

HINDI TEACHING AND LEARNING IN MAURITIUS

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History

The history of education in Mauritius is one of the gradual extension of provision from serving a privileged group to a system covering all children without distinction in class, gender, ethnic origin or even language and its literature so that no child and no language is left behind.

For this purpose, it has evolved from a completely private undertaking to a national education system. Apart from English and French Languages which we have inherited from our colonial masters, not less than 8 ancestral languages including Hindi are spoken, understood and taught at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Systematic but 'unofficial' secondary Hindi education may be said to have started with the establishment of the Hindi Parichay Examination by the Hindi Pracharini Sabha in 1946, but much earlier, Hindi teaching in several evening schools (Baitkas) of the island by voluntary bodies including the Arya Samaj movement was then more effective than that of some of the schools run under state direction.

In 1973, a motion was carried out by the late Sharma Jugdambi in the legislative assembly for the teaching of Hindi in the state secondary schools.

The same year, amidst a large gathering at the Municipal Theatre of Port Louis, in honour of Shivmangal Singh Suman, then visiting Mauritius, then the Prime Minister, Hon Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, announced that his government would introduce Hindi in state secondary and junior secondary schools.

Then comes the historic date for the Hindi Movement in Mauritius. On 29 January 1974, five (5) Hindi Education Officers were appointed and sent to the government secondary schools to introduce Hindi Language on the same footing as the traditional languages English and French. They were Mr. Devnarain Autar to Royal College, Port Louis, Mr. Prahlad Ramsurrun to Royal College, Curepipe, Mr. Permeshwar Chady to John Kennedy College, Miss Dhanwantee Reekaye to Queen Elizabeth College and Miss B. Busgeet to Rose Belle State Secondary College.

Source : Indradhanuth.special August 2014 issue

Today Hindi is taught in all 63 state secondary schools and most private secondary schools of Mauritius including those run under the Roman Catholic Education Authority.

Present Situation 2013 (stats) learner and teaching staff

The education system in Mauritius is largely based on the British System since Mauritius was a former British Colony. It consists of a 2+6+5+2 system of formal

education. Student passing CPE exams gain admittance to secondary schools, those with excellent results are admitted in the National Secondary Schools.

Secondary education covers a seven-year span starting from Form I to Form VI. Various subjects are taught from Form I to Form III including all Asian Languages which are compulsory in all state secondary schools and these Asian subjects depends upon the subjects taken at CPE level. As from Form IV, students are streamed according to the subjects they have opted for. At the end of the 5th year of study at the secondary level, students sit for Cambridge School Certificate (SC), examination. Passing the SC exams, allows them to continue another 2-year study ending with the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations. Good results at these exams allow them admission in good universities with excellent courses.

Table I : Percentage of students studying Hindi in Secondary Schools in 2012

Institutions	Percentage of Students									
	FI	FII	FIII	FIV	FV	LVI Princ	LVI Sub	UVI Princ	UVI Sub	Total
State Secondary Schools	45.6	44.7	43.7	14.4	15	3.6	3	3.6	3	25.9
Private Secondary Schools	19.8	19.3	18.2	6.3	6.7	3.9	0.6	4	0.7	11.8
Total	32.2	31.3	30.2	10	10.2	3.9	1.8	3.9	1.9	18.5

Table II : Percentage of students studying Hindi in Secondary Schools in 2013

Institutions	Percentage of Students									
	FI	FII	FIII	FIV	FV	LVI Princ	LVI Sub	UVI Princ	UVI Sub	Total
State Secondary Schools	45.8	45.9	43.6	16.3	15.3	4	3.6	3.8	3.5	26.7
Private Secondary Schools	21.1	19.8	20.7	7.2	6.6	4.2	0.7	4.3	0.6	12.6
Total	32.4	31.2	31	7.2	10.2	4.1	2.2	4	2.1	19

Secondary Schooling in Mauritius is compulsory for all students of ages 12 to 16 years and optional for students of ages 17 to 20.

Educators

Currently in 2014 there are 89 Hindi Educators on the establishment and the Ministry seeks the help of about 20 Supply Educators as and when required to cater for replacement of these educators. As for Private Secondary Schools there are more than 80 Educators catering for the Hindi Sector.

Government Support and Policies

At the secondary level, all subjects are treated at par according to the curriculum. However, unlike English and French languages Hindi and other Asian Languages are given less time in terms of teaching time i.e. only 3 periods weekly as compared to 5 for English and French Languages.

Since 2012, all students opting for an Asian Language at Form I level should compulsorily study it until Form III (circular notice No. 8 of 2012) and the subject is offered at Form IV and Form V level irrespective of the number of students who have opted for the subject.

As for educators teaching at secondary level in the state sector, all of them are graduates or hold post graduate qualifications and are recruited by the Public Service Commission on a regular basis. Despite their qualifications, regular teacher training is being provided to educators by the Ministry and Mauritius Institute of Education.

Subject combinations have been harmonized to allow maximum students to benefit from the subjects offered, in view of scholarships, future career and courses at the tertiary level.

The Mauritius Examination Syndicate, body responsible for examination in Mauritius, in collaboration with CIE allowed the marking of the Hindi paper for SC since the 90's by training the Mauritian Hindi Educators through workshops. All the markers have been duly trained and up to given satisfaction to CIE. Together with the Hindi Sc Paper, Hinduism and Literature in Hindi papers are also marked by the Mauritian Educators/Markers.

Pedagogical Philosophies and Strategies

The Mauritius Institute of Education, in close collaboration with the MGI, proposes courses of BA Hindi (Hons.) with Education for school leavers. The U.O.M proposes joint BA courses coupled with History, English or French Languages. Together with these courses, for the training of secondary educators, the MIE/MGI proposed the PGCE course in 1985 to train the 1st batch of Hindi Educators. Then this course was relaunched since 2006 to train all the secondary Hindi Educators.

As far as curriculum development is concerned, the MGI has been entrusted with this complex work together with the production and printing of text books. So far the personnel of MGI have given a very big help in the propagation of all the Asian Languages.

To give a further boost to the propagation of the Hindi Language, the MGI is proposing a diploma course in Hindi with Education to help those people who wish to go further in this field.

Key Players in the Sector

The main key player in this sector is the Ministry of Education and Human Resources who is providing all the facilities possible for the propagation of this language in our country. The MGI, with all the facilities provided for the propagation of Hindi Language, together with five secondary schools, plus the training of educators deserve a very good place. The MIE helps in the training of Educators, be it at primary or secondary level and helps in curriculum development. The MES is the body responsible for the conduct of all examinations in our country and even marking of the Cambridge SC Hindi Paper since the past 15 years.

The MBC plays a key role in the propagation of Hindi Language by proposing many programmes in Hindi and relaying the programme of Zee TV and Door Darshan programme from India forgetting the locally produced programme be it on television or the radio where specific channels are dedicated to the Hindi Language.

The role of religious bodies like Arya Sabha, Mauritius and Hindi Pracharini Sabha cannot be forgotten. Together with this, the contribution of evening schools held in the 'Baitkas' cannot be minimized. Since the olden days, despite the lack of proper amenities, selfless teachers have contributed a lot into the propagation of this language.

Moreover, the Government Hindi Teachers' Union at the primary level and the Government Secondary Teachers' Union at Secondary Level have in their own way waged an incessant struggle to propagate this language, despite many reservations. Last but not the least, the role of Hindi Pracharini Sabha, in collaboration with University of Allahabad, India, has helped a lot for the Hindi Language by organizing such

examination such as parichay, prathama, madhyama and uttama examinations, thus encouraging students to prosper in the villages of Mauritius.

Year	No. of students taking part in Exams						
	Praveshika	Parichay	Prathama	Madhyama	Uttama	Uttama II	Uttama III
2013	1198	648	487	335	219	204	185
2014	1142	623	391	270	225	173	185

Source : Hindi Pracharini Sabha

Careers Prospects for Learners

The Cambridge HSC being a gateway to University now, students opting for Hindi, along with other subjects can gain entry in any course provided he/she satisfies other criteria as well. Students may opt for courses such as Law, Finance, Human Resources, Management, Business Communication, Psychology, Humanities and even languages. With such courses for students the sky is the limit.

International Support

The setting up of the World Hindi Secretariat in Mauritius through the close collaboration of the Government of India is one of the most noteworthy step taken in the move to get international recognition of Hindi as a United Nations Language. Moreover, the Indian Government by the setting up of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture and by providing many scholarships for Mauritian students to study Hindi at University level has enhanced the teaching of Hindi in Mauritius.

The World Hindi Secretariat in close collaboration with the MGI is working on innovative measures in the teaching and learning of Asian Languages. Undeniably the use of Information and Communication Technology along with a variety of opportunities existent online, proves to be beneficial in producing techno-pedagogical materials and thereby rendering the essence of teaching and learning more effectively and efficient. The Language Resource Centre has already produced a handbook in ICT for Hindi Language.

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