

Decolonised Education as a Path to Preserve Tribal Languages: A Case of Mannan Community

Jemy Jose Mathew

Research Scholar, Department of Education, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, India

Dr. Kennedy Andrew Thomas

Professor, Department of Education, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru, India

Abstract

The introduction of colonized education systems has historically marked the decline of indigenous languages and traditions in the education systems. The Mannan community of Kerala, India, needs immediate attention to preserve its native language, Inavan, amidst systemic linguistic marginalisation perpetuated by a colonial education framework. The researcher visited the Mannan community from Kerala, which resides in Kozhimala and Anchuruli, Kattappana, Kerala. This qualitative study was conducted through interviews with six teachers, five students, and five community members. Ethical protocols, including informed consent and pseudonymized identities (T1-T6, S1-S5, C1-C5), ensured participant confidentiality and transparency. It was found that the Mannan community students are not using their dialect in school; some don't even know that language. Also, Teachers often discourage using the Mannan Language, perceiving it as irrelevant to the future as it's not used by the mainstream people. Although government initiatives like Samagra Shiksha Kerala (SSK) have introduced Mannan language study materials, but it's not been utilized due to teachers' preference for mainstream languages. Schools should adopt a bilingual education model integrating Inavan with the regional language, Malayalam, particularly in early grades. As part of this, teachers with proficiency in Inavan should be trained and appointed. The language awareness program aims to inform students and teachers about the importance and cultural value of the Mannan language in phonetics. Also, all community-based initiatives, storytelling, cultural events, language competitions, etc, should be included. Priority should be given to indigenous languages and knowledge systems within the policies concerning education.

Keywords

Decolonised Education, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, Mannan Language, Primary Education.

