

**PREDICAMENTS OF THE LEARNERS OF URDU MEDIUM SCHOOLS**  
**“A CRITICAL OBSERVATION”**

**Taiyaba Nazli, Ph.D.**

*Assistant Professor, Department of Education and Training, Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Gachibowli – Hyderabad, Email: - [taiyabanazlimanuu@gmail.com](mailto:taiyabanazlimanuu@gmail.com)*

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**Introduction:-**

The Constitution of India guaranteed protection to the minority communities to preserve and promote their language. The following Articles of the Constitution protect the Minorities' right to receive education in the mother tongue.

Article 29-1. Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same. 2. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

**Article 30-1.** All minorities based on religion or language, shall have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. **Article 30-2.** The State shall not, in granting aid to educational institutions discriminate against any educational institution on the ground that it is under the management of a minority based on religion or language.

**Medium of Instruction:-**

The medium of Instruction should be comprehensible to the teachers and the taught. It should also enable them to attain comfort levels so that they can both deliver and receive

messages using the chosen medium. Farani (1990) described the characteristics necessary for a language in order for it to be adopted as a medium of instruction. These are:

- The language should be lucid and understandable for the teachers and taught.
- It should be possible to promote advance research work in that language.
- It should have simple grammatical structure, not complicated one.
- It must have rich vocabulary.
- It should be considered language, spoken and understood all over the country.

Mostly, the educational experts recommend that the mother language of a child should be adopted as a medium of instruction at the primary level Zubair (1993), NEP2020 also proposed mother tongue as a medium of instruction at the primary level and said that, “Ideally, the medium of instruction of a child living in its own language environment should be the mother tongue and second language i.e. English, should be adopted/taught as a subject”.

In fact medium of instruction has been a matter of concern among teachers, educationists and parents. Teachers and parents believe that English should be taught as a subject right from the very beginning of the school. We all are well aware that the English is a widely used international language and have become a medium of instruction and is being taught as a subject since pre-partitioned India. Urdu became controversial with the diverse opinions at the time of making educational policy for India by the British Government.

However English language occupies a very important place in the educational curricula in India. It enjoys the status of an international language and remains the language of diplomats of India in diplomatic affairs, legal proceedings and official communication. Of all the language in the world today, English is considered as the most important language. But India being a multi-lingual country shall protect its own languages which should be given priority to maintain the cultural identities of the various ethnic groups existing in the nation.

### **Objective of the Paper:-**

The objective of the present paper is to explore learners’ perceptions and experiences of the Urdu and English medium divide in India. This is the matter of concern that the

atmosphere for the non English medium students changes completely after joining the universities. They feel that the competition is quite tough and that their vocabulary accent, style, pronunciation, spelling, almost everything in English needs to be improved and this is where they become depressed and feel low before their counterparts.

They come across the class fellows who are inclined towards English speakers and seem to be very impressed by them. There arises a communication gap amongst the classmates. Even teachers prefer the students/people who are better conversant in English rather than Urdu or any other vernacular language.

Therefore there's a need for

- a) Systematic situation analysis.
- b) Debate and dialogue about relative roles and status of Urdu and English and other regional languages.
- c) Improving the quality of teaching- learning of English in schools.
- d) Addressing the issues with a positive mind.

The linguistic inequality is mediated through the different kinds of standards maintained by different educational institutions and educational practices. At school level the students of English medium consider themselves as a privileged class, they feel that that the students of non-English medium do not have a bright future which is a behavioral barrier. The English medium students doubt the capabilities of non-English medium students questioning their identity.

### **The Problems of Urdu Education in India:-**

Urdu has been so neglected in India that it has become the language of only the Muslims. In other words, education through Urdu medium has become synonymous with Muslim education. An impartial and unprejudiced account of social and political conduct of the Muslims as well as the causes of their backwardness in education cannot be examined unless the dimensions of the politics around Urdu after independence is understood and examined.

An extensive survey through Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra disclosed that there was not even a single non-Muslim student enrolled for studying Urdu even as an optional subject at the primary or secondary level or opting

Urdu as the medium of education. It is sad to note that to date no authentic information is available about Urdu language or education. Neither the government nor any private educational has thoroughly conducted any research in this field. On the contrary deliberate attempts were made by every government to erase Urdu.

The first survey on Urdu was conducted in Uttar Pradesh. An analysis of the state of Urdu education in some states is available and an assessment is made on the basis of the drop-out rates in five schools from each of the four states, namely Andhra Pradesh, UP, Bihar and Maharashtra. Urdu is taught in some schools as an optional subject either from sixth class onwards, or from first to 10<sup>th</sup> class. There is provision for teaching Urdu as an optional subject from sixth to eight class at a few places in UP. There are some schools where Urdu, besides being taught as optional subject from first to 10<sup>th</sup> class is also the medium of instruction. In some schools the regional language is taught as an optional subject from third or fourth class onwards.

In Urdu medium schools science and mathematics are generally taught in English or the regional language. The main reason for this is the lack of adequate vocabulary and terminology in Urdu. Urdu is the medium of instruction only for social science subjects like history and geography etc. In some states private publishers have published Urdu books in science and technology by using technical vocabulary picked up from Pakistani Publications. Some publishers republish the Pakistani Urdu books illegally.

In Hyderabad an experiment to introduce higher education through Urdu medium was initiated by the then Nizam of Hyderabad, had proved to be a great success. In this connections "Darul-Tarjuma", an institution was setup for translating technical books into Urdu did a commendable job. Urdu was abolished as a medium of education and the stock of books produced by Darul-Tarjuma established in Hyderabad was burnt to ashes in extraordinary circumstances. There are a few Urdu medium degree colleges in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana where Urdu particularly remains merely a medium of examinations and not of the instruction since most of the course books are not available in Urdu.

In almost all the states in India Maharashtra Urdu education has gone to the verge of death. Middle, low and lower-middle class people studying through Urdu have to face a

number of difficulties since Urdu as a medium of instruction is available only up to the secondary stage due to which Urdu medium students lag behind the regional language or English medium students. Urdu medium students opting for regional language as a medium of instruction have to drop out of education which remains the only medium of study. The condition of the Urdu and Urdu education is almost pitiable in Uttar Pradesh, a state which has traditional centre of Urdu learning since centuries, the generation born and brought up in this state after independence is quite unfamiliar with Urdu.

#### **Non Availability of Urdu Text Books in Various States:-**

Urdu medium schools have been facing great difficulty regarding text-books since long. Many Urdu speakers in different states complained that Urdu text books published either by state government or by private publishers were not up to the mark and that text-books were generally not available on time.

The other observation is that the original text-books written in regional languages are translated into Urdu. The translation in most cases was not up to the mark and terminology used for a specific concept was different from one text-book to another with a result that students read a different term for a particular concept in Class VI and in the text-book another. The text of Class VII uses a different term for the same concept, thereby confusing the students. Urdu speakers rightly demand that Urdu terminology for Social Studies and Physical Sciences should be standardized.

Availability of text-books for the classes 1 to XII has always been a serious problem in many states even now. Many recommendations were made by various bodies to address this issue. No substantial action or steps have been taken so far to solve the issue. There have been persistent complaints about the non-availability of Urdu text-books in several states. Even if they were published, they were not available in the shops or became available after the half of the academic year was over. The only option left for the students was to change to the other medium. The publication of text-books after the advent of academic session is self defeating. The State governments must ensure that all Urdu text-books are not only printed in time but are also made available well before the beginning of the academic session.

The Governments Press and Government Academies entrusted with the printing of Urdu text-books need considerable attention. Price of paper has also gone up and the cost of printing has also risen. Students belonging to the low income group who generally opt Urdu medium find it extremely difficult to afford such text-books. Government may therefore consider subsidizing the production of Urdu text books.

Besides maintaining the quality of production, the quality of translation and the contents also require attention. Translation work being entrusted to the incompetent people is another problem. Experts and professionally competent both in the language and the content shall undertake the job. There were also deviations in the syllabi prescribed. It is necessary to examine the books produced by private publishers and also by other states to verify whether they fully satisfy the requirements of the state concerned.

#### **Negligence towards Urdu:-**

It is in the common knowledge that Urdu schools are neglected. It is quite well known that they have no infrastructure, no ideal teachers; their management is most often irresponsible. Besides the careless attitude of the government, the callousness of the parents, and the social and cultural environment of the pupils also adding to the deterioration of the standard.

#### **Observations:-**

The performance of the majority of the teachers in Urdu medium schools and the results are the indicator of their sincerity and dedication. Parents are blamed for the poor quality of education and teachers do not take any responsibility for the poor results. The Govt. run schools can be held accountable, teacher's salaries and increments should be made related to pass percentage of the students. The Govt. can take such initiative to make the teachers also share the responsibility for the performance of the children.

Keeping the Sustainable Development Goals in view,[SDG4], and NEP-2020 which recommended that children shall be provided 15 years of quality education across the country, Muslims who have the lowest rates in school education as well as higher education, lower than SC'S and ST'S and who prefer studying through Urdu medium should be preferably focused, readily be provided with quality education.

Therefore in the light of NEP 2020, it becomes necessary that the Urdu medium schools be brought under the reformation to provide the quality education for 15 year in the mother tongue for the most economically and educationally disadvantaged section of the country which comprise 15% of the country's population.

Urdu has become a language of the Muslims and Urdu education is sought only by poor Muslims in most states of India. The most important factor for this situation is the lack of support and encouragement offered to Urdu by the state governments. The students are prisoners of text books most of which produced by the state owned Agencies which are not well written, inaccurate, sparse and poorly presented. The interesting textbooks help immensely to raise the motivation level of the students in the classrooms. Many Urdu books contain material which is unattractive and void of the interesting content with a heavy emphasis on vocabulary and grammar. The evaluation methods also need improvement. From a psychological point of view the environment in which the students are examined is also uncomfortable and boring.

In fact, Urdu has been kept alive by Hindi cinema, FM Radio, a few Urdu channels, the Madarasas and the occasional recitation of couplets from Ghalib, Iqbal and Faiz in the parliament. A language which was born and flourished in India only cannot prosper through such channels alone but through the government's and people's support who sincerely love it.

Many popular children's Urdu magazines like Shama, Khilona, Bano, Shabistan, Toffee, Chandanagri and Jannat Ka Phool have ceased publication for want of readers. They should be revived.

#### **Suggestions:-**

Urdu officers could be appointed in the government's nodal agencies like municipal corporations, police departments and so on besides via the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, there should be more Urdu learning centers in India and Urdu should be made part of the syllabus of the ICSE board, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya Vidyalayas.

Besides, Urdu promoting institutes like the Urdu Academies of all states, the National Council for Promotion of Urdu (NCPUL), Taraqqi Anjuman Urdu, National and State Minority Commissions and the Ministry of Minority Affairs should present the details

as to where the funds allocated are spent given in the name of Urdu and upliftment of minorities.

Upgrading Urdu education system and securing a better future for students should be given utmost attention. The upper class should also show interest and take affirmative actions in the promotion of Urdu by teaching Urdu to their children, at least as one of the subjects. Even those championing the cause of Urdu and occupying top positions in Urdu in various universities and government offices prefer English-medium schools. Urdu learners should love Urdu but they must also make sure that they should be able to be conversant in both the other languages, English and Hindi, and any other regional language.

### **Will Urdu become extinct?**

With the increasing usage of Urdu language in films, radio and television programmes, the desire for learning the language is gaining momentum. Many Private, Semi Govt. Institutions and Idaras, [Idara e Adabiyat Urdu- Hyderabad], News Paper like “Siasat” The Urdu Daily have set up study centers, Summer Schools for Urdu teaching and learning which receive a very good response from the learners and a large number of people are learning the language including non Urdu speakers. More and more number of non-Muslim students are trying to learn Urdu, the language of Tehzeeb (refinement). The students comprise in service and retired people.

The greatest service to Urdu and Urdu learners is being provided by the University which is the only of its kind in India that is **MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL URDU UNIVERSITY** established by an Act of Parliament in 1998 by the Govt. of India. The university functions with a dual mode of education, regular and ODL. This University falls into the category of a National Institution with a sole purpose of promotion and development of Urdu language. Its national character allows it to establish the affiliated colleges, technical and professional institutions throughout the country.

### **The Future of Urdu:-**

Urdu as a language of the freedom struggle, courtesy and tehzeeb cannot possibly survive unless it is introduced in schools as part of a trilingual formula. The plight of the language will continue unless Urdu medium schools are not taken care of by the



community itself. People are following the trend of Urdu mixed with English, giving it a new touch but destroying the tone, tune, texture and taste of the language which is a harmful trend causing damage to the Urdu language, literature and literati in its original form and style.

Prof. Gopi Chand Narang had observed that Urdu is like a patient on oxygen at the fag end of his life. “This is the last generation of Urdu. The language is dying because regional and folk languages were not promoted. They were the identity of Hindustan but remained neglected. Each language has its charm and a distinct persona. Urdu, in particular is sweet, poetic and very adaptable. If a language can be developed through a combination of seven languages, what can be more flexible and welcoming! Languages have no religion or region.

Unfortunately, in a system where Urdu medium and English medium are synonymous with the uneducated and educated respectively, Urdu takes a secondary role and this impacts the development of the language itself.

Though Urdu is loved by everyone, the Urdu loving population is still largely uneducated. , It is the responsibility of Urdu community to make it possible that more and more people subscribe to Urdu newspapers and journals rather than receive them for free.

Appointment of sufficient Urdu language and subject teachers for Urdu medium students in primary, middle, high and higher secondary schools in panchayat, government schools across the country is an urgent need.

### **Improving the Status of Urdu Through the Education in Urdu:-**

#### **TMRIES: Telangana Minority Residential Educational Institutions Society...**

The Telangana State Government established Telangana Minority Residential Institutions in the year 2015 under the Ministry of MINORITY Welfare to cater to the needs of the poor children from the minority communities. With a purpose of providing quality education to the children of economically backward minorities communities of the State of Telangana and to enable them to have an access to the professional courses and jobs in government and public sectors.

The project of TMRIES started with 71 schools in 2016-2017, but it rose to 204 schools and Junior Colleges within a span of 5 years where most student belong to the under

privileged section of the society. This step of Telangana Government has set an example for the whole country that if sincere efforts are made, goals can be achieved. The establishment of TMRIES has done a commendable job in uplifting the status of Urdu language education through an affirmative action and saved it from dying due to negligence towards it.

### **The Psychological Barrier of Urdu Medium Students:-**

The foundation of TMRIES at school level and Maulana Azad National Urdu University, an institution of higher learning has contributed greatly in breaking the barrier of Status Symbol or Social Class: The Social Class shapes learners' access to different kinds of educational institutions and therefore their access to English and Urdu. The difference in educational opportunities lead to linguistic inequalities which affects learners' perception of self and others.

Urdu which was generally considered as a home language, a value asset for the family and social interactions. English on the contrary is accepted as high value asset in academic domain, for future career prospects and for higher social status. So naturally people wanted to improve their English rather than Urdu for the improved chances of employability. But the above mentioned institutions have brought the Urdu language to the level of general acceptance. Students from these institutions have proven their mettle by acquiring higher positions in jobs and have proved that learning through the mother tongue or Urdu is not a barrier in any kind of achievements.

### **Suggestions:-**

To overcome this and barrier of language identity, Urdu should be introduced in all the schools of the country under trilingual formula and the students of Urdu medium should be taught English compulsorily so that a healthy atmosphere prevails amongst the student community all over the country. The students of vernacular medium should be given their due share of respect and equality to overcome the psychological, social and cultural barriers during the process of learning or acquiring education. MANUU being an Indian language university should take up the task of translation of books in science, maths, political science etc. with immediate attention. A linguistic regular course ODL

can also assist students in getting the Urdu translation of all subjects available all over the country and abroad.

Caught between a paucity of teachers and the lack of text books, the future of Urdu medium students should not be pushed into dark. Let us all try hard to save them from dropping out of the school/college and failing in exams at 10 & 12 level by finding a way out to solve their problems and difficulties.

### **Conclusion:-**

Hence the central/state governments, the community, the leaders of different parties as a whole should do something substantially rising above party politics, intellectual biases and think about the needs of the Urdu medium students. In the light of NEP-2020 goal, the fundamental question is to find ways and methods to assure that the quality Urdu medium education should be made available freely till the age of 15 years to the most disadvantaged and educationally backward class of the country.

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