# MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION AND LANGUAGE OF EDUCATION – EXPERIENCES FROM NEPAL

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# Nepal Linguistic Landscape

- **Nepal's multilingual construct**
- **19 major languages** account for 96% speakers an additional **104 minor languages** account for only 4% speakers
- **Mother tongues:** A comparison of census enumerations of languages (1952/54 - 2011)

| Census | 1952-54 | 1961 | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 | 2011 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No. of languages | 44 | 36 | 17 | 18 | 31 | 91 | 123 |

# Literacy and Scripts

- **Devanagari**: Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Avadhi,
- **Sambhota**:Tibetan/Sherpa/Tamang
- **Prachalit**: Newar
- **Others**: Sirijanga: (Limbu), Rong (Lapcha), Akkha (Magar), Mithilakshar/Tirhuta (Maithili), Tamhig (Tamang), Gurumukhi (Punjabi), Perso-Arabic (Urdu), Ol Ciki /Ol (Santhali) and Bangla (Bengali).

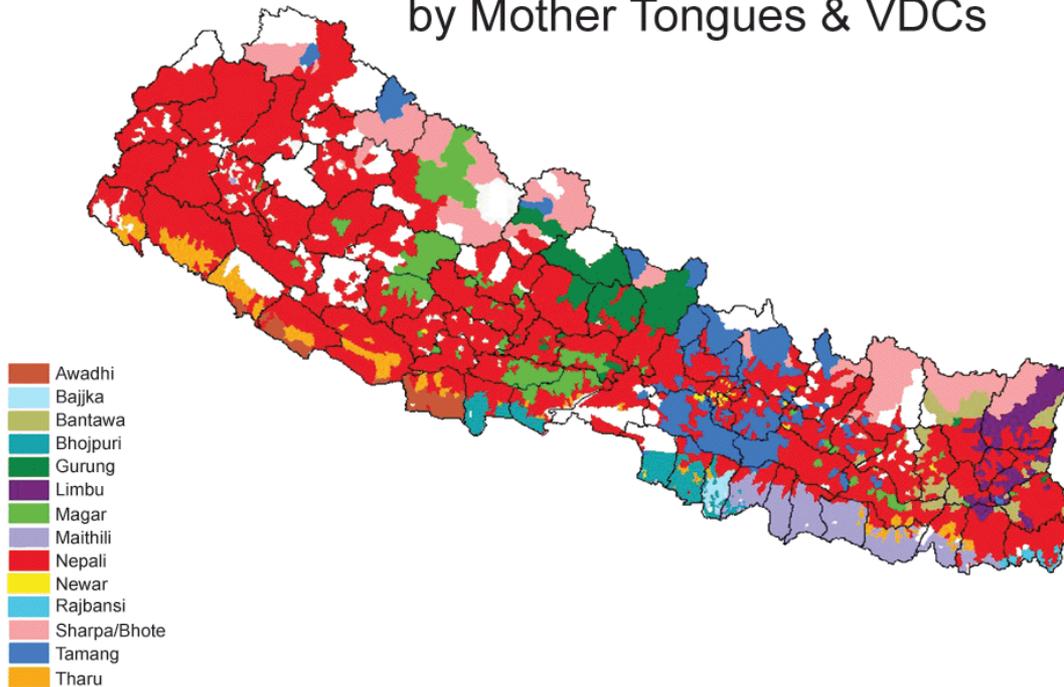| अ | ई | ऊ | ए | क | ख | ग | घ |
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# Political and Socioeconomic Processes Affecting Language Issues



Distribution of Major Languages by Mother Tongues & VDCs

Legend:
- Awadhi
- Bajjka
- Bantawa
- Bhojpuri
- Gurung
- Limbu
- Magar
- Maithili
- Nepali
- Newar
- Rajbansi
- Sharpa/Bhote
- Tamang
- Tharu

- Language hierarchies, social stratifications
- Primacy of oral traditions
- MTB MOI recognized and enshrined in Nepal's new Constitution
- English as MoI due to globalization
- Widening gaps between public and private schools
- Weak foundation for reading and learning

# Policy Manifestations

**Constitutional Provisions and Legal Instruments**

**MLE Guidelines for MTB MoI Implementation**

- Ministry of Education: policy guidelines, planning and resourcing, coordination
- Department of Ed: creating enabling environment for program implementation

**MLE Steering Committee:**

- Policy guidelines, support mechanism
- REDs: ensuring program delivery
- DEOs/ RCs: support and supervision for MLE implementation in schools
- VDC/ Municipality: planning, resourcing, capacity
- Schools/ SMCs: MLE implementation and ensuring students learning
- Community/ Parents/ PTAs: coordination and rapport building
- Partnerships with (I)NGOs, Lessons drawn from regional and global practices

**MTB MoI in EGRP Program:**

- USAID support for improving children's early grades reading
- Low levels of reading and learning competence
- Capacity building at national and local levels (teachers and providers)
- Curricular and pedagogical support
- Indigenized approach to EGR
- School – community linkages

# MTB MoI Road Map

1. ECD and G1-3: MT based MoI (MLE approach)

2. G 4-8: Consolidation of MT and Nepali

3. G 6-8:  Consolidation of Nepali and transition to English MoI

4. G 9-12: continuation of MT and Nepali, and introduction to Eng  MoI (science, Maths, computer science as a MoI)

5. University Education in English Medium (except for languages)

6. Non-formal education: MLE based literacy

# EGR: MTB MOI and English

**1. ECD to Grade 1: Oral Skills (Pre-Reading) Stage**

- Gains control of oral language; relies heavily on pictures in text; recognizes shapes and sounds , develops phonological awareness

**2. Grade 1: Decoding Stage (vocabulary level)**

- Becomes aware of sound/symbol associations; focuses on printed symbols; uses decoding to figure out words, pre-writing, making meaning of words

**3. Grade 1 to Grade 3: Confirmation Stage**

- Develops fluency in reading; recognizes patterns in words; understands meaning

**4. Grade 4 to Grade 8: Consolidation and Expansion Stage**

- Uses reading as a tool for learning; applies reading strategies; expands reading vocabulary; comprehends and deciphers meaning

**5. Secondary and Early Higher Education: Study Skills Stage**

- Analyzes texts; reacts to texts; understands layers of facts and concepts; comprehends multiple view points

**6. Higher Education: A Worldview Stage:**

- Widens discourse and develops a worldview through reading

# Critical Components

- Stage 1 (up to grade 1): Concepts about print, Phonemes, Listening comprehension

- Stage 2 (grade 1): Decoding vocabulary, letter naming, letter sounds, letter sound association, word reading, sentence reading (with comprehension)

- Stage 3 (grades 1 to 3): Paragraph reading (oral reading fluency) with comprehension, taking dictations (different languages will have different competency levels)

# Implementation Arrangement

**Curricula and Medium of Instruction**

- Curriculum Framework and Guidelines – Primary education through Mother Tongues
- CDC developed primary education materials in 22 Languages and NFE materials in 14 Languages
- CDC guidelines for developing local materials
- CAS guidelines and continuous evaluation
- Provision for Local Language/ Mother Tongues from grade 1 with 100 Full Marks (4 Credit Hours)

# Implementation Arrangement 2

- Provisions for 20% local content in primary education
- Indigenized approach to MLE in schools/ communities
- Multiple sets of materials and Reading Competencies
- NCED offering MLE teacher training in 15 languages
- 10 thousand teachers trained for MLE in schools
- Partnerships and support structures at local and national levels
- DoE/ REDs/ DEOs – Dedicated MLE Unit and Support staff

# Challenges

## National Level

- **Bridging gaps between policy manifestations and practices**
- **Limited MT textbook and materials** both in quantity and coverage
- **EMIS lacks MT and L2 specific information** of children and teachers (linguistic profiles)
- Lack of clarity on what to do in **mixed language contexts** and what should be the **transitional model/sequence.**
- **Few teachers are trained to support learning of Nepali as L2 or to teach literacy**- NEGRP now plans to address this.

## District Level

- Some schools and whole districts have tried **English MOI and reverted quickly to Nepali MOI**
- Some schools have successfully **resisted pressure** from DEOs/ parents to adopt English MOI

# Challenges 2

## Community Level

- **Lack of awareness** about language issues in education among parents and community members
- **Shifting of MOI from Nepali to English due to parental demand and pressure** - for employment, use of modern technology, better SLC result in English medium private schools, upward mobility, etc.

## School Level

- **Mismatch** of teachers' and students' language background
- **Diverse** school communities with several MTs in one classroom
- Harmonizing efforts and initiatives
- Teachers have limited English capacity and not able to use it as an MOI.

# Possible Strategies and Next Steps

## Advocacy
- Clarify misconceptions about language instruction
- Ensure that mechanisms are established for ongoing dialogue on language issues
- Further develop evidence base on successful approaches in the Nepali context.

## Teacher Development and Management
- Teacher training and support for MT teaching and introduction of Nepali as L2
- Ensure teachers have basic understanding of language development in the early grades
- Consider language in teacher recruitment and deployment

## Curriculum Development
- Develop MT curricula and textbooks in key 'MOI' ready languages for grades 1-3
- Develop curriculum for introducing Nepali as L2
- Devolve aspects of curriculum development to ensure textbooks reflect local cultures and actual MT

## Systems Strengthening
- Include sociolinguistic data in EMIS
- Strengthen analysis and planning at the district, cluster and school levels to account for the integration of language factors / issues into SIPs, DEPs

# Predictors of MTB MoI EGR

- Use of children's mother tongues in early grades ( at least in ECD to grades three)
- Misplaced emphasis on English has been detrimental
- Recognition to children's cosmologies, cultures, values, homes (maintaining Nepal's inclusive practices)
- Early grades reading projects in close collaborations with parents, families and communities in both orate and non-orate traditions
- Reading materials with native content and constructs
- Focus on children's social intelligence, emotional intelligence and cognitive processes
- Departure from memorization, rote teaching, reproduction to thinking, understanding, interactive engagements (getting rid of tyranny of schooling)

# Predictors of MTB MoI EGR 2

- Children's access, retention and success (with better performance in national assessments)
- Alternative and locally appropriate approaches to complement EGR
- Addressing the immediate needs of hard to reach populations (particularly in earthquake affected districts and disadvantaged areas)
- Replicating good practices and innovative approaches initiated by NGOs and partners organizations
- Children's exposure to multiple sets of materials and digitized contents
- Employing ICT for promoting reading and learning
- Developing a culture of reading, learning and knowledge society
- Costs of learning and increasing investment in MTB reading materials
- Enhancing capability and competence of teachers
- School Sector Development Plan (2016 -2022) with focus on students' cognitive development, learning (45% learning competence to 60% plus)
- Collaboration, partnerships at local and global levels

# Opportunities and Options

- **Building on and consolidation of on-going practices**
- **Response to disaster affected schools and low lying areas**
- **Restructuring schools in line with federal architecture**
- Mother Tongues and Early Grades Reading
- Bringing EGR to forefront of learning agenda
- Collaboration with USAID and sharing global experiences
- Building on what Nepal has done – MTB MoI, Piloting
- Indigenized approach to EGR
- Research, Innovation and dissemination of knowledge
- Bridging gaps between policy intents and pedagogical practices
- Teachers' knowledge on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension (language forms and functions)
- Fostering culture of reading and recognizing oral tradition

# Questions to Consider

1. How can we translate policy intents into EGR / pedagogical practices?
2. How can we support local development and adaptation of curriculum, textbooks and materials, taking account of language diversity, scripts, orate only traditions?
3. How can we ensure teachers have required competencies and are optimally deployed to support effective language use and learning?
4. How can school leadership/ local level management better incorporate language analysis and strategy?
5. How can we strengthen advocacy and dissemination of evidence base?

# धन्यवाद
# Thank You