



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Education

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENROLMENT AND RETENTION OF MULTILINGUAL AND NON-MULTILINGUAL TRIBAL STUDENTS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

KEY WORDS: MLE, Non-MLE, Enrolment, Retention etc.

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to find out the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of multilingual and non-multilingual elementary schools of Odisha. Admission registers and promotion registers of tribal children from classes – I to V of both MLE and Non-MLE schools for the last five academic years i.e. (2014-15) to (2018-19) were used as tools to collect relevant data. Sample comprised of 360 elementary tribal students (180 students from MLE school and another 180 students from Non-MLE schools) spread over four districts over Odisha. Data obtained were analyzed by using Spearman rank-difference Correlation method. The results showed that degree relationship between enrolment and retention is higher in case of elementary tribal students of MLE schools than the elementary tribal students of Non-MLE schools.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a means of communication of ideas, thoughts, feelings, experiences and emotions from one person to another. It is a means of social control. No society can function without it, nor it is possible to think without language. When we think of anything, we give shape to our thinking with the help of language.

In the field of teaching and learning also, Language is always believed to play a central role. No matter what the subject area, students assimilate new concepts when they listen, talk, read and write about what they are learning. According to UNESCO, it is through mother-tongue every human being first learns to formulate and express his ideas about himself and then about the world in which he lives. Research finding shows that children learning in their mother -tongue have a better understanding of the curriculum. Skills and competencies learnt in the mother-tongue do not have to be re-taught when the child transfers to a second language. Besides this, children can learn better and faster in a language they can understand as they are familiar to it from birth. They can enjoy school more and feel more like at home with increased self-confidence.

Result of learning assessment shows that when home and school languages differ, there is a negative impact on academic achievement of a child. Odisha has 62 numbers of Scheduled Tribes (ST), which constitutes about 22.8% of total state population (2011 Census). The majority of tribal children have issues of language gap problems in school. The DPEP assessment of Odisha shared that, most of the ST children particularly those in high tribal concentration areas, have inadequate exposure to Odia when they come to school. It takes at least 3 years for tribal children entering class- I to understand the language of the child in early years leading to maximum dropout in classes- II and III and cumulative learning deficiency. The home language and school language mismatch in primary schooling of tribal children.

Many states of India have uniform curriculum and textbooks which are not suitable for those children, whose home language is different from the school language. Denying children their mother tongue education leads to serious intellectual damage which blocks the learning of the children. Research finding of Ball (2010) indicates that children's ability to learn a second or additional language does not suffer where their mother tongue is the primary language of instruction throughout primary school. Singal (2018) study also highlighted the fact that language learning should be embedded or the socio-cultural environment of the child and multilingualism should be used as a resource to bridge the gap between the home language and school language.

Children competent in mother-tongue can do better in other tongues. It is essential to sustain cultural and linguistic bio-diversities to promote human knowledge which is a part of intellectual property. Culture and language should be the foundation of education especially in ethnic minority and linguistic minority communities to make education context specific. Since using mother tongue as the medium of instruction is the best form of education for linguistic minority children, OPEPA under the Department of SM&E Started Multi-lingual Education (MLE) in 2007 in 544 schools across 8 districts in 10 tribal languages covering classes I to V. The mother tongue of tribal children will be used as the medium of instruction for the five years of primary education in the multi-lingual schools for sustained impact on tribal children's educational achievements, high levels proficiency in Odia and English and positive transfer to post-primary education with a sense of self-efficacy and identity.

In the MLE programme the learner gets opportunity to learn in his/her mother tongue. MLE is not learning mother tongue rather it is learning through mother tongue. Learning of alphabets is natural through MLE approach. It facilitates learning of State language. Concept of anything acquired in mother tongue can easily be switched over to other languages. It is a kind of positive transfer of learning.

Now, after the introduction of Multi-lingual Education (MLE) in Odisha, under the School and Mass Education Department, there are two types of Elementary Schools i.e. Multi-lingual Elementary (MLE) Schools and Non-Multi-lingual Elementary (NMLE) Schools. Taylor-leech and Cart (2012) Study on MTB-MLE at international level indicates that effective MTB-MLE not only enhances the learning of official languages but also helps to increase enrolment, retention, raise educational achievement and involve the local communities in the life of the school. Thus, the present study aims to examine that how far the Multi-lingual Education is better than Non-Multi-lingual Education for tribal children in terms of enrolment and retention.

Definitions of Key Terms

1. Enrolment

Enrolment means attendance of tribal children from classes I to V covering the age group 6 to 11 in both multi-lingual and non-multi-lingual elementary schools. One of the barriers of tribal children for non-participation in school is teaching through school language other than the home language of their own. To attract the tribal children towards the school or to increase their participation in the school teaching through their mother tongue has been initiated by the government of Odisha through the introduction of multi-lingual education in tribal belt. So, effort has been made by the investigator to

examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of Multi-lingual and Non-Multi-lingual elementary schools.

2. Retention

Retention means those children who have enrolled in class I must continue up to class V and should not leave the school in between the Classes I to V.

3. Multi-Lingual Education (MLE)

Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) is a programme of learning through mother tongue where the children explore their community knowledge covering classes I to V. In the present study MLE for tribal languages of Odisha covering classes I to V have been taken into consideration. Under this programme, the tribal children of elementary schools will be taught initially through mother tongue from classes I to V, then efforts will be made for transition from home language to school languages i.e. Odia and English hoping that concept of anything acquired in mother tongue can easily be switched over to other languages.

4. Non-Multilingual Education (Non-MLE)

Non-multi-lingual education is a programme of learning through school languages or State languages. For example, in Odisha Odia is a school language which is used as a medium of instruction in elementary as well as secondary schools. The language of the school differs from home language in the cases of some children. For example, the home language of tribal children is totally different then the school language, but all the children are taught together through school language irrespective of their home language or mother tongue.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives were formulated for the present study:

1. To study the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention in multi-lingual and non-multi-lingual elementary schools
2. To study the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of boys in multi-lingual and non-multilingual elementary schools
3. To Study the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of girls in multi-lingual and non-multilingual elementary schools

Hypotheses of the study

The following research hypotheses were tested in the present study:

- H₀1 -There is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students in multi-lingual elementary schools
- H₀2 -There is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students in non-multi-lingual elementary schools
- H₀3 -There is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys in multilingual elementary schools
- H₀4 -There is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys in non-multi-lingual elementary schools
- H₀5 -There is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls in multi-lingual elementary schools
- H₀6 -There is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls in non-multi-lingual elementary schools

Methodology

This study has adopted descriptive survey design to find out the current conditions and practices in relation to enrolment and retention after the introduction of multi-lingual education for tribal children in elementary Schools.

Sample

Keeping in view the objectives of the study the researcher selected the sample through the purposive sampling technique. The sample of present study consists of 360 tribal children covering classes I to V of multi-lingual and non-multi-lingual elementary schools of Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Bargarh and Dhenkanal districts of Odisha. Out of 360 tribal children, 180 children belong to MLE Schools and other 180 children belong to Non-MLE Schools. Again out of 180 children of MLE schools, 95 are boys and 85 are girls. Similarly, out of 180 children of Non-MLE schools 80 are boys and 100 are girls children.

Tools used

The following tools were used in the present investigation.

1. Admission registers of tribal children from class I to V of both MLE and NMLE schools for the last five academic years (2014-15 to 2018-19)
2. Promotion registers of tribal children from Class I to V of both MLE and NMLE Schools for the last five academic years (2014-15 to 2018-19)

Statistical Techniques Used

In order to study the relationship between enrolment and retention of multi-lingual and non-multi-lingual tribal students of elementary schools, coefficient of correlation was computed using Spearman's rank-difference correlation method.

Analysis and Interpretation

The obtained data have been analysed by using the above statistical technique under the following sub-heads:

1. Relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of MLE schools

One of the objectives of the study is to examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of multi-lingual elementary Schools. The result of Spearman's rank-difference co-efficient of correlation is given below in the Table no. 1.

Table no. 01 Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal students of MLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.98**	0.01

** Significant at 0.01 level

From the table no.1, it is evident that the Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal students of MLE Schools is 0.98, which is positive and significant at 0.01 level with df = 24. It shows that enrolment and retention of MLE Schools tribal students were positively and significantly correlated.

Thus, the null hypothesis is that there is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of MLE schools tribal students is rejected. It may, therefore be said that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of MLE Schools.

2. Relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of Non-MLE schools

The second objective of the study is to examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students NMLE Schools. The result of Spearman's rank difference co-efficient of correlation is given below in the Table no. 2.

Table no. 02 Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal students of NMLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.86**	0.01

** Significant at 0.01 level

From the table no. 2, it is evident that the correlation coefficient between enrolment and retention of tribal students of NMLE schools is 0.86, which is positive and significant at 0.01 level with $df = 27$. It shows that enrolment and retention of tribal students of NMLE schools were positively and significantly correlated. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of NMLE Schools is rejected. It may, therefore be said that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students NMLE Schools.

3. Relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys in MLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.97**	0.01

The third objective of the study is to examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribals boys of MLE Schools. The result of Spearman's rank difference co-efficient of correlation in given below in the Table no.3.

Table no. 03 Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of MLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.97**	0.01

** Significant at 0.01 level

From the table no. 3, it is evident that the correlation coefficient between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of MLE Schools is 0.97, which is positive and significant at 0.01 level with $df = 24$. It shows that enrolment and retention of tribals boys of MLE Schools were positively and significantly correlated. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of MLE Schools is rejected. It may, therefore be said that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of MLE Schools.

4. Relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys in Non-MLE schools

The 4th objective of the study is to examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of Non-MLE schools. The result of Spearman's rank difference co-efficient of correlation is given below in the Table no. 4.

Table no. 04 Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of NMLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.81**	0.01

** Significant at 0.01 level

From the table no. 4, it is evident that the correlation coefficient between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of Non-MLE Schools is 0.81, which is positive and significant at 0.01 level with $df=27$. It shows that enrolment and retention of Non-MLE tribal boys were positively and significantly correlated. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of Non-MLE Schools is rejected. It may, therefore be said that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys of NMLE Schools.

5. Relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls in MLE schools

The 5th objective of the study is to examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls MLE Schools. The result of Spearman's rank difference co-efficient of correlation is given below in the table no.5.

Table no. 05 Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of MLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.97**	0.01

** Significant at 0.01 level

From the table no. 5, it is evident that the correlation coefficient between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of MLE Schools is 0.97, which is positive and significant at 0.01 level with $df=24$. It shows that enrolment and retention of MLE Schools of tribal girls were positively and significantly correlated. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of MLE tribal girls is rejected. It may, therefore be said that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of MLE Schools.

6. Relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls in Non-MLE schools

The last objective of the study is to examine the extent and nature of relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of NMLE Schools. The result of Spearman's rank difference co-efficient of correlation is given below in the Table no.6.

Table no. 06 Correlation co-efficient between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of NMLE schools

Variable	Retention	Level of Significance
Enrolment	0.92**	0.01

** Significant at 0.01 level

From the table no.6, it is evident that the correlation coefficient between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of NMLE Schools is 0.92, which positive and significant at 0.01 level with $df=27$. It shows that enrolment and retention of NMLE schools tribal girls were positively and significantly correlated. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between enrolment and retention of NMLE tribal girls is rejected. It may, therefore be said that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal girls of NMLE Schools.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of correlation co-efficient reveal that there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal students of MLE Schools and NMLE schools. However, both type of schools differs in terms of degree of relationship between enrolment and retention. The degree of relationship between enrolment and retention in case of MLE Schools is 0.98, whereas the degree of relationship between enrolment and retention in case of NMLE Schools is 0.86. Similarly, there is significant positive relationship between enrolment and retention of tribal boys and girls of both MLE and Non-MLE schools. Again, both types of schools differ in terms of degree of relationship between enrolment and retention. In case of tribal boys the degree of relationship between enrolment and retention in MLE schools is 0.97, whereas in case of Non-MLE Schools, the degree of relationship between enrolment and retention is 0.81.

In case of tribal girls, the degree of relationship between enrolment and retention in MLE schools is 0.97, whereas in case of Non-MLE Schools, the degree of relationship between enrolment and retention is 0.92. Thus, the above correlation coefficient results indicate that the MLE Schools tribal students have higher degree of relationship between enrolment and retention than the Non-MLE Schools. So, these findings imply that in elementary schools of tribal areas, the students should be initially taught through their mother tongue, then gradually transition should be made from home language to school language as the concepts acquired on mother tongue can easily be switched over the other language. Taylor - Leech and Cart (2012) Study on MTB-MLE at international level indicates that effective MTB-MLE not only enhances the learning of official languages but also helps to increase enrolment, retention, raise educational achievement and involve the local communities in the life of

the school. Hence, multi-lingual education should be promoted at elementary level for tribal students to increase their enrolment and retention rate.

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