



Productive Welfare in India through English

Seema.S, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Government Arts College,
(Autonomous), Hassan 573201, Karnataka

Abstract: The legacy of English in India owes its existence in India being colonized by the English and the English education promoted by them, though with self-interest to create a work force for their smooth functioning in administrative matters .For many years English education was polarized by the upper class and was not accessible to the average and backward classes due to the costs of education and social stigma attached to the attainment of education. English is a globally accepted communicative language of the world. 60% of today's world population is multi-lingual. Both from contemporary and historical perspective bi -lingualism or multi -lingualism are the norm rather than exception. English at present is the most widely studied foreign language. It is the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and politics .It is the Lingua franca of the modern era. As the world has shrunken into a global village the importance of English as the dominant international language cannot be ignored. This paper addresses the role of English in promoting productive welfare in India.

Key words: English language, multi -lingualism, global growth of English, promoting productive welfare

Introduction: The legacy of English in India owes its existence to India being colonized by the English and the English education promoted by them, though with self-interest to create a work force for their smooth functioning in administrative matters .For many years English education was polarized by the upper class and was not accessible to the average and backward classes due to the costs of education and social stigma attached to the attainment of education. English is a globally accepted communicative language of the world. 60% of today's world population is multi-lingual. (Annika Kohanthal , "English in India : Loyalties and Attitudes" 2010).

Both from contemporary and historical perspective bi -lingualism or multi -lingualism is the norm rather than exception. English at present is the most

widely studied foreign language. It is the dominant language of education, commerce, religion and politics .It is the Lingua franca of the modern era. As the world has shrunken into a global village the importance of English as the dominant international language cannot be ignored. The elite class has for a long time exercised a hegemonic control over it. Today the scenario has changed there is awareness in the people of India as they see English as a passport to a bright future and liberation from the shackles of poverty. People have come to realize the viability of this language for productive welfare in India. (Kachru, Braj B. "English in South Asia". In Robert Bruchfield (ed.) The Cambridge History of The English Language).

The job market today is more receptive to those who have proficiency in English. It is no wonder that a National



University of Education Planning and Administration study found that between 2003 and 2011 enrolments in English medium Schools increased to a whopping twenty million students in India. Though the costs are difficult to bear for many Indians they are putting their money into educating their children in English medium schools as they see English as the only tool towards upward mobility in terms of increasing wages and its impact on social worth. (Annika Kohanthal , "English in India : Loyalties and Attitudes" 2010).

English is the language which connects people from different regions, cultures and nations. As we have a multi-cultural and multi-lingual workforce in the companies, English is the language used for official communication, whether it is meeting within or outside, presentations, training conferences, letters, documents, reports etc. (Annika Kohanthal , "English in India : Loyalties and Attitudes" 2010). The purposes being that people are expected to read, write, speak and understand English. The reality is that the companies consider the candidate's ability or inability to speak fluently in English as one of the major selection criteria. (Kachru, Braj B. "English in South Asia". In Robert Bruchfield (ed.) The Cambridge History of The English Language).

Globalization has encouraged the domestic companies to think beyond their nations. There are many multinational companies which are operating in India. Our BPO sector skill has an edge over other countries due to the fact that Indians speak fairly better English compared to other non-native speakers of English. It applies to our IT as well as other related sectors too . (

Thirumalai, & B. Mallikarjun, - Language In India-Strength For Today And Bright Hope For Tomorrow Volume 2 : 4 June-July 2002). Our neighboring countries and especially China will prove to be a strong competition to India in the coming days in the outsourcing job sector because of the importance and seriousness given to attaining English proficiency. A large section of Indian professionals in the field of medicine, engineering and other skill based areas are working abroad. In many spheres they have to pass English examination to settle abroad too . This also speaks of the importance of English in India. (Annika Kohanthal , "English in India : Loyalties and Attitudes" 2010).

English Language Training

Due to the emerging demand for communication skills in English and remarkably poor level of English taught in the regional medium schools in India, the students constantly try to get outside help in the form of spoken English classes, training programs and finishing schools. The number of such institutions is mushrooming due to the increasing market demand. Such institutions have become good money making entities. These organizations survive on the sentiments and insecurity feeling of the regional medium students. (Annika Kohanthal , "English in India : Loyalties and Attitudes" 2010).

Considerations: In order to cater to the demands of regional language medium students in their efforts to get good jobs in the corporate world, Government should bring changes in the English Language syllabus. The emphasis



should be on functional English usage exercises .The syllabus should focus on practical oriented exercises and real life situations than mere study of literature. So the need of the hour is strengthening the English speaking ability of the present generation to have an edge over other developing countries.

English as a tool towards upward mobility : Millions of Indians are putting their money into educating their children in English schools as they see English education as a passport to a bright future and liberation from the shackles of poverty.(Kachru,Braj B. "English in South Asia". In Robert Bruchfield (ed.) The Cambridge History of The English Language. 2014).All of this is the direct outcome of the economic liberalization of the 1990s, the subsequent dot com boom and the huge job opportunities in the service sector. (Thirumalai,& B. Mallikarjun, - Language In India-Strength For Today And Bright Hope For Tomorrow Volume 2 : 4 June-July 2002).

The tools of education in the vernacular classrooms are not adequate enough to translate into instruments of growth and emancipation outside it, therefore the impetus among people in English Schools at any cost.

1. Instrument of upward mobility
2. Instrument of growth
3. Instrument of emancipation
4. Instrument of greater career opportunities
5. Instrument of public welfare
6. Instrument of youth motivation
7. Instrument of technological support

Chandra Bhan Prasad , a dalit writer and entrepreneur in his writings exalted

the English language to the status of goddess. He writes that for a community which has been a victim of deprivation, it provides hope and freedom. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar ,a dalit by caste and the architect of the Indian constitution had remarked that "English was the milk of the lioness and only those who drink it will roar" .English language will certainly enable the oppressed and backward communities to escape poverty and become empowered .

It is thus acting as a great equalizer and promoter towards upward mobility in society. The increasing desire to know the language stems from the fact that the elite have for the longest time exercised hegemonic control over it and also that there is a growing realization that social worth and prospects in the job market are determined in terms of one's proficiency in the language. The upward mobility does not come easily to the members of backward castes; the backward classes recognize the fact that English is a tool towards upward mobility in terms of increasing wages and impact on social worth. This explains the strong assertion by the less privileged to learn and be proficient in the language.

It is important to acknowledge the demands; the present globalised economy place on people .Proficiency in the English language is a contributor to upward mobility and has been statistically proved in numerous studies. Unless the right to Education Act ensures an equal right to English Education, the language will be a great divider than an equalizer. (Kachru,Braj B. "English in South Asia". In Robert Bruchfield (ed.) The Cambridge History of The English Language. 2014).



Conclusion- thus English is acting as a great equalizer and promoter towards upward mobility in society. The increasing desire to know the language stems from the fact that the elite have for the longest time exercised hegemonic control over it and also that there is a growing realization that social worth and prospects in the job market are determined in terms of one's proficiency in the language. The upward mobility does not come easily to the members of backward castes; the backward classes recognize the fact that English is a tool towards upward mobility in terms of increasing wages and impact on social worth. This explains the strong assertion by the less privileged to learn and be proficient in this language.

References

1. Report on the National Council of Educational Research and Training, 2012
2. Desai, & others. (2009). "Private Schooling in India: A New Landscape," India Policy Forum Vol. 5
3. Thirumalai, & B. Mallikarjun, - Language In India-Strength For Today And Bright Hope For Tomorrow Volume 2 : 4 June-July 2002
4. Anuradha; Drèze, Jean (3 June 1999). Public Report on Basic Education in India. UK: Oxford University Press
5. Kachru, Braj B. "English in South Asia". In Robert Bruchfield (ed.) The Cambridge History of The English Language. 2014
6. Annika Kohanthal , "English in India : Loyalties and Attitudes" 2010
7. Volume 1-Annihilation of Caste by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar
8. Somini Sengupta, "Crusader sees wealth as cure for Caste Bias" The New York Times August 29, 2008
9. Prabhu, Joseph (2006), "Educational Institutions and Philosophies, Traditional and Modern", Encyclopedia of India (vol. 2) edited by Stanley Wolpert, 23-28, Thomson Gale
10. Setty, E.D. and Ross, E.L. (1987), "A Case Study in Applied Education in Rural India", Community Development Journal, 22 (2): 120-129, Oxford University Press