

A Study on the Teaching of English in Government Schools at the primary level in India

1. INTRODUCTION

English in India is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. The visible impact of this presence of English is that it is today being demanded by everyone at the very initial stage of schooling. The NCF-2005 stresses on the use of child's mother tongue as a medium of learning at the primary level. The English teaching profession has consistently recommended a relatively late introduction of English and this is reflected in spirit in policy documents. The dissatisfaction with this recommendation is evident in the mushrooming of private English medium schools and the early introduction of English in State schools. The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of State policy to respond to people's aspirations, making almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of a very early introduction.

English is introduced as a subject in class I in 18 States. In Orissa, English is introduced in Class II while in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar, Assam and Goa English is introduced in class III. The teaching and learning of English today is characterised by the diversity of schools, classroom procedures and teaching of textbooks for the purpose of passing the examination.

It is important at this stage to try and understand the way in which English is being taught in government schools across the country. Analysis of the textbooks (undertaken by SCERTs & resource groups) in J&K and Assam has indicated the completely inappropriate nature of the books and the lack of a comprehensive strategy for English language teaching, also the competence of teachers to understand and teach the texts of class III/IV etc. It also revealed the complete mismatch between the level of English language used in the language textbooks and the difficult concepts used in the English medium textbooks of classes III, IV & V.

At the national level there is need for studying the nature of textbooks being used for English teaching, teacher preparation for teaching English as subject or through English medium and the methodology used in classrooms.

Textbooks in different states need to be analysed. Discussion with teachers and classroom observations need to be carried out in order to understand the lacunae in teaching of English to make suggestions for its improvement.

2. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the status of teaching English at the primary level across the states and UTs in India both as a subject and medium of instruction\
2. To analyse in depth the curriculum, syllabi and textbooks of English in selected states.
3. To find out how English is taught in classes in which it is introduced for the first time by observing the classroom processes in the selected states.
4. To observe the training programmes (both pre-service and in-service) for teachers of English and to assess their competence in teaching English at the primary level.
5. To make suggestions for improvement in teaching of English on the basis of the findings of the study.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 States to be covered

The study will be conducted at two levels, (a) one at the national level to find out the general status of teaching of English at the primary level and (b) two, an in-depth study of all aspects of teaching-learning of English at the primary level in 8 selected states

The states were selected to represent 5 geographical regions and variety in class at which English is introduced as a language at primary stage. Overall 7 states and one UT have been selected .

1. Gujarat	4. Nagaland	7. Orissa
2. Uttar Pradesh	5. Maharashtra	8. Jammu & Kashmir
3. Chandigarh	6. Tamil Nadu	

3.2 Collection and analysis of data

(a) NATIONAL LEVEL

i) Collection and analysis of information regarding the status of teaching of English and teacher training programmes

- Information regarding the status of teaching of English in primary schools and teacher training programmes (Pre-service and In service) as available from syllabi and other documents, will be collected from all states and UTs.
- For in-depth study of the status of English teaching in the selected 8 states, the respective SPD's Directors of Education / Primary Education, SCERT's, RIE's will be contacted to seek their cooperation in conducting the study.
- Curriculum, syllabi and English textbooks etc. will be collected from the State Textbook Boards or agencies responsible for preparation and publication of text-books, syllabus etc
- Teacher training manuals and teacher guides (Pre-service and In service) in the . selected states &UT will be procured for analysis of training material.
- Guidelines for analysis of textbooks and other material will be developed by a team of experts.

ii) Textbook Analysis

Textbooks used in the States will be analysed by teams of experts drawn from NCERT, RIE, SCERT, Regional Institute of English, ELTI's and States. These will be looked at in terms of appropriateness of structure, design, content, vocabulary etc. It will view the emphasis laid on listening and speaking skills along with reading and writing.

iii) **Analysis of teacher training material** : The material collected from the states will be analysed in terms of its appropriateness.

(b) STATE LEVEL

i) Observation of Training Programmes for Teachers

Teacher development in the form of pre service and in-service teacher training programme is an important input to enable teachers to transact curriculum through a student centred, participatory approach to ensure quality elementary education.

It is important to find out how i) Pre-service training and ii) In-service training programme are helping development of teachers' skill in transacting curriculum and motivating students and thereby leading to meaningful classroom processes and improvement in student comprehension .

Pre-service training programmes for primary teachers are being conducted by different state level institutes such as DIETs to train the candidates wishing to join teaching profession /or those who are already in job but want to improve their knowledge and transaction skills. Some of the training classes in English in two such institutes in each state will be observed

In-service teacher training programmes, in general, have been developed in every state with active involvement of SCERTs and are implemented at district or block level every year with the support of DIETs, BRCs, CRCs and NGOs. Two such programmes in each state will also be observed.

The study primarily aims to examine the process, if any, being used in the state for identification of training needs of teachers; understand the focus and expectations of the annual in-service teacher-training module(s); understand the process by which teacher training modules are developed and the periodicity with which they undergo revision; how are master trainers selected and trained, appropriateness of the material used in the training; teachers' understanding of content covered in the module, teachers' perception of the efficacy of in-service training imparted, how far they think they will be able to translate it in the classroom situation,; is there any follow up of the training , if yes what is the nature of follow up training support that was provided (venue, content, methodology, frequency, etc.); what is the net impact on classroom transaction and on student learning/comprehension and what are the constraints faced by teachers in adopting the pedagogical approach advocated during the training.

ii) Classroom Observations

To find out how teachers teach English and the level of preparation of teachers, classroom processes in English periods in sampled schools would be observed in each state. The observation will focus on development of listening, speaking ,reading and writing skills , medium of transaction, use of TLM and availability of reading material in English. An attempt will also be made to evaluate the effectiveness of these methods.

The data would be collected through the use of Classroom observation Schedule to be developed for recording observations on pedagogy, content, evaluation methods

Teachers teaching English classes will be interviewed in sampled schools. Issues related to pre-service and in-service training, transaction of textbooks, reference materials used for improving professional competence will be covered in the interviews..

3.3 Tools

Tools will be developed for collection of qualitative and quantitative data on various aspects viz status of teaching of English, classroom interaction, teacher profile, textbook analysis, teachers training mode and processes, students and teacher competence, etc.

Tools to be developed will include:

- Guidelines for observing classrooms
- i. State Questionnaire
- ii. Analysis proforma - Criteria for evaluating textbooks
- iii. School Questionnaire
- iv. Teacher Schedule
- iv. Classroom observation / schedule
- v. Observation schedule for pre-service and in-service programmes.

The research team will visit schools (rural and urban) to collect data in the eight states..

3.4 Sample

In each state , **two** in-service training programme for English would be selected for observation and **two** institutions will be selected for observing their Pre service training programmes for training teachers in English.

In all **154 schools** will be selected for this study from 2-4 districts in each state . Next two to three blocks will be selected in each district; from each sampled block list of schools will be procured and a sample of schools will be selected keeping in mind urban, rural, large, small, interior rural, tribal categorizations. Details have been provided in the table given below.

S. No.	State Name	No. of Districts to be selected	No. of blocks in each district	Sample of schools for Classroom Observation					
				Govt.				Private	Total
				Urban	Rural	Tribal	Total		
1.	Gujarat	3	2	3	12	3	18	3	21
2.	Tamil Nadu	3	2	3	12	3	18	3	21
3.	Maharashtra	3	2	4	12	2	18	3	21
4.	Orissa	2	3	3	12	3	18	3	21
5.	Nagaland**	2	3	2	0	10	12	3	15
6.	Uttar Pradesh	4	2	4	16	0	20	3	23
7.	Chandigarh	1	2	6	2	0	08	3	11
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	3	2	3	12	3	18	3	21
Total		21	18	28	78	24	130	24	154

* Urban schools will be selected from the urban areas of the district.

** Rural schools in Nagaland are included under Tribal.

3.5 Criteria for comparison of government and primary school

The Government and Private schools would be compared on the following criteria :

- i. Teaching-learning practices.
- ii. Norms followed by the private schools vis a vis Government schools .
- iii. Professional development of teachers in English (in service training, use of training in their teaching etc.)
- iv. The syllabus and textbooks used to teach English.

Following table shows the responsibility of different faculty members of NCERT for coordinating this study. The Head / Director or a faculty member for English teaching as shown in the coordination chart will be the State Coordinator.

4. Staff requirement

The study will be conducted with staff resources of NCERT and RIESs. It is however proposed to employ 1 consultant, 1 Research associate, and 8 JPFs for data collection and analysis.

S. No.	State	Coordinators	Consultant / JPF	Teacher Training Programme Coordinators
	NCERT, Delhi	English faculty	1 Consultant 1 Research Associate	Prof. S. Nagpal Anupam Ahuja Madhulika Patel
1.	Gujarat	Saryu Yadav (RIE, Ajmer) / Dr. Mishra, (RIE, Bhopal)	8 JPFs (One for each state)	
2.	Tamil Nadu	Prema Reghavan / Nidhi Tewari (RIE Mysore)		
3.	Maharashtra	Usha Dutta / Kirti Kapur (DOL)		
4.	Orissa	Sandhya Sahoo /Rupa Palit (RIE Bhubaneshwar)		
5.	Nagaland	Prof. A. K. Mishra / Melissa Wallang (NERIE Shillong)		
6.	U.P.	Prof. R. J. Sharma / Nasiruddin Khan (DOL)		
7.	Jammu & Kashmir	Varada M. Nikalje / R. Meganathan (DOL)		
8.	Chandigarh (U.T.)	Kirti Kapur / Usha Dutta (DOL)		

Tasks of staff members

- 1 Consultant, 1 Research Associate will be placed at NCERT Delhi. The Consultant will provide technical guidance and will assist in carrying out the study at NCERT.
- 1 JPF each for 8 states will assist in collection and compilation of data.
- The Coordinators will be responsible for finalizing State Reports. They will visit schools to observe teaching of English in classrooms, collection of data, analysis and compilations of reports.
- Teacher training will be documented by the Department of Teacher Education. Two in-service and 2 pre-service programmes in each state will be observed.
- A synthesis report of the study covering all the states will be prepared by NCERT faculty.

5. Responsibilities of different departments/ RIEs

- At the national level, the Department of Languages, NCERT will be responsible for the study and will coordinate the work of all the 8 States. Also, it will collect and analyse the textbooks and secondary data received from all the states / UTs. It will be assisted by an Advisory Committee to help in development of tools and in taking key decisions on the conduct of the study.
- Workshops for finalization of tools, guidelines for observing classrooms and teacher training programmes will be organized by the Department of Languages.
- The tools will be tried out in 4 or 5 schools in a couple of states before being finalised. By the Department of Languages with help of RIEs.
- In each of the 8 states either NIE or Regional Institute of Education (RIE) will be the nodal institution as shown below.

Sl.No.	State	Nodal Agency
1.	Gujarat	NIE, Delhi
2.	Nagaland	NERIE, Shillong
3.	Orissa	RIE, Bhubhaneshwar
4.	Uttar Pradesh	NIE Delhi
5.	Maharashtra	RIE, Bhopal
6.	Jammu & Kashmir	RIE, Ajmer
7.	Chandigarh	NIE, Delhi
8.	Tamil Nadu	RIE, Mysore

The task of the nodal institutions will be to appoint the JPF's but their training will be organized centrally at NCERT. The nodal institutions will be responsible for preparation of the state's draft report. The Coordinators will observe classrooms transaction and teacher training programmes.

6. Time schedule

S. No.	Activities proposed to be organized	Proposed Months
1.	Expert Group Meeting	1 st Month
2.	Two workshops for finalization of tools, Trialling of tools	2 nd Month
3.	Field visits to States/Schools	3 rd & 4 th Months
4.	Compilation of data	5 th Month
5.	Report writing (for state reports)	6 th & 7 th Months
6.	Preparation of synthesis report	8 th Month