

Linguistic Justice in Education: Ensuring An Equal Opportunity for Rajbanshi Language Students

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2025.v10i09.048 URL: <https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2025.v10i09.048>

Received: 15 September 2025 / Accepted: 27 September 2025 / Published: 30 September 2025

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the urgent need for linguistic justice in education in the pursuit of equal educational opportunity for Rajbanshi language students in West Bengal, a socially deprived community historically excluded from the mainstream education system. Rajbanshi students have been reported to lack the right teaching resources, little mother-tongue instruction and socialization experiences, and the marginalization of their language and culture which causes poor academic performance, early dropout, and cultural loss. Using a mixed-methods methodology, this study collects qualitative data, including interviews with teachers, community influencers, parents, and community managers, and focus groups with students, along with quantitative data regarding academic achievement, language use, and resource access. Expected outcomes would include curriculum recommendations, policy briefs, teacher training, compensation priorities and community engagement frameworks.

Keywords: Linguistic justice, education equity, mother-tongue instruction, Rajbanshi language preservation, multilingual education.

Introduction

Education is a basic human right, but linguistic barriers can prevent many students from becoming involved and achieving full participation in education. Rajbanshi students often face difficulties in learning in a language other than their native mother tongue due to the need for linguistic justice and equity in an education system (Sarkar, 2020). India's linguistic diversity is constitutionally recognized and the national education policy (NEP) 2020 also recommends mother -tongue instruction until grade 5 to enhance learning outcomes (Ministry of Education,2020). However, the application has been limited in areas with Rajbanshi speakers, leading to educational inequalities. When education honors one's birthright by incorporating one's mother tongue, it promotes students' identity, provides social integration, and enhances

well-being. It is a statement of linguistic justice that people have a right to learn their native tongue.

Literature Review

Multilingual education is one of the most universally established strategies to promote inclusivity and fairness in multilingual societies. Key Research Studies :

- 1) Mangdi Sadek (1922): Focuses on education systems and bilingual learning in India.
- 2) Rahman (2020): Analyzes language and social justice in Bangladesh, focusing on the role of language in people's identity and political power. Language plays a critical role in identity and social cohesion.
- 3) Pradhan (2016): The role that language and education play in preserving social cohesion; its relevance to the ethnic situation in Nepal.

Research Gap

While studies have examined multilingual education ,minimal research has been conducted on the Rajbanshi language community in West Bengal , with their linguistic right yet to be fully explored.This research addresses that gap (Barman, 2020; Sarkar, 2020).

Objectives

This research will Identify specific challenges for students of the Rajbanshi Specific objectives are -

- 1) Evaluate how current language programs affect their academic and life-homing processes.
- 2) Suggest solutions within the educational framework.
- 3) Explore socio-political elements affecting the acculturation support of the Rajbanshi language.

Research Questions

This research examines how educational policies and practices reflect (or do not reflect) the linguistic rights of Rajbanshi citizens in Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar districts. Research questions include:

- 1) Evaluate the effect of Rajbanshi -medium instruction on students academic achievement, attendance rate, and language retention.

- 2) What percentage of schools in jalpaiguri and Alipurduar provide Rajbanshi language instruction?
- 3) How much do students learn in Rajbanshi compared to other languages?
- 4) What professional growth, opportunities exists for teachers teaching Rajbanshi as a medium of instruction?

METHODS

This mixed-methods study integrates- Qualitative research designs: Semi-structured interviews with teachers, community leaders, and parents and focus groups with students are employed to explore the students' lived experiences and challenges (Barman, 2020; Sarkar, 2020). Quantitative methods: Structured questionnaires to a broader population of students to gather data about achievement, use of language at home and at school, and education facilities available to them. Respondent variables such as sampling strategies and interview protocols, along with survey objects, are developed to provide an assurance of reliability and validity. Both methods will be jointly utilized in this study aimed at a holistic perspective on the issues of linguistic justice (Rahman, 2020; Kadyan & Kumar, 2015).

Significance and Expected Outcomes

This paper identifies access to mother-tongue education and its relation to student achievement with evidence-based recommendations for local government organizations and community organizations (Barman, 2022). Expected outcomes would include policy briefs, curriculum recommendations, teacher training, compensation priorities, and community engagement frameworks. Promoting linguistic justice for Rajbanshi students will: Develop self-esteem and cultural identity through reconnection to heritage. Provide social integration and cultural exchange (Cohen, 1994).

Informed by findings, local authorities will devise methodologies for mother tongue instruction with Rajbanshi learners, increasing both retention rates and achievement. The ideas from the study will empower the Rajbanshi people by strengthening cultural identity through language. practical advice for curriculum development and teacher training will benefit policy makers and schools.

Conclusion

At the end, it can be said achieving linguistic justice for Rajbanshi language students requires sustained efforts, political will and a deep commitment to ensure equivalency and addition in education. These efforts goes beyond simply providing training; it is about ensuring equal

opportunities, fostering mother tongue education and empowering a historically marginalized community . Therefore, linguistic justice in education for Rajbanshi language students isn't only about a matter of rights but also a strategic investment in an indifferent, prosperous and harmonious future for all.

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