The transformational role of preservice teacher training in promoting MTB-MLE in Sri Lanka

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The purpose of this study is to identify (1) how effectively mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) teacher education can be developed and incorporated as a teaching qualification in preservice and inservice teacher education institutions, and (2) the key actors and institutions affecting the selection, training, and practical work of MLE teachers.

The introduction and incorporation of MTB-MLE through the 19 National Colleges of Education (NCoEs), which provide three year preservice teacher training leading to a National Diploma in Teaching (two years residential and one year internship), will be of immense relevance and importance as language plays a vital role as a means of communication and a bridge between cultures leading to establish one’s identity and gaining universal membership in the global community. By including MTB-MLE methodologies in NCoE curriculum, and through a systematic evaluation process during the internship period, this could effectively be done. This prior theoretical and practical knowledge of MTB-MLE can unquestionably fulfil the need. The same could be applied to inservice teacher education under the guidance and supervision of the National Institute of Education.

The Chief Commissioner of NCoE, officials in teacher education, and presidents of 19 NCoEs can make top level decisions about selection, training, practical work, and evaluation. Since teachers execute the policies made at higher levels, it is clear that internalization of MTB-MLE concepts leading to certification could effectively be done through preservice teacher training.