

## Tendencies of Teachers towards Pashto Medium of Instruction in Government Primary Schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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### ABSTRACT

*In this paper the tendencies of teachers towards Pashto medium of instruction in government primary schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were examined. A sample of 600 government primary school teachers was used, whereas 100 teachers were selected randomly from each sampled districts i.e. Swat, Malakand, Peshawar, Nowshera, Kohat and Bannu. Questionnaires based on two and three points scale were used as an instrument to know the tendencies of teachers. The data was tabulated and then analyzed by using chi-square and percentages, while calculated through SPSS. It was found that Pashto was the mother tongue of an overwhelming majority of teachers and nearly all teachers were able to understand Pashto. Therefore maximum teachers had literacy (reading, writing and speaking ability) and knowledge of all subjects in Pashto as well. However, there was a shortage of trained teachers in Pashto and majority of them disfavored Pashto medium teachers' training. Pashto medium of instruction was opposed by majority of teachers as compared to Urdu (national) and English (international) language. The other reasons of opposition were in capability of Pashto language to help students in obtaining the future education, superior jobs and its use in non- Pashto speaking areas.*

**Keywords:** Pashto Medium, Primary School, teachers' tendencies

### INTRODUCTION

The medium of instruction has remained a critical issue in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since independence (1947) and it was hoped that the fundamental right of people of the province, about Pashto medium of instruction would be accepted. But unfortunately every government has developed and implemented educational policies of own choice, without any prior research. Consequently, their policies did not fully benefit the school going children (Ahmad, 2011; 71 & Daud, 2006b; 7).

For this purpose the National Educational Policy (1979) allowed all of the four provinces to adopt Urdu or the major regional language(s) as the medium of instruction at the elementary school level. Prior to that UNESCO was invited by the Government to identify various causes of low standard of education in Pakistan. Thus, a survey was conducted by UNESCO throughout Pakistan and put forward its findings and recommendations to the government of Pakistan. It stated that since independence (1947) the basic education has never been imparted in students' mother tongue which was the main reason of low standard of education throughout Pakistan. Hence, this policy (1979) was mostly based on the recommendations of UNESCO.

Thus, in 1984 the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (NWFP) declared Pashto as an instructional medium at primary school level in Pashto speaking regions. For this purpose two projects were launched simultaneously. (Daud, 2006a; 37, 38) These were;

- (i) Primary Text Books Pashto Translation Project
- (ii) Pashto Dictionary Project

The implementation of Pashto as an instructional medium was a hard task to the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa because there were many barriers in its way of implementation (Khattak, 1998; 45).

It is very sad to say that the above mentioned projects, which achieved most of their objectives were however closed down and there was no follow up by the provincial education department to enhance the implementation process of education policy about Pashto as an instructional medium (Daud, 2006a; 38).

### **Pak-German Project**

Pakistan and Germany started a project with mutual cooperation in 1984 to publish text books for the students of government primary schools Peshawar (Khattak, 1998; 63). Its main purpose was to educate students in their home language with new methodologies. This project developed text books in Pashto language and organized teachers training (Daud, 2005; 162).

### **Instructional Material Development Cell (IMDC) 1991**

This project, which had the patronage of the World Bank, developed teaching-learning material in Pashto and organized teachers training in the target primary schools (Daud, 2005; 162, 163).

### **Primary Education Programme- Improvement of the Learning Environment (PEP-ILE)**

In 1996, the Pak-German and Pashto Translation Projects merged with Text Book Board into a single above mentioned institution. It had also the aim to develop learning material in Pashto language for primary school students (Daud, 2005; 163).

### **Primary Education Curriculum Reform Project**

A survey study was conducted in Malakand district through Primary Education Curriculum Reform Project Bureau of Curriculum Development and Education Extension Services, Abbottabad. The main findings of the survey study were as under:

- a. 78 out of 80 (97.5%) teachers had Pashto as their home language.
- b. According to the responses of teachers on the prevailing medium of instruction in their schools 76 (95%) responded Pashto and 3 (3.75%) responded Urdu.
- c. 57 (71.25%) teachers were found satisfied with Pashto medium of instruction.
- d. Out of 80 male teachers, an average of 49.4 (61.75%) proposed Urdu, 29 (36.5%) proposed Pashto and only 1.6 (2%) proposed English medium of instruction for all subjects (Farooq *et al.*, 1991, 65, 66, 84).

### **The Recommendations of Education Conference (27<sup>th</sup> Nov- 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 1947)**

All of the four provincial governments were being allowed to determine the instructional medium at primary level. However, the national language (Urdu) was considered as second language of instruction, if the main provincial language(s) is introduced as instructional medium (Govt. of Pakistan, 1947; 5, 11, 39).

### **The Recommendations of National Education Commission (1959)**

The national language (Urdu) was recommended as subject from class three and as an instructional medium from class 6<sup>th</sup> onward. However national language (Urdu) of the country was recommended as an instructional medium in western Pakistani government schools except in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces (Govt. of Pakistan, 1959; 298).

### **The New Education Policy 1970**

The following recommendations were laid down in the policy for choosing the desired instructional medium:

- i. A language which can facilitate students to get knowledge successfully.
- ii. A language that can make communication (oral and written) to the point and clear.
- iii. A language that can encourage students' innovative and reasoning abilities.

In 1970s, the national languages and to some extent the main provincially used languages were replaced by English at (Government) primary and secondary school levels (Govt. of Pakistan, 1970; 18).

### **The National Education Policy 1979**

It was declared that all of the four provinces would take measures to adopt national language (Urdu) or main provincial language(s) as the instructional medium. Home language was considered on the top for educating children at primary school level (Govt. of Pakistan, 1979; 59).

### **National Education Policy 2009**

Recommendations of the policy are as under:

- i. Every language has a capability to bridge a person in respect of its use, such as English can lead to the world around, Urdu is confined upto the country boundaries while provincial language(s) limited to the provincial frontiers.
- ii. All of the four provincial governments will decide the instructional medium upto grade five whereas English, Urdu and the main regional language(s) were declared as subject(s) in the policy at this level (Govt. of Pakistan, 2009; 4, 20).

### **Constitution of Pakistan 1973**

It was declared in the prevalent constitution of Pakistan (1973) that all of the four provincial governments should take measures for the promotion of main provincial language(s), particularly for their implementation as instructional medium (Rahman, 2005; 2, 9).

## Procedure

A sample of 600 government primary school teachers was used, whereas 100 teachers were selected randomly from each sampled districts i.e. Swat, Malakand, Peshawar, Nowshera, Kohat and Bannu. Questionnaires based on two and three points scale were used as an instrument to know the tendencies of teachers. The data was tabulated and then analyzed by using chi-square and percentages, while calculated through SPSS.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Tendencies of Teachers Towards Pashto Medium of Instruction**

Items	Mostly	To	Not	P-value	$\chi^2$
	(%)	some extent (%)	at all (%)		
1. You have the ability to read Pashto text.	66.7	23.3	10	0.000	316
2. You have the ability to write Pashto text.	59.4	26.8	13.8	0.000	197.7
3. You prefer Pashto language for written communication in your community.	27.7	32	40.3	0.001	14.9
4. You have fluency in Pashto speaking.	79.5	18.7	1.8	0.000	600.9
5. Primary schools' teachers training should be provided in Pashto medium.	26.53	20.17	53.3	0.000	111.6
6. Teaching in Pashto makes teachers as well as students feel more relaxed and better adjusted in class.	44.2	20.8	35	0.000	49.7
7. You have sufficient knowledge of the contents of general science in Pashto.	46.8	21	32.2	0.000	60.43
8. You have sufficient knowledge of the contents of social studies in Pashto.	50.3	20.7	29	0.000	84.28
9. You have sufficient knowledge of the contents of Islamic studies in Pashto.	52.2	21	26.8	0.000	98.83
10. You have sufficient knowledge of the contents of mathematics in Pashto.	41.7	20.8	37.5	0.000	43.75
11. Schools have adequate number of trained teachers for Pashto medium of instruction.	6.2	11.5	82.3	0.000	65.83

The analysis of data in table 1 above presents the tendencies of teachers towards Pashto medium of instruction at government primary schools. All of the responses were found as significant. Of the above 11 items, teachers favored 9 and disfavored 2.

The maximum teachers were able to read, write and speak Pashto while opposed teachers training in Pashto medium. Majority of the teachers were of the view that they would relax to teach in Pashto and had knowledge of all subjects in Pashto. But the trained Pashto teachers were deficient. The findings of Iyamu and Ogiegbaen (2005; 8) were similar to this result that trained teachers in mother tongue were found deficient at elementary level because it needs a variety of human and physical resources.

**Table 2. Tendencies of Teachers Towards Pashto Medium of Instruction**

	<i>Items</i>	<i>Yes (%)</i>	<i>No (%)</i>	<i>p-value</i>	$\chi^2$
1	You have studied Pashto as an optional subject at primary school level.	66	34	0.00	61.4
2	You have studied Pashto as an optional subject at middle school level.	53	47	0.14	2.2
3	You have studied Pashto as an optional subject at secondary school level.	33.2	66.8	0.00	68.0
4	You have studied Pashto as an optional subject at intermediate level.	34.8	65.2	0.00	55.2
5	You have studied Pashto as an optional subject at graduation level.	18.5	81.5	0.000	238.1
6	You have done your master in Pashto language.	13.8	86.2	0.000	313.9
7	Pashto is your mother tongue.	72	28	0.000	116.2
8	You reluctant to prefer Pashto (provincially understood in specific areas) as a medium of instruction at primary school level, as compare to English (International) and Urdu (National) language.	85.3	14.7	0.000	299.6
9	You think Pashto medium of instruction benefit students in their jobs, if they are appointed in non- Pashto speaking areas.	2	98	0.000	592.2
10	Pashto as a medium of instruction will be harmful at primary school level for future education provided in English/ Urdu.	545	55	0.000	400.2

The analysis of data in table 2 above presents the tendencies of teachers towards Pashto medium of instruction at government primary schools. Of the 11 responses, only one was found as not significant, while the remaining 10 significant. Of the 11 above items, teachers favored 11 and disfavored 3.

An overwhelming majority of teachers had Pashto as their mother tongue and studied Pashto as an optional subject upto class 8<sup>th</sup>. It was similar to the findings of Farooq *et al.*,(1991;65,88,103) in district Malakand that nearly all of the government primary school teachers and students had Pashto as their home language however most of them had studied Pashto as a subject upto SSC level.

Greater number of the teachers opposed Pashto as a medium of instruction as compared to English and Urdu. The findings of Farooq *et al.*, (1991;100,108) were consistent with it that most of the government primary school teachers, students and parents opposed Pashto and proposed Urdu as an instructional medium.

Most of the government primary school teachers were of the view that it will not benefit students in their jobs if they get appointed in non- Pashto speaking areas, and particularly in future education provided in English or Urdu. Heugh *et al.*,(2007;93) and Ramasamy (2001;5) argued that the use of English as an instructional medium from the early primary school level would facilitate learners in achieving future education with good grades and desired employment.

## **CONCLUSION**

The paper concluded that Pashto was the mother tongue of majority teachers and nearly all were able to understand Pashto. Therefore maximum teachers had literacy (reading, writing and speaking) ability and knowledge of all subjects in Pashto as well. However, there was a shortage of trained teachers in Pashto and majority of them disfavored Pashto medium teachers' training. Pashto medium of instruction was opposed by majority of teachers as compared to Urdu as national and English as an international language. The other reasons of opposition were the incapability of Pashto language to facilitate students in obtaining the future education, superior jobs and its use in non- Pashto speaking areas.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of findings and conclusions, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Most of the teachers opposed Pashto as an instructional medium because they think it put adverse effects on the learners' performance in future education and in competitive examinations. If it is introduced in these areas, then the people would consider it important. However English (international), Urdu (national) and Pashto (regional) languages should be introduced as subjects at primary school level.
2. Very small number of trained teachers was available for Pashto medium of instruction. Hence, it was recommended that ministry of education should provide trained teaching staff in Pashto medium for government primary schools. For this purpose representative teachers (5 to 10) should be selected, from each district of the province for training and then these master trainers would provide training to the government primary school teachers. Thus, they would be equipped with the maximum knowledge, content and methodology.
3. Very small number of teachers in this had higher academic qualification in Pashto. Thus, provincial government should encourage and facilitate them to increase their academic qualification with regard to Pashto. For achieving the said purpose scholarships and incentives should be granted to the desired learners.
4. Majority of the respondent teachers were of the view that wider communication languages (English and Urdu) discourage the promotion of Pashto as an instructional medium. Therefore, it was recommended that the government and non-government agencies should come forward to provide funds and incentives for the arrangement of language research projects, seminars, conferences and workshops on the annual basis.

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