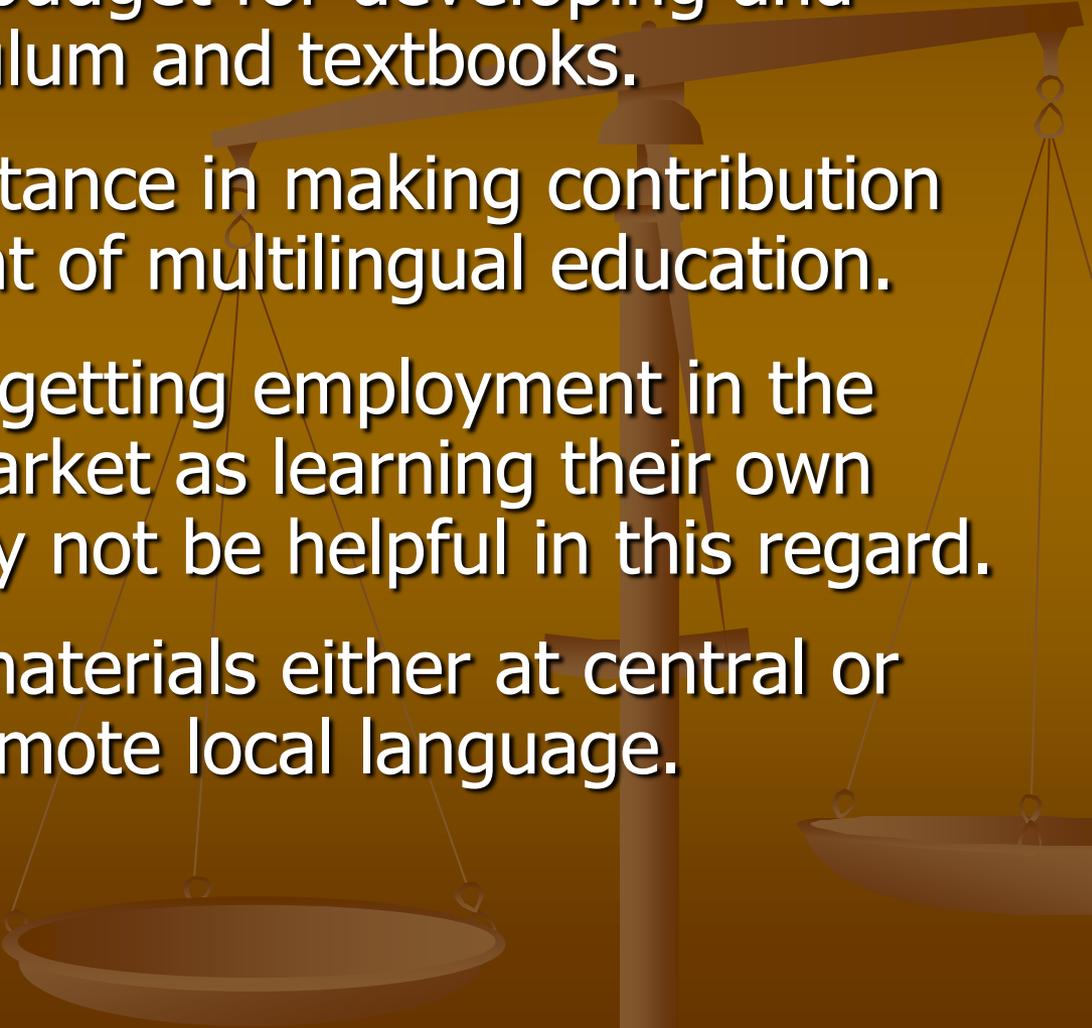
Outputs

- Awareness raised in teachers of the pilot schools in using mother tongue in education.
 - Technical human resources trained in preparing texts relating to mother tongue.
 - Reference books of mother tongue developed and distributed.
 - Guidelines document for MLE development.
 - MLE teacher training manual prepared.
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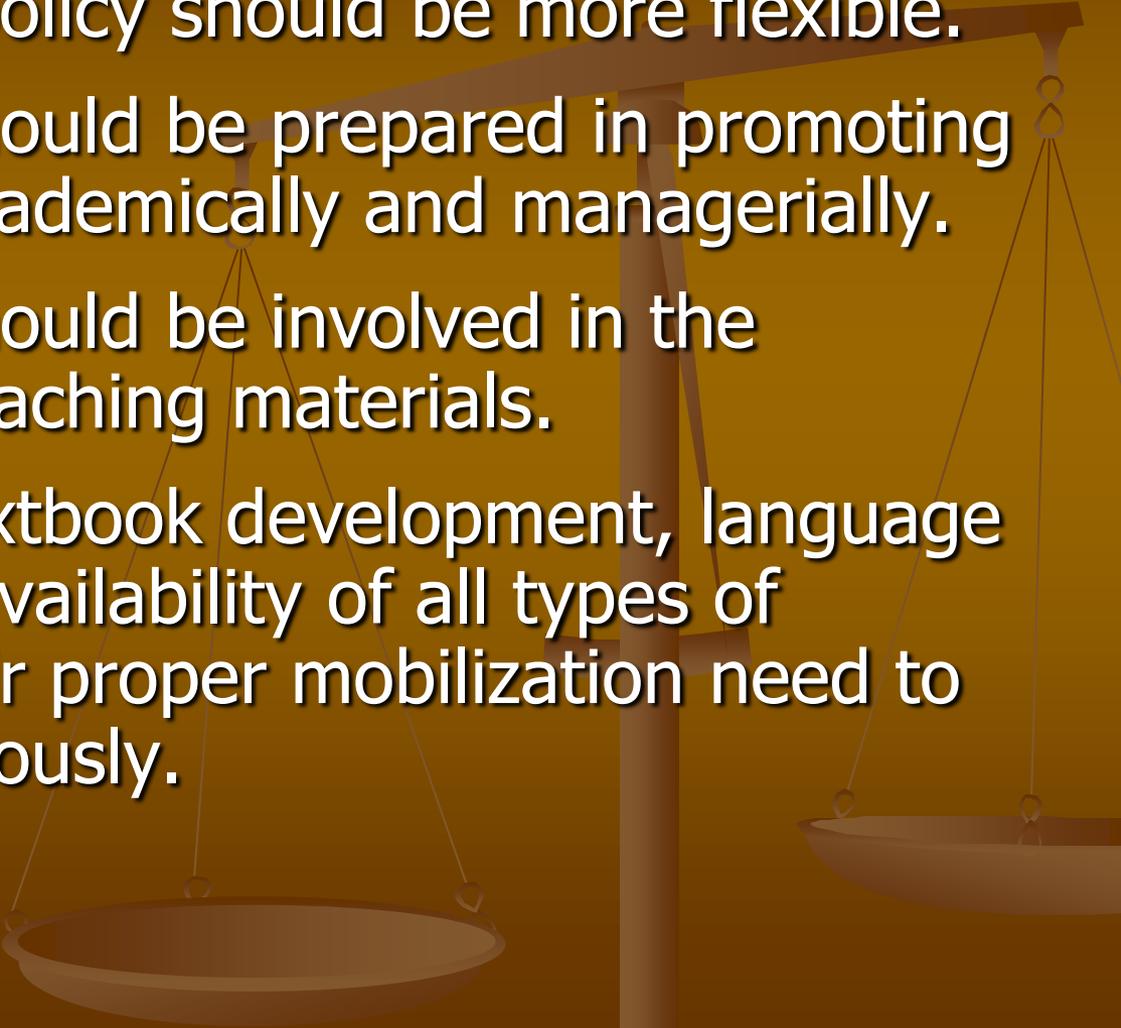
Challenges for MLE

- Multilingual education is limited only in slogan.
 - Mixed students from various ethnic groups in schools.
 - Lack of knowledge and skills in terms of curriculum and textbook developments.
 - Lack of teachers in the concerned language.
 - Lack of written form of local languages.
 - Lack of policy clarity i.e. bilingual or multilingual.
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- Lack of adequate budget for developing and distributing curriculum and textbooks.
 - Community's reluctance in making contribution to the development of multilingual education.
 - Psychology of not getting employment in the competitive job market as learning their own local language may not be helpful in this regard.
 - Lack of resource materials either at central or school level to promote local language.
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In conclusion,

- The government policy should be more flexible.
 - The community should be prepared in promoting local languages academically and managerially.
 - The community should be involved in the development of teaching materials.
 - Curriculum and textbook development, language teacher, and the availability of all types of resources and their proper mobilization need to be considered seriously.
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Thank you

