

Teaching of Urdu Language: Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Language plays a pivotal role to the achievement in students. It is also indicated that children's find it easier to acquire and comprehend complex ideas in their mother tongue (NEP 2020). To improve education and accomplish educational objectives, children should only receive an education in their mother tongue. The purpose of this paper is to gather the corpus of knowledge about the problems and challenges that Urdu teachers face in classroom settings. Even though they play a crucial role in promoting Urdu literature and language, there are many challenges that instructors encounter, which lowers their effectiveness. This study explores the major challenges and problem that Urdu teachers face, including a lack of resources, lack of training, and public perceptions of Urdu language instruction. This paper also examines how these challenges impact student learning outcomes. This review intends to educate, teacher training programs, and instructional approaches that can empower and support Urdu teachers by recognizing the main issues and difficulties they confront.

Keywords: Urdu Teaching, Challenges and Opportunities, Instructions

Education has a highly significant role to play in the all-around development of a child. The all-round growth of a child largely depends on education. In addition to teaching the child a number of different subjects, it also aids students in their maximum development and also induces good behavioural changes. The objective of education is the all-around development of the child. It is only when the process of teaching-learning is straightforward and methodical that children can grow in a comprehensive manner, and language is an integral part of this process among so many others. Language holds a critical position in the process of student's achievement. Language is a system that relies on spoken sounds and shared symbols to communicate ideas and feelings. It is impossible to think of a civilization without language. Human language is non-instinctive, varied, flexible, and acquired as opposed to (Tamboli, 2014) being inherited. Language is a medium of communication that is employed to conceptualize, negotiate, and pass on cultural values, beliefs, and knowledge across generations. It is a vehicle for converting our ideas, thoughts and beliefs. We acquire many things on a daily basis and it is also part of our thought process. Language is the main issue of every learning and teaching process and the device through which ideas and feelings are conveyed and knowledge is passed on (Anzar, 2018). Language is the most effective mode of expression, and mother tongue is the most basic form of language. Unlike all other languages, the mother tongue expresses deeply and

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becomes deeply etched in the mind without resistance, mental effort, and disturbance. Because of these reasons, experts suggest emphasizing and employing the mother language as the medium of instruction in the teaching-learning process. "The mother tongue is not only a source of knowledge of the external world to him from the beginning, but it is breeding ground for his imagination and a breeding ground for emotions" (Ali, (2013).

There are about 22 languages that are officially which is officially listed in the 8th schedule of the Indian constitution and Urdu language is one of them. People in India, a multilingual country with diverse languages, naturally learn multiple languages. Language is closely related to perception. We communicate our perceptions, thoughts, and happenings using any language. Language impacts perception and memory. Students typically select languages with potential for future growth. These languages are highly sought for, providing students with a competitive advantage in the employment market. Urdu is the 7th most widely spoken language in India. About 8 crore people in India alone speak Urdu. In a number of Indian states, including Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, J&K, West Bengal, and the National Capital Territory, Delhi, Urdu is also acknowledged as the official language. Even though Urdu is not a local language, many people communicate using the language, especially in Deccan and northern parts of the country. From Kashmir to West Bengal and Karnataka, the speaking population of this language is relatively good (Shaban, 2015). It is also one of the two official languages of Telangana and the official language of Jammu & Kashmir. Further, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, National Capital Territory of Delhi, and Andhra Pradesh have made it the official language of the land. In parts of India, some people speak and understand it as a mother tongue. Reports indicate that a sizeable number of the people in Karnataka (10.83%), Maharashtra (6.71%), and Andhra Pradesh (8.87%) claim Urdu as their mother tongue. This is an interesting aspect because an overwhelmingly larger number of Muslims in all three states declare Urdu as their mother tongue compared to the Hindi-Urdu belt, according to The Census of India, 2011). As per above discussion it has been illustrated that the majority of people use the Urdu language as mother tongue. Other than these for the purpose of studying Urdu learners or teachers have to undergo numerous issues such as non-availability of teaching learning material in Urdu, scarcity of resources, shortage of infrastructure like Urdu language lab, untrained teachers, pedagogical knowledge doesn't possess by teachers, shortage of Urdu teachers, this study was done to talk about the issue encountered by Urdu teacher during class. Seeking teaching material for use in Urdu classes is among the issues an Urdu language teacher encounters while teaching non-native speakers of Urdu. The state and issues of learning and teaching in Urdu have been discussed by Anzar (2018). As the survey report states, students in elementary school are not receiving adequate education in language skills. Thus, secondary level teaching and learning had been problematic for students as well as teachers. Furthermore, the Urdu -medium schools' student-teacher ratio is very low. Additionally, there was also a lack of resource availability in Urdu. Siraj's (2017) study on the status of Urdu -medium schools was quoted. It has been found by the research that 49% of schools were functioning in rented buildings, while 51% of schools possessed their own building. Twenty percent of schools had non-working restrooms, revealed the same poll. All of these have influenced teaching. Intellectual development and retention among Muslim students in Urdu -medium schools have been highlighted by Shaban (2016). As per his research, Urdu -medium schools lack behind other mediums and suffer from a teacher deficit in these schools. All these factors are negatively impacting the studies of girls.

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Objectives

- To Study the problem faced by Urdu teachers in teaching Urdu.
- To highlight the challenges and opportunities in Urdu teaching

Teaching Urdu as a subject can be a challenging task for instructor. Despite its importance as a language and a medium of instruction, Urdu teachers face numerous problem that hinder their effectiveness. Urdu languages experiencing a range of problems in the contemporary times. On one hand, it is the case that Urdu is treated differently by the government, which is harmful for the language (Sohail, 2020). Conversely, most individuals believe that Muslims are not interested much in Urdu too. Urdu is suffering from both ends of the phenomenon; therefore, it is excluded in the public as well as private spheres. Staying competitive with the times and connecting the language to contemporary needs of science and technology is another gigantic task for Urdu -speaking learners and educators. Teaching and learning through Urdu are afflicted with numerous issues for students as well as instructors. Students and teachers face numerous challenges in the teaching-learning process whenever Urdu is employed as a medium in institutions. They include the following ones: issues concerning elementary infrastructure and school facilities, recruitment issues of Urdu -speaking teachers, books in various subjects authored in Urdu language are lacking in school, no Urdu -speaking teachers who are tech-savvy and cannot use the technology in the classroom, language proficiency issues, etc. In spite of all this, there are numerous other issues which are hindering the learning and teaching process. As a result, learning and teaching in Urdu is becoming increasingly challenging for the teachers as well as the students. As per Sachar Committee report (2006). Students who finish primary level education in Urdu face problems in continuing higher studies in Urdu medium, because few secondary and higher secondary schools exist in the language. This implies that any student who wants to pursue further studies after fifth grade has to go to Hindi/English/Regional Medium School.

Teachers faces numerous challenges while teaching mathematics or science in Urdu due to the scarcity of Urdu content in these subjects. Mathematics is one of the main topics taught in schools. Considering that most of the other subjects are abstract, this has a slightly different character. So, to understand this subject, teachers and students need to concentrate on it. The main problem is the shortage of Urdu -speaking math teachers. In this regard, if the math teacher in a school does not know Urdu, he must teach the subject in Hindi or English. Similarly, other studies have focused on the issues of teaching various subjects in English or local regional language. In this regard, it has been frequently observed that Urdu -medium schools are compelled to teach courses like science and mathematics in either English or the local tongue, according to Farouqi (1994). As a result, students are forced to work in the same language. The lack of timely availability of mathematics textbooks and related books in Urdu is another significant issue (Anzar, 2018). In this context, Farouqi (1994) says that it has been generally found that Urdu medium schools are forced to teach subjects like Science and Mathematics in English or the regional language. Due to which students also work in the same language under compulsion. Another major challenge is nonavailability of Mathematics textbooks and supporting books in Urdu on time (Anzar, 2018). The problem of Urdu -textbooks arises even if a school has teachers teaching in the language. Consequently, mathematics needs to be taught in Hindi or English both to teachers and students. Furthermore, teachers have to cope with the lack of understanding of basic mathematical concepts on the part of the students. This creates a problem while trying to answer the questions on tests and exams. Another challenge in mathematics education is that difficult mathematical expressions such as Raqba (area) are hard for pupils to relate to their

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everyday lives. However, those teachers and students who related to Urdu medium of instructions, have to face various types of challenges in teaching and learning process. Teachers who are not appointed as a Urdu teacher in Urdu medium school, it is challenging for them. Most of the time Urdu medium schools have not appointed teachers of Urdu medium for years (Sinha,2009). Consequently, teachers who are from English and Hindi medium background are tend to forcefully teach Urdu medium children. Similarly, the issues surrounding the teaching of science subjects in Urdu were addressed by the National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities in 2007. According to the survey, Urdu -medium schools feel obliged to teach science and other topics in either English or the local tongue (NCRLM, 2007). Urdu -speaking students are compelled to study a variety of subjects in both Urdu and other languages. Due to this, there is a disconnect between the students' comprehension and the teachers' inability to relate to the kids of the Urdu media. In this case, the children were asked by the teachers and school administration to learn mathematics in Hindi or English rather than Urdu. This also impacts their academic performance. The children find it hard to understand the lessons taught in school since they do not understand Hindi or English. Moreover, since they may not be fluent in Urdu, teachers find it challenging to simplify abstract ideas and relate them to real life.

Some of the major challenges are given below:

- **Lack of availability of Urdu material: Material:** Among the most important issues, materials availability was a mainstay of discussion among both teachers and students. There is a scarcity of study material in the Urdu language. It is tough on students going to Urdu -medium schools to find books on specific subjects in Urdu. As a result, it becomes difficult for teachers to teach in Urdu, and they are compelled to rely on books in English or Hindi, which are then hard for Urdu -medium students to follow. Half of the teachers reported that of the problems faced by Urdu medium students, the biggest issue is not getting texts and other materials on schedule. Books are not available among most pupils, and even when they have books, these supporting materials are rare, with a lack of sufficient texts in math and science by Urdu -medium students. Besides this, in the class, there are fewer works of Urdu literature, regular publications, newspapers, etc.
- **Lack of pedagogical practices in Urdu subjects:** One of the main problems faced by the teachers is there is a lack of pedagogical practices in Urdu subjects. As compare to other subjects there is also a less no. of teachers appointed in Urdu so due to lack of trained teachers. Many times, it happens that teachers of other subjects have to take Urdu classes but they are not trained, hence they do not have pedagogical knowledge of Urdu due to which they face problem in taking Urdu classes. Researchers also found that several teachers said they did not understand the science and math textbooks quickly because of their difficult vocabulary. It is difficult to explain them to the pupils correctly. Moreover, there is a problem with these schools having no Urdu -speaking teachers. Since most subject-matter experts are fluent in Hindi or English, they cannot teach Urdu -medium pupils on that subject. Further, students are unaware of the terminology used in the book; teachers have to face a lot of problems.
- **Outdated Curriculum:** The Urdu curriculum may be outdated, focusing on traditional teaching methods rather than modern learner centered approach.
- **Lack of ICT integration in Urdu classes:** Information and communication technology is hardly put into use by Urdu -medium schools. Teachers as well as the students have the requisite skill to make proper application. Contrary to this, most of

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the languages possess no or less instructional materials. Urdu -medium open education resources are very scanty. It has also been discovered that Audio-visual teaching materials are not easily available in the Urdu language. Teachers and students were disappointed as a result. There is also a Lack of understanding and communication between our teachers and students.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion it has been clear that there is a lot of challenges faced by both teacher as well as students in teaching learning of Urdu. Special opportunities and challenges accompany teaching Urdu. There is a lot of potential for Urdu teachers to play a significant role in advancing Urdu language and culture despite scarce resources, poor preparation for the teacher profession, and social prejudices. Adopting the most current teaching methods, the use of technology, and engaging communities will enhance the learning outcome for the students and help them appreciate the Urdu language. Moreover, solving the problems which Urdu teachers face can work towards the development and future preservation of Urdu culture and language. To enhance their ability to use Urdu for all topics, training institutions should review the current framework for teacher support for Urdu competencies and training and continuing professional development. This can be achieved by establishing requirements for Urdu language competency that the relevant authorities can strictly enforce and monitor. Standards of instructors in all aspects of proficiency in Urdu language should be ascertained by training facilities and outcomes to guide future activities. Majority of the teachers gave priority emphasis on IT-computer literacy, lesson preparation, and Urdu teaching methods. Emphasis in these areas during training and development can benefit both the new and existing teaching staff. The study concluded that we can overcome the challenges faced by learners in studying Urdu like to use innovative method, storytelling method, integration of ICT to teach Urdu language skill etc.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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