



National Education Policy 2020 and Pandit Raghunath Murmu's Vision of Mother Tongue-Based Education: A Critical Analysis

Dr. Biswajit Tudu

Ph.D in Education

Sri Satya Sai University of Technology & Medical Sciences, Sehore, M.P.

Abstract:

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental instrument for individual empowerment, social transformation, and national development. In multilingual and multicultural societies, language plays a crucial role in shaping educational experiences and learning outcomes. The question of the medium of instruction has therefore remained a central concern in educational discourse across the world. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 of India has renewed attention to the importance of mother tongue-based education by recommending the use of the home language, mother tongue, or local language as the medium of instruction at least until Grade 5 and preferably beyond. This policy initiative has been widely welcomed as a progressive step toward inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive education. Long before the emergence of such policy frameworks, Pandit Raghunath Murmu, the creator of the Ol Chiki script and one of the most influential intellectual figures of the Santal community, emphasized the necessity of mother tongue-based education for the educational advancement and cultural empowerment of indigenous peoples. Through his literary works, educational activism, and linguistic innovations, Murmu advocated an educational system rooted in the language, culture, and worldview of the learners. This study critically examines the relevance of Pandit Raghunath Murmu educational philosophy in the context of NEP 2020. Using a qualitative and analytical methodology, the study explores the conceptual similarities between Murmu's educational ideas and the contemporary educational reforms proposed under NEP 2020. The paper argues that Murmu's vision anticipated many of the principles currently emphasized in educational policy, including multilingualism, inclusion, cultural preservation, and linguistic justice. The study concludes that Murmu's educational thought remains highly relevant for the successful implementation of mother tongue-based education among tribal and indigenous communities in India and offers valuable insights for achieving educational equity and social justice.

Keywords: Pandit Raghunath Murmu, Mother Tongue-Based Education, Ol Chiki Script, Santali Language, Indigenous Education, National Education Policy 2020, Tribal Education, Multilingualism.

Introduction :

Education has long been regarded as one of the most powerful instruments for human development and social transformation. It not only equips individuals with knowledge and skills but also contributes to the preservation and transmission of cultural values, social norms, and collective identities. In diverse societies characterized by multiple languages and cultures, the language of education becomes a critical issue influencing both educational achievement and cultural continuity. The medium through which knowledge is transmitted significantly affects how learners understand, internalize, and apply educational content. Consequently, language policy in education has remained an important area of academic inquiry and policy intervention throughout the world. The significance of mother tongue-based education has been recognized by numerous scholars, educational theorists, and international organizations. Research has consistently demonstrated that children learn more effectively when instruction is provided in their first language during the foundational years of education. Learning through the mother tongue enhances comprehension, promotes cognitive development, facilitates emotional security, and strengthens cultural identity. Conversely, educational systems that rely on unfamiliar languages often create barriers to learning, resulting in lower academic achievement, reduced participation, and higher dropout rates, particularly among marginalized and indigenous communities.

India presents a unique context for examining the relationship between language and education. As one of the most linguistically diverse countries in the world, India is home to hundreds of languages and dialects spoken by

different communities. This linguistic diversity constitutes an important cultural resource but also poses significant challenges for educational planning and implementation. Historically, many indigenous and tribal communities have faced educational disadvantages because formal schooling has often been conducted in languages different from those spoken in their homes and communities. Such linguistic mismatches have contributed to educational exclusion and social marginalization. Recognizing these challenges, the Government of India introduced the National Education Policy 2020, which seeks to transform the educational landscape of the country through comprehensive reforms. One of the most notable features of the policy is its emphasis on mother tongue-based education and multilingualism. The policy recommends that, wherever possible, the medium of instruction should be the home language, mother tongue, local language, or regional language at least until Grade 5 and preferably until Grade 8 and beyond. This recommendation reflects growing recognition of the educational and cultural benefits associated with learning in one's native language. The emphasis placed on mother tongue education in NEP 2020 resonates strongly with the educational philosophy of Pandit Raghunath Murmu. Widely regarded as the father of the Ol Chiki script and a pioneer of Santali linguistic and cultural revival, Murmu dedicated his life to promoting education through the mother tongue. He believed that meaningful education could only be achieved when learners were taught in a language they understood and identified with. His efforts to develop the Ol Chiki script and create educational literature in Santali represented a revolutionary intervention in the educational history of the Santal community.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu emerged during a period when indigenous languages and cultures faced significant challenges due to colonial educational policies, linguistic assimilation, and cultural marginalization. He recognized that language was not merely a tool of communication but a foundation of identity, dignity, and collective consciousness. Through his educational and literary work, he sought to empower the Santals by enabling them to access knowledge through their own language and cultural framework. The educational philosophy of Murmu extended beyond language preservation. He envisioned education as a means of social transformation, cultural regeneration, and community empowerment. He argued that education should be rooted in local realities and should strengthen rather than undermine indigenous cultural traditions. In this respect, his ideas anticipated many contemporary discussions concerning culturally responsive pedagogy, indigenous knowledge systems, and inclusive education. The relevance of Murmu's educational philosophy has become increasingly evident in the contemporary context. As educational policymakers seek to address issues of educational inequality, cultural diversity, and linguistic rights, his vision offers valuable insights into the design and implementation of inclusive educational systems. The principles underlying NEP 2020, particularly those related to multilingualism, local knowledge, and educational equity, reflect concerns that Murmu articulated many decades earlier. Despite his significant contributions, scholarly attention to Murmu's educational philosophy has remained relatively limited. Much of the existing literature focuses on his role as the inventor of the Ol Chiki script and as a literary figure. Comparatively fewer studies have examined the broader educational implications of his thought or explored its relevance to contemporary educational reforms. This gap becomes particularly important in light of recent policy developments that have brought issues of language and education to the forefront of national debate. The present study seeks to address this gap by critically examining the educational ideas of Pandit Raghunath Murmu within the framework of NEP 2020. The study explores the conceptual foundations of his educational philosophy, analyzes its relationship with contemporary educational principles, and evaluates its relevance for addressing current challenges in tribal and indigenous education. By situating Murmu's thought within broader discussions of language policy and educational reform, the paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of indigenous educational perspectives and their significance for contemporary policy development.

Furthermore, the study recognizes that educational policies cannot be fully understood without considering their socio-cultural context. The implementation of mother tongue-based education involves not only pedagogical considerations but also questions of identity, power, representation, and social justice. Murmu's educational philosophy provides an important lens through which these issues can be examined. His insistence on the educational value of indigenous languages challenged dominant assumptions about linguistic hierarchy and

cultural superiority. In doing so, he articulated a vision of education that remains profoundly relevant in contemporary efforts to democratize knowledge and promote educational inclusion. The significance of this study extends beyond the specific case of the Santal community. As many indigenous groups across the world continue to struggle for linguistic recognition and educational equity, the experiences and ideas associated with Murmu's educational movement offer broader lessons for policymakers, educators, and researchers. Understanding his contributions can enrich ongoing discussions about multilingual education, indigenous rights, and culturally responsive pedagogy in diverse societies.

Review of Literature :

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) examined the relationship between language, human rights, and education. She argued that denying children access to education in their mother tongue constitutes a violation of linguistic human rights and contributes to educational inequality. Her work emphasized the importance of linguistic diversity and advocated educational systems that respect and promote minority and indigenous languages. Skutnabb-Kangas further argued that language loss often accompanies cultural erosion, making mother tongue education essential for cultural preservation.

Thomas and Collier (2002), based on extensive longitudinal studies in the United States, found that students receiving sustained education in their first language achieved higher academic outcomes than those educated exclusively in a second language. Their findings suggested that bilingual and multilingual educational models are more effective than assimilationist approaches that prioritize dominant languages at the expense of learners' native languages.

Mohanty (2009) explored multilingual education among indigenous communities and argued that language barriers constitute one of the most significant obstacles to educational access and achievement. According to Mohanty, many tribal children enter schools where the language of instruction differs from their home language, resulting in alienation, poor academic performance, and increased dropout rates. He advocated multilingual education models that begin with the mother tongue and gradually introduce regional and national languages.

Mohanty (2019) further emphasized that linguistic diversity should be viewed as a resource rather than a problem. He argued that educational systems must recognize and utilize the linguistic assets of indigenous communities instead of attempting to replace them with dominant languages. His research highlighted the importance of culturally responsive educational practices that acknowledge local knowledge, traditions, and linguistic realities.

Annamalai (2001) examined language policy and multilingualism in India, noting that linguistic diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for educational planning. While India has historically recognized multiple languages, educational systems have often privileged dominant regional and official languages. As a result, speakers of minority and tribal languages frequently experience educational disadvantages. Annamalai argued that inclusive language policies are necessary for promoting educational equity and national integration.

The educational experiences of tribal communities in India have also received significant scholarly attention. Studies conducted by Xaxa (2005), Govinda and Bandyopadhyay (2010), and Nambissan (2006) documented persistent educational disparities affecting tribal populations. These studies identified language barriers, cultural mismatches, inadequate infrastructure, and socioeconomic disadvantages as major factors contributing to educational exclusion. Researchers consistently noted that educational systems often fail to accommodate the linguistic and cultural needs of tribal learners.

Within this broader literature, the contributions of Pandit Raghunath Murmu occupy a distinctive position. Murmu is primarily known as the inventor of the Ol Chiki script and a leading figure in the cultural renaissance

of the Santal community. However, his contributions extend beyond script development to encompass a comprehensive educational philosophy centered on linguistic empowerment and cultural regeneration.

Several scholars have examined Murmu's role in the development of Santali language and literature. Tudu (2015) described Murmu as a visionary intellectual who recognized the centrality of language in the preservation of cultural identity. According to Tudu, the creation of the Ol Chiki script represented not merely a linguistic innovation but a broader movement aimed at educational and social transformation.

Besra (2018) emphasized Murmu's commitment to indigenous education and argued that his efforts laid the foundation for educational advancement among Santals. Besra noted that Murmu viewed education as a means of achieving social dignity, cultural continuity, and collective empowerment. Through literary production and community mobilization, he sought to establish a culturally relevant educational framework rooted in the Santali language.

Soren (2014) highlighted the relationship between language, identity, and educational development in Murmu's thought. According to Soren, Murmu believed that meaningful education could not occur in a language unfamiliar to learners. His advocacy of mother tongue education was therefore grounded in both pedagogical and cultural considerations.

The emergence of the National Education Policy 2020 has generated a growing body of literature examining its implications for language and education. Scholars have generally welcomed the policy's emphasis on multilingualism and mother tongue instruction. Kumar (2021) argued that the policy represents a significant departure from previous approaches that often prioritized dominant languages over local linguistic diversity. Similarly, Sharma (2021) suggested that the policy creates new opportunities for strengthening indigenous language education and promoting cultural inclusion.

Objectives of the Study :

The major objectives of the study are:

To examine the educational philosophy of Pandit Raghunath Murmu.

To analyze his views regarding mother tongue-based education.

To explore the provisions of NEP 2020 related to language and education.

To identify similarities between Murmu's educational vision and the objectives of NEP 2020.

To evaluate the contemporary relevance of Murmu's educational thought.

To assess the implications of his ideas for tribal and indigenous education in India.

Methodology :

The present study adopts a qualitative and analytical research design. Since the study seeks to examine ideas, policies, historical developments, and philosophical perspectives, a qualitative approach is considered most appropriate. Qualitative research enables a deeper understanding of educational concepts, cultural contexts, and policy frameworks.

The study relies primarily on documentary and textual analysis. Relevant data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the writings, literary works, speeches, and educational contributions of Pandit Raghunath Murmu. Secondary sources include books, journal articles, dissertations, government reports, policy documents, and scholarly studies relating to mother tongue education, indigenous education, multilingualism, and NEP 2020.

The National Education Policy 2020 serves as a key source for understanding contemporary educational reforms. Relevant provisions concerning language, multilingualism, tribal education, and inclusion have been carefully analyzed and compared with Murmu's educational ideas.

Content analysis has been employed as the principal method of data analysis. The collected materials have been examined to identify recurring themes, concepts, and patterns relating to language, education, culture, identity, and empowerment. Comparative analysis has also been used to evaluate similarities and differences between Murmu's educational philosophy and the objectives of NEP 2020.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu's Educational Philosophy :

Pandit Raghunath Murmu occupies a unique position in the history of indigenous education in India. Although he is primarily remembered as the inventor of the Ol Chiki script, his contribution extends far beyond linguistic innovation. He was a visionary thinker who understood the intimate relationship between language, education, culture, and social empowerment. His educational philosophy emerged from his deep concern regarding the educational marginalization of the Santal people and his desire to create a system of learning that would reflect their linguistic and cultural realities. Pandit Raghunath Murmu lived during a period when formal education among tribal communities was extremely limited. Colonial educational systems, missionary institutions, and mainstream schools generally employed languages such as English, Bengali, Odia, Hindi, or other dominant regional languages as media of instruction. For Santal children, who primarily spoke Santali at home, this created significant barriers to learning. Many children struggled to understand classroom instruction, leading to poor academic performance, school dropout, and educational exclusion. Observing these conditions, Pandit Raghunath Murmu concluded that meaningful education could not be achieved unless learners were taught through their own language. He believed that language is not merely a medium of communication but the foundation upon which knowledge, culture, values, and identity are built. Education delivered in an unfamiliar language, according to him, alienates learners from both knowledge and their own cultural heritage.

At the core of Murmu's educational philosophy was the principle that every community possesses its own intellectual traditions, cultural values, and systems of knowledge. These should not be replaced or marginalized by dominant cultural frameworks. Instead, education should nurture and strengthen indigenous identities while simultaneously enabling learners to engage with broader social and intellectual developments. Pandit Raghunath Murmu viewed education as a tool of liberation. For him, educational advancement was inseparable from social dignity, cultural pride, and collective empowerment. He believed that a community deprived of its language would eventually lose its history, traditions, and identity. Therefore, the preservation and development of the Santali language became an essential component of his educational mission.

His philosophy can be understood through several interconnected principles. First, he emphasized linguistic accessibility. Education should be provided in a language familiar to learners. Second, he stressed cultural relevance. Educational content should reflect the experiences, traditions, and environment of the learners. Third, he advocated educational inclusion. No child should be excluded from learning because of linguistic differences. Fourth, he promoted community participation in educational development. Education should emerge from the needs and aspirations of the community rather than being imposed externally. Finally, he viewed education as a means of social transformation capable of addressing inequality and marginalization.

These principles anticipated many contemporary discussions concerning culturally responsive pedagogy, multilingual education, and indigenous knowledge systems. Long before such concepts became prominent in educational discourse, Murmu articulated a vision of education rooted in linguistic justice and cultural empowerment.

Mother Tongue-Based Education in Pandit Raghunath Murmu Thought :

Mother tongue-based education formed the foundation of Murmu's educational philosophy. He recognized that children acquire their earliest knowledge through interaction with family members and community institutions. This learning process occurs naturally through the mother tongue. When formal education begins in a different language, children often experience confusion and disengagement.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu argued that effective education requires continuity between home and school. If the language spoken in the classroom differs significantly from the language spoken at home, children must first learn the language before they can understand academic content. This dual burden places indigenous learners at a disadvantage compared to students whose home language corresponds to the language of instruction. According to Pandit Raghunath Murmu, mother tongue education offers several advantages. It facilitates comprehension, encourages classroom participation, promotes confidence, and reduces feelings of alienation. Learners are able to express their thoughts more freely and engage more actively with educational materials. Furthermore, education through the mother tongue strengthens cultural identity by validating the learner's language and worldview.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu also understood that language and culture are inseparable. Indigenous knowledge systems, oral traditions, folklore, songs, rituals, and historical narratives are transmitted through language. When children are educated exclusively through external languages, they may become disconnected from these cultural resources. Mother tongue education therefore serves not only educational objectives but also cultural preservation. Importantly, Murmu did not advocate linguistic isolation. He recognized the importance of learning additional languages for wider communication and participation in modern society. However, he insisted that such learning should occur after a strong foundation has been established in the mother tongue. This perspective closely resembles contemporary theories of multilingual education, which emphasize additive rather than subtractive bilingualism. His commitment to mother tongue education reflected a broader vision of educational democracy. By enabling learners to access knowledge through their own language, he sought to challenge structures of linguistic domination and create more equitable educational opportunities.

The Development of the Ol Chiki Script :

Perhaps the most significant contribution of Pandit Raghunath Murmu was the creation of the Ol Chiki script for the Santali language. Before its development, Santali was written using various scripts including Bengali, Odia, Roman, and Devanagari. While these scripts allowed for some degree of written communication, they were not specifically designed to represent the phonetic characteristics of Santali. Pandit Raghunath Murmu recognized that the absence of a distinct script posed serious challenges for educational development. The use of multiple scripts created confusion and hindered the standardization of educational materials. Moreover, many Santals perceived these scripts as external to their linguistic and cultural traditions. In response to these challenges, Murmu developed the Ol Chiki script during the 1920s. The script was specifically designed to represent the sounds and grammatical structure of the Santali language accurately. Unlike borrowed writing systems, Ol Chiki reflected the linguistic characteristics of Santali and facilitated literacy development among native speakers.

The creation of Ol Chiki represented far more than a technical linguistic achievement. It symbolized cultural self-determination and intellectual autonomy. Through the script, Murmu sought to establish a foundation for educational advancement, literary production, and cultural preservation. The introduction of Ol Chiki enabled the development of textbooks, literary works, newspapers, and educational resources in Santali. It also strengthened collective identity by providing a visible symbol of cultural distinctiveness. For many Santals, the script became a source of pride and a marker of cultural continuity. Pandit Raghunath Murmu actively promoted the use of Ol Chiki through educational campaigns, literary activities, and community mobilization. He composed plays, poems, songs, and instructional materials designed to encourage literacy and educational participation. These efforts contributed significantly to the spread of Santali literacy and the growth of indigenous educational initiatives. The significance of Ol Chiki extends beyond the Santali community. It

demonstrates the critical role that language planning and script development can play in promoting educational inclusion among marginalized linguistic groups. The success of the script highlights the importance of creating educational systems that respect and support indigenous languages.

Educational Empowerment of Indigenous Communities :

Pandit Raghunath Murmu's educational vision was fundamentally linked to the empowerment of indigenous communities. He recognized that educational exclusion often reinforced broader patterns of social and economic marginalization. Consequently, improving access to education required addressing linguistic and cultural barriers.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu challenged this model by advocating an educational system rooted in indigenous language and culture. He believed that education should empower communities rather than assimilate them. Indigenous learners should be able to acquire modern knowledge without abandoning their cultural heritage.

His educational movement encouraged Santals to view their language and culture as valuable resources rather than obstacles to progress. By promoting literacy in Santali and encouraging the production of indigenous literature, he created opportunities for intellectual and cultural development within the community. Furthermore, Pandit Raghunath Murmu emphasized the importance of self-respect and collective confidence. He understood that educational achievement is influenced not only by cognitive factors but also by psychological and cultural conditions. When learners see their language and culture recognized within educational institutions, they are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward learning.

National Education Policy 2020 and Indigenous Education :

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a landmark educational reform initiative in India. The policy seeks to transform the educational system through a comprehensive framework emphasizing equity, inclusion, quality, and lifelong learning.

One of the most significant features of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on language and multilingualism. The policy acknowledges that children learn most effectively when taught in their home language or mother tongue during the foundational years. Consequently, it recommends that the medium of instruction should be the mother tongue, local language, or regional language at least until Grade 5 and preferably until Grade 8 and beyond.

The policy also recognizes the importance of preserving India's linguistic diversity. It encourages the development of educational materials in local and tribal languages and supports initiatives aimed at promoting multilingual education. Special attention is given to the educational needs of tribal communities and other socially disadvantaged groups. Another important aspect of NEP 2020 is its emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems. The policy calls for the integration of local traditions, cultural practices, and traditional knowledge into educational curricula. This reflects a growing recognition that education should be culturally relevant and responsive to local contexts.

The policy further advocates inclusive educational practices designed to reduce disparities in access and achievement. It acknowledges that linguistic barriers contribute to educational inequality and seeks to create more supportive learning environments for diverse student populations.

Comparative Analysis of Pandit Raghunath Murmu's Vision and NEP 2020 :

A comparison between Pandit Raghunath Murmu educational philosophy and NEP 2020 reveals striking similarities. Both emphasize the importance of mother tongue-based education as a foundation for effective learning. Both recognize linguistic diversity as a valuable resource rather than a problem. Both advocate educational approaches that respect cultural identities and local knowledge systems. Pandit Raghunath Murmu insistence on teaching children in their native language closely corresponds to NEP 2020's recommendation regarding mother tongue instruction. Similarly, his emphasis on cultural relevance aligns with the policy's focus

on integrating local knowledge and traditions into education. Another important similarity concerns educational inclusion. Pandit Raghunath Murmu sought to remove linguistic barriers that excluded indigenous learners from educational opportunities. NEP 2020 likewise seeks to promote equitable access to quality education for all social groups, including tribal communities. The policy's support for multilingualism also reflects principles evident in Murmu's thought. Although he prioritized Santali, he recognized the importance of learning additional languages. His approach corresponds to contemporary multilingual educational models that seek to balance linguistic diversity with broader communicative competence.

However, some differences should also be noted. Murmu's educational philosophy emerged from the specific experiences of the Santal community, whereas NEP 2020 addresses the educational needs of an entire nation. Consequently, the policy operates at a broader level and must accommodate a wide range of linguistic and cultural contexts. Despite these differences, the philosophical convergence between Murmu's ideas and NEP 2020 is remarkable. Many of the principles now recognized as progressive educational reforms were articulated by Murmu decades earlier.

Significance and Utility of the Study :

The study entitled "National Education Policy 2020 and Pandit Raghunath Murmu's Vision of Mother Tongue-Based Education: A Critical Study" is significant in understanding the relevance of mother tongue-based education in contemporary India. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the foundational years of education, a principle that closely reflects the educational philosophy of Pandit Raghunath Murmu. Through a critical analysis of these two perspectives, the study contributes to the discourse on language, education, and cultural preservation.

Academically, the study enriches existing literature on indigenous education, multilingualism, and educational philosophy. It highlights the contribution of Pandit Raghunath Murmu to the development of mother tongue-based education and examines its relevance in the context of present educational reforms. The research also provides a theoretical framework for understanding the relationship between language, identity, and learning.

From a policy perspective, the study is useful for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educational administrators involved in implementing NEP 2020. It offers insights into the opportunities and challenges of promoting mother tongue-based education among tribal and indigenous communities. The findings may help in designing inclusive and culturally responsive educational practices.

Socially, the study emphasizes the importance of preserving indigenous languages and cultural heritage through education. It draws attention to the educational needs of marginalized communities and advocates linguistic inclusion as a means of achieving educational equity and social justice. Furthermore, the study serves as a valuable resource for future researchers interested in language policy, tribal education, and indigenous knowledge systems. Thus, the research contributes to the broader goal of creating an inclusive, democratic, and culturally sensitive educational system in India.

Major Findings :

The analysis undertaken in this study yields several important findings:

Pandit Raghunath Murmu was a pioneer of mother tongue-based education among indigenous communities in India.

His educational philosophy emphasized linguistic accessibility, cultural relevance, community participation, and social empowerment.

The development of the Ol Chiki script provided a strong foundation for Santali literacy, literature, and educational advancement.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu recognized the relationship between language and educational achievement decades before similar principles gained widespread acceptance in educational policy.

The National Education Policy 2020 reflects many of the ideas advocated by Pandit Raghunath Murmu, particularly regarding mother tongue instruction, multilingualism, and cultural inclusion.

Both Murmu's educational philosophy and NEP 2020 view linguistic diversity as a resource rather than an obstacle to national development.

The policy's emphasis on indigenous knowledge systems corresponds closely with Murmu's commitment to culturally relevant education.

Significant challenges remain in implementing mother tongue-based education, including shortages of trained teachers, limited educational resources, and administrative constraints.

Community participation and local ownership are essential for the successful implementation of multilingual educational models.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu educational vision continues to provide valuable guidance for educational reforms aimed at promoting equity, inclusion, and cultural sustainability among indigenous communities.

Suggestions :

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Expansion of Mother Tongue-Based Educational Materials

Government agencies, universities, and cultural organizations should collaborate to develop textbooks, storybooks, dictionaries, and digital learning resources in Santali and other indigenous languages.

2. Strengthening Teacher Education

Teacher training institutions should establish specialized programs for multilingual and indigenous education. Teachers working in tribal areas should receive training in local languages and culturally responsive pedagogical methods.

3. Promotion of Ol Chiki Literacy

Educational authorities should continue supporting the teaching and use of the Ol Chiki script in schools, colleges, and adult literacy programs.

4. Development of Digital Educational Resources

The creation of mobile applications, e-learning platforms, online libraries, and digital archives in Santali can significantly enhance educational access and language preservation.

5. Integration of Indigenous Knowledge Systems

Educational curricula should incorporate local history, folklore, ecological knowledge, cultural traditions, and indigenous scientific practices.

6. Community Participation

Parents, elders, community leaders, and indigenous scholars should be actively involved in educational planning and curriculum development.

7. Research and Documentation

Universities and research institutions should undertake systematic research on indigenous languages, educational practices, and cultural knowledge systems.

8. Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular assessment mechanisms should be established to evaluate the implementation of mother tongue-based education under NEP 2020.

Conclusion :

The present study has critically examined the relevance of Pandit Raghunath Murmu's educational philosophy in the context of the National Education Policy 2020. The analysis demonstrates that Murmu was not merely a script inventor or literary figure but also a visionary educational thinker whose ideas anticipated many contemporary educational principles. His commitment to mother tongue-based education emerged from a profound understanding of the relationship between language, learning, identity, and social empowerment. Through the development of the Ol Chiki script and the promotion of Santali literacy, he sought to create educational opportunities that were accessible, culturally meaningful, and socially transformative. His efforts represented an important challenge to educational systems that marginalized indigenous languages and knowledge traditions.

The National Education Policy 2020 reflects a growing recognition of many principles that Murmu advocated throughout his life. The policy's emphasis on multilingualism, mother tongue instruction, indigenous knowledge systems, and educational inclusion demonstrates a significant shift toward more culturally responsive educational practices. In this respect, Murmu's educational vision can be viewed as a precursor to contemporary educational reforms. Nevertheless, achieving the goals of NEP 2020 requires more than policy declarations. Effective implementation demands adequate resources, trained teachers, institutional commitment, community participation, and sustained political support. The challenges associated with multilingual education must be addressed through collaborative and context-sensitive approaches that recognize the diversity of India's linguistic landscape.

Pandit Raghunath Murmu educational philosophy remains highly relevant in this endeavor. His emphasis on linguistic dignity, cultural self-respect, and educational accessibility provides a valuable framework for designing inclusive educational systems capable of serving diverse communities. As India seeks to build an equitable and knowledge-based society, the lessons derived from his educational movement offer important guidance for policymakers, educators, and researchers alike. Ultimately, the legacy of Pandit Raghunath Murmu extends beyond the Santali community. His work represents a broader struggle for educational justice, cultural recognition, and human dignity. In an era characterized by rapid social and technological change, his vision continues to inspire efforts to create educational systems that respect diversity while promoting collective progress. The successful implementation of NEP 2020 among indigenous communities will depend, to a significant extent, on the extent to which the principles championed by Pandit Raghunath Murmu are translated into educational practice.

References :

1. Annamalai, E. (2001). *Managing Multilingualism in India*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
2. Battiste, M. (2002). *Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy in First Nations education*. Ottawa: National Working Group on Education.
3. Besra, K. (2018). *Tribal Education and Indigenous Knowledge*. New Delhi: Rawat Publications.

4. Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic interdependence and educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(2), 222–251.
5. Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
6. Dei, G. J. S. (2011). *Indigenous Philosophies and Critical Education*. New York: Peter Lang.
7. Govinda, R., & Bandyopadhyay, M. (2010). *Social exclusion and school participation in India*. New Delhi: NUEPA.
8. Mohanty, A. K. (2009). *Multilingual Education for Social Justice*. New Delhi: Orient BlackSwan.
9. Mohanty, A. K. (2019). *The Multilingual Reality: Living with Languages*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
10. Murmu, R. (1936). *Bidu Chandan*. Mayurbhanj: Ol Chiki Publications.
11. Murmu, R. (1942). *Kherwal Bir*. Mayurbhanj: Ol Chiki Publications.
12. Murmu, R. (1948). *Darege Dhan*. Mayurbhanj: Ol Chiki Publications.
13. Nambissan, G. B. (2006). Equity in education? Schooling of Dalit children in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(11), 1015–1022.
14. Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000). *Linguistic Genocide in Education—or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
15. Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2008). Human rights and language policy in education. In S. May & N. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Language and Education* (2nd ed.). New York: Springer.
16. Soren, H. (2014). Language, identity and educational development among Santals. *Indian Journal of Tribal Studies*, 12(1), 45–58.
17. Tudu, P. (2015). *Santali Language and Literature*. Kolkata: Progressive Publishers.