Perception of Parents and Teachers of Chakma Community towards Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education at Early Primary Level

A MSc thesis presented to the
Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University

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In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
Master of Early Childhood Development

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Ethical Approval Form

Date: _____

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Title of Thesis Topic: Perception of Parents & Teachers of Chakma Community towards Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Educa-

1. Source of population tion at Early Primary Level

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)
    1. physical risk to the subjects
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Title: Perception of Parents and Teachers of Chakma Community towards Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education at

The Research Checklist indicates: Early Primary Level

- ☐ Approved without amendments
- ☑ Approved with advice to research
- ☐ Not Approved. Resubmission is required

Authorised by:

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Position in Ethical Review Committee: chair/co-chair/other

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Ferdousi

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Signature of the Student

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BRAC UNIVERSITY

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Dedicated to-

This thesis is dedicated to my late parent Babu Kalachan Chakma and my dear mother Mrs.

Rupeshwary Chakma who brought me up and gave all kinds of support for my education.

Acknowledgement

Executive Summary

Children of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh receive education in Bangla language although their mother tongue is not Bangla. Both children and teachers face problems due to lack of exposure to Bangla language in home environments. To overcome these problems Mother Tongue Based Multilanguage Education or Multilingual Education has been introduced in a number of schools in the Chittagong Hill Track area. The present study was an attempt to identify perceptions of Chakma parents and teachers toward mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) of their children. Further, the study also explored the awareness of parents and teachers regarding MTBLE and the problems faced in implementing MTBMLE.

The specific objectives of this study were to identify:

1. whether parents of Chakma community are aware of the MTBMLE program
2. parent's perceptions towards mother tongue based multilingual education
3. teacher's perception toward mother tongue based multilingual education
4. how mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) is being implemented in the classroom and
5. Problems faced in implementing mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) in the experimental schools in Chittagong Hill Tract areas where Chakma children attend

Descriptive survey method was used to identify perception of parents and teachers toward mother tongue based multilingual education. Observations were used to gather information on classroom practices in relation to multilingual teaching. The stratified sampling method was used in drawing the sample of parents and teachers for this study. The first strata were schools that implemented MTBMLE. From these schools a purposive sample of two schools were selected. From this sample a purposive sample of six parents from each school (Grades 1 and 2) were selected. The teachers sample consisted of two teachers from each of MTBMLE implemented schools.

Two survey questionnaires and one observation checklist were the research instruments of this study. Questionnaires and observation checklist were developed based on the literature review and the informal discussions the researcher had with parents and teachers of Chakma children and children themselves. Data gathered from parent and teacher questionnaires and the

observations were analyzed qualitatively as well as quantitatively. Ethical approval of the proposal was provided by a review committee of the Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. Informed consent was taken from the respondents. They were assured that information provided will be kept confidential, names will not be disclosed, and outcomes will not have any adverse affect on them.

The findings of the study revealed that Chakma parents perceive MTBMLE as a program that would help their children to do better in their future life. In spite of the low education level of parents, they accept MTBMLE for the reason that they want their children to be conversant with both mother tongue and the national language through this program. The findings also revealed that teachers also had positive perceptions towards MTBMLE, they perceived that through MTBMLE children will learn Chakma written language (using literary or scholarly language). They believed that MTBMLE would be successful in the Chittagong Hill Track in spite of having many languages. However, teachers perceive that lack of teacher training in MTBMLE, students' inability to understand Bangla language, lack of proper teaching learning materials, and people's unawareness of MTBMLE as well as lack of interest on the part of Government are constraints to successful implementation of MTBMLE.

The observations found that four aspects of the teaching learning process i.e. student teacher interactions, teaching learning materials; students' performance and teachers' performance were not satisfactory at the implementation stage of MTBMLE.

Observations also found problems specific to classroom environment, lack of involvement of the community in MTBMLE and the gaps on the part of the government policy.

The study recommends awareness raising programmes for parents on MTBMLE, capacity building of teachers, increased involvement of parents in MTBMLE, and joint efforts of the Government and the programs to make MTBTMLE a success.

ACRONYMS

ADB- Asian Development Bank

BA- Bachelor of Arts

CHT- Chittagong Hill Tract

CHTDF- Chittagong Hill Tract Development Facility

EFA- Education For All

ECCE- Early Childhood Care and Education

EIC- Education for Indigenous Children

HSC- Higher Secondary Certificate

ICDP- Integrated Community Development Project

IMLD- International Mother Language Day

MA- Master of Arts

MTBMLE –Mother Tongue Base Multilingual Education

NGO- Non Government Organization

SAS- Strategic Action Society

SSC- Secondary School Certificate

UNESCO- United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF-United Nations Children Fund

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The present study attempts to identify perceptions of parents and teachers of Chakma community towards mother tongue based multilingual education at early primary (grades 1 and 2) years. Children of ethnic minorities in Bangladesh receive education in Bangla language although their mother tongue is not Bangla. Both children and teachers face problems due to lack of exposure to Bangla language in home environments (Dunnian, 2007). To overcome these problems Mother Tongue based Multilanguage Education or Multilingual Education (MLE) as sometimes called by many researchers has been introduced in a number of schools and some of Chakma children attend these schools. Therefore, the researcher felt that identifying perceptions of Chakma parents and teachers towards mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) of their children would be a fruitful task that would benefit program designers, implementers and Chakma children.

1.1 Background

Language is fundamental to cultural identity and empowerment. Respect and recognition of linguistic diversity is essential for peaceful cohabitation (UNESCO, 2003). Durnnian (2007, p.8) states in Bangladesh ethnic children and communities want the choice of primary education in their mother tongue. As Barun, a class III Tripura student stated; "I will be regular and enjoy my class in school if the teacher teaches me in Tripura (my mother tongue)".

Durnnian (2007) opines that 'Mother Tongue Based Multi-lingual Education' (MTBMLE) in Bangladesh would increase enrolment and completion of primary education for ethnic children. He reports that the positive impact of MTBMLE has been documented in countries such as India, Cambodia, and Thailand. Education notes of the World Bank (2005) also support Durnnian when it states that if instructions are given in mother tongue, access and equity will be increased, learning outcomes will be improved, repetition and dropout rates will be reduced and there would be socio-cultural benefits and reduce overall costs.

Children of ethnic communities are exposed to Bangla language only when they attend schools. The researcher's experience is that when children do not have any Bangla exposure

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in home setting and/or neighborhood teachers find it difficult to teach them in Bangla language. In this context language also contributes to increase dropout rate (60%) in Chittagong Hill Tract (ADB, 2001; Durnnian, 2007).

International Mother Language Day was proclaimed by General Conference of the UNESCO in November 1999 (30c/62). Since then International Mother Language Day has been observed annually (21st February) to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism (UNESCO, 2011). This has promoted ethnic minority communities to rethink of finding ways and means of preserving their own language.

The education of these ethnic children with diverse backgrounds remains a major challenge in Bangladesh. Various ethnic communities live in the Hill Tracts and they have their own cultures and languages. Children attending preschools and formal schools from these communities find it difficult to adjust to the school environment where language of instruction is Bangla. Successful bilingual education requires parents and teachers support (Bado, 2009). This statement is relevant to the present context of this study. Therefore, it is productive to know parents and teachers perceptions which will contribute to the success of MTBMLE.

Since mother tongue based multi lingual education is a novel concept in Bangladesh it would be interesting to know how parents and teachers perceive it. Comments on Multi Lingual Education (MLE) have been not altogether positive. As one community leader opines 'the concept of mother tongue based multilingual education is a great idea for the betterment of indigenous children's education, but it may take as long as fifty years to make this dream a reality' (Tripura, 2008). In this context, how parents and teachers perceive MTBMLE is important to make if this dream to become a reality.

1.2 Literature Review

According to UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 30 " Children have a right to learn and use the language and customs of their families, whether these are shared by the majority of people in the country or not." Although the right to use the language and customs are there, in many countries where ethnic minorities live their right to education in mother tongue is sometimes over looked.

There are many international declarations on the right of the child to education. UNESCO General Conference (35th session, Paris 2009) states:

"The World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), which states in article 5 that learning begins at birth, and that this calls for childhood care and initial education; and thee Dakar Framework for Action, which states in paragraph 7 that the expansion and improvement of comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE), especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, is the first goal of achieving EFA."

However, to ensure achieving EFA goals especially the goal 1 every child should be prepared to learn the language used in education in the country he/she lives if it is not the mother tongue. Therefore, mother tongue based multilingual education can be considered as one strategy that promotes education of minority groups in any country.

Many researchers attempted to find out the importance of mother tongue based multi lingual education at Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh. Durnnian (2007) expressed that Multilingual Education (MLE) in Bangladesh would increase enrolment and completion of primary education for Adivasi children. The positive impact of MLE has been documented in countries such as India, Cambodia, and Thailand. Ahmed et. al. (2002) found low self-esteem, poor relations with Bengali teachers and classmates, problems with Bengali as the language of instructions as well as less spontaneity and less participation in extra curricular activities among indigenous students in BRAC's NFPE programs.

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In an unpublished report of BRAC Mesbah, et. al. (2004) revealed that most of the parents of indigenous children expressed their opinion in favor of both the languages. They opined that indigenous children should read and write in their mother tongue in the school, but at the same time they must learn Bengali considering the existing reality. They also emphasized on English to some extent. The language barrier on early learning among ethnic minorities in Chittagong Hill Tracts areas hampers the EFA goals. National education system in Bangladesh is in Bangla medium and most of the teachers do not have the ability to communicate in two languages (mother tongue and Bangla) or Multilanguage (mother tongue Bangla and English). Moreover, there is also lack of accessibilities about multilingualism. Therefore, when any ethnic child comes to school he/she has to face language and communication problems which will lead to drop out from school. According to Tripura (2008) due to lack of recognition of their language, a majority of ethnic indigenous children quickly lose interest and leave school. After peace accord (Chittagong Hill Tract peace 1997) UNDP and local NGOs took initiative to raise the awareness level of the community leaders on MLE through involving them in the entire activities of the program. Now MLE is a debating issue in Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT). Some people believe that MLE will bring mass positive change in education basically primary education. The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development.

Access to education in CHT depends on the distance of the schools. As Rafi and Chowdhury (2001) found, both net and gross enrolments of children in CHT are lower than in others parts of the country. The net enrolment rate was high for the Chakma (53.2%) and Marma (44.8%) groups and low for Mru (7.7%). The performance of the students also suffered due to shortage of teachers. Even where schools are available nearby, the Mru enrollment rate is only 60% and girls' enrollment was also low.

Rafi & chowdhury also (2001) state only 20.6% of the villages surveyed had primary schools located within the village and the children from 43.3% of the villages had a primary school located within a mile from the village. On average the nearest primary school was located 2.5 miles away and the net enrollment rate among the children aged 6-10 years was 56.8%. The net enrollment rate of the children varied widely among the ethnic groups.

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Inequity against ethnic minority influences an individual's access to schooling and the quality of schooling they receive affects their performances. Though the government agreed to mother tongue primary education in the 1997 Peace Accord (Article 33b), it has made no efforts to implement such education in the CHT. The Government of Bangladesh has not taken any attempt to provide primary education for ethnic students in their own mother tongue before 2010. Now the government has been given importance to mother tongue based education from early primary stage for ethnic children (National Education Policy). Development Board has been working since 2000 to promote oral bi-lingual teaching in their para centers. In para centers para workers use their mother's languages to communicate and interpreted mainstream language (Source from ICDP). Since 2008 UNDP - (CHTDF Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facilities) and Three Hill Districts Councils have been jointly working for MLE under the project of "Parbatya Chattagram Moulih Shikka Sahayatadan Prakalpa." UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in early childhood and primary education since 1953. In Bangladesh NGOs have been working on MTBMLE in very small scale nearly one decade. Many researches which were conducted by UNESCO have cited the over looked advantages of multilingual education in the early years (UNESCO, 2003).

MTBMLE in the Global Context

Both advantages and disadvantages of learning foreign languages at early years have been presented in many studies. Early introduction of a foreign language distorts the accumulated vocal and verbal facility, thought process and cognitive equilibrium and this accounts for a good proportion of primary school dropouts in Nigeria (Fafunwa,1975) and India (Mahanlal, 2001).

Iyamu and Oglegbaen (2007) suggest that MBTMLE supports children to perform better in society. Yet, in most of African countries, formal education is offered in a language that is foreign to the child. Researchers find foreign language (English) constitutes a barrier of effective teaching and learning in Africa. Iyamu and Oglegbaen (2004) calls this situation is 'unfortunate'. Early education in the mother tongue expands the verbal facility and cognitive realm of the child (Iyamu and Oglegbaen,2007).

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Child studies have shown that children's first experiences in school are traumatic largely because they do not see the school experiences as a continuation of home experiences (Iyamu & Omozuwa, 2004). A large body of international research has demonstrated the importance of instruction in the mother tongue in the early years of a child's schooling, particularly for language and cognitive development (Ball, 2010). However, depending on several studies and experiments Igboanusi (2008) shows that bilingual schooling also can improve basic education in developing countries.

In spite of the attention paid by scholars on the importance of learning in mother tongue during early years, there are examples to show that native parents prefer education in national languages to their mother tongue. A study conducted on Mhlanga in Africa (Ngidi, 2007) showed that illiterate parents in the study felt that English which is not the mother tongue should be used as the language of teaching. A study conducted by Echu (2004) in Cameroon found that parents want their children to start learning English and French (the two official languages of the country) rather than their mother tongue as early as possible. This may be due to the advantages offered by learning an international language such as English. It is also interesting to note that there are instances where even intellectuals and scholars support such notions (Bado, 2009). In contrast, Diallo (2005) reports that Senegalese people are loyal to their mother tongue and wanted their children to be given the education in mother tongue at elementary level but not at the expense of French.

UNESCO Beijing Office and the China Education Association for International Exchanges (CEAIE) organized the IMLD in China for the first time in 2006; the understanding of Chinese educators and policy makers about bilingual education was rather mixed. The Chinese organizers and participants used to put strong emphasis on the teaching of Chinese and English languages in the name of bilingual education and teaching and learning of Mandarin as mother tongue education. The Beijing Office has been one of the few organizations advocating for cultural and linguistic diversity. With several years of consistent efforts, policy makers, administrators, researchers and teachers are open to discuss all aspects of mother tongue and multilingual education, and have realized the importance of mother

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tongue and multilingual education in improving education quality and protecting cultural diversity. The Beijing Office and its Chinese counterparts will continue to organize this event in different areas in China in the future, in particular the ethnic minority areas, to reach more audience and increase the impact.

Researches indicate that multilingual based education could possibly minimize the gap between main stream language and mother tongue of other ethnic groups. According to organizational Vietnam reporter Bich and Thao (2006) "Vietnam has 54 ethnic minority groups with different languages, making up about 13% of the population. Education enrolment and completion rates are lower for these groups, as are their performance results. This article outlines Save the Children UK's (SCUK) work to promote to increased use of mother tongue based multilingual teaching approach to give ethnic minority groups a better chance in education." In same article showed that in Vietnam the overall primary completion rate in 2006 were 89.7% for Kinh but only 67.9% for children from ethnic minority groups.

An Indian study by Malekar (March 2010) points out that many languages spoken by adivasis and dalits in India are endangered because of government policies, particularly in education, as well as the constant external cultural assault via television, films and the ubiquity of media of all kinds in mainstream language. And also says there are only 69-72 languages that are taught in school in India in some capacity, but radio networks **beam** programs in 146 languages and dialects across the country.

MTBMLE/MLE: Aims and Implementation Strategies
The aim of MTBMLE is to initiate education in the learners' first language with the deliberate and prolonged use of that language in order to further develop linguistic and cognitive skills of the learner (Department of Education, Philippines, Durnnian, 2007). According to Malone (2005) there are four steps in developing MLE at pre primary and primary levels.

Step 1- Oral preparation through building confidence in mother tongue

Step 2- Begins reading and writing in mother tongue while continuing oral mother tongue

Step 3- Reading, writing and speaking in mother tongue is continued while oral Bangla language is introduced

Step 4- Begin reading and writing in Bangla while continuing to develop writing, reading, speaking in mother tongue and oral Bangla (Durnnian, 2007).

According to Martin (2011) the proper implementation of MTBMLE involves many different approaches and strategies since there are many different languages, schools, and communities. These strategies are guided by common and sound foundational principles of teaching and learning. A successful MTBMLE program requires highly motivated, strong-willed and creative classroom teachers and school heads who are convinced about the importance of mother tongues in literacy development, and truly knowledgeable about the developmental stages of learning and their consequent applications to teaching.

To implement MTBMLE successfully a great deal of teaching learning materials are also needed. According to MTBMLE Net work, for successful implementation of the MTBMLE, schools need early literacy materials, a variety of on grade reading materials and possibly subject area materials in the mother tongue. Along with these materials, schools also need relevant materials for successful to transition from mother tongue into the second language. However, in relation to many countries in Asia concerns about resistance to change, teacher accountability challenges and concerns about multiple mother tongues are identified as constraints to successful implementation of MTBMLE (Pinnock, 2009).

1.3 Justification

Bangladesh is a democratic and multicultural county. In Bangladesh 98% of people are Bengali and Bangla speakers. However, Bangla is not the mother tongue of 40 ethnic minorities living in Bangladesh (Framework for Pre-primary Curriculum 2011, p.78). A majority of them live in three hill districts (Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachhari) and Chakma community is one.

The Chakma community is the biggest ethnic minority community in Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT). They have their own language and script. However, since Bangla is the national

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language, children learn it to pursue studies and to exist successfully as useful members of the society. In Bangladesh NGOs have been working on MTBMLE in very small scale near about one decade. Many researches conducted by UNESCO points out the over looked advantages of multilingual education in the early years (UNESCO, 2003).

The type of mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) that is being implemented in the experimental schools in Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) is transitional multilingual education. The program is transitional in the sense that the amount of time devoted to instruction in the local language (Chakma) decreases as children move from pre-primary to grade five. The local language gradually loses its place to Bangla, which is the dominant language in the final grade of primary school. The program starts with a strong emphasize on the mother tongue (100% of the instructional time in pre-primary), and gradually shift to Bangla instruction (70% of the curriculum taught in Bangla) in the 5th grade (Chittagong Hill Tract Development Facility (CHTDF) and Rangamati District Council). To make this transition smooth for children, teachers as well as parents support is needed. Regarding the perception about MTBML, there has been a little research effort that would result in a full portray of parents and teachers perception in general.

In this context, it would be worthwhile to identify parents and teachers perception on Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE).

1.4 Operational Definitions

The key terms of this study are 'perception of parents and teachers', 'Chakma community' and 'mother tongue based multilingual education'.

Perception according to Merriam-Webster dictionary is the way you think about or understand about something. Macmillan Dictionary defines perception as the ability to understand and make good judgments about something. Based on the Macmillan Dictionary definition, the study defines perceptions of parents and teachers as the ability of parents and teachers to understand and make good judgments about MTBMLE.

Chakma is the name of the largest ethnic group found in the central and northern part of Chittagong hill tract areas (Schendel, 2012; Roy, 2008) in Bangladesh. Chakma community can be found in Myanmar and India also (Wikipedia Encyclopedia). However, in this study Chakma community is defined as the largest ethnic group living in Chittagong Hill track area in Bangladesh.

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTBMLE) is education in which children's mother tongue and national language or/and international language are used in the classroom (Ball, 2010; Durnnian, 2007). The term "mother tongue-based multilingual education" is used in the present study to refer to the use of Chakma language (children's mother tongue) and Bangla language as medium of instruction in the early years (early primary level).

1.5 Objectives and Research Questions

1.5.1 Objectives of the Study

The key objective of this study is to identify perception of parents' and teachers' towards mother tongue based multilingual education.

The specific objectives of this study are to identify:

1. whether parents of Chakma community are aware of the MTBMLE program
2. parent's perceptions towards mother tongue based multilingual education
3. teacher's perception toward mother tongue based multilingual education
4. how mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) is being implemented in the classroom and
5. problems faced in implementing mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) in the experimental schools in Chittagong Hill Tract where Chakma children attend

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1.5.2 Research Questions

The study attempts to find answers for the following research questions:

1. Are all parents of Chakma community aware of mother tongue based multilingual education?

2. How do parents perceive multilingual education?

3. How do teachers perceive mother tongue based multilingual education?

4. How do teachers implement MTBMLE and

5. What are the problems faced in implementing MTBMLE

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Present study was conducted to identify the perception of parents and teachers of Chakma community toward mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) at early primary level in chittagong hill tract area in Bangladesh. To achieve the objectives of the study both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Descriptive survey method was used to identify perception of parents and teachers toward mother tongue based multilingual education. Observations were used to gather information on classroom practices in relation to multilingual teaching.

2.1 Population and Research site

Parents of all Chakma children who attended grade 1 and grade 2 in Sajek union of Bagaichari sub district and teachers who taught Grade 1 and 2 in primary schools where Chakama children attend the same union and sub district were the population of this study. There are seven primary schools run by an NGO (SAS) that implement MTBMLE Program in Bagaichari.

2.2 Sampling

The sample was selected by using stratified sampling method. The first strata were schools that implemented MTBMLE. From these schools a purposive sample of two schools were selected. From this sample a purposive sample of six parents from each school (Grades 1 and 2) were selected. The teachers sample consisted of two teachers from each of MTBMLE implemented schools. The sample is presented in the following table.

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Table 1-The Sample of Parents and Teachers

Upazila (sub district)	Union	Type of school	School	Parents		Total	Teachers
				Grade 1	Grade 2	Both Grades	
Bagaichari	Sajek	MTBMLE	2	6	6	12	4

2.3 Research Instrument

Two survey questionnaires and one observation check list were the research instruments of this study. Questionnaires and observation check list were developed on the basis of literature review and informal discussions the researcher had with parents and teachers of Chakma children. The questionnaires and observation check list were carefully designed in order to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. The format of the two questionnaires and the observation schedule is presented below.

Parent Questionnaire:

> Part 1- Demographic details of the respondent
>
> Part 2- Parents' awareness of the MTBLE program
>
> Part 3- Parents' perceptions on MTBLE program

Teacher Questionnaire:

> Part 1: Demographic details of the respondent
>
> Part 2: Respondents perceptions and problems faced by the respondents in
> implementing the MTBMLE program

Observation Checklist

> Part 1: Student teacher interactions in MTBMLE classroom
>
> Part 2: Teaching learning process and students' ability to perform in two or more
> languages
>
> Part 3: Other problems

2.4 Validation Procedure of the Instrument

The content validity of the questionnaires and observation check list were examined by experts. The suggestions were taken into consideration and modifications were made. The

questionnaires were piloted and the procedure was repeated for the final version of the instrument.

2.5 Data Collection

Parent questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire were administered in person by the researcher. Since a majority in the parent sample were illiterate the questionnaire was filled up by the researcher for parents after reading each question and getting their responses. Their responses were read back to them to rule out any researcher bias. Teacher questionnaire was filled up by teachers and two classroom observations were conducted by the researcher.

2.6 Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed by frequency and percentage calculation. Qualitative data were analyzed descriptively.

2.7 Limitation of the study

Allthough the present study was conducted in small scale for partial fulfillment of Master thesis, every steps of conducting a research has been consciously followed. But it has some limitations which are given below:

- A major limitation of the study was the subjects in the sample (N=parents 12 & teachers 4). Unavailability of MTBMLE schools, remoteness of the area, and time available to complete the study prevented the researcher from selecting a larger sample.
- Dearth of relevant research literature in the study area was another limitation. There is wealth of literature published on MTBMLE. However, literature on Bangladeshi ethnic minorities specially in CHT area are lacking. Literature conducted specifically on Chakma ethnic minority was also lacking.
- There are eleven ethnic minority communities living in CHT but only Chakma ethnic group has been chosen for this study. The reason for selecting Chakma community was that the researcher does not have any knowledge of others ethnic languages except Chakma language.

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- The findings of this study cannot be generalized since it has been conducted on a small sample, confined one area in the CHT. There are other areas where Chakma communities live and MTBMLE is being conducted in some of these areas.

2.8 Ethical Approval

Ethical approval of the proposal was provided by a review committee of the Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University. Informed consent was taken from the respondents. They were assured that information provided would be kept confidential, names would not be disclosed, and outcomes would not have any adverse effect on them.

CHAPTER 3

FINDINGS

The main focus of this study is to find out parents' and teachers' perception towards Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education (MTBMLE) at early primary level. The study also explores the awareness of parents and teachers regarding MTBLE and attempts to find out the problems faced by the teachers in implementing MTBMLE. In this chapter the findings of the study are presented by analyzing data gathered through parent questionnaire, teacher questionnaire and classroom observations.

3.1 Parent Questionnaire

The purpose of administering the parent questionnaire was

1. to identify whether all the parents of Chakma community were aware of the MTBMLE and
2. to find out the perceptions of Chakma parents towards MTBMLE.

The following table presents demographic details of the parent sample.

Table 3.1.1-Demographic Details of the Parents Sample

Demographic detail	Number	Percentage
1. **Gender**		
a) Male	07	58.33
b) Female	05	46.67
2. **Age**		
a) 20-30 years	02	16.66
b) 31-40 years	07	58.33
c) 41-50 years	03	25.0
3. **Education qualifications**		
a) No schooling	11	91.67
b) Below grade five	01	8.33
c) Above grade five	0	0.0
4. **The Grade child studying**		
a) Grade one	07	58.33
b) Grade two	05	41.67
5. **Language spoken at home**		
a) Chakma	12	100.0
b) Bangla	0	0.0

Demographic detail	Number	Percentage
6. **Language Child learns in school**		
a) Chakma	0	0.0
b) Bangla	01	8.33
c) Both	11	91.67

According to the table above all the parents are below 50 years and a majority is above 35 years (07). However, the education level of parents seems to be far from satisfactory. 91.67% of the sample is illiterate since they have not attended a school. Others have studied only up to class five or below. All these parents have children attending either class one or class two of the non government primary schools. The table above reveals that although all the children in the sample speak only Chakma at home a majority (91.67) learn both languages in school. Only one child is learning in Bangla language. According to the data presented in the table above it is evident that children are exposed to Bangla language only in school.

The table 3.1.2 below presents parents awareness of MTBMLE

Table 3.1.2- Parents Awareness of MTBMLE

Awareness	Number	Percentage
7. **Knows that MTBMLE is being implemented in school**		
a) Yes	08	66.67
b) No	04	33.33
8. **Understanding of MTBMLE**		
a) Education received only in Chakma language	0	0
b) Education received in Chakma and Bangla languages	07	58.33
c) Education received in Chakma, Bangla and English language	05	41.67
9. **Parents explanations on how MTBMLE is being implemented**		
a) Teaching in Bangla and explaining in Chakma	07	58.37
b) First use Chakma and then use Bangla in teaching	02	16.67
c) Unable to explain	03	25.0

As the table above shows 1/3rd (33.33%) of the sample does not even know that MTBMLE is being implemented in schools. Data also shows that the 41.67% of parents have knowledge of MTBMLE. However, a majority do not think English language as part of MTBMLE. It is interesting to know that 25% of the parents were unable to explain how MTBMLE is being

implemented. Only 16.67% of parents were aware how MTBMLE is being implemented although they did not mention about English language being introduced later. On the whole, the table reveals that the awareness of a majority of parents of MTBMLE is inadequate. Data gathered on parents' perception on MTBMLE is presented in the table bellow

Table 3.1.3 Parents perception on MTBMLE

Perception		Number	percentage
10. Language preferred to be taught Both Chakma and Bangla		12	100.0
11. Language preferred to start school Start from mother tongue and shift in to Bangla		12	100.0
12. If the child learns in one language he/she will do better in school	Yes	02	16.67
	No	10	88.33
13. If the child starts learning in Chakma and gradually shift to Bangla he/she will be confused			
	Yes	01	8.33
	No	11	91.67
14. Helps children in school work	Yes	0	0.0
	No	12	100.0
15. MTBMLE will make children use both Chakma and Bangla languages when speaking			
	Yes	09	75.0
	No	03	35.0

16. Children who start learning in MTBMLE will have the
    ability to use Chakma literary language better than
    others
		12	100.0

	Yes	0	0.0
	No		
17. Children exposed to MTBMLE will be more loyal to the mother tongue			
	Yes	11	91.67
	No	01	8.33
1. Schools have facilities to implement MTBMLE			
	Yes	05	41.67
	No	07	58.33
2. Multilingual education could be successful in Chittagong Hill Tracts			

	Yes	10	83.33
	No	02	16.67

Responses of the parents to the question number 10 to 19 are presented in the above table. Responses to question Number 10 reveal that all the parents prefer their children to learn both Chakma and Bangla languages. Likewise a majority (838.33%) of parents do not think that their children will be able to do better if they learn only one language. It is also noteworthy that a majority (91.67%) of parents do not think that their children would get confused if they learnt in their mother tongue in the preschool and gradually shift to Bangla language in the primary school. However, responses to question number 14 show that parents are unable to help their children in school work.

According to the table above a majority (75%) of parents believe that MTBMLE promotes children to use Bangla and Chakma mixed language. They (100%) also feel that children who learn Bangla language based on mother tongue will have an advantage than the others. A majority (91.67%) believe that children who learn Bangla language based on Chakma language will be more loyal to mother tongue than those who learn Bangla language. This shows that they know the benefits of having opportunities to learn in mother tongue even based on the national language.

Responses to question number 18 indicate that a majority (58.33%) of parents perceive the facilities available in their areas are not adequate for MTBMLE. However, a considerable percentage (41.67%) perceives facilities to learn in MTBMLE are adequate. A majority (83.33) of parents also believe that multilingual education could be successful in Chittagong hill tract inspite of having many local languages. On the whole, the data presented in the above table shows that parents' perceptions in relation to MTBMLE are positive.

3.2 Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire was administered to achieve the following objectives

1. to identify teachers perceptions towards MTBMLE and
2. to identify problems faced by teachers who teach in MTBMLE implemented classes

All these teachers in the sample are teaching in non government primary schools. Table 3.2.1 below presents the demographic details of the teacher sample

Table 3.2.1 Demographic details of the teacher sample

Demographic details	Number	Percentage
1. Gender a) Male b) Female	 03 01	 75.0 25.0
2. Age a) 20-25 years b) 26-30 years	 01 03	 25.0 75.0
3. Education qualifications a) SSC/Dakhil b) Above SSC/Dakhil	 04 00	 100.0 0.0
4. Teaching experience a) One year b) Two years c) More than two years	 01 02 01	 25.0 50.0 25.0
5. The class you teach in school Both(Grade one & Grade two)	 04	 100.0

According to the table above and there is only one female teacher. All the teachers are below 30 years and majority is between 26–30 years (03). However, the education level of all the teachers is SSC (100%). From the total teacher sample only 25% have more than two years teaching experience while 25% have less than two year teaching experience. It could be noted that 50% percent of the teachers have 2 year teaching experience.. All these teachers teach in both class (Grade one and Grade two).

The table 3.2.2 below presents teachers awareness of MTBMLE

Table 3.2.2 Teachers Awareness of MTBMLE

Awareness of MTBMLE	Number	Percent age
6. How MTBMLE is understood a) Education received only in Chakma language	00	0.0
b) Education received in Chakma and Bangla languages	00	0.0
c) Education received in Chakma, Bangla and English language	04	100.0
7. How the knowledge of MTBMLE was received		
a) Through training	03	75.0
b) No	01	25.0
8. Duration of the training		
a) six days	01	25.0
b) five days	01	25.0
c) One day	01	25.0
d) No training	01	25.0
9. Teachers description on how MTBMLE is being implemented		
a) First teach in mother tongue and then in Bangla and English	03	75.0
b) Is implemented with minimum facilities	01	25.0

The table above shows that all (100%) of the subjects of the sample have an understanding of MTBMLE. Data also shows that the 75% of teachers have undergone training in MTBMLE. However, one teacher has not had any training. Duration of the training varies from one day to six days. Only one teacher has undergone six days training. Although a majority of teachers were able to explain properly the way MTBMLE is being implemented; one teacher has pointed out that it is not being properly implemented. His remark does not mean that he is not aware of MTBMLE. It clearly shows his dissatisfaction of the implementation of the program. On the whole, the table reveals that teachers were aware of MTBMLE although one teacher pointed out about the there are gaps in the implementation.

Data gathered on teachers' perception on MTBMLE is presented in the table below.

Table 3.2.3 Teachers' Perception on MTBMLE

Teacher's perceptions	Number	Percentage

10. Preferred way of learning
   a) Learning straight away in one language
   b) Gradually shift to national language
	00
	04
		0.0
		100.

11. Learning in one language helps to do better in school
   a) Yes
   b) No
	00
	04
		0.0
		100.0

12. Gradually shifting to Bangla language in the school confuses children
   a) Yes
   b) No
	02
	02
		50.0
		50.0

13. Parents help their children in school work?
   a) Yes
   b) No
	02
	02
		50.0
		50.0

14. MTBMLE promotes using a mixed language when speaking
   a) Yes
   b) No
	04
	00
		100.0
		0.0

15. Children exposed to MTBMLE will use Chakma literary language better than the others
   a) Yes
   b) No
	04
	00
		100.0
		0.0

16. Children exposed to MTBMLE will be more loyal to the mother tongue
   a) Yes
   b) No
	04
	00
		100.0
		0.0

17. There are facilities to implement MTBMLE?
   a) Yes
   b) No
	04
	00
		100.0
		0.0

18. Multilingual education could be successful in Chittagong Hill Tract
   a) Yes
   b) No
	04
	00
		100.0
		0.0

As depicted in the table above, teachers prefer children to gradually learn the national language. They do not speak about English learning. They also do not believe that children

will do better in school if they learn in one language. Only 50% of the sample believes that children will get confused if they learn in their mother tongue in the preschool and gradually shift to national language in primary school. Although parents unanimously have said that they do not help children in school work; however, 50% of teachers feel that they do help. To teachers help means support given by parents through providing materials time etc. while for parents help means reading stories, helping to write etc. Teachers also believe that children would use a mixed language when learning both languages. However, all of them feel that children who are exposed to MTBMLE will have the ability to use Chakma literary language more than the others. Moreover, the teachers believe that when children are exposed to MTBMLE they will be loyal to their mother tongue than those who start learning in national language.

The table also reveals information in relation to implementation and facilities of MTBMLE. Although teachers agree that there are facilities in school to implement MTBMLE and education would be successful in spite of having many local languages, their responses to question 19 shows that they have problems. Following table presents the problems they face and their suggestions to overcome these problems.

Table 3.2.4: Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing MTBMLE and Their Suggestions to Overcome Them

Problems Faced	Number	Percentage
1. There is materials but lack of training is the problem I face	01	25
2. I use mother tongue often to explain because without it students will not understand either Bangla or English	01	25
3. People are not aware about MTBMLE	01	25
4. Government is not interested in teaching the local language	01	25
5. Lack of training, lack of materials and appropriate environment		

Suggestions	Number	Percentage
1. Reading material should be developed by experts	01	25
2. MTBMLE teaching and learning should be monitored		
3. Introduce alphabet of the mother tongue first before teaching in Bangla and English	01	25
4. Learning material like alphabet chart, rhyme and counting chart to be supplied before delivering the lesson.	01	25
5. All teachers should be trained, teaching learning materials should be available, and teacher attendance should be ensured.	01	25

3.3 Classroom Observations

The objective of classroom observations was to identify how MTBMLE is being implemented in the classroom. It also identified problems teachers faced in MTBMLE classrooms. Data were gathered by observing two classrooms in different schools.

Findings of school 1 and school 2 are presented in the following table-

Table 3.3.1- Classroom Observations of Student-Teacher Interactions

Observed areas	Most of the time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Teacher used Bangla language when explaining lesson	2	-	1	
Teacher used Chackma language when explaining lesson	1	2		
Teacher used both languages when explaining lesson		2	1	
Teacher used Bangla language when interacting with students		2		1
Teacher used Chakma language when interacting with students	2 &1			
Teacher used both languages when interacting with students		2	1	
Students communicated with the teacher in Bangla language			2	1
Students communicated with the teacher in Chakma language	2&1			
Students communicated with teachers in both languages		2		1
Use of English language				1&2

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The table above indicates that when explaining lessons teacher of the school 2 has used Bangla language most of the time while the teacher of the school 1 has used it rarely. However, teacher of the school 1 has used Chakma language most of the time. Teacher of School 2 has also used both the languages sometimes but teacher of school one has used both languages rarely. The researcher observed teacher of the school 2 using both languages sometimes which means he used Chakma language most of the time when explaining the textbook written in Bangla. It was noted that teacher of the school 1 used Chakma language all the time and once in a while started a Bangla word.

The table also depicts that teacher of school 2 interacted with students in Bangla language sometimes while teacher of school 1 never did. However, both the teachers have used Chakma language most of the times when interacting with students. It was observed that teacher of the school 2 used both the languages sometimes when interacting with the student. However, students in both the schools communicated with the teachers in Chakma language most of the time. It could be seen that students in school 2 used both languages sometimes to communicate with teacher while students in school 1 never did. Use of English which is a component of MTBMLE was absent in both the schools.

Table 3.3.2- Observations on Teaching Learning Material Student Performance and Teacher Performance in MTBMLE Classroom

Observed areas	Yes	No
11. Learning materials were in Bangla language	1&2	
12. Learning materials were in Chakma language		1&2
13. Learning materials were in multi-languages		1&2
14. There were opportunities to use reading and writing in at least two (Chakma and Bangla) languages		1&2
15. Ability to read letters and words in Bangla language is good in most of the students	2	1
16. Ability to read letters and words in Chakma language is good in most of the students		1&2
17. Ability to write letters and words in Bangla language is good in most of the students (correct spellings)	2	1
18. Ability to read letters and words in Chakma language is good in most of the students (correct spelling)		1&2

Observed areas	Yes	No
19. Students are responsiveness in the classroom is good		1&2
20. Teachers responsive to the students is good	2	1
21. Teacher applied methods favorable for language learning		1&2
22. Students used the mother tongue when working in groups	1&2	

As indicated in the table above all the learning materials in the two schools were in Bangla language. Although these were MTBMLE classrooms two or more languages were not evident in materials. Opportunities were not provided in reading and writing to use both languages. Teachers spoke Chakma language but reading and writing were practiced in Bangla language. Students in school 2 possessed the ability to read and write letters and words in Bangla language. However, ability to read letters and words in Chakma language was not good in most of the students in both the schools. It was observed that students' responsiveness in the classroom was also not good. When students were engaged in group work they spoke their mother tongue and not the national language.

Problems identified by the researcher are presented in the following table-

Table 3.3.3-Problems faced in Implementing MTBMLE

Problem	School
Lack of learning materials	1&2
Teachers inability read or write Chakma language	1&2
Lack of a time schedule	1&2
Classroom arrangement was not satisfactory	1&2
Lack of training in teaching	1&2
Teachers have no link with the local community	1&2

During the observation the researcher observed that there were no learning materials in Chakma language. There were learning materials such as rhyme books, story books which were written in Bangla language. The researcher found that both the teachers were unable to read and write Chakma language although they belong to Chakma community. On the other hand, there was no fixed time allocated for MTBMLE. Therefore, in the course of teaching other subjects Bangla language was used instead of MTBMLE.

The researcher found that the classrooms were also not arranged to suit child centered education. There were no exhibits in two or more languages for children to get familiarized. Lack of training to teach in MTBMLE classes was another problem researcher identified from his observations. Teachers had undergone from one day to six days training in MTBMLE which is not adequate to teach at elementary level. Moreover, both teachers were from two distant villages although they belong to Chakma community. They had no connection with community of the school.

CHAPTER 4
DISCUSSION

Findings of the study conducted to identify how parents and teachers of Chakma community perceived MTMBLE and how MTBMLE is being implemented in the classroom are discussed in this chapter. The findings in relation to perceptions of parents and teachers will be discussed together. How MTBMLE is implemented in early primary classrooms will be discussed separately.

4.1 Chakma Parents' and Teachers Awareness of MTBMLE

Data presented in the tables 3.1.2 provided information related to Chakma parents' awareness of MTBMLE. The data in the table showed that a majority of parents are aware of MTBMLE as mother tongue based national language education. A considerable percentage (41.67%) is also aware that English is included in MTBMLE. However, a majority (58.37) does not know how it is being implemented (Table 3.1.2). Considering their education level (see Table 3.1.2) the researcher feels that parents may not know the connotation or the purpose of MTBMLE. Research has proved parents' participation is important in children's education (Beyer et. al. 2003). When considering the percentage of parents who could not explain how MTBMLE is being implemented, it is evident that they were not well informed about the program or not involved by the school.

Although there is not an objective the researcher attempted to identify whether teachers' had a proper awareness of MTBMLE. In contrast to parents, all the Chakma teachers understood the literal meaning of MTBMLE (Table 3.2.2). They stated that teaching of all three languages is involved in MTBMLE. A majority could explain (75%) how it is being implemented correctly. Unlike parents a majority of Chakma teachers have undergone training (Table 3.2.2) in this programme although the duration of the training varied from one day to six days. Only teacher who could not explain correctly had no training on MTBMLE.

4.2 Chakma Parents and Teachers Perceptions towards MTBMLE

4.2.1 Language preferred to be taught in school

Findings of the study revealed that all the parents (Item 10 and 11 in Table 3.1.2) prefer children to learn both Chakma nd Bangla Languages. They also prefer their children to start primary school education in both Chakma and Bangla languages. Parents have given various explanations to support their perception. Explanations they have given are as follows:

> *"It would help children to understand what was being taught in school better."*
>
> *"If children start learning in only one language they will end up by not learning either."*
>
> *"Learning the two languages will help them to be successful in their future life."*
>
> *"If children learn only in mother tongue they will not be able to understand Bangla in later stage."*

These statements show that they perceive learning in Bangla and Chakma would help their children to be successful in future.

Findings of the study show (Table 3.1.2) a majority of parents do not think that if a child learns in one language they will do better in school. In their explanations they have stated that if a child knows more languages he/she will be able to learn better. One parent has stated, *"In near future our children will have to read Bangla as well as English books. Therefore it is better to know more languages."* However, one parent who perceived learning in one language is adequate has mentioned *"Only Bangla language is enough. It is the national language."*

Teachers also believe that learning in one language does not help children to do better in school (Table 3.2.3). Their argument was that children will not be able to understand what other ethnic group speak if they learn only in one language. On the other hand, they state that since children have to follow the national curriculum and they have to learn Bangla language too. A number of teachers perceive that if the child learns only one language in early primary years they will face problems in acquiring a second language later. Likewise, some teachers have the view that children should learn multi-languages.

4.3 Learning Chakma Language First and Gradually Shifting to Bangla Language

A majority of parents think children will not get confused if they learn in Chakma language in preschool and gradually shift to Bangla language in primary school (see Table 3.1.3). A majority of parents (7) expressed their view that those children will not get confused since they will come to know both mother tongue and Bangla language. Two parents stated that if children gradually shifted to Bangla language *"Practice of mother tongue will increase while mistakes they do in Bangla language will decrease"*. Another parent disclosed his fear of child dropping out from school by stating, *"If the child did not shift to Bangla he will drop out of school"*

All the teachers in the sample also prefer children to learn Chakma language in the preschool and gradually shift to Bangla language (Table 3.2.3). They gave various reasons to justify their answer.

"If children are given an opportunity to start preschool in Chakma language teachers can use that language to explain since children do not know Bangla language" was one reason a teacher mentioned; while another teacher remarked that *"children can easily understand both languages if they gradually shift to national language."* Children get exposed to Chakma speech in the home environment but how children get exposure to Chakma letters in the preschool is a question since it involves prewriting and pre reading skills.

Fifty percent of the teachers in the sample do not think children will get confused when they learn Bangla language in the preschool and gradually shift to Chakma language (Table 3.2.3). A teacher stated, *"When children learn both languages they will get a real understanding of them."*

4.4 Using a Mixed Language when Speaking

A majority of parents were of the view that children will speak a mixed language (mixing both Bangla and Chakma languages) as a result of MTBMLE. A majority of parents (09) have stated that they are *"Proud of the fact that they know both languages"* However, two parent do not view MTBMLE will promote using mixed languages.

All the teachers also think that children will use a mixed language as result of following MTBMLE. However, they feel it will not interfere with children's use of mother tongue. A teacher stated that *"Future children will collect Chakma stories and literature on Chakma customs although they may speak a mixed language"*.

Language mixing is common in bilingual children. And some psychologists call this code switching (Heredia and Altariba, 2001). According to Fromkin et. al. (2011) language mixing in bilingual children is not caused by confusion but is a result of two grammars operating simultaneously.

4.5 MTBMLE Promoting Chakma Literary Language

According to data gathered from the questionnaire it was evident that all the parents in the sample perceive that when children learn the national language based on mother tongue they would have the ability to use the literary language of the mother tongue (Chakma). The researcher found that most parents feel that children would be able to read and write Chakma language unlike many educated Chakma people who cannot read or write Chakma language. All the teachers too perceive the same. A number of teachers stated, *"They can already read few Chakma words. They will be able to acquire Chakma literary language quickly."* This supports earlier research on the influence of foreign language leaning on the mother tongue (Mahamood, 2011; Pedrero, 2002).

4.6 Loyalty to the Mother Tongue

A majority of parents (91.67%) believe that if children learn national language based on mother tongue they would be more loyal to the mother tongue. They stated that since children learn Chakma too they would be able to read and write Chakma language and they would be loyal to it. Some of the parents (25%) stated, *"Children will understand our culture better because they know the mother tongue."*

All the teachers also unanimously agree (Table 3.2.3) that children exposed to MTBMLE will be more loyal to the mother tongue. One teacher stated, *"Starting school by learning mother tongue is fun and interesting. As a result they will be loyal to the mother tongue."* As

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Huei-Wu (2005) points out ethnic language maintenance supports in forming strong bonds among family members. Therefore, MTBMLE could be a welcoming step for ethnic minorities such as Chakma.

4.7 Facilities to Implement MTBMLE and Its Success

With regards to facilities to implement MTBMLE, a majority (58.33%) of parents perceive that facilities are inadequate. Although a considerable percentage thought that facilities are not adequate; however, a majority responded that MTBMLE would be a success. They also had suggestions to make this program a success. Some of them are: teachers should be appointed from the community that speaks the same language, materials should be in both or three languages and should not teach more than three languages.

On the contrary, it was surprising to note that all teachers who implement the program perceive that there are adequate facilities. What teachers perceive as facilities is the opportunity Chakma children have to start school in mother tongue. Children attending schools that do not implement MTBMLE do not have the opportunity which they regard as a facility to learn the mother tongue. As some teachers mentioned, *"Eighty percent of our students are Chakma. Therefore, teaching in Chakma language is fun and children feel comfortable when learning the mother tongue and Bangla language in school."* However, teachers also perceive that they should receive more training on MTBMLE and efficient teachers should be appointed to make MTBMLE a success. They also believe that if teachers receive more support from the government MTBMLE would be successful.

4.8 Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing MTBMLE and Suggestions to Overcome Them

The problems as perceived by teachers in implementing MTBMLE are stated in Table 3.2.4 they believe that training they received on implementing MTBMLE is inadequate. The duration of the training they received varied from no training to six days. It is not possible for teachers to learn how to teach first language and introduce a second language to children in early childhood within such a short period. Teachers also perceive that people are unaware of

MTBMLE and the Government is not interested in teaching languages other than the national language.

To overcome these problems teachers suggest that teaching learning materials should be prepared by experts in MTBMLE. Another suggestion was to introduce mother tongue alphabet before teaching a national language or a foreign language. They suggest that teaching learning material should be provided on time. Further, teachers want teaching learning to be monitored and regular attendance of teachers to be ensured.

All this suggestions reveal weaknesses in the implementation process of MTBMLE. In general the questionnaire revealed that both parents and teachers were enthusiastic about mother tongue based Multilanguage teaching. In spite of all the problems they perceive

4.9 Observations

The purpose of observations is to identify how MTBMLE is being implemented. Findings of the classroom observations in relation to students and teacher interactions, students' performance and teacher performance in multi- language classrooms are discussed in this section.

4.9.1 Student- Teacher Interactions in the MTBMLE Classrooms

Observations on the classroom interactions show teachers interacted in mother tongue with students most of the time. One teacher used the both languages very rarely when interacting while the other teacher used the both languages now and then in the classroom. Only one teacher used Bangla language when explaining lessons most of the time.

The observation also revealed that all the students have interacted with teachers in mother tongue. Children in both classes have communicated their needs to teachers in also mother tongue. English was never used in the classroom. These finding support previous studies that conducted on two or more language education in Bangladesh. Islam (2006, p. 25) states that although teachers feel obliged to use Bangla in classroom since it is the official language they do use children's mother tongue to explain ideas. This may be due to children's lack of understanding of the Bangla language. On the other hand, in MTBMLE classrooms Bangla

language also should be used. But it seems to happen sometimes or rarely in the case of schools the researcher observed.

4.9.2 *Teaching Learning Material, Student Performance and Teacher Performance*

Teaching materials are important in the teaching learning process of a primary classroom. If the classroom implements MTBMLE these should be in Chakma as well as Bangla language (Labeling the illustration etc.). However, the observations revealed that the teaching learning materials used in both classes were only in Bangla language i.e. Bangla primer and rhymes book (Table 3.3.2). There were no opportunities for students to learn reading and writing in two languages ((Bangla and Chakma languages). Teacher firstly read any story in Bangla then orally translate it in to chakma. According to Durnnian (2007), in the primary class 1 developing skills in mother tongue – (reading, writing and speaking) should be continued along with developing oral Bangla. Reading & writing in Bangla (or preferably in P-2) language as a second language is also introduced during this period. However, the present study reveals that there is a gap in the implementation of language skill development process. Without using both languages for teaching learning materials as well as not providing opportunities to read and write the two languages it is doubtful that Chakma children will develop skills in mother tongue along with the national language. They had the opportunity to read and write only Bangla although oral mother tongue could be used.

4.9.3 *Student Performance*

The researcher observed how children performed in the MTBMLE (Table 3.3.2) classroom. Most of the students in one class (Class 2) performed well in relation to reading Bangla letters and words as well. However, most of the students were poor in relation to reading Chakma letters or words. Likewise, most of the students in the class 2 performed well in writing Bangla letters and words but most of the students in both classes failed to write Chakma properly. Informal discussions with teachers revealed that the teachers also could not read or write Chakma language properly.

The researcher observed how students responded to teacher's questions when teaching. It was not satisfactory in both classes. Researcher observed that only 2 to 3 students responded

to teacher's questions and rest of them were quiet. However, teacher's responsiveness to students needs was good in one class i.e. the teacher of school-1 helped students to open book and turnover the page etc.

It was noticeable that students used mother tongue when working with groups and instructions were also given in Chakma language. English language was never used. Teachers also complained about students' lack of participation in teaching learning process. Teacher in the School 2 was responsive but the researcher found methods used in teaching were not creative or encouraging in both classrooms.

4.9.4   Problems Faced in Implementing MTBMLE

The main problem identified by the researcher was the inability of teachers to read or write Chakma language. The whole program of MTBMLE would be unsuccessful if teachers are not acquainted with two or more languagess.

Lack of proper training for teachers was another serious problem identified by the researcher. This was even mentioned by the teachers in the interview sample. Maximum training period is six days and these teachers have undergone six (class 2) five days (class 1) of training. It is not sufficient to implement MTBMLE. On the other hand, lack of training was evident in their classroom management. Children were not grouped to promote team work in language activities. Activities such as action songs and picture games could be implemented successfully in teams or groups (Malone, 2010).

Teaching learning materials especially in relation to Chakma language (Table 3.3.3) were scarce in both classrooms. Children need various learning materials and posters displayed so that they get motivated to learn reading and writing mother tongue as well as oral and written Bangla language. As discussed in the literature review MTBMLE schools need early literacy materials, on grade reading materials and subject area materials in the mother tongue. In addition, relevant materials for the smooth transition from mother tongue o the second language are also needed. Nevertheless, both the classrooms did not have such materials.

The observations also revealed that there was no time specifically allocated for mother tongue based multilingual activities. The classrooms were also not arranged to suit multi lingual education and the needs of children in the early childhood. Children were not seated

in groups. It is a well known fact that group seating facilitates sharing of resources and though ability grouping smart children can help others.

The fact that both teachers were living outside the community of the students had an effect on committing themselves fully to the cause. According to Nolasko (2012) materials preparation requires a minimum of one year and should be developed with the community. The distance prevents these teachers to get the community involved in the programme. On the other hand, teachers mentioned about parents lack of awareness of MTBMLE and the government's lack of interest in shown towards. However, the researcher found there is a lack of involvement in the part of the community. When teachers are from a distant location it is not easy for them to get the local community involved in the project. They feel the government is not interested since they look up for a solution from the government.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents conclusions of the study conducted to identify perceptions of parents and teachers of Chakma community towards mother tongue based multilingual education at early primary level. The conclusions are presented under specific objectives of the study.

5.1 Chakma Parents' Awareness of MTBMLE

The first objective of the study was to identify Chakma parents' awareness of MTBMLE. The study found that a majority of Chakma parents were aware of the fact that MTBMLE is being implemented in their area. Findings showed that some even know that a third language (international language) is being included in the program. However, it was identified that a majority of parents do not know how MTBMLE is being implemented. Therefore, the study concludes that although a majority of Chakma parents knew that mother tongue and national language are used in MTBMLE they were not aware how it is being implemented.

5.2 Parents Perceptions Towards MTBMLE

The second objective of the study was to identify Chackma parents' perceptions towards MTBMLE.

 The study identified that Chakma parents preferred their children to learn mother tongue first and then gradually shift to the national language. A majority did not believe that children will get confused by this approach or will not be loyal to the own mother tongue. They were not concerned about children speaking a language mixed with Chakma and Bangla words. Infact a majority were proud of it. On the other hand, a majority of parents had the view that MTBMLE will develop their children's ability to use Chakma literary language. According to the findings it could be concluded that a majority of Chakma parents perceive MTBMLE as a program that would help their children to do better in their future life. In spite of the low education level of parents MTBMLE is accepted by them and a majority wants their children to be conversant with both mother tongue and the national language through this program.

In relation to availability of facilities to implement MTBMLE, a considerable percentage (41.67%) perceived that facilities were adequate to implement MTBMLE but a majority

thaught otherwise. At the same time, even with limited facilities most of the parents were positive that MTBMLE would be successful. This shows their high expectations of children learning the national language while preserving their own. It can be concluded that in spite of a majority believing that the facilities to implement MTBMLE is inadequate a high percentage of parents have the confidence that the program would be successful.

5.3 Teachers' Perceptions Towards MTBMLE

Identifying teachers' perceptions towards MTBMLE was the third objective of the study. The researcher identified their awareness of MBTMLE as well as their perceptions. The study found that since all the teachers in the sample except one has undergone training related to MTBMLE they were able to describe the programme precisely. A majority explained the implementation of MTBMLE based on what they have learnt at the training i.e. start learning in mother tongue, then in Bangla language and last, English language. They did not explain based on what was actually happening i.e. first, the mother tongue and then Bangla language only. Therefore, the study concludes that all the teachers had a literal knowledge of MTBMLE.

A majority of teachers believed that children should start learning mother tongue first and gradually shift to national language. Like parents they were also not concerned about the mixed language children would speak. They too were positive that Children will learn Chakma written language (using literary or scholarly language), and MTBMLE would promote loyalty to the mother tongue. They believe that it would be successful in the Hill Track in spite of having many languages. The study concludes that perception of teachers in relation to above mentioned aspects and outcomes of MTBMLE is positive and similar to parents' perceptions.

Despite the above mentioned positive thinking, a half of teacher sample perceived that children will get confused by multilingual education. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is no absolute conformity in the perceptions of teachers in relation to children being confused by MTBMLE.

There was a gap between what parents and a teachers perceived as helping children in school work. For teachers, parents' help meant providing books and other material for children while for parents it meant guiding children at home. The study concludes that teachers need a clear vision on how parents could help their children for successful implementation of MTBMLE.

Teachers' disclosure of the problems they face and the suggestions they made to improve the programme also reflected their perceptions. Based on the problems they faced and their suggestions; the study concludes that teachers perceive lack of training for teachers on MTBMLE, students' inability to understand Bangla language, lack of proper teaching learning materials, people's unawareness of MTBMLE as well as lack of interest on the part of Government as constraints to successful implementation of MTBMLE.

5.4 How MTBMLE is being Implemented

The fourth objective of the study was to identify how MTBMLE was implemented. Four aspects of the teaching learning process i.e. student teacher interactions, teaching learning material, students' performance and teacher performance were observed to identify how MTBMLE is being implemented in both experimental classrooms.

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter the study concludes that all four aspects of the teaching learning process were not favorable for the successful implementation of MTBMLE. Since Chakma students' were not conversant in Bangla language, teachers used Chakma language to interact with students and this practice hinders the aims of MTBMLE i.e. learning oral Bangla in the early primary classroom. Language used on illustrations (examples) and with teaching learning materials was not multilingual. Students' responses in one class and teachers' responses in both classes were good. But neither

students nor teachers could read Chakma letters or words. All these facts contribute to the above mentioned conclusion on how MTBMLE is being implemented.

5.5 Problems Faced in Implementing MTBMLE

The fifth objective of the study was to identify problems faced in implementing MTBMLE. The study identifies problems specific to teachers and problems specific to classroom environment as key issues that affect negatively in the successful implementation of MTBMLE. Lack of involvement of the community in MTBMLE and the gaps on the part of the government policy were also identified as problems. These problems were identified through observations as well as the responses of the teachers to the questionnaire.

Teachers' illiteracy in Chakma language, the distance teachers have with the community of the students, lack of training in MTBMLE and unsatisfactory attendance were the main problems specific to teachers who play a key role in MTBMLE. All teachers who were interviewed by researcher were appointed from distant villages. Because there is no SSC passed even grade eight passed person in that village where MTBMLE School are established. So implementing NGO appointed the teachers from same union according to merit. Ensuring teacher attendance suggested by teachers to overcome problems faced by them in implementing MTBMLE (Table 3.2.4) implied that teacher attendance was not satisfactory. Therefore, the study concludes that teacher specific problems impede the successful implementation of MTBMLE.

Problems specific to classroom environment were the poor quality teaching learning material, availability of materials only in Bangla Language, and unavailability of learning material on time, no specific time allocated to multi linguistic activities and poor classroom arrangement. Unvailability of learning materials in Chakma language is a grave problem since it deprives children from learning to read and write in their mother tongue. Teachers have also suggested introducing the alphabet of the mother tongue first. On the other hand, time also should be allocated for multilingual activities. Considering these facts the present study concludes that classroom environment was not conducive for MTBMLE in the schools where the program was implemented.

Teachers have stated that community is not aware of MTBMLE and Government is also not interested in teaching local languages. The researcher identified that community (parents) was aware of MTBMLE, but they were not fully involved in the program. Teachers who travel from distant have no time to get community involved in the program. Teacher who can get the community involved in the development of resource materials and other inputs should be selected to implement this program. Therefore, the study concludes that the MTBMLE program conducted in Chittagong Hill Tract areas of Bangladesh faces problems related to lack of suitable teachers who can commit themselves to the cause. The study also concludes that MTBMLE has not utilized resources (Human and capital) that are available in the community. This may affect negatively in realization of the aims of the program.

6. Recommendations

The present study identified many gaps in the implementation of MTBMLE in CHT areas. It could be useful in reviewing the program as well as Government policies in relation to mother tongue based multilingual education. Following recommendations are made with a view to exploit possible strategies to improve MTBMLE.

1. Capacity building of teachers is recommended since teachers lack many skills that are needed to implement MTBMLE. They need to be literate in the local language and should know to develop teaching learning materials with the support of the community. Their attitudes towards MTBMLE, and creativity should be developed. Their social skills should be developed in order to obtain much needed assistance from suitable sources for the successful implementation of MTBMLE.

2. The present training period is not adequate for teachers to learn teaching strategies, child psychology and implementation of MTBMLE. Therefore a lengthy period of training is recommended.

3. Teachers should be recruited from the community. If it is not possible to recruit teachers from the community it is recommended to provide incentives to encourage them to live in the community of the schools they serve.

4. Multilingual teaching learning materials should be provided to teachers on time. Mother tongue and national language should be used appropriately in teaching learning materials. If possible English language also could be used.

5. Specific time should be allocated to MTBMLE and special attention should be given to classroom arrangements that enhance language learning.

6. Government and the programs should work together to make MBTMLE a success. Government support is needed in provisions such as teacher deployment and delivery of resources. A joint plan that recruits suitable teachers and provides systematic training is recommended.

7. Incentives are recommended to encourage teachers to follow every step needed to make MTBMLE a success.

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Parent questionnaire

Multilingual education in Chittagong Hill Tract: Parents' and Teachers' perception towards Multilingual Education (MLE) in Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT).

Dear Parent

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find your perceptions towards mother tongue based multilingual education. Please respond accurately to each question presented to you. The information provided by you will be considered strictly confidential. Your cooperation in this regard in highly appreciated.

Part 1: Demographic Information

1. Name:…………………………………   ID No…………..

2. Address:

Village:……………………….. Union:……………………..

Upazila…………………….. District:………………..

			Code
3	Gender	1. Male 2. Female	
4	Age	……………….. year	
5	Education qualification	1. Never admitted to school 2. Went to school, but did not complete class 3. Class 1-5 4. Class 6-9 5. SSC / Dakhil 6. HSC / Alim 7. BA / Fazil 8. MA / Kamil	
6	The grade child learning	1. Grade one 2. Grade two	
7	Language spoken at home	1. Chakma 2. Bangla 99. Others	
Part 2-Awreness of MTBMLE			
8	In what language does your child learn in school	1. Chakma 2. Bangla 3. Both (Chakma+Bangla)	
9	Do you know that Mother tongue based Two or more languages	1. Yes 2. No	

	Education is being implemented in the schools where your child goes?		
10	How do you understand MTBMLE?	1. Education in Chakma language only 2. Education in Chakma and Bengali language 3. Education in Chakma, Bengali and English languages	
11	If you are aware of MBTLE program can you explain how it is being implemented?		

Part 3-Parents perceptions on MTBMLE

12A	In what language do you like your child to start learning in school?	1. Chakma 2. Bangla 3. Both (Chakma+Bangla)	
12B	Give reasons for your answer		
13A	Do you prefer your child to start learning straight away in one language or start from mother tongue and gradually shift to the national language?	1. Straight away in one language 2. Gradually shift to national language	
13B	Give reasons for your answer		
14A	Do you feel if your child learns only in one language he/she will be able to do better in school?	1. Yes 2. No	
14B	Give reasons for your answer		
15A	Do you feel that when your child start learning in Chakma in the preschool and gradually shift to Bangla in the primary school your child will get confused?	1. Yes 2. No	
15B	Give reasons for your answer		
16A	Do you help your child in school work?	1. Yes 2. No	
16B	If the answer is no give reasons		
17A	Do you think MTBMLE will promote children to use a mixture of Chakma and Bangla languages	1. Yes 2. No	

		when speaking?		
17B	If your answer is yes please respond to following statements about your child using a mixture of both Chakma and Bangla languages	1. I am proud of the fact that he/she knows both languages 2. I do not understand half of what he/she says 3. I prefer her to use one language		
18A	Do you feel those children who started learning in Bangla language based on your mother tongue will have the ability to use Chakma literary language more than the others?	1. Yes 2. No		
18B	Give reasons for your answer			
19A	Do you think children who learn national language (Bangla) based on mother tongue (Chakma) from preschool years will be more loyal to their mother tongue than children who start learning in national language?			
19B	Give reasons for your answer			
20	Do you think schools in your area have facilities to implement MTBMLE?	1. Yes 2. No		
21A	Do you think multilingual education could be successful in Chittagong hill tract inspite of having many local languages?	1. Yes 2. No		
21B	Give reasons for your answer			

APPENDIX-2

<u>**Teacher Questionnaire**</u>

Multilingual education in Chittagong Hill Tract: Parents' and Teachers' perception towards Multilingual Education (MLE) in Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT).

Dear Teacher

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find your perceptions towards mother tongue based multilingual education. Please respond accurately to each question presented to you. The information provided by you will be considered strictly confidential. Your cooperation in this regard is highly appreciated.

Part 1: Demographics details

1. Name:………………………………   ID No…………..

2. Address:

Village:………………………. Union:…………………….

Upazila…………………… District:………………..

			Code
3	Gender	1. Male 2. Female	
4	Age	……………… year	
5	Education qualification	1. SSC / Dakhil 2. HSC / Alim 3. BA / Fazil 4. MA / Kamil	
6	Teaching Experience	…………….. Years	
7	The grade you teach	1. Grade One 2. Grade Two 3. In both grades	
Part 2-Awareness of MTBMLE			
8	How do you understand MTBMLE?	1. Education in Chakma language only 2. Education in Chakma and Bengali language 3. Education in Chakma, Bengali and English languages	

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9A	Have you undergone any training on mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE)?	1. Yes	2. No	
9B	If the answer is 'yes' state the duration of the training period	....		
10	Can you please describe how MTBMLE is being implemented?			

Part 3-Teachers' perceptions on MTBMLE

11A	Do you prefer children to start learning straight away in one language or start from mother tongue and gradually shift to the national language?	1. Straight away in one language 2. Gradually shift to national language		
11B	Give reasons for your answer			
12A	Do you feel if children learn only in one language he/she will be able to do better in school?	1. Yes	2. No	
12B	Give reasons for your answer			
13A	Do you feel that when children start learning in Chakma in the preschool and gradually shift to Bangla in the primary school thay will get confused?	1. Yes	2. No	
13B	Give reasons for your answer			
14A	Do parents help their children in school work ?	1. Yes	2. No	
14B	If the answer is no give reasons			
15A	Do you think MTBMLE promotes children to use a mixture of both Chakma and Bangla languages when speaking?	1. Yes	2. No	
15B	Give reasons for your answer			
16A	Do you feel those children who are exposed to MTBMLE will have the	1. Yes	2. No	

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	ability to use Chakma literary language more than the others?			
16B	Give reasons for your answer			
17A	Do you think children who are exposed to MTBMLE from preschool years will be more loyal to the mother tongue than children who start learning in national language?	1. Yes	2. No	
17B	Please give reasons for your answer			
18A	Do you think schools in your area have facilities to implement MTBMLE?	1. Yes	2. No	
18B	Please give reasons for your answer			
19	Do you think multilingual education could be successful in Chittagong hill tract spite of having many local languages?	1. Yes	2. No	
20	Please state problems you face in implementing MTBMLE			
21	Please state your suggestions to overcome the problems you mentioned			

Classroom Observation Guide Line.

Name of school………………………

Date……………………….

Starting Time ……………..

Concluding Time…………..

Duration…………………..

Observation Areas	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Comments
Teachers used Bangla language when teaching and explaining the lesson					
Teachers used Chakma language when teaching and explaining the lesson					
Teachers used both languages when teaching and explaining the lesson					
Teachers used Bangla language when communicating with students					
Teachers used Chakma language when communicating with students					
Teachers used both languages when communicating with students					
Students communicated with teachers in Bangla language					
Students communicated with teachers in Chakma language					
Students communicated with teachers in both languages					

Learning materials were in Bangla language					
Learning materials were in Chakma language (e.g story books, rhymes, poems and alphabet etc)					
Learning materials were in both languages					
There opportunities to use reading and writing in both languages					
Ability to read letters & words in Bangla language is good in most of the students					
Ability to read letters & words in Chakma language is good in most of the students					
Ability to write letters & words in Bangla language is good (spellings) in most of the students					
Ability to write letters & words in Chakma languages is good (spellings) in most of the students					
Students are happy and responsive in the class room					
Teacher's are responsive to students					
Teachers applied methods favorable for language learning					
Students used the mother tongue when working in groups					
Problems teachers faced during the classroom teaching					
Availability of time schedule for language used (L1 & L2)					

Appendix: 4

Parent's Informed Consent Form

A research initiative in your area has been taken as part of Master's course in Early Childhood Development from the Institute of Educational Development (IED), BRAC University. The title of the research is- *Perception of Parents and Teachers of Chakma Community towards Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education at Early Primary Level.* The aim of this research is to an attempt to identify perceptions of Chakma parents and teachers toward mother tongue based multilingual education (MTBMLE) of their children. Further, the study will also explore the awareness of parents and teachers regarding MTBLE and the problems faced in implementing MTBMLE.

For this study I will request you to give me some time as you will be asked some questions I will maintain your privacy and confidentiality about your information. Your child and your family members' name will not be written on any of the materials, and only the researcher will have access to your information. The research will not benefit you personally. The information you provide will however, have significant contribution in improving the practice MTBMLE in Bangladesh.

Your participation is totally voluntary, and you may change your mind and withdraw at any time before and during the study. We will not pay or give any facilities for this participation.

If you want to take part to participate in this research, please sign the form below.

Name of the participant--------------------------------

Signature:-------------------------------------

Address :---