

Role of English Language in Enriching Education System in India

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ABSTRACT

Learning English has never been so important for Indian students. Almost every institute in India has adopted English as the medium of imparting knowledge. From admission forms to textbooks, every resource is available mostly in English these days. This is another reason why spoken English is important in India. English is the language of opportunities. Hence, it plays a pivotal role in the employment sector. Students from various disciplines of the knowledge look for job opportunities in and across the country. Organizations often look for candidates with exceptional communication skills and good command over English. This is because the majority of organizations have an international clientele and English is a common language for them to interact. Many jobs like IELTS Tutor and English professional. Hence, they look for employees that are not only technically sound but are proficient in English. Being a global language, English is understood in most of the countries. Hence, it gets easier to communicate with people around the world when you know English.

Keywords :- Learning English, IELTS Tutor and English professional.

I. INTRODUCTION

“English is not an obsession; it is a door to better opportunities”. One cannot overstate the importance of English language in India. As a student, you might have faced embarrassment due to poor English skills at least once in your lifetime. Hence, you understand how important it is today to have knowledge of English. There is no denying people have been increasingly realizing the importance of English language in India. By getting mastery over English, one can share their thoughts, knowledge, gather information, etc and grow with the challenging world.

Before we delve into the importance of English language in enriching education system in India, let us first take a brief look at the history of English in India.

English in India – History

It was not before the 17th century when English traders landed India as ‘The East India Company’ in the lure of trading with Indians. Hence, it’d be apt to say that India’s first brush up with English started with the arrival of the East India Company. Gradually, the trading company involved themselves in local politics and expanded industries over the next centuries. With the greed to expand their rule in India, they started looking for Indian mediators who could play administrative roles under the reign of British officials. Soon, they turned to high-class Indians, like Brahmins to work for them. The primary agenda of the British was to create a class of Indians who could think and work like the British. This is when they realized the importance of English language in India for the purpose of education. To achieve this, they established several universities

based on British models with emphasis on the English language.

Importance of English Language in India Today
While the British motive behind introducing English to Indians was not fair, it has turned out to be a gift for our country. With English as a common language of communication, India has made its way out in the world setting benchmarks in various fields.

Today, English is the only language favoured by different industries including legal and banking systems, defence, industrial houses and trade and commerce. Moreover, it is still the medium of instruction at many post-graduate institutions. It's a common belief these days that the English language shapes the way people see the world. Having knowledge of more than one language is a gift that makes an individual more efficient and skilful in various ways. It is for this reason that even many Indian freedom fighters adopted English as a language to communicate with masses both inside and outside the country. English also helped in bridging the gap between states and regions when the linguistic diversity in India was extremely sharp. Because of all the roles that English played for the nation, our constitution gave it the status of official language in India.

Learning English has never been so important for Indian students. Almost every institute in India has adopted English as the medium of imparting knowledge. From admission forms to textbooks, every resource is available mostly in English these days. Whatever stream you belong to, you might need the help of research papers during your graduation. Today most of the research and academic papers that were previously written in native languages are also written in English languages. For instance, the ratio of papers written in English to that in Dutch is 40:1.

Indian aspirants who dream of going abroad for jobs or studies must also know English. Getting admission in foreign universities is tough for those who lack communication skills. Since English is a globally accepted language, students must have proficiency in verbal and written English to apply and get selected in their dream institute. Also, many countries ask students to clear an English proficiency test- IELTS, for instance- before applying for a Visa. It helps them know if they are welcoming the right talent to their country. To sum up, it is important to learn English for students, because:

Almost all books are available in the English language. The vocabulary and terminology in any field like science, economics, technology, medicine, Space, etc. are available only in English. All competitive exams for higher studies are written in English. English enjoys the status of official language by UNO. Students who wish to travel abroad for higher studies have to clear competitive exams in the English language. There is no doubt that English is here to stay for long in the country. Since we truly embrace it along with Hindi and other regional languages, English is sure to hold the future as well. Everybody now understands the importance of English in modern India. Hence, it is necessary to foster English learning among children and youngsters at various levels of education. Further, it is important to safeguard the role of English as a "library language" even where the medium of instruction is a non-English language.

Whoever knows English has ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth, which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations. It may be safely said, that the literature now extant in that language is of far greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together. The question now before us is simply

whether, when it is in our power to teach this language, we shall teach languages, by which, by universal confession, there are not books on any subject which deserve to be compared to our own; whether, when we can teach European science, we shall teach systems which, by universal confession, whenever they differ from those of Europe, differ for the worse; and whether, when we can patronize sound Philosophy and true History, we shall countenance, at the public expense, medical doctrines, which would disgrace an English farrier, -- Astronomy, which would move laughter in girls at an English boarding school,--History, abounding with kings thirty feet high, and reigns thirty thousand years long,--and Geography, made up of seas of treacle and seas of butter.

Mass education would be (in the fullness of time) by the class of Anglicized Indians the new policy should produce, and by the means of vernacular dialects: In the Indian context, the English language had been recognized for official purposes in the Constitution for a period of 15 years and continues to enjoy such recognition under the Official Languages Act, 1963. While the “national language” issue was contentious during the Constituent Assembly debates and continues to remain unsettled even today, the use of English remains prevalent, not just for official purposes but also in education and public discourse. An estimated 10% of India’s population can speak the language.

But in a country with 22 scheduled languages (those that are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution) and 99 other non-scheduled languages (as per the 2011 Census), what role does English play? Why is English becoming increasingly sought after as a medium of instruction? And what impact does the English medium have on education in the country? While the reliance of the ruling elite classes on English is not in question, its “official status” is

tenuous. It does not find a place in the scheduled languages list. Instead, Hindi is recognized as the official language of the nation and Article 343 of the Constitution, and Sanskrit is given primacy when it comes to providing the vocabulary for Hindi. The mention of English in this constitutional scheme is characterized by its temporary nature since Article 343 provides for its continuance in use for only 15 years.

Placing English outside what he termed the “chaturvarna (four-tier order) of languages” in India (with Sanskrit, Hindi, the scheduled, and the non-scheduled languages occupying various rungs of the ladder), Hany Babu M T (2017) wrote: While officially, English is treated as an invisible or untouchable language, it continues to dominate the public sphere and having no access to good English is often the determinants of social mobility, wherefore the underprivileged find it impossible to catch up as the state has no obligation to provide education in English for them.

But it is in this placement of English outside the “official” language system of the state that Babu also situated its emancipatory potential for the marginalized. However good, however important, English may be, we cannot tolerate that there should be an English-knowing elite and a large mass of our people not knowing English. Therefore, we must have our own language. But English—whether you call it official or whatever you please, it does not matter whether you mention it in the legislation or not—but English must continue to be a most important language in India which large numbers of people learn and perhaps learn compulsorily. Why? Well, English today is far more important in the world than it was when the British came here. It is undoubtedly today the nearest approach to an international language. S Anand (1999) explained the unique position of English in Indian society, as compared to a

language like Sanskrit, which has been historically inaccessible to Dalits.

Socio-economic Benefits and English Learning Aspiration Historically, English has been the preserve of the elite and privileged in India. It is a well-known fact that the first people to benefit from English education in India were the privileged and elites, who could send their children to English-medium schools and accumulate cultural capital over time. One needs to note that it is not only English as a language of instruction but the way it is spoken (accent) that creates a hierarchy in the society and allows the privileged to garner immense cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) to be used for social mobility.

The cultural capital of English translates into social and economic benefits due to the predominance of “networks” in accessing career opportunities in India. The same has also been true in a global set-up since the advent of liberalization in the 1990s. Faust and Nagar (2001) explained:

This social, cultural, economic and political fragmentation leads to increasingly unequal access to resources and power in a period of growing transnational networks among the elite. Under the liberalizing trade regime, the elite see their futures as tied to the global economy and increasingly detached from the future of the common people. In fact, some of the people we interviewed in 1995-96 linked a steadily increasing dominance of English with the restructuring of the global and national economies, and the globalization of culture in which the English speaking national elite benefit from transnational capitalism while the ordinary people are left out. This sentiment resonates with GPD’s (1996) view of elites as a cultural comprador who speak English to do business with multinationals and speak the vernacular to mesmerize the unsuspecting masses.

Thus, we can say that English education in India is playing a pivotal role within the folds of the Indian educational system and making it one of the most important languages required for future advancements in career as well as making them global citizens.

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