International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

ROLE OF DOGRI LANGUAGE IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY (NEP) 2020: ADVANCING MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION, CULTURAL PRESERVATION, AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Dr. Gharo Choudhary,
Assistant Professor,
Dogra College of Education Ph.D. in English (Specialization: Dogri Short Stories in English Translation)
gharo.dce@dogracollege.com

Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 represents a significant transformation in India's educational philosophy by recognizing multilingualism as a fundamental component of quality and inclusive education. Among its major reforms is the emphasis on mother tongue and regional languages as media of instruction during the foundational years of schooling. This paper examines the relevance of Dogri, one of the languages included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India, within the framework of NEP 2020. It argues that the integration of Dogri into school education can strengthen conceptual learning, preserve cultural heritage, promote social inclusion, and improve educational outcomes in the Jammu region.

The study adopts a qualitative and analytical approach based on policy documents, educational research, and literature on multilingual education. It discusses the historical and constitutional status of Dogri, its educational significance, and the opportunities created by NEP 2020 for curriculum development, teacher education, and digital resource creation. The paper also highlights practical classroom examples illustrating how Dogri can facilitate children's understanding of academic concepts while nurturing cultural identity. Finally, it identifies challenges related to teacher preparation, learning materials, public perception, and policy implementation, and proposes recommendations for effectively integrating Dogri into the educational system.

The paper concludes that promoting Dogri in accordance with NEP 2020 is not merely a linguistic initiative but a broader educational strategy that supports inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive learning while preserving the rich heritage of the Duggar region.

Keywords: Dogri language, National Education Policy 2020, multilingual education, mother tongue, regional language, inclusive education, cultural heritage, Jammu and Kashmir, language policy.

1. Introduction

India is internationally recognized for its remarkable linguistic diversity. Hundreds of languages and thousands of dialects are spoken across different regions, representing centuries of cultural evolution, indigenous knowledge, and literary traditions. This linguistic diversity is one of India's greatest strengths, yet educational practices have often prioritized a limited number of languages, particularly English, resulting in the gradual marginalization of many regional languages.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 acknowledges that language plays a central role in children's intellectual, emotional, and social development. It recommends that wherever possible, the medium of

Received: 21-09-2026 | Accepted: 25-10-2026 | Published: 31-10-2026

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

instruction until at least Grade 5—and preferably up to Grade 8—should be the child's mother tongue, home language, or regional language. This recommendation is supported by international educational research demonstrating that children learn concepts more effectively when instruction begins in a familiar language.

Within this national framework, Dogri occupies a significant position. Spoken primarily in the Jammu region and neighboring areas, Dogri reflects the historical, cultural, and literary traditions of the Duggar civilization. The language possesses a rich heritage of folk literature, poetry, oral narratives, songs, proverbs, and modern literary works. Its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in 2003 marked an important milestone in its recognition as one of India's major languages.

Despite this constitutional recognition, Dogri has remained underrepresented in formal education. Many children whose home language is Dogri begin schooling in languages different from those spoken in their homes, creating linguistic barriers that may affect comprehension, participation, and confidence during the early years of education. NEP 2020 provides an opportunity to address this gap by promoting regional languages as valuable educational resources rather than merely subjects of study.

Teaching through Dogri during foundational education can improve conceptual understanding, encourage classroom participation, strengthen literacy, and reduce the cognitive burden associated with learning through an unfamiliar language. Beyond academic achievement, Dogri education contributes to preserving intangible cultural heritage by introducing children to local history, folklore, traditions, values, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Furthermore, integrating Dogri into school education supports the broader objectives of inclusive education by ensuring that learners from rural and linguistically diverse backgrounds are not disadvantaged because of language. It also creates opportunities for curriculum development, translation of educational resources, teacher education, educational technology, and scholarly research.

This paper examines the role of Dogri within the framework of NEP 2020 and argues that effective implementation of mother tongue-based multilingual education can strengthen educational quality while preserving the linguistic identity of the Duggar region.

2. Review of Literature

Research on multilingual education consistently demonstrates that children acquire knowledge more effectively when they begin learning through their first language. International organizations such as UNESCO have repeatedly emphasized that mother tongue-based education enhances literacy, conceptual understanding, classroom participation, and long-term academic achievement.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory identifies language as the primary tool through which children construct knowledge and interact with their social environment. Learning in a familiar language enables meaningful participation and supports cognitive development.

Cummins' theory of bilingual education argues that strong proficiency in a child's first language provides the foundation for acquiring additional languages. Rather than hindering English proficiency, effective mother tongue education strengthens overall linguistic competence.

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

Scholars such as Annamalai, Mohanty, Khubchandani, and Koul have highlighted India's multilingual character and argued that regional languages should occupy a central place in educational planning. Their work emphasizes that linguistic diversity should be regarded as an educational asset rather than a barrier.

Studies on language policy in India have shown that students often experience learning difficulties when schooling begins in a language different from the one spoken at home. Such linguistic discontinuity may reduce classroom interaction and negatively influence early learning outcomes.

The National Education Policy (2020) responds to these concerns by recommending multilingual education and encouraging the preparation of textbooks, digital resources, teacher education programmes, and translation initiatives in Indian languages.

Although substantial research has examined multilingual education in India, relatively little scholarly attention has been devoted to Dogri within the context of NEP 2020. Existing studies largely focus on Dogri literature, translation, and cultural identity, leaving considerable scope for research on its pedagogical role in school education.

This paper attempts to bridge that gap by examining Dogri not merely as a regional language but as an educational resource capable of improving learning outcomes, preserving cultural heritage, and strengthening inclusive education in Jammu and Kashmir.

3. Statement of the Problem

Language plays a decisive role in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. In multilingual societies such as India, the language used as the medium of instruction significantly influences learners' comprehension, classroom participation, and overall academic achievement. Although Dogri is one of the constitutionally recognized languages of India and the mother tongue of a large population in the Jammu region, it has received limited attention in formal school education.

Many Dogri-speaking children begin their schooling in English or Hindi, often before developing adequate literacy in their home language. This linguistic transition may create learning barriers during the foundational years, affecting conceptual understanding and reducing students' confidence in classroom interactions. The limited availability of Dogri-medium textbooks, trained teachers, and digital learning resources further restricts the effective implementation of mother tongue-based education.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 provides a historic opportunity to address these concerns by promoting multilingual education and encouraging the use of regional languages as media of instruction. However, successful implementation requires systematic planning, teacher preparation, curriculum development, and community participation. Therefore, there is a need to examine the educational significance of Dogri within the framework of NEP 2020 and identify practical strategies for its integration into school education.

4. Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to:

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

Examine the provisions of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 related to multilingual and mother tongue-based education.

Explore the educational significance of Dogri as a medium of instruction during the foundational years of schooling.

Analyze the contribution of Dogri language to cognitive development, cultural preservation, and inclusive education.

Identify the challenges associated with implementing Dogri in school education.

Suggest policy measures for strengthening Dogri language education in accordance with NEP 2020.

5. Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

What opportunities does NEP 2020 provide for the promotion of Dogri language in school education?

How can Dogri contribute to improved learning outcomes among primary school children?

What role does Dogri play in preserving the cultural identity and heritage of the Duggar region?

What challenges hinder the implementation of Dogri as a medium of instruction?

What policy initiatives are required to effectively integrate Dogri into the educational system?

6. Research Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research design. It is primarily based on the analysis of secondary sources, including the National Education Policy (2020), books, research articles, government reports, educational policy documents, and scholarly works on multilingual education, language policy, and Dogri language and literature.

A thematic analysis has been employed to examine the role of Dogri within the framework of multilingual education. The study also incorporates illustrative classroom examples to demonstrate the practical application of Dogri in teaching and learning. The objective is not to conduct empirical measurement but to critically analyze policy provisions and their educational implications.

7. Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by four complementary theoretical perspectives.

7.1 Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

According to Vygotsky (1978), language is the primary cultural tool through which children develop higher mental functions. Learning occurs through meaningful interaction within a social and cultural environment. When instruction is delivered in the learner's mother tongue, communication becomes more effective, enabling deeper conceptual understanding and active participation.

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

7.2 Cummins' Interdependence Hypothesis

Jim Cummins argues that proficiency in a child's first language forms the foundation for learning additional languages. Strong literacy in the mother tongue facilitates the acquisition of second and third languages while enhancing cognitive development. Therefore, promoting Dogri during the early years can strengthen rather than weaken later learning of Hindi and English.

7.3 Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE)

UNESCO strongly advocates mother tongue-based multilingual education as an effective strategy for improving educational quality. Children who begin learning in their home language generally demonstrate higher levels of literacy, better comprehension, lower dropout rates, and stronger academic performance. NEP 2020 reflects these international recommendations by encouraging education through regional languages.

7.4 Cultural Capital Theory

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital suggests that language represents an important social and cultural resource. Dogri embodies the traditions, customs, folklore, values, and historical experiences of the Duggar region. Incorporating Dogri into education allows learners to value their own cultural heritage while developing confidence and identity.

8. Historical and Constitutional Status of Dogri Language

Dogri belongs to the Indo-Aryan branch of the Indo-European language family and is predominantly spoken in the Jammu region of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as in parts of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab. The language has evolved over centuries, reflecting the history, customs, and cultural traditions of the Dogra community.

Dogri possesses a rich literary tradition that includes folk songs, ballads, devotional poetry, short stories, novels, plays, and modern poetry. Oral traditions have played a vital role in preserving local history, ethical values, and indigenous knowledge. Writers such as Padma Sachdev made significant contributions to the development and national recognition of Dogri literature, inspiring subsequent generations of authors and translators.

A major milestone in the history of Dogri was its inclusion in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India through the Ninety-second Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003. This constitutional recognition acknowledged Dogri as one of India's official languages and encouraged its promotion in education, administration, literature, and cultural activities.

Several universities, including the University of Jammu, have contributed to the development of Dogri language through academic programmes, research, translation studies, and publication of literary works. Literary and cultural organizations continue to promote Dogri through seminars, publications, theatre, and community engagement.

Despite these achievements, the educational use of Dogri remains limited. In many schools, it is taught only as an optional subject or is absent altogether. The implementation of NEP 2020 offers an opportunity to strengthen the position of Dogri by integrating it into foundational education, curriculum development, teacher education, and educational technology.

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

The constitutional recognition of Dogri, combined with the policy support provided by NEP 2020, creates a favourable environment for revitalizing the language and ensuring its meaningful contribution to inclusive and culturally responsive education.

9. Dogri Language and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a paradigm shift in India's educational philosophy by recognizing multilingualism as a cornerstone of quality education. Unlike previous policies that primarily emphasized access and expansion, NEP 2020 places equal importance on the language through which learning takes place. It advocates the use of the mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction during the foundational and preparatory stages, recognizing that children learn concepts most effectively in a language they understand.

For the Jammu region, this recommendation has special significance because Dogri is the home language of a large section of the population. Integrating Dogri into early childhood and primary education can bridge the gap between home and school, making learning more meaningful and reducing language-related barriers. Children who think, communicate, and interact in Dogri at home are likely to participate more confidently in classrooms where the same language is used for instruction.

NEP 2020 also encourages the preparation of textbooks, digital learning materials, bilingual dictionaries, teacher-training programmes, and translation projects in Indian languages. These initiatives provide an opportunity for universities, teacher education institutions, and literary organizations to collaborate in developing quality educational resources in Dogri.

Furthermore, the policy promotes multilingualism without undermining the importance of English or Hindi. Dogri can serve as the foundation for conceptual learning during the early years, while Hindi and English may be introduced progressively to develop multilingual competence. Such an approach reflects the educational philosophy that multilingual learners benefit from strong literacy in their first language before acquiring additional languages.

10. Educational Significance of Dogri Language

10.1 Cognitive Development

Educational psychologists agree that children understand new ideas more effectively when they are presented in their mother tongue. Dogri enables learners to connect classroom knowledge with everyday experiences, thereby improving comprehension, memory, and analytical thinking.

For example, when teaching environmental science, a teacher may introduce concepts such as water (pānī), rain (meh), river (daryā), mountain (pahāṛ), and forest (jangal) using Dogri vocabulary before gradually introducing Hindi and English terminology. Such multilingual scaffolding reduces cognitive load and strengthens conceptual understanding.

10.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education requires that every child participates meaningfully in learning irrespective of social, cultural, or linguistic background. Dogri-speaking children, particularly those from rural communities, often encounter educational challenges when instruction begins in unfamiliar languages.

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

Using Dogri during foundational education ensures that learners enter school with confidence. They are more willing to ask questions, participate in discussions, and express ideas without fear of linguistic inadequacy. Consequently, the classroom becomes more democratic and learner-centred.

10.3 Cultural Preservation

Language is a repository of culture. Dogri preserves centuries of oral traditions, folk songs, proverbs, myths, legends, festivals, and indigenous knowledge. Integrating these cultural resources into classroom teaching enables children to appreciate their heritage while developing language skills.

Lessons based on local customs, festivals such as Lohri and Baisakhi, traditional agricultural practices, and Dogra folklore make education contextually relevant. Such learning strengthens students' emotional connection with their community and promotes respect for cultural diversity.

10.4 Development of Multilingual Competence

Contrary to the misconception that mother tongue education delays English acquisition, educational research indicates that strong literacy in the first language facilitates learning additional languages. Students who develop reading and writing skills in Dogri are better prepared to acquire Hindi and English in later grades.

Thus, Dogri should not be viewed as an alternative to national or international languages but as a foundation upon which multilingual proficiency can be built.

11. Classroom Examples of Teaching through Dogri

The successful implementation of NEP 2020 requires practical classroom strategies. The following examples illustrate how Dogri can be integrated into teaching and learning.

Example 1: Environmental Studies

While teaching the water cycle, the teacher may begin by asking students simple questions in Dogri:

Barkha kutthon aundi ae? (Where does rain come from?)

Pānī kutthon milda ae? (Where do we get water?)

Students first explain their observations in Dogri. The teacher then introduces scientific concepts using bilingual explanations in Dogri, Hindi, and English. This approach enhances conceptual clarity and vocabulary development.

Example 2: Mathematics

Basic arithmetic can be introduced through familiar situations.

For instance:

"Ramesh kol chār seb ne. Ussi do aor seb milli gai . Hun dasso kinne seb oyi gaye?"

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

Such examples connect mathematical concepts with children's everyday experiences, making learning enjoyable and meaningful.

Example 3: Language Teaching

Dogri folk tales, riddles, and proverbs can be used to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Students may narrate stories heard from grandparents, write short paragraphs in Dogri, and later translate them into Hindi or English. This activity simultaneously develops creativity, translation skills, and multilingual competence.

Example 4: Social Science

Topics related to the Duggar region, including traditional occupations, architecture, cuisine, festivals, and local history, can be introduced through Dogri narratives. Students become active participants by sharing family experiences and community knowledge.

12. Dogri Literature and Curriculum Development

Dogri literature provides a valuable resource for implementing NEP 2020. It encompasses poetry, novels, short stories, drama, folk literature, devotional compositions, and oral traditions that reflect the social and cultural life of the Dogra community.

Including Dogri literary texts in school curricula can enrich language education while promoting critical thinking and creativity. Children's literature, folk tales, riddles, and songs can be incorporated into foundational education to improve literacy and encourage reading habits.

Translation also has an important role to play. High-quality translations of NCERT textbooks, children's literature, science materials, and reference books into Dogri would broaden access to knowledge. Similarly, translating outstanding Dogri literary works into English and Hindi would introduce the richness of Dogri culture to a wider audience.

Teacher education institutions should encourage pre-service teachers to prepare bilingual lesson plans, teaching aids, digital learning resources, and classroom activities in Dogri. Such initiatives would contribute significantly to the effective implementation of NEP 2020.

The integration of Dogri literature into school education should not be viewed merely as language instruction; rather, it represents an opportunity to preserve cultural heritage, strengthen multilingual competence, and make education more inclusive, contextual, and learner-centred.

References:

1 Annamalai, E. (2001). Managing Multilingualism in India. Sage Publications.

2 Bourdieu, P. (1991). Language and Symbolic Power. Harvard University Press.

International Journal of
LAW, ARTS AND HUMANITIES
Peer Reviewed, Referred & Indexed Journal
ISSN: 3070-0523 www.zesterapublications.com Original Research Paper

3 Census of India. (2011). Language and Mother Tongue. Government of India.

4 Cummins, J. (2000). Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire. Multilingual Matters.

5 Fishman, J. A. (1991). Reversing Language Shift. Multilingual Matters.

6 Government of India. (2003). The Constitution (Ninety-second Amendment) Act, 2003.

7 Ministry of Education. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. Government of India.

8 Mohanty, A. K. (2009). Multilingual Education for Social Justice. Orient BlackSwan.

9 Mohanty, A. K. (2019). The Multilingual Reality: Living with Languages. Multilingual Matters.
National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2023).

10 National Curriculum Framework for School Education. NCERT.
National Council of Educational Research and Training. (2020).

11 Position Paper on Teaching of Indian Languages. NCERT.
Pattanayak, D. P. (1986).

12 Language Policy and Programmes. Central Institute of Indian Languages.
Skutnabb-Kangas, T. (2000).

13 Linguistic Genocide in Education or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights? Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

14 UNESCO. (2003). Education in a Multilingual World. UNESCO.
UNESCO. (2021). Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education. UNESCO.

15 Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Harvard University Press.
Koul, O. N. (2008). Language Planning in Multilingual India. Yashoda Publications.

16 Khubchandani, L. M. (1997). Revisualizing Boundaries: A Plurilingual Ethos. Sage Publications.

17 University of Jammu. (Various publications). Research on Dogri Language and Literature.

18 Sahitya Akademi. (Various publications). Dogri Literature.