



## ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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### INTRODUCTION

English Language in India is a lot more than just an official language. It has been the language of diplomacy, higher administration, higher education, superior judiciary and information technology. Besides, English is a language of opportunities and success for life in India. As was noted by the Education Commission of India in 1966, “when a degree holder from India goes to any of the developed countries he is not treated at par with a degree holder of that country” (1). This shows the poor pattern of Indian Educational System which has no great implication on the matter of English language. Moreover, most of our system of curriculum doesn’t make the learning of English mandatory. Hence the reluctance about learning or teaching of English language is seen as an inherent quality of Indian Educational System. To eliminate this obstacle of academic growth, our ELT pattern has to be evaluated so as its outcome on curriculum.

In this following analysis, we could know about how the Indian ELT has been across the nation and how its impacted the quality of education (2). India’s Status on English Language It was Lord Macaulay in 1835, who was the first to emphasis English language teaching in India through his “Minute of Education”. He imported English on Indians way back in 1835, and had little the how deeply entrenched its roots would become in a country that prided itself in Tamil and Sanskrit, the classical languages of the world (3). In 1854, Sir Charles Wood Stated that English could be a suitable medium of higher levels of education, because a sound knowledge of English was a prerequisite to seek admission into any established university. But on contrary, grass root land response to English language was very pitiable as no one turned their heads towards learning English. English language was adopted as the medium of instruction for fundamental sciences and mathematic science, which resulted in the phenomenal



development of secondary and higher education, especially in urban areas. Since from our Independence, the need for English was greatly realised in the field of higher education and research. In this regard, the Kothari Commission referred to the study of English in India a report of study group appointed by the ministry of education, Government of India in 1964. The study group has supported the structural approach to the teaching of English, which is now extensively practiced in different parts of India. The study group also came up with a detailed syllabus for the study of the English language from class V to XII.

Today, in this nation of billion plus population with a literate population of 74% in 2011, knowledge of English guarantees a job across the sectors. Be it a hairdresser, a bell boy or a waiter, salutations and courtesies in English are considered so essential that often a minimum skill in the language is non-negotiable with recruiters (4). In case of ELT, effective learning takes place on when the learner is able to communicate fluently both in writing and speaking and able to use English for library purposes. Therefore, the promotion of ELT in India in modern times has an impeccable demand and gives a great deal of transformation from the odd ELT approaches. Approaches of English Language Teaching in India Indian practise on ELT has been a multi-purpose teaching approach. It differs on the basis of various purposes to learn English language. In that way, there has been three fundamental pattern/approaches of ELT in India, namely *f* English for Academic Purpose (EAP) *f* English for Occupational purpose (EOP) *f* English for Specific Purpose (ESP) Firstly, EAP refers to the teaching of English language in primary, secondary and common graduate level educational institutions. This approach aims to built-up the students to be aware of basics of English, and encourages the students to have general thought about the basic grammar, pronunciation and the use of English for common purpose. Secondly, EOP refers to the teaching of English language for professional purpose which in practical requires a basic insight about the concerned profession and its relevance with use of English.

The approach of ELT has been a great task for the tutors to educate the beneficiaries as it requires specialized knowledge about the particular occupational jargons. Thirdly, ESP refers to the teaching of English language for specific need in



which the intention of the learners is restricted within the particular use. ESP advocates the designing of special courses instead of one multi-purpose course, to suit the needs of different courses of students. The concept of ESP is said to be particularly adequate for teaching English to students of science and technology (EST). Moreover, English at the undergraduate level of engineering studies differs from English in other undergraduate courses because it has a specific purpose unlike a general purpose in other colleges. It differs from other courses in the three aspects, such as relevance, register and style (5). These three aspects gain supremacy in material designing because the course must engage the students for both academic and professional purposes. Their academic functions include oral and written communication, comprehension of lectures and books, note-making, note-taking, paper presentations, participation in regional, national and international seminars and taking interviews.

Officially English has a status of assistant language, but in fact it is the most important language of India. After Hindi it is the most commonly spoken language in India and probably the most read and written language in India. Indians who know English will always try to show that they know English. English symbolizes in Indians minds, better education, better culture and higher intellect.

Indians who know English often mingle it with Indian languages in their conversations. It is also usual among Indians to abruptly move to speak fluent English in the middle of their conversations. English also serves as the communicator among Indians who speak different language. English is very important in some systems – legal, financial, educational, business – in India. Until the beginning of 1990s, foreign movies in India weren't translated or dubbed in Indian languages, but were broadcast in English and were meant for English speakers only. The reason Indians give such importance to English is related to the fact that India was a British colony. When the British started ruling India, they searched for Indian mediators who could help them to administer India. The British turned to high caste Indians to work for them. Many high caste Indians, especially the Brahmans worked for them.

The British policy was to create an Indian class who should think like the British, or as it was said then in Britain "Indians in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions and morals and intellect". The British also established in India universities



based on British models with emphasis on English. These Indians also got their education in British universities. The English Christian missionaries came to India from 1813 and they also built schools at primary level for Indians in which the language of instruction was local language. Later on the missionaries built high schools with English as the language of instruction which obliged the Indians who wanted to study to have a good knowledge of English. The British rulers began building their universities in India from 1857. English became the first language in Indian education. The 'modern' leaders of that era in India also supported English language and claimed it to be the main key towards success. Indians who knew good English were seen as the new elite of India. Many new schools were established in which the language of instruction was English. According to the British laws the language of instruction at university level was English and therefore schools that emphasized English were preferred by ambitious Indians. Even after India's independence, English remained the main language of India. Officially it was given a status of an assistant language and was supposed to terminate officially after 15 years of India's independence, but it still remains the important language of India.

The English language came to India in the 17th century with the East India Company. It was formed to conduct trade with India and other countries in the east. Initially the Britishers tried to learn Indian languages to communicate with Indians. They started special colleges for this purpose. They also took the help of the translators. But when their political powers increased, they created the British Indian provinces like Bengal, Madras and Bombay. So the English traders gave more importance to English rather than to Indian languages. Some missionary institutions taught English to Indians. The East India Company took the responsibility of the education of the Indians. The Indians were also realizing the importance of the English language. As A.P.R. Howatt notes: By the 1830s the Indian middle classes were becoming very demanding. They realized that English was the language required for a secure future in a government job, so why was English not taught in the secondary school? Private schools offering this service were already doing good business, particularly in Calcutta. The state was set for the first 'big moment' in the imperial history of English language teaching. Meanwhile some movements were started by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to introduce western scientific



education through English. He wanted to replace traditional Sanskrit and Persian teaching.

To take a decision on the issue, a committee was formed. Lord Macaulay was the chairman of this committee. He advocated English as the medium of instruction in the place of Sanskrit and Persian. Lord Macaulay wanted to make the people Indian in blood and colour but English in taste and opinion. He thought the members of this class would spread their knowledge through English. Macaulay's purposes were: i) to create the dominance of British culture over the Indians and to have the control over the minds of the Indian people through English. ii) to train Indians and make them fit for the employment. The British Government gave preference in jobs to the Indians who had the knowledge of English. A number of Indian students found poetry, drama and other writings difficult to get their degrees. Meanwhile many new colleges and universities were formed. The system of English education founded on English literature continued till the independence.

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