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Enhancement of English Language in Rural Haryana

Dr. Rashmi Lohchab

Associate Professor, Department of English, M.K.J.K Mahavidyalya, Rohtak, Haryana, India.

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Abstract— *English has emerged as an international language and plays an important role in education, communication, employment, and global participation. In India, its significance increased during the colonial period and has continued after independence because of its usefulness in a multilingual society. The present paper focuses on the enhancement of English language proficiency among students in rural Haryana. It highlights the significant disparity between urban and rural students, particularly in terms of vocabulary, communication skills, grammatical competence, and exposure to English. The major factors responsible for the weak position of English in rural areas include low literacy levels, limited learning resources, inadequate teaching facilities, lack of an English-speaking environment, and insufficient access to modern educational technologies. The paper suggests several measures for improving English language learning among rural and first-generation learners, including bilingual and translation-based teaching, early introduction of English, vocabulary development, grammar practice, creative writing, classroom communication, audiovisual resources, online learning programmes, language laboratories, and greater community participation. It also emphasizes the role of teachers, government agencies, educational institutions, and local administration in creating effective learning opportunities. Strengthening English education in rural Haryana can contribute to students' confidence, academic development, employability, and participation in the contemporary knowledge society.*

Keywords— ***English Language, Rural Haryana, English Proficiency, First-Generation Learners, Bilingual Teaching, Translation Method, Digital Learning, NEP- 2020.***

The English language has no longer remained confined to its place of origin; rather, its proliferation due to various social and political reasons has changed its status to that of an international language. The root cause of the global nature of this language was the imperialist policy of England, which resulted into colonization of many countries of Asia and Africa. Consequently, a large number of countries of the world got exposed to this language. As far as the scenario of India is concerned, Indians came into proper interaction with this language in the eighteenth century, specially through the introduction of Lord Macaules's Educational Policy. The teaching of English language was the very pivot of this policy. The imposition of this language on Indians was basically an administrative compulsion because the Britishers wanted to create a class in India "who may be interpreter between us and the millions whom we govern: a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect", thus, becoming merely a bridge to assist them in their imperialist motives. But in this regard, they were quite myopic because acquisition of this language proved a boon in disguise for Indians. It opened the floodgates for them to have access to all the western notions of liberty and rationality. The awareness of these newly acquired ideas rather strengthened their spirits to rebel against all kinds of political and intellectual slavery. They became aware of histories of freedom struggle and progressive movements of various nations. Western political upheavals, specially French Revolution and American War of Independence and subsequent concept of democratic set up intensified their struggle to attain independence from the clutches of colonial subjugation of England over a long span of almost three centuries. Most of our frontline leaders of the freedom struggle such as

Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Sarojini Naidu etc. got education from England and ironically, became champions of the independence movement.

The crescendo of the freedom movement, leading to that midnight hour when the world slept and India awoke to life and freedom to keep her tryst with destiny and declaration of 'We the People of India' to proclaim ourselves Democratic Socialist Republic were the developments bound to influence any sensitive mind during that crucial stage. Consequently, our visionary leaders realized the global importance of this language and, eventually, they framed the policies to provide education in the vernaculars as well as in English. The basic motive behind these policies was to enable Indians to keep themselves in tune with the progressive waves of the world. India, being a vast land of diverse region and culture, where regional languages were dominant, English had an edge over others languages because it was an easy medium of communication in multilingual India. Keeping in view the multifarious advantages of this language, special importance to it was given specially in case of higher education.

But a broad survey of this language even after so many years of its prevalence in the case of Haryana clearly reveals a large-scale disparity between urban and rural students. In rural areas, the students have a very poor knowledge of this language and lag behind in its general usage. A synoptic survey of this problem reveals that although a plethora of causes are responsible for this dismal scenario, the root cause of this low level popularity of English is the low literacy level of villagers. Since most of the people in our villages are uneducated or semi-educated, they fail to understand this language, whereas others generally communicate in their regional language. Eventually, the basic remedy of this low scale prevalence of language lies in raising the literacy level in rural areas so that they may be able to understand the importance of this language in contemporary times.

Keeping in view the backward situation of rural India, the question arises how to teach the first generation learners. In this teaching methodology, the first step is to motivate the students to enrich their vocabulary of English language. They should be encouraged to read English books with simple sentences. In this respect, the translation method is very effective because they will learn how to use a particular kind of word in its cultural context. The functional approach is to use a bilingual method of teaching; the concerned topic should be made clear in the regional language and then that should be explained in English. At the primary and secondary levels, various topics of translation and books should be made available. Sahitya Academy has taken an initiative to translate literary works of various languages into English and vice-versa. The departments of education at state level and even universities should also include in their curriculum various translated works. For instance, the translated version of many Indian authors like Kabir, Rabindranath Tagore, Munshi Premchand and Kalidas etc. in the subject curriculum of undergraduate and post graduate degree courses of Kurukshetra and Maharshi Dayanand University students has made it quite easy for them to understand the usage of English words in their familiar cultural context. This practice of translation includes a lot of complications due to cultural variations yet a standard translated work will be quite fruitful for teaching first generation learners.

Another significant step to encourage the learning capacity of rural students includes introduction of this language at the primary level itself. This concept is purely based on the scientific notion that a child has an innate ability to learn many languages more quickly and accurately as compared to an adult. He can easily understand the semantic and syntactic structures of a language, enabling him to construct various kinds of sentences. Acknowledging this factor, the Government of Haryana took a right step a few years ago by introducing this language at the primary level itself because earlier the students had to face a lot of difficulties while constructing these sentences at the middle level. National Education Policy 2020 lays special focus on the introduction of a three language formula at primary level itself. This acquisition will gradually enable the child to understand regional cultures also. Moreover, keeping in perspective this focus of the government to reduce regional and language gaps, emphasis was laid on translation work also.

When a student becomes aware of the elementary vocabulary of the English language, the next step is to teach him various grammatical concepts. For instance, he should be made aware of the various parts of speech, tenses, kinds of sentences, auxiliaries, voices, narration, non-finites etc. In this way, a student will learn how to construct grammatically correct sentences and subsequently, this faculty should be promoted through creative writing. Initially the students should be asked to write small paragraphs on their various kinds of socio-cultural experiences so that they may be able to convey their spontaneous experiences into English. Gradual practice of small scale writings will certainly enable them to think critically. To provide a practical shape to this idea, regular competitions of various programmes like essay writing and book-reviews should be organised.

Beside these writing practices, the students should be encouraged to communicate in English because inter-personal communication is a very appropriate device which accelerates the very process of thinking in that particular language, enabling a student to logically understand various

permutations and combinations of different words. For instance, it can be made compulsory in a classroom teaching, leading to the inculcation of a habit among the students. It can be further promoted through various kinds of mock programmes and extempore speech.

Since the rural students do not have an adequate exposure to congenial milieu of this language due to backward and uneducated social scenarios. Audiovisual methods and online programmes of teaching can be very effective in this regard. Different videos on various kinds of topics like better pronunciation, grammatical concepts etc. will certainly improve their knowledge of this language. Media can also play a vital role in upgrading the quality of the first generation learners. Through the telecast of various kinds of innovative programmes on television networks, the students can be made aware of the latest methodologies and can also have an opportunity to listen to the lectures of different experts. Although the Indian government has already started distance education programmes through Open Universities like Indira Gandhi Open University yet its access is limited only upto the town level. Likewise, the local universities have also started distance education through correspondence studies but this system also suffers from similar kinds of defects. The nodal centres are at the district level and teacher-student interaction is proportionately inadequate. University Grants Commission has launched various online modules like Swayam and e-Pathsala etc. to give access to students for joining these plethora of courses. In this regard, special provisions should be taken by all higher education institutes to take advantage of these courses. Maximum language courses should be made available free of cost.

The basic responsibility for improving this language, no doubt, lies on the teaching section of the society, but government policies and local administration will also have to come forward and contribute a lot in this regard. The present scenario of schools in Haryana clearly reveals that due to poor quality of teaching, the students lag behind in their performance as compared to public schools in cities. However, the reading material in the libraries of schools and colleges like newspapers, magazines and journals are not adequate enough to meet the demands of the students. The audio-visual methods are almost insufficient. Language labs should be mandatory at school level as well as at college level. Consequently, the government will have to tighten its network for effective implementation of its policies. With the help of various agencies like literacy missions and other voluntary agencies, messages should be conveyed regarding the relevance of this language in the modern context. Village Panchayats should come forward and villagers should be taught elementary English. Even Sarpanches should be motivated to open nodal centers and language labs for creating adequate facilities for village students for joining online courses.

The present scenario of English in rural areas is quite depressing but cumulative efforts from various sections of the society will certainly lead to some kind of improvement. Eventually, the rural students will be able to shed their inferiority complex and be prepared to join the modern wave of globalization. This competency will lead to their personal development as well as the development of the nation, which is directly linked with the quality of trained and well qualified human persons. In this ultramodern high-tech era, where knowledge of soft skills matters a lot and where artificial intelligence is trying to replace human knowledge. Awareness of the English language is the very foundation of success. This emphasis on improving the quality of English language by the government will certainly resolve the problem of the falling ratio of enrolment of students, especially in government schools. Generally, parents in rural areas prefer private school as compared to government school for the admission of their children simply because of the facility of English medium. If we focus at the primary level itself, a vast majority of poor as well as middle class students will be able to seek admission in higher institutions; thus, constituting good quality of human resources. They will certainly be an asset for the nation in the long run and will also fulfill the vision of our National Education Policy 2020, which is “rooted in Indian ethos that contributes directly to transforming India, that is Bharat, sustainably into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society, by providing high-quality education to all, and thereby making India a global knowledge superpower”.

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