When will Bangla become the medium of Education?

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WHETHER or not Bangla should be or is worth to be the medium of education in Bangladesh has always been a much talked about subject for many years. Many education commissions headed by notable academics have suggested on creating a standardized education policy for the nation. Unfortunately the proposals put forward by the education commissions were not approved. The education system that our country follows now is the mixture of some heterogeneous and unrelated policies. For this reason, there are no national goals, nor any national philosophy of education in our country. The cardinal issue '*what should the medium of education in this monolingual state, English or Bangla?*' has never been sincerely addressed and thus the question left unanswered. In this situation, our February based hue and cry to promote our mother tongue and flowery languages to enrich it remains nothing more than lip services. This little essay focuses attention on the necessity of making Bangla as the medium of education and offers some prerequisite issues to be addressed.

According to almost all linguists it is self evident that mother tongue is the reliable medium of education. Because it is naturally understandable and through the mother tongue communications between the learners and the texts easily take place. On the other hand, foreign language and second language smother the natural flow of imagination, conceal the ability of innovation and slow down the speed of achievement. When a reader or learner approaches any discourse written in foreign language he at least faces two stumbling blocks in deciphering the discourse- one is its structural or syntactic properties, and the other is its semantic aspects. There are many other socio-psychological reasons behind a mother tongue's being a more understandable and comfortable medium of instructions than any other foreign or second languages. It is known to all of us that unlike Singapore, Hong Kong, India; Bangladesh does not have any officially declared second language and thus, very reasonably English is a foreign language here. Though we are familiar with English language for near about two hundred years, we cannot get predictable accuracy and fluency in English language due to methodological problems and lack of trained English teachers. If you talk about acquiring a strong command over a foreign language, it is not possible. According to language experts, a second language or foreign language learner is unable to have strong fluency, because of fossilization- a process through which aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary usage, and grammar become fossilized or fixed in second or foreign language learning. Thus, no matter how better proficiency you possess on a foreign language, you will find your first language always easy and always accurate than other languages. For this, in context of Bangladesh, Bangla should be the medium of education in our country.

Moreover, if we look at the reports submitted by the several education commissions we will see that all of the reports of different commissions encouraged Bangla to be the medium of education. Qudrat e Khoda education commission (formed in July 1972) in its report (submitted on May 1974) encouraged Bangla to be the medium of education. In addition, the constitution of the country (in article-3) clearly stated -Bangla is the state language of the Republic. Thus, we can naturally assume that the medium of education of the state will also be Bangla. Apart from this, the Qudrat e Khoda Education Commission report clearly shows the distinction between the status of Bangla and the role of other foreign languages in the national education system. The report says: i. Bangla will be the medium of education. ii. Bangla will remain as a compulsory subject up to class-12. iii. There is no need for learning any foreign languages up to class- 5. iv. Students must learn a modern foreign language from class 6 to class-12, and for historical grounds, English will enjoy the second language status. v. At the tertiary levels, students shall take extensive language courses under respective departments on the basis of importance.

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