

SUGGESTIVE ROAD MAP FOR MLE (MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION) FOR A STATE GOVERNMENT

Introduction

“Classroom without Fear” and the significant role of mother tongue for school learning were the visions on which National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) based its entire arguments. However, the Scenario in most of our schools is different from the vision of NCF 2005. Unfortunately even when the enrolment rates are increasing the dropout rates among the Indigenous, minorities and linguistic disadvantaged groups are also increasing. The learning achievement of these children who stay up to 5th class is also not encouraging. One of the major causes for this is the gap between home language and school language. National Curriculum framework -2005 (NCF) and Right of children to free and compulsory Education Act -2009 suggests that children be taught in their mother tongue as well as in their cultural context.

To tackle the huge dropout and lower learning levels among Primary classes the State Governments of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa which have significant Tribal population has introduced MLE in 2004 and 2007 respectively. Andhra Pradesh is in its 5th year of implementation and Orissa in its 3rd year of implementation. Studies and evaluations of the programmes of MLE in these states show good results on reducing dropout rates and increasing levels of learning achievement. With initial positive effects of the experimental MLE programmes (which are also being up scaled in Andhra and Orissa), new states such as Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and other states with tribal and linguistic minority children are expected to plan for and implement MLE programmes in their states. The experiences of AP and Orissa show some models for MLE and also offer insights for good and not so good practices for planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such programmes. It is also necessary to suitably plan for capacity building and training for effective MLE implementation, material development and classroom transactions. Thus it is necessary to prepare a plan of action, a road map for the states intending to join the MLE movement. Besides incorporating the insights from the existing MLE programmes in different states.

A workshop was organised in NMRC (National Multilingual Education Resource Consortium) in Zakir Husain Centre for educational Studies, JNU – New Delhi from 27th Aug to 29th Aug 2009. A suggestive road map for implementing MLE has been discussed and drawn in this workshop.

Suggestive Road Map

When a State Government wants to implement MLE there are few steps which needs to be done to ensure effective implementation.

STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED FOR INTIATING MLE

I. Establishing a core team and capacity building

A core team need to be formed by State - SSA consisting of 8-10 resource persons drawn from SPO, SCERT, DIETs, Tribal Research institutes/SC/ST Development Dept./University Depts. NGOs, and Experts. It is suggested that the SSA - State Pedagogy and Tribal Coordinator or (disadvantages group) can be the facilitator for the Core Resource Group. Persons with appropriate experience in pedagogy, tribal knowledge, linguistics, psychology etc. may be identified by the SPO, SSA to provide further support. The Core Group needs to be oriented through exposure visits to existing MLE implementing states and MLE trainings. The resource persons can be drawn from NMRC/ TSG/ CIIL and other MLE implementing states like AP and Orissa.

II. Holding a State level consultation.

A meeting may be conducted by inviting the major functionaries of various departments working for tribal children of the state to discuss on the status of education of tribal children in terms of participation, completion and learning. This will also look at the status related to systemic readiness for the same in terms of availability of schools, teachers, training, materials, pedagogy, assessment, community participation, academic support and quality monitoring. MLE core team should prepare the Position Paper on the progress of tribal education on major indicators of access, participation, completion and learning along with certain case studies on school functional aspects and classroom processes.

Therefore the need for providing education to the tribal children in their mother tongue is to be justified to achieve the major objectives of EFA – that is equitable quality education and ensure desired learning achievement for all. The SPO, SSA can organise a workshop inviting the key persons of the state as well as national level experts to discuss the situation, challenges and design an appropriate State specific roadmap for MLE. The SPO may design a plan of action for the concerned districts and familiarize concerned authorities in those districts by issuing guidelines, frameworks and idea about source of financial and technical support.

I. Development of Action Plan on MLE implementation

A. Formation of MLE Resource Groups at State and District level

State/ District Resource Group on MLE need to be formulated with persons representing state level, district level and Block level institutions like SPO, SCERT, Dept. of Tribal Welfare, Dept of School Education, University departments, DIETs , BRCC, CRCCs, NGOs, community resource persons, tribal teachers, individual experts. The SPO shall take necessary action in formulating SRG and organize orientations and exposure visits for their capacity building. The SRG meetings shall be conducted at least once in a quarter to discuss planning, progress of implementation, material development, trainings emerging issues and possible strategies to address them etc. The state level core team may be drawn from the SRG members whose role will be advisory and provide academic support. The total number of SRG members can be 20-25.

B. Conduct of Socio- linguistic survey

Socio linguistic survey may provide necessary information on the target language population (children, parents and teachers) and their exposure to tribal language and regional languages. Based on the linguistic situation the areas may be selected for adoption of MLE schools. Necessary proposals and knowhow and support may be extended from NMRC, CIIL and MHRD/ TSG, New Delhi for undertaking socio linguistic survey in the state.

C. Identification of MLE project areas

The project areas may be selected based on information drawn from the findings of socio linguistic survey and the size of the linguistic population with gap of home language and school languages. Another criteria for selection of schools is the availability of MT teachers , number of grades(I-V) and number of tribal children and community agreement to introduce MT as the medium of instruction at least up to primary level , as envisaged by the Constitution of India followed by NCF 2005.

D. Development of State MLE plan

MLE plan shall be prepared by the MLE core group at SPO, SSA. The plan shall include the rationale for the implementation for MT based MLE, goals, pilot areas, Transition plan, development of curriculum and textbooks, TLM, teacher training, baseline and terminal evaluation etc. Monitoring of implementation of MLE shall also be discussed in detail along

with the possible sources for professional support, resource mobilization, external evaluation, etc. The MLE plan may be developed by the core group and shall be discussed in the SRG meeting for finalization. The language specific District Resource Group may also be formulated to develop curriculum, text books, TLM, training modules etc. The group shall act as trainers and provide training to the teachers of pilot MLE schools.

E. Monitoring, Reviews and Evaluation

Appropriate monitoring mechanism may be evolved with specific roles and responsibilities to the DIETs, BRCC and CRCCs. These district level and sub-district level resource centers shall take up academic monitoring of MLE schools along with on job support, organize training, conducting periodic assessments etc. The programme shall be reviewed on monthly basis at BRC and at district level and bi monthly review at state level. The important stake holders like Dept. of Education, Tribal Welfare shall participate in the review meetings and take appropriate measures to address the gaps and other requirements. External evaluation studies, impact studies, longitudinal studies, case studies shall be planned to conduct the periodic way to understand the issues, gaps, successes etc. The entire expenditure for the implementation of MLE during the pilot phase may be met under various appropriate budgetary heads of SSA – Project Management , REMS, Teacher Training, Text Book, TLM, Innovations, BRC/ CRC, NPEGEL, etc.

F. Staff position at state and District offices :

SPO : A Coordinator for tribal education assisted by assistant Tribal Coordinator and two research associates , one computer operator need to be placed in the SPO to operate MLE and other tribal related educational interventions.

DPO : A coordinator for tribal education at the DPO or an Asst. Coordinator for tribal education assisting the District Pedagogy Coordinator may be positioned. Appropriate support in terms of space and equipments may be provided.

G. MLE implementation :

Implementation of MLE during pilot phase is the sole responsibility of the SSA through its state and district specific offices with support from DIETs , BRCC and CRCC. However the implementation will be in convergence with other related departments and the reviews, monitoring may be by involving persons from other related departments.

H. Process Documentation and Evaluation

Process documentation and assessment is important for success of the program. Baseline on classroom transaction, teacher preparation, children performance etc should be conducted in the beginning of the program and bench marks should be established. During implementation stage process documentation of workshops, meetings at various levels with photographs /Video are required to monitor progress. Conduct of longitudinal study/ Action Research in few identified schools to understand progress/ changes overtime both in school functional aspects and outcome indicators is also necessary. It is suggested that impact studies by external agencies on MLE that is language specific and area specific should be conducted. Documentation of case studies, problems and issues will help in mid course corrective measures.

I. Plan for community Participation

Community participation is vital to the success of MLE programme. Community members can be used as MLE resource persons – Story telling/tribal art and culture. Melas can be conducted to demonstrate children performance on curricular and co- curricular areas to the community and the parents. Development of teaching learning materials in collaboration with community is beneficial. Review of MLE Implementation and support by VEC/SMC is crucial.

Conduct of Tribal association meetings at block level involving community leaders, opinion makers, parents on annual basis will sustain the programme. It is effective if community monitors the school functional aspects namely – children attendance, teacher attendance, VEC meetings, children performance. Support to VEC/Gram Panchayat for positioning of local teachers where ever native language teachers are not available.

