



Tribal Languages and Early Childhood Education

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According to a UNICEF report, there is a dispute over the recognition of Early Childhood Education in India, as may attest the current gaps in the pre-schooling system. Language issues in pre-schools are creating big debates in India Early childhood education is a problem in many parts of the world. What should be the curriculum? What should be the language? What kind of learning environment is being provided? Who is the teacher and what are the qualifications? These are the basic questions that arise whenever we think of an early childhood education. Middle class business people started profitable English private preschools. They target poor people who want their children to become “Angregi Babus” and lead an elite life.

As India is a country which has diverse culture, people, geography and what not? More than 100 aboriginal groups are scattered all over India. Aborigines, gypsies, tribals are habituated to migrate from place to place, they migrate in search of job, livelihood, climatic changes. Their education, economic and social life, status, are often pathetic. Aborigines speak different languages. In most cases, their bilingual status is denied, nobody pays attention to the fact that the language they speak is not their mother tongue. The regional language which they speak in the place they live and the language that they are using for market communication is considered as their mother tongue. What happens to the language spoken at home?

The focus of my research is the Banjara tribe, the major tribal community scattered in entire India. The tribal settlement I chose for my study is still suffering from the stigmas of the British rule: these people are called ‘Notified’. After Independence, many were still in jails. Later, the prime minister of India converted the official nomenclature from notified to “de-notified status”. Legally, it is taken for granted that police or any other government representative can harass them as part of the “de-notified” category. This social and economic backward position provides the necessary background on which to discuss the deep structural problems of tribal children. What do they think of their children’s future, their education, health, and survival. They often ignore such issues that bother them. How could they best think of education for their children?

I developed an understanding of the complexities of these issues through my own experiences as a tribal child, and later while doing research on these issues, as tribal members settled in Thanda face problems in learning languages other than Goarboli, my mother tongue. The presentation discusses the self-study case of a child who learned Goarboli at home and started learning his native tongue outside and got confused with the double standard in language learning.

Prof. N. Shantha Naik teaches English literature and Language at Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Bellary, Karnatak, India. He is specialized in teaching American English, Linguistics at M.A. Graduation students. He has a number of PhDs to his credit. As a creative writer in Kannada as well as in English he penned four novels, four short stories collection and equal numbers of plays and article collections also. He focused on one of the largest tribal community of India which is known for Holi and Deepavali. Prof. Naik submitted a major research study on *Banjara Language and its Cultural Dictionary*. He has written a Play in English *The Banjara Warrior*, and a novel *Gormati-An Ending Journey*. He recited poetry in the 2019 World Bookfair. **Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University** is a State University established by the Government of Karnataka under the Universities Act 2000. It is an affiliating university with about 100 affiliated colleges offering both undergraduate and post graduate programs.