

Recent Development in Multilingual Education in Nepal.

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Nepal is a country of ethnic diversity and linguistic plurality. Despite its small size, Nepal is home to an amazing cultural and linguistic diversity. A census in 2001 identified 92-plus languages spoken as mother tongue languages by more than 102 ethnic communities. This paper aims to present the emergence of mother tongue education; its development as in the form of Multilingual Education (MLE); and challenges for MLE. The study is based on the secondary data available in the context of MLE. Publications from the department of Education, National Centre for Education Development (NCED) and Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) are used as the sources of information. Different education reports are also concerned as secondary sources of data. The initiative for education in the mother tongue language in Nepal started after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Every ethnic or language group can acquire a primary level education in their respective language (Constitution of Nepal, 1990). The Multilingual Education Programme, jointly conducted by the Government of Nepal and the Government of Finland, started in January, 2007. This programme is conducted in six districts, seven pilot schools and eight languages covering all the language families of Nepal. The challenges facing MLE are: students from various linguistic communities in the same classroom; a lack of advocacy; a lack of teachers in concerned languages; a lack of written literature in the languages; and a lack of government policy. This study will provide support to deliver primary education through mother tongue languages and offer guidelines to teachers and other stakeholders.