

A Study of English language Teaching in Tribal Areas of Poonch District in Jammu and Kashmir

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Received Feb. 10, 2017

Accepted March 14, 2017

ABSTRACT: *More than 200 years have passed by English Language to be inhabitant of India. Various stages of Development have passed sometimes accept and sometimes not accepted. Certain Strata of Indian society have accepted it as the first language; some see it as the essential second language whereas others regard it as a link language. Both at the national and international level. But in all the above discussions, English remains an important language. This is the reason it is continued to focus on the teaching and learning of English. India is a vast country and inhabitants numerous tribes with varying ways of life. Therefore it is better to study the topic in socio-economic linguistic and geographical perspectives. This paper will deliberately confine the discussion to the teaching of English in the tribal areas of Poonch District in Jammu And Kashmir State.*

Key Words: *English Language training, Tribal Development, Tribal learners, Poonch District.*

INTRODUCTION

English is the language of international communication. Although English is not the most spoken language in the world, it is the official in 53 countries and is spoken as a first language by around 400 million people worldwide. But that's not all; it is also the most common second language in the world. But to teach English as a second language in tribal areas still remains a greater problem. The reason is that one should have understand the difficulty of the situation as one has to teach English to some who have, perhaps no or little English. At the school level the main focus of the student is to pass English exam. The teacher shows the tricks to pass the exam and doesn't bother whether the students have learnt English at the end of the term or year. Such practice of teachers and students create lack of interest in students and demotivate them from English at a very early stage of life, which by the course of time becomes one of the major problems of lack of communication skills. The student realizes it by time he/she is about to graduate and searching for job in the market. One of the major problems of teaching English in tribal areas is to change the mind set of the conservatives (those who don't feel the necessity of change) to persuade them for the change that education and the learning of English shall bring; after all learning is a change of behaviour. So it is the responsibility of parents to educate their kids so that they can also be on par with the modern world. Lack of motivation remains the major challenge for teaching English. If the teacher can establish a good rapport with the

learners, his/her job would be easier. Studies suggest that teacher motivation contributes more to teaching learning process than the teacher competence. Therefore it is rightly said, "If you are teaching "John Greek". You must know John, you must know Greek, and you must know how to teach John Greek". It is in the context of this kind that the following small historical fact has been contextualised with the learning of English.

The tribes are the essential gifts of our nature. Hence, it is our duty to bring them up as developed in the society. They are also ordinary human beings like us, who should participate and socialize in the society. This is possible, only when they have a language at hand, which can bridge them to the larger world. Thus, English language teaching is to be focused more in the tribal areas for their betterment and active participation in the society. This is possible only by creating more language teaching methods in the class rooms which makes the learning, a part of experience. Proper awareness is to be given among the communities to make them realize the prospects of English language in store for them. The knowledge on addressing Bi-Lingual classroom, understanding the tribal situation as a special group can bring the tribal children into the mainstream keeping their level of achievement intact at par with the other children of other contents. In the Indian situation, the content and process need to be adaptable for the children of special needs. Due to the gap between the home language and the school language and due to the gap that exists between

the content of the curricula and the external content in which the tribal children lives. The pedagogy followed in teaching the other learners will not be effective in the tribal classrooms.

English language teaching in Tribal Areas: -

Grammar translation method is one of the earliest and most practiced methods of English language teaching. Though presently considered out dated in reference of modern methods. It is still useful and constantly applied in schools and colleges in India.

The direct method which is also known as Natural and psychological Methods stresses on developing oral and listening skills of English than bookish grammar.

Communicative methods don't aim at language as a set of linguistic items, but aims at developing communicative competence in the learners. It focuses on the meaning and functions rather than on the form of the language.

Structural-Situational method gives importance to language as a system of structurally related elements of phonemes, morphemes, words, structures and sentence types to encode and decode the meaning.

The Bilingual method considers that second language can be learned with the help learner's mother tongue but it should not be used as word to word translation as in Grammar Translation method but as a means to achieve the Communicative ends.

Having considered the above methods, we come to know that English language teaching in tribal region needs a mixed and comprehensive approach. No single method can serve the purpose; a mixed approach according to the mind set of the learners should be employed. Primarily, the Grammar Translation method is useful since the students are used to it from their schooldays. Also application of other methods can be considered as per need. Because tribal region is a special region in many respects. What is suitable to metros may not suit our students in tribal zone should be taught first to learn basic skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. Healthy and congenial atmosphere should be created in the class so that the students develop the self-confidence and be inspired to communicate in English. Relevant changes can be made in the syllabi. We should promote our students to use four skills of language effectively. They should be encouraged to read, write and speak. This is not as easy as it seems to be but the difficult target of achieving language proficiency in English can never

be got otherwise. The students should be given language assignments containing presentation of CV, writing letters, reports, agendas etc. to develop their language skills.

English Language Teaching in Tribal of Poonch District of Jammu and Kashmir, India

The tribal are socially, economically and politically backward section in India. According to census 2001 tribal's accounts for 8.2 percent of India population. Scheduled Tribe groups have traditionally lived in remote and far-flung areas closer to forests and natural resources. The areas in which tribal live are economically backward and living conditions are also poor. The low literacy rate of scheduled tribes is a serious threat to Indian education. The increase in the number of failures and drop out in the schools of Poonch district is pointed out as major cause of the fall by educators and proponents of the state. The lack of proficiency in English language is identified as a major obstacle to the education of Schedule Tribe learners. The inappropriate syllabus and teaching methods of English develops a negative attitude in learners towards learning .The fear of learning a foreign language is one of the factors to stop their education because English language is a criteria rather than an option at higher level. It is clear that tribal learners are not motivated well. They have adjustment problems with school curriculum and teaching of English language. Though the government can provide grants and scholarships for the betterment of learners, the responsibility of their educational development are ultimately in the hands of the teachers.

A sample of 50 weak learners of the class was chosen for the study on the basis of their examination grades. The study was conducted in one of the higher secondary schools of Chandak. Where tribal learners are educated along with non-tribal learners. During the pilot study was undertaken by the researcher to axes the English language education of Tribal learners and study the area of weaknesses contributing to the lack of quality learning. The informal interactions were held with some teachers, parents and children.

The teaching of English language in schools and colleges in tribal areas should be integrated and graded. The teaching/learning materials should motivate and lead the learners ahead by inviting him/her accomplish the tasks step-by-step, one after the other. At each stage the learning material next or higher level. Annual examination should not be the only means of testing the learner's Progress Opportunities of expression in the target language [English] should be provided and

encouraged. The learner should be involved in the process of formulation and revision teaching/learning material. Students in the higher secondary school can be motivated to burring or create socially relevant tales, poems, stories, anecdotes and real life situations for discussion to the classroom. Learners at higher levels of school can work with vocabulary and sentence structures that age not fixed or rigid. At graduation and post graduation level students can be gradually initiated towards apprehension and narrating skills in such a manner that the material they produce for evaluation serves as the reading instructional material for the lower grades.

In this way teaching/learning of English in tribal areas can became or develop into self initiated exploration with the help of English teachers in tribal areas and other peer groups comprising sociologists, psychologists, educationists, N.G.O and the like socially relevant curriculum can be formulated. This graded curriculum should have a well – marked starting point and a finish line. At every stage the learner should be able to identify and experience the difference between the achieved position and the previous state. The present syllabus in schools and colleges is obscure and repetitive. The grammatical categories prescribed at the high school level like parts of speech, sentence structures, transformation, etc. are again included in the under – graduate curricula. As a result the learner constantly revolves in the realm the unknown never fully realizing the progress in the real sense. The exam oriented teaching encourages the teachers and the students to solve the linguistic and grammatical problems with mathematical formulae or solutions. The rule based method of teaching structural grammar in the classrooms ignores the communicative purpose of language.

Thus, English language teaching/ learning shares an equal amount of expectation and limitation. Teachers are not provided with the freedom to choose instructional material. Moreover, in an exam oriented system all efforts are discussed towards performance in exams. The teacher has no liberty to move away from the prescribed text and has taught the presided text in the prescribed manner. In such a situation even an intuitive teacher is always faced with the dilemma of

whether to help learners acquire competence in English or prepare the pupil [examinee] to obtain higher grades. So the teaching of English in tribal areas should cater primarily to the economic cultural and interactive needs of the tribal people.

The course should not endeavour to transform the tribal people into the so called civilized society. The tribal population is civilized. It lives in the lap of nature, myths, and beliefs practises along with their indigenous knowledge can best be known to the world if English becomes a tool in their hands but if it becomes only an ornament like it has become in many parts of the country. It will differentiate between those who possess it and those who don't.

Conclusion:-

Language learning is a skill. It is more difficult to teach because language is taught by the use of language itself. Every section of the society has his/her own idiosyncrasies. Due to the nomadic, agrarian life style, the tribal's are somehow cut off from the mainstream students. They have their own place and ideologies of learning. The students have their own language problems. So, it is responsibility of society to help them to overcome all these problems and how the tribal's come with the main stream students to the need of the hour to learn English language and to complete with the world change is the soul of life. If we will not change ourselves then we will not adjust in this environment. All of us have heard about Darwin's theory survival of the fittest. If we will learn and absorbs this theory than we will understand the importance of English language.

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