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Sangeeta Chauhan

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A Critical Examination of Foreign Universities' Presence in the Indian Market

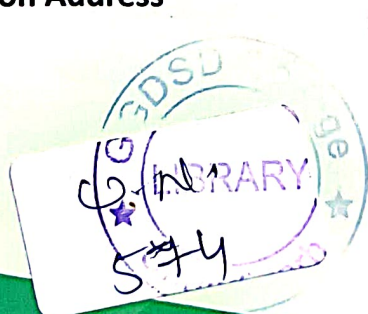
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Higher Education 5.0 for Industry 5.0: A Human-centric Vision for
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Multilingualism in Indian Schools: A Boon or Bane?

Sangeeta Chauhan*

India is a land of linguistic diversity, and a home to 22 officially recognized languages along with hundreds of dialects. This diversity is reflected in its schools, where students and teachers often speak multiple languages. The idea of multilingual education has gained in popularity, particularly after the NEP 2020 emphasized mother-tongue instruction in early education. However, the benefits and challenges of implementing multilingualism in schools remain debated. On one hand, multilingualism is seen as a boon that can foster cognitive flexibility, promote cultural integration, and support inclusive education. On the other hand, it presents challenges such as resource limitations, teacher preparedness, and a lack of standardized materials. This paper examines the complex role of multilingualism in Indian schools, weighing its advantages and disadvantages.

Definitions of Multilingualism

- Linguistic Definition:** Multilingualism refers to the ability of an individual or a community to use and understand more than two languages with varying degrees of proficiency. It includes the capacity to speak, read, write, or comprehend multiple languages.
- Sociolinguistic Definition:** Multilingualism is the use of two or more languages by an individual or community in social contexts. It often occurs when different languages are spoken in the same social or geographical area, and can reflect various social, cultural, or educational factors.
- Psycholinguistic Definition:** Multilingualism is the cognitive ability to process, switch between, and manage multiple languages in the brain. It involves not just speaking different languages but also the mental and neurological skills required for handling multiple linguistic systems simultaneously.
- Educational Definition:** Multilingualism in education refers to the practice of teaching and learning multiple languages. It encompasses various approaches like bilingual education, language immersion, and foreign language acquisition programs, aiming to foster proficiency in more than one language.
- Cultural Definition:** Multilingualism is the coexistence of multiple languages within a community, reflecting the cultural diversity of that community. It often involves interactions where individuals or groups use different languages to express identity, heritage, and affiliation to cultural groups.

Advantages of Multilingualism in Schools (Boon)

Cognitive Benefits

- Research indicates that multilingualism enhances executive functions, such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and

*Professor, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Sector- 16 C, Dwarka, Delhi-110078. E-mail: Chauhan.dr@gmail.com