

An In-depth Study of the Implementation of Hindi Language Curriculum at Upper Primary Stage

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INTRODUCTION

Hindi language education in India is large and diverse in terms of its size, place and role of the language. Besides being the official language of the country, Hindi is spoken by the largest number of people in the country and serves as a medium of instruction in schools. It is taught as a first, second and third language in different school systems. Curriculum development and materials for teaching-learning of Hindi at school level is carried out at various levels. The National Curriculum Frameworks developed at the national level serve as a model curriculum for the States/ UTs while the states have freedom to adopt, adapt or develop their own curriculum. The recent curricular revision in India, National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005) (NCERT, 2005), provides guidelines for marching towards the goal of quality education for all children in school. In its call for the spread of equitable quality education, the NCF-2005 stresses the need for a paradigm shift in the way of planning and implementation of various aspects of education (which includes teaching-learning, assessment and other activities in and outside school). The Position Paper on Teaching of Indian Languages by the National Focus Group (NCERT, 2005) deliberated on the problems and issues of teaching of Indian languages in the multilingual contexts, besides suggesting methods and strategies for improving the quality of language teaching in the variety of teaching situations that exists today. There exist varieties of language teaching situations in India depending upon the teachers' language proficiency and pedagogical knowledge, language environment, resources for teaching learning of the language, and so on.

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Introduction

As the National Education Policy (NPE) 1986 and the Programme of Action (PAO) 1992 indicate, the national curriculum needs to be revised at regular intervals for bringing in the desired changes in the curriculum and materials. Therefore, there is a need to study how far the ideas and recommendations of the curriculum have been realised in different school contexts. The new pedagogies and methodologies suggested by the language curriculum and the materials developed as a follow up to NCF-2005 has been in practice for about seven years now. It is felt that this is the time to examine the extent to which the Hindi language curriculum in school is working. The Position Paper on Teaching of Indian Languages (NCERT, 2005), in its recommendations, also calls for research-based evidences for quality language education through curriculum and materials. It is in this context that the present research studied the extent to which the language curriculum has been implemented in different school systems in terms of understanding the ideas of NCF-2005, objectives of language education at different stages of school education, effectiveness of materials for teaching of Hindi, classroom processes and assessment procedures. The study attempted to identify the implementation of Hindi language curriculum in various types of schools at the national and state levels through an analysis of the syllabi and textual materials. An exploration into the teaching-learning processes was made to find out as to what extent the new pedagogies/methodologies suggested by NCF-2005 are being implemented by teachers. Also, the study collected and analysed the perception of teachers, learners (of secondary level) and parents on the existing practices of Hindi language education.

Objectives

1. To study the implementation of Hindi language curriculum in various types of schools at the national and state levels through—
 - (i) an analysis of the syllabi and textual materials of Hindi language education at upper primary stage of school education.
 - (ii) an exploration into the teaching-learning processes to find out to what extent the new pedagogies/methodologies suggested by NCF-2005 are being implemented by the teachers.

2. To collect and analyse the perception of teachers, learners (of secondary level) and parents on the existing practices of Hindi language education.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. To what extent has the Hindi language curriculum been implemented in schools at the national and state levels as recommended by NCF-2005? what are the processes involved for the development and implementation of Hindi language curriculum and syllabus at national and state levels at the upper primary stage?
2. How are the materials for teaching-learning of Hindi developed? Do the materials fulfill the objectives as stated by the curriculum and syllabi?
3. What are the perceptions of teachers, learners and parents about the existing practices of Hindi language education?
4. What are the teaching-learning processes followed in the Hindi language classroom? Do these reflect the new pedagogies/ methodologies suggested by the national curriculum? Has the teacher been oriented (both on pedagogy and content) to achieve the objectives of Hindi language education as perceived by NCF-2005; what are the processes of language assessment in different school systems? How is assessment practiced in the Hindi language classroom?

Methodology

The proposed study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches for collection of data. For this study five states were selected—Bihar, Odisha, Chattishgarh, Kerala and Haryana. In each state few schools from rural and urban were selected. Around 23 urban schools and 17 rural schools were used for the study. One Navodaya School was also selected for the study. The following criterion was followed for the selection of states—(i) States which have adopted curriculum developed by NCERT following NCF-2005 directly; (ii) States which have adapted with modification; (iii) States which have developed their own curriculum-based on the ideas of NCF.

Tools used in the study were—analysis of curriculum and courses of the school, learning and interpretation form, questionnaires for the students, questionnaires for the teachers related to syllabi, and classroom teaching observation.

Findings of the Study

The curriculum framework syllabi and textbooks were developed in the states of Kerala; Bihar according to their needs following NCERT-2005. The curricular of these States reflect creative outlook and critical pedagogy.

The NCERT of different states had developed the study materials for Hindi language teaching. However these materials and courses had not been able to fulfil of the objectives of NCF-2005.

The textbook developed by the states of Odisha were found to be less effective in terms of subject matter and presentation as compare to the other states. Hindi is taught at upper primary stage in the states of Kerala and Odisha as third language while it occupies the position of first language in the states of Haryana, Bihar and Chhattisgarh.

It was found during classroom observation that teachers were still using the traditional method of teaching, though textbook content activities and project works. Teachers did attempt to follow continuous and comprehensive education. However they lacked innovation and originality. The study also showed lack of teacher training programme in the states and some of the teachers had not even heard about NCF-2005.

About one-thousand students filled up the questionnaires required information related to the teaching of Hindi language. It contained information related to classroom transaction, available Hindi textbook, Hindi teacher and evaluation methods and students relationships. These students come from rural and urban areas, Government and added schools, Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas.

All the students reported that computers and ICT are not used in Hindi language teaching. Classroom observation showed that reading skills of the students were very poor. The same case was with the writing skills. These findings were more prominently observed in the states of Kerala and Odisha. The students from these states do not have access to additional reading materials in Hindi at their homes or at their schools. In the states of Kerala it was found that teachers were teaching Hindi in Malayalam language. In some states like Haryana teachers pointed out some difficulties in teaching a few topics.

Teachers and students in almost all the states suggested that there should be a scope for doing more activities in the class and less emphasis should be given in writing. In Kerala and Odisha the students reported that a course material in Hindi was not interesting. The qualification prescribed for appointment of teachers in all the states was not similar. It was also found those teachers were not provided in-service training in Hindi subjects. The study suggested providing in service training to the teachers, encouraging them to use ICT and computer, use of audio video materials for teaching of Hindi, providing textbooks to the students which develop interest Hindi in them and so on.