

# Teaching English As A Foreign Language – Prospects And Challenges In India

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*Abstract: This article will reflect some of the major issues related to the teaching of English as a foreign language in India. It will discuss the present status of education and English Language Teaching in Indian classrooms. It will discuss few various challenges of Teaching English. Studying how to meet these challenges are essential. So finding the cause for these challenges and to attempt some remedies to tackle those challenges is the need of present Indian educational system. Here a short attempt is made to satisfy present second language learning become fruitful.*

*Keywords: Teaching English, Foreign Language, Projects, Challenges.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

"English Language teaching in India, you will agree with me, has suffered a lot so much that our students who pass intermediate or degree examinations with English either as a compulsory or as an elective subject can neither speak nor write correct English, may be because the emphasis in our schools and colleges has always been on the conceptual content and the stylistic content has been neglected so far."

A.K. Sharma –

This paper deals with the importance of teaching English to fulfill the ever growing demands of English. The methods and approaches adopted or followed by teacher in the past to teach English language and the challenges before teachers in present day English language teaching are considered in this study. We know that soft-skills are part of communication skills. Soft skills comprises of the skills which an individual uses to inform, to persuade, to explain, to present, to understand and to elicit information. Today we can't ignore the role of soft skills in any learning process, more so in learning and teaching a language. English language currently serves several functions and enjoys an eminent status in various sectors at all levels within India. This perceived growing position of English is in response to the development of India in a variety of ways. There is an expansion of education at all

levels; the economy of the country is growing rapidly, as it is industrial and commercial base. The theme of foreign man power and the ever-evolving attitudes of the Indian people towards English; as well as the presence of various media sources, cannot be left out of an accurate picture of the current status of the English language on the soil of India to be presented.

## II. PRESENT STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING (ELT)

English is taught as foreign language or as a second language in India. Earlier a little importance was given in teaching and learning of English in Indian educational system. Now a days it was introduced as a compulsory subject, but hardly the students had given any emphasis in acquiring the efficiency in English, instead they considered it as a language to pass in the examination. Unlike the past, the status of English in India is entirely changed now. Due to the global demand and being the language of 'Science and Technology' 'business and commerce' 'window to the world' etc., the importance of English language grew rapidly. Now it is considered on of the major subjects in the educational system. Now English is turned in to a universal language, its presence

and value in the world has expanded enormously in the past decades. Many money-earning activities such as BOP, medical transcript and IT add to the importance and relevance of English in every walk of life.

In the past, students were introduced to English only in fourth and fifth standard onwards. Student learned English just as another subjects and got very little opportunity to use English in School and outside the school. But the present situation is changed. Now a day's pre-school stage onwards English is introduced in schools. But the exact expected result cannot be get achieved because of the wrong handling of curriculum and lack of efficient teachers.

### III. MAJOR CHALLENGES OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

There is no doubt that India is accelerating day by day in the field of Education; but the level of achievements in learning English as a foreign language is far below. After learning English for many years, the students have achieved little in terms of language proficiency, and making a large number of students and teachers waste of time and energy. Now a question arises why there has been no improvement among students? Here the challenges come. It is enormous and apparent. In the earlier days English was just like a library language, but now that notion has changed totally. At present the challenges visible before the English language teachers in India are diverse and it is necessary for them to shape up accordingly to meet the demands of the day. For that to know the present challenges of English language teaching is essential.

We always complaining that students leave the secondary and higher secondary stage without the ability to carry out a short conversation. It may be due to:

- ✓ Improperly trained teachers
- ✓ Inadequate teaching methodology
- ✓ Teacher centered rather than learner centered activities.
- ✓ Lack of motivation
- ✓ Whole language approach
- ✓ Lack of emphasis on language skills.
- ✓ Inappropriate textbooks and teaching materials.
- ✓ Inefficient assessment system
- ✓ Lack of exposure
- ✓ Lack of awareness in imparting curriculum in a right ways.
- ✓ Lack of facilities in institution.
- ✓ Psychological problems
- ✓ Learning methods
- ✓ Problem of concretizing the abstract idea
- ✓ More translation method
- ✓ Mother tongue interference
- ✓ Difference in Pronunciations
- ✓ Lack of practice
- ✓ Lack of interest
- ✓ Malpractices in exam.
- ✓ Mistake in English
- ✓ Crowded class.

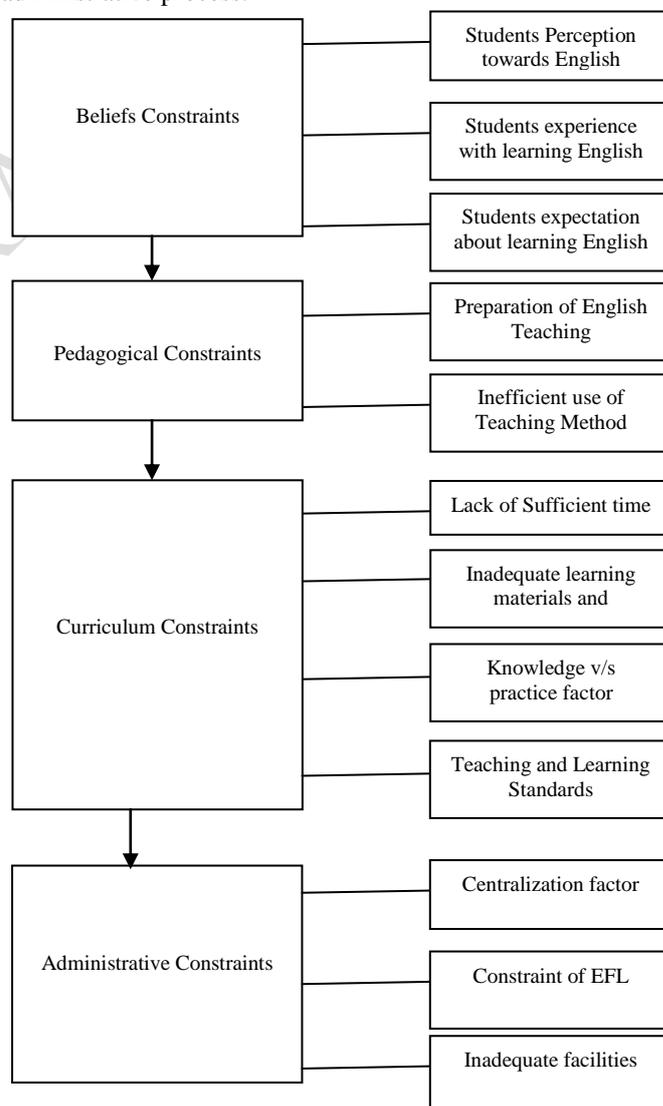
These all are the major identified problems, issues or challenges in our ELT classrooms. We can solve it though.

- ✓ Building a rapport with class
- ✓ Importance and place of English should be defined.
- ✓ Applying different methods of teaching
- ✓ Building confidence among students
- ✓ Keeping in mind aims and objectives of teaching English
- ✓ Improvement in Teaching facilities
- ✓ Make students talk in English
- ✓ Solve the socio-psychological problems
- ✓ Building communication skills
- ✓ Giving internal tests
- ✓ Handling mistakes with care
- ✓ Matching level with students

English holds a place of status in our country. So meet all the challenges and take a sample remedies to tackle all these challenges are essential.

### IV. MOST COMMON CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING ENGLISH TEACHING

These constraints are observed in several areas, including students' beliefs, aspects of curriculum, pedagogy and administrative process.



Beliefs about second (foreign) language learning are central constructs and, thus play a major role in the success or failure of the teaching learning process of English. Indeed, the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes that students bring with them to the English classroom are very important factors in the language learning process. The key ingredient is missing for most of the students have intrinsic motivation. It is the extrinsic influence of the educational system that encourages them, not any personal or inner motivation. Students have no real purpose for or opportunity to use English outside the classroom. Teachers Teaching students to swim in a bath tub and giving them lots of rules, but little water. Students believe that learning English is beyond their reach. They perceive English as a dry and boring subject learned for instrumental purpose, mainly to pass examination. Then it remains largely an academic exercise.

Pedagogical constraints include insufficiency of English teaching preparation programs and English teaching methods. English teachers were trained through programs offered by the English departments at various levels. In-service training programs are currently conducted on a limited scale. The methods employed to teach English in India are largely centered on bilingual method. To a lesser extent the grammar translation method. This methods encourages teachers to focus on detailed explanations of grammar structures. It instruct students to memorize vocabulary lists grammatical rules and exceptions and ask them to translate whole texts word for word as the central focus of their teaching. The employments of these traditional teaching methods failed to produce learners who are able to take part in a basic conversation or comprehend a simple oral command or written message. This is a not a normal level of achievement.

Curriculum reveals various constraints that impede the process of teaching English. Mainly the limited time for instruction, curriculum require more time be allocated for teaching English, students are expected English learning only in the period allotted for English (Class periods). No efficient reinforcing environment is available outside school. This amount of time is insufficient since some of the lesson materials and connected class activities cannot be completed in a single lesson. This constraint leads to ineffective language teaching and learning experiences. Lack of resourceful teaching learning materials also a hindrance in teaching and learning of English. In India, there is the unavailability and inadequate diverse, selective and appropriate teaching resources. The English text books emphasize imparting knowledge at the expense of teaching skills. Specifically, the content seems to be concerned with presenting the information to learners, rather than giving them ample opportunities to practice the given information and materials. Teacher shouldn't be viewed as a materials presenter and content demonstrator, and as a manager of language learning situation. English teaching paradigm to implement a student centered approach. Teaching learning standards are low. It should build educational policies and applications and which require educational accountability. There is a failure to one global standard for measures in assessing the qualification of English teachers.

## V. PROSPECTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

English as a base in several countries and it is considered as the most suitable and convenient tool for international communication. The people who have proficiency in English language could access large number of jobs and also were seen holding high positions in many national and international organisation. English continued to be seen as an essential vehicle for personal and national growth. Educational process has undergone several functions and enjoys in eminent status in various sections at all levels with in India. This perceived growing positions is in response to the development of India variety of ways, including the number of the founded social establishments and the rapid changes that the social fabric has witnessed in recent years. There is an expansion of education at all levels; the economy of the country is growing rapidly, as is its industrial and commercial base. And also it is playing an important role in both electronic and print media. Many leading daily news papers are in English and boradcast various English programmes in television and radio.

## VI. TO TACKLE THESE CHALLENGES AND TO GAIN THESE PROSPECTS WERE SHOULD REMAIN

It is felt that for a successful English Language Teaching Programme, there is a need of active participation of the policy makers, syllabus designers, text writers, teachers and students. So should identify and define the specific need of a language programme. We discussed a lot of challenges and constraints in Language Teaching and Learning. The prospect of English Language Teaching is also vivid and varied. To satisfy all these we should remain:

- ✓ Whether ample training for teachers are provided?
- ✓ Whether the English language curriculum clearly pointed out its aims and objectives?
- ✓ Whether the curriculum has been developed after a Need Analysis (NA) programme in ELT?
- ✓ Whether the text books and Teaching materials meet the learner's needs?
- ✓ Are the teachers well qualified and properly trained?
- ✓ Are the students highly motivated towards learning English?
- ✓ Whether the students receive enough exposure to use English?
- ✓ Are the facilities of the institutions, is enough and ample for language teaching and learning?
- ✓ Are the teachers use the technology properly in English Classrooms?
- ✓ Whether the teaching guides the Learner in academic, social and economic activities?

Before entering in to an ELT, we should ask some of these queries then only we know whether it is purposeful or not. For this should change the mind set of both the teacher and the learner. By avoiding, mere translation method and mother tongue interference.

- ✓ To enable student to acquire basic language skills (Listening, Speaking, reading and writing)
- ✓ To develop student's awareness of the importance of English as a means of international communications.

- ✓ To develop students' positive attitude towards learning English.
- ✓ To enable student to acquire the necessary linguistic competence required in various professions and life situations.
- ✓ To provide the student linguistic basis to enable him to participate in transferring other nations' scientific and technological advances that can enhance the progress of his nation.
- ✓ To equip language lab in each institution.
- ✓ Spend sufficient time and fund for recruiting efficient teachers, curriculum development and teacher's training.
- ✓ Create awareness in students that English is no longer a language to pass on the examination, but an important subject for higher education, international communication, business and trade.
- ✓ To ensure tremendous growth of student's enrollment has been taken place in various language institutions.

## VII. CONCLUSION

"English is no longer some remote but a powerful mystery, lying hidden in the world of text books and examinations" - Prof. Jacob Tharu

The study revealed some of the important issues of English Language Teaching in India. It is felt that for an English Language Teaching programme, there is a need of active participation of the policymakers, syllabus designers,

text book writers, teachers and students. To meet the present day challenges in teaching English should not be treated as a subject as it is to be used actively in interacting with one another throughout the world. By using conventional methods, maximum portion of class time will be wasted in exercise and drilling, dealing with grammar and pronunciations which takes away a large portion of class time. These methods were mostly used to develop basic skills of language learning such as Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, but by following these methods listening and speaking skills were neglected as students cannot put their language in practice. So teachers should give maximum language exposure to learners for creating a language atmosphere.

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