

English Language Teaching in the Govt. Schools of Tripura: Think Through Rural Perspective

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Abstract: This study sheds light on the difficulties of English teaching and learning in the Government Schools of Rural Tripura. In 2006, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj enlisted Dhalai, now the largest of eight districts of Tripura, as one of the 250 most backward districts in India. The focus is on the rural backward students to show the reality of our country, highly contrasted to the picture of digital classrooms and alike. Unlike urban counterparts, rural school students perform poorly in English learning. This paper presents the challenges of teaching English and the variables affecting students' learning process. With the advent of Globalization and world-class Multi-National Companies (MNC) English has become the language of prosperity. Learning English opens up an infinite reservoir of knowledge and understanding. In building a successful career or uplifting from poverty and dependency English language acquisition plays a significant role beyond any other. Global demand and importance have led English language to be taught as a compulsory all across India. Although there exist numerous Govt. Policies, Circulars and Instructions for SLA starting from primary to HS level, accessibility of the relevant facilities to rural students are minimal. Unlike urban counterparts, rural schools lack advance infrastructure and competent faculties. Thus a prominent difference in people's English language skills prevail between rural and urban areas.

Key words: Rural Tripura, Backward, Govt. schools, Globalization.

Introduction: Language, what we know as of now, has evolved through multiple Epochs in order to communicate since our DNA veered from that of the apes. By the time the British colonised significant parts of the other world, English language became the way of expression. All around the

world the commerce and economy run by means of proper communication, precisely through English. Thus the global demand of English education sprouted and being promoted in every international initiative. Now, quality Education in English is an itinerary for all round development of our country. Being in north-eastern India, the population of Tripura is vastly distributed in rural and remote areas. This is needless to say that particularly this population is to be educated earnestly when we talk about development. But teaching English in the rural area is easier said than done. Since the parents and guardians lack basic education the onus of educating their children lie solely upon teachers and faculties. As a result we see that the parents residing in these rural areas are unable to directly participate in the education process of their children. They barely understand what their children are reading and writing in the school as well at home. It is a fact that the parents also need the help of their children to earn the livelihood. This ambience of a rural student is a huge difference as compared to the urban learner. The setting and environment of an urban centre of learning is totally different as contrast to the rural areas. The major highlight can be like teachers, peers, infrastructure, school bags, covers on the books and the notebooks, homework etc. These instances may be found trivial by others but it does matter a lot as far as learning or teaching of English is concerned. Teaching in rural areas is definitely a challenge be it of any subject and English gets tougher. A teacher finds it puzzling to conduct and execute the classes as per the acquired theoretical knowledge of ELT. One has to think of conducive strategies so as to apply to the learners' level. The students fear many subjects due to their tender age but English makes them feel more dizzying. It is treated as elite over other languages. As per the scenario in the rural schools the teaching material is substandard, basic infrastructure is unavailable and the socio-cultural factors are hostile. The teacher teaching in rural schools is looked up to as the role model, not just by the students but by the society too as the challenges and demands one faces is hard and laborious.

The main objectives of teaching English is to enable students to understand simple commands, instructions and requests and also carry them out (NCF 2005). Three language formula suggests that the learners should be taught mother tongue, national language and foreign language. There are

multiple factors those stand together as the main cause behind the unplanned system and ill-managed English teaching-learning process. Few are as follows:

- The teachers entrusted are not skilled and fall short in dedication.
- The teaching is purely based on theoretical and bookish.
- Basic infrastructure is not available.
- Inadequate books with no standard teaching material.
- Parents illiterate, unable to motivate their children.
- Logistic issue for the learners to commute.
- Hostile socio-cultural factors.

Research Method: To get broad information from rural area students' English achievement, the study primarily relied on the remote districts of Tripura namely Dhalai and Unakoti. The research was conducted on 100 students of senior basic which belongs to class VI-VIII upper primary level students, 10 English subject teachers, 30 guardians as well as other documentary evidence. To get to know the actual picture of rural area of English achievement, 8 schools (four governments and four non-governments) were chosen randomly. The study was conducted by observation meticulously in the classrooms and distributed questionnaires to the stakeholders', students and English teachers. Most of the oral evidence was noted immediately on the spot.

Results: The analysis of the questionnaire that was provided to the students, as per the results and responds, interprets that the students are unable to read and write a proper sentence in English. Many of the students faced the problem in spelling, handwriting not up to the mark, poor reading skills. The analysis of the teachers shows that they are unable to conduct conducive teaching learning to the students as they lack basic knowledge on English language. Guardians are innocent and illiterate so they are unable to help their children in their studies. Mostly, respondents gave their opinion that environment plays a key role in learning a second language.

Conclusion: Since English is taught as the second language to the learners' in school they find it complex in their learning. We see that effective implementation of English curriculum is not yet achieved as per the requirement. English is yet the matter of fear for students studying in rural comparatively to the urban learners. To achieve the curriculum goals and objectives, government and non-government organization, should take up few plans by considering existent condition of English language learning and the prevailing problems which are hindrances for implementing it. All these are possible only if a committed & honest approach is adopted. A teacher has to adopt innovative strategies in the classroom to get the positive learning environment. One has to think beyond and go for action research to find the solutions on the spot. A few measures like appointment of skilled & committed teachers of English, effective implementation of minimum technological aids which can be provided in such areas like TV, Computers, Stereos, weekly film shows, will definitely facelift to the general ambience in schools. The said measures may appear far-fetched due to the electricity issues which is common in the far-flung areas. But with the implementation of multiple Energy schemes by the Govt. and stabilizing the existing power supply scenario, the near future certainly looks better in those areas.

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