

# English in india

Linguistics, Language Acquisition



English in India 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 (see Europeans in India). 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 color 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. Even today schools in India that emphasize English are considered better schools and the same is the case at university levels, even though there is a trend towards Indianization. In the 1970s and 1980s about one third of the Indian schools had English as their first language. For most of these students, English is their first language and it is easier for them to communicate, read and write in English than in Indian languages, including their mother tongues. Just like the Americans, Australians or even the British who have their unique English words and phrases, the Indians also have their own unique English. The Indians and the Indian English language press uses many words derived from Indian languages, especially from Hindi. Other than that, the Indian accent is sometimes difficult for non-Indians to understand. There are some Indian

pronunciations that don't exist in non Indian languages. The British also had problems with that and they caused some changes in Indian words so that they could pronounce them. Even the Indians started using these changed words and made them part of their English. Two examples of such changed words are currey and sari.

English Language Education in India

English Language Education in Rural Schools of India: The Situation, the Policy and the Curriculum Submitted by Rama Meganathan on 30 October, 2009 - 23:46

English Language Education in Rural Schools of India: The Situation, the Policy and the Curriculum Abstract

This paper attempts to bring in the issues related to English language education situation in rural schools in India, the state policy on language education, quality questions in second / foreign language education through an analysis of language policy practices and the curriculum and syllabi of five states (provinces) in the country. The language policy in school education emerged as a political and social consensus, though established equality among the languages in school education, is somehow heading for a competitive bi / multilingualism in which the English language is (perceived to be) over taking Indian languages. On the contrary the quality of English language education in majority of Indian schools presents a very appalling picture. Teacher's language proficiency, exposure to language and materials are major concerns for quality English language learning. An analysis of curricular statements and syllabi of the states of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland reveals how planning for language in education is not looked at holistically in terms of basic assumptions about language learning / acquisition (how language learning takes place), learner profiles and the contexts in which learning

takes place, and the recent developments in language learning-teaching. Most states refuse to move beyond the good old structural approach of the 1950s and the 60s, while they stress for communication skills to help the learner for an upward movement. This, in reality, reveals the paradoxical situations of an English language education which would further place the rural learner in a very disadvantaged situation. --- 1. Introduction The increasing demand for English — both as a language and as a medium driven by the instrumental motivation has compelled most governments at the state (provincial) level to introduce English as a language from class One. The recent curricular revision at the national level culminated in the framework for National Curriculum Framework — 2005 (NCF) records the half a century development very objectively when it says, “ The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of political response to people’s aspirations rendering almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of very early introduction” (Position Paper Teaching of English 2005 - p1). English is an institutionalized subject in the school curriculum. Twenty six out of the thirty five states and union territories (the provinces and the specially created regions) introduce English as a language from class I and the remaining states introduce the language either from class three or five. There is every likelihood that these states (which do not introduce English in class I) would bring it down to class I with in a year or two. Resistance to spread of English language education is countered by genuine arguments which look at the English language as a tool for empowerment. English today is simultaneously sought after and suspected (Tickoo 1996) phenomenon. The motives, generally, are not only social-political and but academic too.

While the demand increases on the one hand, the quality of English language education in our state run schools, more particularly in rural schools, presents an abysmal picture. The 'divide' between the urban and rural is further contributed by the way English language education is making its way as a medium of instruction. The paradox of demand and suspicion (Tickoo 1996) mentioned above could be further reflected through the paradox of access depicted by the report of the National Knowledge Commission (NKC 2007), India as it brings out rightly, " There is an irony in the situation. English has been part of our education system for more than a century. Yet English is beyond the reach of most of our young people, which makes for highly unequal access. Indeed, even now, more than one percent of our people use it as a second language, let alone a first language ..... But NKC believes that the time has come for us to teach our people, ordinary people, English as a language in schools. Early action in this sphere, would help us build an inclusive society and transform India into a knowledge society. "(P. 47 ) The diverse English language education situation in the country shows both a rosy and an abysmal picture. Schools in different regions and systems operate in their contexts. The state policy on language education, curricular statements and syllabi and materials for teaching-learning of English along with teacher inputs decide the quality of education in schools more so in rural schools. An analysis of language policy practices and the curriculum and syllabi of five the states, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland reveals how planning for language in education is not looked at holistically in terms of basic assumptions about language learning / acquisition (how language learning

takes place), learners profiles and the contexts in which learning takes place and the recent developments in language learning-teaching. 2. The Language Policy in India: The Dilemmas The language debate in education in the formative years of India's independence not only brought in awareness among the stakeholders of education, it also enabled the policy makers to fully attempt to realize the Constitutional vision of equality of opportunity, linguistic rights of every linguistic and ethnic community and moving towards the goal of achieving universal access to education. The Three Language Formula[1] which emerged as a political consensus[2] on languages in school education was a strategy (not a policy) (Pattanayak D. P. year not mentioned) to accommodate at least three languages within the ten years of schooling. As the report of the Education Commission (1964-66) rightly describes it, "the impelling considerations were more political and social, than educational. In effect the formula established equality between the Hindi and the non-Hindi areas..." (p 191) India today has 92.07% schools at the primary stage teaching through mother tongue, and the rural and urban comparison shows 92.39% schools in rural areas and 90.39% school in urban areas teach through mother tongue. At the Upper Primary stage 91.34% teach through mother tongue which consists of 92.71% in rural areas and 87.37% in urban areas. 12.14% at the primary stage, 14.47% schools at upper primary and 18.53% at the secondary stage have two or more media of instruction. It is also interesting to note that 91.95% of schools in the country at the primary stage teach two or more languages. With regard to number of languages taught 90.61% of schools at the upper primary stage follow three language formula (i. e. at least three languages

are taught), 84. 86% of schools follow the formula at the secondary stage. (7th AISSES - NCERT 2007). Forty seven languages are used as media of instruction in schools and forty one languages are taught or used in schools (Srinivasa Rao 2008).

Multilingualism is constitutive of Indian diversity. There are about 1652 languages belonging to five different language families in this country (1971 census). Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution recognizes twenty two languages as official languages of the country, eighty seven languages are used in the print media, seventy one languages are used on radio and the administration of the country is run on thirteen different languages. But only forty seven languages are used as media of instruction in schools. Our educational system should make every conceivable effort to sustain multilingualism (Crawhall 1992; Heugh et al. 1995 among others) rather than suppress it (NCERT 2005). Pattanayak (1981) argues how our educational system has consistently weakened the advantages of grass-root multilingualism that characterizes our society. As Illich (1981) suggests, we need to make every possible effort to empower the languages of the underprivileged and tribal and endangered languages. Affirmative action is called for in this domain (NCERT 2005). To quote Pattanayak (1981), " if participatory democracy has to survive, we need to give a voice to the language of every child. " Multilingualism in education refers to the use of two or more languages as medium of instruction (UNESCO-2003). The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) — 2005 strongly advocates multilingualism in school education. This confers definite cognitive advantages. Researches have shown that that there is a highly positive



relationship between bilingualism / multilingualism, cognitive flexibility, and scholastic achievement. (See Peal and Lambert 1962; Gardner and Lambert 1972; Cummins and Swain 1986). Bilingual children not only have control over several different languages but they are also academically more creative and socially more tolerant (NCERT Position Paper: Teaching of Indian Languages 2005). Using the multilingual classroom or the languages of the classroom (i. e. children) as resources to teach-learn the subjects as also of the languages would benefit in locating the child in his / her context. This also takes us to language across the curriculum perspective. The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) — 2005 provides the following guidelines for language education in schools - Language teaching needs to be multilingual not only in terms of the number of languages offered to children but also in terms of evolving strategies that would use the multilingual classroom as a resource. - Home language(s) of children should be the medium of learning in schools. - If a school does not have provision for teaching in the children home languages(s) at the higher levels, primary school education must still be covered through the home language(s). It is imperative that we honour the child's home language(s). According to Article 350A of our Constitution, 'it shall be the endeavour of every state and of every local authority with in the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups'. - Children will receive multilingual education from the outset. The Three language formula needs to be implemented in its true spirit, promoting multilingual communicative abilities for a multilingual country. - In the non-Hindi speaking states, children learn Hindi. In the case of Hindi

speaking states, children learn a language not spoken in their area. Sanskrit may also be studied as Modern Indian Language (MIL) in addition to these languages. - At later stages, study of classical and foreign languages may be introduced. (3. 1. 1. Language Education, NCF 2005 P37) The number of languages taught or used in Indian schools had been reduced during the period between 1973 and 1993. The number of languages used in schools in 1973 (Third All India Educational Survey, NCERT 1975) was 67; the number came down to 41 in 1993 (Sixth All India Educational Survey, NCERT 1995) (cb. Srinivasa Rao 2008). While the promise of education through / in the mother tongue of the child is made time and again, we notice that with in a period of twenty years at least 25 languages were thrown out of the school system. This means children whose mother tongues are these languages would have to undergo the burden of studying in a language which is not theirs. This only contributes to what Amartya Sen calls compounded disadvantage of those who are already disadvantaged. Language policy planning in India presents both collaborative or additive and competitive bi-multilingualism. While the policy statements and implementation strategies inform us that the collaborative bilingualism or multilingualism is advocated, the choice of people and demands indicate there is competitive bilingualism or multilingualism, i. e. individuals using the language of their choice. There is more tilt towards the competitive bilingualism or multilingualism as felt by the some recent developments. First is the Madras High Court judgement in the year 2000 on choosing the medium of instruction against the order of the Tamil Nadu government ' Tamil as a compulsory medium at the primary school stage". One of the

arguments in favour of nullifying the government order was that it was against the fundamental right recognised by the Union Nations that the parents have about the choice of education they would like to have their children exposed to (Ramasamy 2001). Second is the increasing demand for conversion to English medium education, irrespective of the quality. It was reported recently that a large number of state run schools in the state of Andhra Pradesh wanting to shift their affiliation to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in order to become English medium schools. The clear picture which emerges is English Vs. all Indian languages. English, as some argue, taking the 'killer' role.

### 3. Role and place of English

Though there is an increasing demand for the language, English has become a bone of contention for reasons of social and political, and also academic. The position paper of the National Focus Group on Teaching of English for NCF — 2005 makes it clear when it addresses the 'English language question' English is in India today a symbol of people's aspiration for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Its colonial origins now forgotten or irrelevant, its initial role in independence India, tailored to high education now felt to be insufficiently inclusive socially and linguistically, the current state of English stem from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena.

... (P 1) 1. 1. Why English? ) English is introduced in class I or class III by 26 states or union territories out of 35 and seven states or union territories introduce it in class IV or V ( Khan 2005 cb Position paper Teaching of English — 2005 NCERT). The position paper also makes an attempt to find the place and role of English in today's context in India. Stating that 'English

does not stand alone', the position paper argues that it (English) needs to find its place (i) Along with other Indian Languages (a) in regional medium schools: how can children's other languages strengthen English learning? (b) in English medium schools: how can other Indian languages be valorized, reducing the perceived hegemony of English. (ii) In relation to other subjects: A language across the curriculum perspective is perhaps of particular relevance to primary education. Language is best acquired through different meaning-making contexts and hence all teaching in a sense is language teaching. This perspective also captures the centrality of language in abstract thought in secondary education (p 4). English today is a compulsory second language in the native / vernacular medium schools and in English medium schools it is competing to the status of first language.

3. 1. English Language (Teaching) Situation English language teaching situation presents a mixed picture from top to very low level in terms of teacher proficiency (TP) and the exposure of pupil to English in and outside school, i. e. the availability of English in the environment of language acquisition (EE). (Nag-Arulmani, 2000 cb NCERT 2005). Kurien (2005) identifies four types of schools as given below

1. High TP, High EE (e. g. English-medium private / government-aided elite schools) Proficient teachers; varying degrees of English in the environment, including as a home or first language
2. High TP, Low EE (e. g. New English-medium private schools, many of which use both English and other Indian languages): teachers with limited proficiency; children with little or no background in English; parents aspire to upward mobility through English.
3. Low TP, Low EE (e. g. Government-aided regional-medium schools): schools with a tradition of

English education along with regional languages, established by educational societies, with children from a variety of background. 4. " TP, " EE (e. g. Government regional-medium schools run by district and municipal education authorities): they enrol the largest number of elementary school children in rural India. They are also the only choice for the urban poor (who, however, have some options of access to English in the environment). Their teachers may be the least proficient in English of these four types of schools. (Position Paper Teaching of English-NCF - 2005- NCERT) (p 2) The difference in the teaching-learning situation, learners' exposure to the language outside the schools and parental support further divides each category into many levels. As Prabhu (1987: 3) observes that " typologies of teaching situation... should thus be seen as an aid to investigating the extend of relevance of a pedagogic proposal, " rather than as an absolute categories. The teaching situation decides where a school stands. The most rural schools in India today fall under the fourth category where we have children with almost nil or no exposure to the language, teachers' language proficiency is in question and here are the parents who can not support their wards in learning the language. 4. The Curriculum and the syllabus of English language Education Any curricular reform ought to take into consideration the fact that whatever appears relevant and essential today may not be suitable for tomorrow. Curriculum in countries like India bases itself on the diverse characteristics of the nation with its multiplicities. As John L. Clark (1987) remarks, a curriculum addresses the common as well as the individual aspirations. Given the diverse and conflicting values that exist within any large social group, and given a democratic concern for the valuing

of such diversity, it would seem necessary for any contemporary curriculum to attempt to embody what are agreed to be common aspirations, and yet leave space for individual interpretation within and beyond these, to accord with the individual characteristics of each teaching and learning context. (p. 9)

Goals for a comprehensive language curriculum needs to bring in aspects of language, culture, practices of people in the learning process in accordance with the local needs and concerns so that learners are able to connect with real life situations. A national curriculum (in language education) should aim for (Position Paper in Teaching of English NCERT — 2005) ... a cohesive curricular policy based on guiding principles for language teaching and acquisition, which allows for a variety of implementations suitable to local needs and resources, and which provides illustrative models for use. (p . 3)

A syllabus, which is a medium to realize the aims of language education, is driven by various needs and concerns that a curricular framework aims to achieve. We expect a syllabus to present textbook developers for deigning such materials that would give scope and space for teachers to exploit the perspective to maximum extent and to go beyond the textbook to engage the learners with their peers and immediate surroundings. The main objective of a good syllabus is to enable the learner to achieve proficiency in the language in different domains. The syllabus should reflect.

- i. Assumptions about language learning
- ii. Appropriate themes the texts embody
- iii. Objectives of teaching-learning English.
- iv. Knowledge of methods expected of teachers who use the textbooks
- v. Ideas on how learning materials will be constructed (What? and How?)
- vi. Ideas on how

learning is to be evaluated The state run schools which mostly fall under the fourth category of schools mentioned above would need to provide a curriculum for that ensures at least minimum level of exposure to the language, materials (receive inputs) that would present the language in contexts through authentic texts (Krahsen 1985), tasks and activities where children would engage with the language and interact and develop communicational skills, proficient teachers who would ensure enabling conditions for learning the language in meaningful contexts, and an examination system that would not threaten the rural learner and declare him a failure because s/he could not pass the mark of 33% in the subject as that of a content subject. Do our state curricula provide such conditions so that the rural learners feel comfortable being in school, particularly in learning English language? Let us see through an analysis of the curricular statements and the syllabi of some of the states.

4. 1. Andhra Pradesh a. Assumptions about Language The syllabus makes an attempt to define the two-fold goals of language curriculum as (i) attainment of basic proficiency, and (ii) the development of language as an instrument for basic interpersonal communication and later for abstract thought and knowledge. Recognizing the diverse nature of schooling and linguistic environment that prevail in India today, it calls for using meaningful and often multilingual contexts to enrich learning experiences. It recognizes input-rich communicational environment as a prerequisite to language learning. b. Objectives The objectives are delineated at two levels for primary stage: level I for classes I & II and level II for classes III, IV & V. Upper primary and secondary levels have different sets of objectives. An interesting aspect of

the primary level syllabus is that through the objectives spelt out for English medium and Telugu medium or vernacular medium are common, the activities and competencies to be realized through objectives are indicated separately. Sub themes and structures are listed in detail showing which structures are to be learnt / taught through each sub theme. Level I Objectives (classes I & II) seeks to familiarize the child with the spoken language by exposing them to the language in meaningful, interesting and real life situation through the mother tongue, signs, visuals, pictures, sketches, gestures, letters, words, single-word questions and answers, formulaic expression as communicative props. Teacher talk and listening to recorded material are some other suggested ways for exposing learners to spoken language. Use of drawings / paintings as precursors to writing and relating these activities to oral communication and familiarizing the learner with the text (words / phrases/ sentences, rhymes) and playing the roles of birds and animals are included in the objectives. Level II Objectives (classes III, IV & V) move from familiarising the children with the language by exposure to enabling them to read and write, besides listening and speaking. The objectives include too many items in terms of skills and competencies. These are: (i) transforming the silent written / printed language into living speech (ii) readying the learner for reading, discussion and writing (iii) enriching vocabulary through telling, re-telling and reading aloud of stories, folktales (iv) teaching good hand writing and correct punctuation and. (v) helping them speak simple English with correct pronunciation (vi) and facilitating them to recite and appreciate rhymes and poems and classify words nouns, actions (verbs) describing words



(adjectives) and linkers (conjunctions). Level III Objectives at the Upper primary (classes VI, VII and VIII) include reading of texts of representing different genres and themes, speaking in a given situation, acquiring production skills ( to develop fluency and accuracy ) in speaking and writing., developing study skills / reference skills and understanding and appreciating jokes, riddles, anecdotes , etc. The first objective will create awareness among learners of ‘ learning how to learn’. It will help learners know / understand their learning goals and evaluate their own progress.

Level IV Secondary stage (Classes IX and X) Higher order skills are introduced here to enable learners to use the language appropriately and to be creative. Learners will acquire greater proficiency, appropriacy and fluency in oral and written communication in different social settings and will shape themselves out as independent learners through self learning skills.

c. Contents of the course The syllabus takes into account the ten core components listed in the National Policy on Education (1986). These components will cut across all subject areas. The course materials as the curriculum makes it clear should draw upon the themes integrated with the core components. The themes listed are the same themes of syllabus and guidelines developed as a follow up to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) — 2005. However, the themes/listed in the syllabus are only suggestive and at each stage should be in line with learner’s cognitive level, interest and experience,

d. Curricular package A single textbook is recommended for each grade up to class V. The material from class VI onwards as indicated by the syllabi should consists of (i) A Reader (ii) A Workbook and (iii) A Supplementary Reader. The number of lessons/ units

in each book has also been suggested. Reader (the main textbook) should contain not more than ten comprehensive units (text, exercises / tasks activities) and five / six poems of varying lengths depending on the class. The workbook will have as many corresponding worksheets as the number of comprehensive units in the Reader. The Supplementary Reader will have about eight pieces meant for self-study to promote reading for information and pleasure. The material included in the package will be completed in 150 working days.

e. Evaluation Allotment of marks in terms of weighting to each book is prescribed; the Reader will have 40%; the Workbook 40% and the Supplementary Reader 20%. Suggested evaluation procedures include what is called periodic, preferably at regular intervals of 4 to 6 weeks of actual instruction. Both oral and written evaluation methods need to be followed and the periodic tests should carry a weighting of 50% of oral and 25% of written testing at the primary level.

4. 2. Mizoram a. Status of English & Assumptions about language learning The socio-political aspirations of people in demanding English as a language of opportunity are addressed by the proposed syllabus in the hope that within a span of five years, it should be possible to ensure basic English language proficiency including basic literacy skills of reading and writing.

b. Objectives v Objectives have been spelt out for four levels, namely classes I and II, III to VII, VIII to X and XI & XII. Objectives are in line with the objectives mentioned in the syllabus guidelines of NCF — 2005. However, the syllabus prescribes expected learning outcomes for each class, which has not been done in the NCERT syllabus. The outcomes are listed as the ‘child should be able to acquire the skill of...’ These are listed in terms of

listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary for all classes, including classes I & II. Though these seem to be specific objectives, they are very specific about what each category of skills needs to consist of. v The course content for each class is presented as language items and a range of themes for the text. Class I will have names of familiar objects, fruits, vegetable, animals and birds, basic colours, parts of body, numbers 1 – 10, etc. It also expects children to learn to write letters of the alphabets, both lower and upper case. v In class II, it seems there is an attempt to teach grammar very explicitly. Items like present continuous, imperatives, opposites, use of ' in' and ' on', phrases and sentences, pronouns, affirmative and negative sentences, verbs, etc are also found in the list. This is in addition to vocabulary. v Likewise, each stage has its objectives and the expected outcomes along with listed items, mainly grammar items. By the end of class X, one can expect that all grammatical items of the English language will have been covered with nothing missing. c. Teaching-Learning Material The Curricular Package: The proposed syllabus adopts the recommendation of NCERT syllabus of having a textbook, a workbook and a supplementary reader. The weighting in terms of marks is 40% for the textbook, 40 % for language work including oral testing and 20% for supplementary reader. (NCERT's new generation textbooks produced as a follow up to the NCF —2005 have integrated the language and grammar components with the main textbook itself. Two books form the total package) d. Themes for the Content Themes listed for the textbooks are the replication of the themes listed in the NCERT syllabus. e. Methods and Techniques The syllabus borrows the methods and techniques from NCERT

syllabus ' for enriching learner's experiences.' It does not state how these would be realised in the classroom. f. Evaluation The syllabus recommends a periodic, regular evaluation inclusive of oral and written aspect language. Assessment of general proficiency rather than specific achievement has also been emphasised. 4. 3. Nagaland The syllabus of Nagaland records the importance and inevitability of English language in the Indian educational system and ' life of our people.' The dominance of English language in higher education thereby making it a language of access to knowledge is recognized in the introduction. It is clearly stated that English has been accepted as the official language by all sections of people of Nagaland. 1. The syllabus does not indicate or provide any assumptions about nature of language, learning, learner profiles, local context in learning a subject or a language. 2. The aims of language teaching learning are given under two broad categories (i) General Aim which contains (a) , Semantic aspect, (understanding meaning) (b) Phonetic aspect (spelling and pronunciation), (c) graphic aspect (written form), and (d) the phonetic-cum-graphic aspect (reading ). The second aim of teaching-learning English is ' each lesson should have specific aim.' What the specific aim is remains unclear. The aim in reality is ' proceed from known to unknown' ' from concrete to abstract.' The procedure or method is presented as specific aim. 3. Overall objectives all stages of schooling are presented in seven points, which are further categorized into LSRW, each having a separate set of objectives. The over all objectives expect the learner to understand simple spoken and written English and to read silently, read poems, use dictionaries, etc. ' The basic skills of teaching and learning English' as the syllabus postulates

are LSRW, expecting the textbook and classroom to give ample time for listening and speaking among the four skills at the primary stage. However, it also lays emphasis on reading and writing at later stage. The syllabus delineates again general objectives for each class at the primary level. These are divided into (i) aural —oral skill (ii) reading skill and (iii) writing skill. Objectives of each skill are presented in terms of what the learner is expected to do

4. Syllabus of Nagaland does not have any information about the teaching —learning materials, evaluation procedures, methods and strategies for the classroom activities and so on. An interesting statement to be noted in the analysis of the NCERT[3] syllabus in comparison with the state is, “ Nagaland is little more advanced when compared to the one given in the National Curriculum Framework — 2005, ‘ as the pupils have already had two years of learning the said language before coming to level 1”

4.4. Manipur Syllabus of the state of Manipur consists of general objectives of teaching / learning English for each stage and expected learning outcomes for each class in terms of four skills — LSRW. It also prescribes vocabulary limit for each class and “ the list”, as the syllabus says, has been prepared by CIEFL, Hyderabad. a. The general objectives are more or less in line with NCERT’s guidelines. The expected outcomes detail each activity the child is expected to do in the classroom. The activities are listed under LSRW. b. The number of words to be learnt by each child in a particular class is mentioned as follows class one 100, class two 250 -300, class three 450 - 500 class four 750 — 800, and class five 800 — 1000. This is an obsolete idea as one cannot say how many words one knows at a particular point of time. This shows that the syllabus

is following the structural approach. c. Syllabus at the higher secondary level provides examination specifications i. e. allotment of marks and expected numbers of words for each answer. The blue print of the question paper with its various components is given in detail. Knowledge, Understanding, Application and Skill are the four components that would be tested. The specifications do not even distinguish between language and other 'content' subjects. Aesthetic appreciation has been left out completely. The question paper specifications also categorize questions into difficult, average and easy with specific allotment of marks to each category.

d. The analysis of topics / titles of the lessons in each textbook found that the topics and themes are not in line with NCERT's guidelines. Items that would be deleted and themes on which new lessons need to be added are listed.

4. 5. Madhya Pradesh The state has brought out State Curriculum Framework 2007, (by Madhya Pradesh Rajya Shiksha Kendra, Bhopal). The curriculum Framework spells out the rationale for the curricular revision and the need to cater to the changing societal needs and the diverse cultural, linguistics and social background. The framework prescribes / recommends a two level approach (this is the existing system in the state) — General English and Special English — Special English is an optional subject designed specifically for those who plan to acquire higher linguistic and literary proficiency and take up English as a the medium of instruction while the general English is opted by others i. e. those who study in vernacular medium schools. The framework is cautious when it defines ' General English' is by no means lessens the quality of inputs given to the learner and the ' general English' has all the ingredients included in ' English'

as discussed in the NCF — 2005. The Framework — 2007 aims at equipping all children with high level of proficiency in English so that they do not suffer discrimination for lack of it. Advocating an integrated approach to teaching of the language to promote a holistic perspective, the framework calls for need based syllabus and proficient teachers to synchronize with national and international standards. The framework presents the overall objectives of English language education (ELE) in terms of skills to be fostered, development of desirable attitude, methods and techniques to be adopted for an effective implementation in the classroom, curricular package (materials), evaluation methods, time allocation and training of teachers. The specific objectives for each class / stage are spelt out separately for both general and special English.

a. Assumption about language learning

The curriculum framework — 2007 (Madhya Pradesh) calls for equity in the access to English language education at school level as they would, it believes, suffer the discrimination for lack of it. The framework also advocates the equality of languages and complementary role of languages (they (languages) flourish in each other's company). The framework believes that language learning takes place implicitly by comprehending and communicating messages, either through listening or reading for meaning. Different language skills develop simultaneously rather than in a linear order as reflected in the traditional LSRW (page 5). An integrated approach would enable learners to receive meaningful language input that is appropriate to his / her age, acquire basic interpersonal communicative skills and move on to cognitively advanced language proficiency. Language acquisition follows, as the framework believes, processes of scientific enquiry such as

observation of data, classification and categorization, hypothesis formation and verification

b. Skills to be fostered & attitudes to be nurtured The framework presents the overall objectives of English language education in schools in terms of receptive skill (listening and reading) expressive skills (speaking and Writing). The ‘desirable attitudes’ to be nurtured include: The ten core components identified in the NPE - 1986, along with emerging concerns like environmental issues, conservation of resources, population concerns, disaster management, human rights, etc. The framework emphasizes for enabling learners to engage in discussion in an analytical and critical manner, use language creatively and imaginatively in text transaction and performance of activities.

c. Contents of the Course The framework suggests (under desirable attitudes to be nurtured) the lists of themes for development of materials. These include the emerging concerns and ten core components and the following: Self, family, home, friends and pets; Neighbourhood, community, surrounding; Madhya Pradesh — its cultural, religious diversity; India —cultural, religious, linguistics diversities and heritage; Patriotism, national heroes and freedom fighters; Duties and rights; Adventure and imagination; Sports; Science and technology; Peace and harmony; Travel and tourism; Art and culture

d. Methods and techniques The framework suggests oral-aural, learner-centered, activity-based approach. The activities include: project work, activities that promote reading with comprehension, quiz, role-play, skits, dialogue, dramatization, discussion, debate, language games, simulating, real life situation, using newspaper clipping, riddles and puzzles, pair work and group work.

e. Curricular Package Each class will have a (i) textbook, (ii) a workbook and



(iii) a teacher's book. The curricular framework — 2007 (M. P.) also prescribes number of units for each stage. In general English for classes I — V, the textbook will have 10 to 14 units including 3 or 4 poems of varying length. Each workbook will have the same number of corresponding worksheets as number of comprehensive units of the textbook. f.

Evaluation The framework calls for the implementation for newer trends in evaluation techniques. A continuous and comprehensive model is suggested. Time allocation: The framework suggests at least one period a day for the teaching of English in each class. The curricular framework of M. P. strongly recommends compulsory training of all teachers employing the cascade mode within a year. Since English language has been introduced from class I, it is felt that the training of teachers both on the 'content' and methodology is advocated. 5. Discussion The syllabi of the states analysed above inform us how language learning is understood; the basic conditions for learning a language as a second or foreign language aimed at and the essential of a good language learning-teaching in a situation like the rural Indian settings. The essentials may be listed as (i) Proficient language teacher (ii) amount of exposure of students to the language (iii) Motivation of children (iv) materials that would provide opportunities for the learner and teacher to act and react and move beyond the texts. Though the picture is alarming that the language is taken as a content subject, some states have got themselves informed of the recent development at the national level, like the NCF -2005 and made an attempt at least to bring in the ideas. The syllabus of Andhra Pradesh does not make an attempt to understand what is language learning i. e. assumptions about language learning. The syllabus

reflects (i) attainment of basic proficiency, and (ii) the development of language as an instrument for basic interpersonal communication and later for abstract thought. It does not talk about the learner, nature of learning, language and learning. The place and status of English language is touched formally. The syllabus draws learning upon NCF — 2005. The syllabus moves from learning orally to written i. e. speaking to writing at the primary stage, but is not clear about when to begin writing the alphabets of English. Objectives attempt to bring in many things at the same time. We can notice it in the primary, and in upper primary stages. Though the syllabus advocates multiple methods for teaching / learning the language, it appears that it relies heavily on ‘good old’ structural approach in the primary classes. The number of structures to be taught / learnt is listed in the detailed syllabus. The new (proposed) syllabus of the state of Mizoram does not take a holistic view of language learning and the learner’s role in learning as central. Much emphasis is laid on grammar teaching even in classes I and II. Outcome based objectives are delineated to ensure that everything is taught and learnt. Though the syllabus talks about linking life outside the classroom with learning in the classroom, it does not say much about local life and culture as contents for the textbook. The themes the syllabus has identified are the themes listed in the NCERT syllabus. It makes an attempt to go beyond these themes and let the textbook developer feel free to choose the themes suiting the locale. Issues like gender, peace, health and physical education and work related attitudes are listed in the themes. One needs to look at the textbooks to find out whether these find a place in them and whether the themes are dealt with

adequately. The syllabus of the state of Nagaland defines aims of teaching-learning of English in vague manner listing as general and specific aims and the objectives in terms of LSRW. It would be difficult for teachers' to understand the syllabus, if at all it reaches them. If it does, they will be let to believe that language has been presented in all its aspects (a), Semantic aspect, (understanding meaning) (b) Phonetic aspect (spelling and pronunciation), (c) graphic aspect (written form), and (d) the phonetic-cum-graphic aspect (reading) without touching upon any underlying principles of language acquisition or learning. For example ' graphic aspect' (written form) can actually refer to recognizing the mechanics of writing the alphabets, words, sentences, paragraphs, leaving any reference to meaning. We recognize learning as meaning making. The aims of Nagaland syllabus do not corroborate this aspect learning. Manipur, in her attempt to define the aims and objectives of English language education loses its track when it prescribes vocabulary lists to each class. The vocabulary list, which the state claims that has been prepared by CIEFL, (as far as our knowledge goes CIEFL never prepared such a list) is obsolete and outdated. Madhya Pradesh presents an encouraging picture on many counts. It adopts a holistic approach to language learning and teaching in the context of the learner. Adopting the ideas from the NCF, the syllabi delineates the over all aim and skills to be fostered during the school stage. The syllabus recommends two types of courses —one, general English and the other, special English. One can see the divide that the first course is for native /vernacular medium learners and the special English is for those who study in English medium schools. Though the curriculum framework argues that no course is by no

means lesser, it does not require great intelligence to understand the motive.

5. 1. English language input / exposure Language learning, whatever way it occurs in a naturalistic or in an instructed context, takes time and laborious process (Rod Ellis 1993 & 2008). Learners need to receive exposure to the target language. The language input (comprehensible input) and motivation (Krashen 1985) are essential for learning a language as second or foreign language. The intended curriculum and syllabi of the states analysed above, though attempt to provide a comprehensible package of text material as a major input, are not clear on how and why the learners would be exposed and the teachers' language proficiency acts as a major input in the classroom. They do not talk about development of reading; strategies for reading (like story telling, story reading, etc.) and integrated approach to learning the language are not clearly understood. The enabling conditions for learning the language as second or foreign language are not even talked about. In other words, the syllabi do not make attempt to understand the contexts of the learners, how learning takes place in the contexts, while tall statements are made in recognizing the language (English) as a language for access to higher education and employability.

5. 2. Interactive / Communicative Activities /Tasks There is lot of confusion in understanding what an activity or a task is in language classroom. The activity / task needs to let the learner use the language, i. e. get engaged with the language. This requires learner initiating, turn taking, suggesting, debating, etc. the syllabi and a cursory look at textbooks shows that the activities are teacher directed and teacher centered. The syllabus does not visualize (except cursorily in the objectives) how activities in the classroom

can be organized and what roles learners and teachers have in the classroom. We can notice the paradox of the syllabus aiming to design communicational syllabi and doing the opposite of the same. This is noticed in all the five states syllabi analysed.

### 5. 3. Teaching — learning of Vocabulary

Vocabulary list still dominates syllabi of Manipur as it prescribes number of words to be learnt in each class. This obsolete idea of teaching the number of words in each class reveals that the understanding the syllabi framers have and the latest knowledge on language learning. In fact the list as mentioned in the syllabi prepared by CIEFL does not exist. Other states' syllabi too do not throw any light on vocabulary —whether lexical approach would be followed or vocabulary would be learnt in contexts.

### 5. 4. Teaching of Grammar

Every one seems to be bothered about teaching of grammar and the rules of language explicitly from the earliest. Most of the states list the grammatical item to be covered in each class and thereby completing the whole grammar of English language by the end of class X. What is worrying is that the idea of teaching of grammar in an isolated manner through single sentence examples and telling the rules followed by example. The PPP (present-practice-proceduralized i. e. automatized) (Rod Ellis) model is aimed at teaching grammar. PPP is against the zero grammar(meaning centered) approach- the idea that a grammatical structure should be first presented explicitly and then practiced until it is fully proceduralised (i. e. automatized). (emphasis original) (Rod Ellis 2008) We recognise learner as constructor of knowledge through his / her engagements with the language and encounters, the learner discovers the rules of language. Contrary to the beliefs of constructivism, the syllabi aim to teach grammar

explicitly, though attempts are made to contextualise the ‘ grammar’ worksheet / exercises in the workbook with corresponding units/ lessons of the textbook. 5. 6. Curricular package Each state analysed here suggests teaching-learning material for each stage. Rightly all recommend only one book for primary stage. Three textbooks are prescribed from class six onward. They are: a textbook (the main reader), supplementary reader and a workbook. Some states prescribe number of units to be included for each class, number of poem and grammatical item. The textbook is aimed at providing comprehensible inputs (Krashen 1985) and the input needs to be authentic i. e. texts which are written not for the purpose of textbook, but written for some other purpose like stories, novels, travelogue, autobiography, etc. The curricular statements on materials do not talk about the authenticity of texts, texts that would provide opportunity to exploit the maximum learning, variety of genres, and translation from Indian languages. The workbook aimed to teach grammar items explicitly need to be introspected further as the recent trends advocate learning-teaching of grammar in context rooting it in the texts of the main textbook, thus connecting it with the experiences of learners. 5. 7. Extensive Reading All the five syllabi in their design for materials or curricular package include a supplementary reader (from class VI) aiming at promotion of reading as a major input for learning the language. The syllabi fail to recognize the distinction between the intensive reading and extensive reading. It appears that the supplementary readers for extensive reading are aimed at for intensive reading as that of a detailed reading text. So the examination specifications suggest testing of the supplementary reader as that of the

detailed text. Moreover, the syllabi do not envisage promotion of reading taking the benefit of learner's first language / mother tongue and through story telling, story reading and creating locally available resources like class library and reading as a continuous strategy for learning the language. 5. 8.

Examination Though much water has flowed through the processes of curricular reform both at the national and state levels, not much progress has been felt in the syllabi of the states in evaluation. Every syllabus talks about continuous and comprehensive evaluation, but it the one time final examination that decides what has been learnt and there has been regret about listening and speaking not tested. The syllabi designers find themselves in a fix when it comes to the two important skills of language learning, i. e. listening and speaking. It is only the written examination that decides all aspects of learning the language. Since there is not much scope for 'teaching' listening and speaking beyond the textbooks, the skills suffer in the tested curriculum too. 6. To Conclude Addressing the Rural learner's needs: If the teaching-learning situation is to be made rural learner centered, the curriculum in language education needs to: 1. Have a holistic approach to language planning where language education is perceived as whole in which English language education find its complementary and supplementary role. 2. Use the languages of children as a resource for teaching-learning of languages and other content subjects (NCF -2005).

Adopting the multilingualism as strategy for learning of languages and other subjects will help the rural learner finding their contexts and connecting their life outside the school with happenings of the classroom. 3. Create (English) language environment in the classroom and attempt to enable the learner to

explore finding the language in use outside the classroom. This requires bilingual proficient teachers, who are conformable in the mother tongue(s) of children and in English. The activities and assignments that would demand children to move beyond the textbook and the classroom in finding to use the language. Newspapers, radio, TV and computers could be exploited for the purpose. 1. Let us have, what David Graddol (1997) calls in his *The Future of English*, an ethical framework for ELT in which he brings in the questions of (a) How then, can the teaching of English be brought with in a more ethnical framework? (b) What social responsibilities are associated with the promotion and teaching of English? And there is a growing concern about endangered languages but very little debate about the management of large languages, of which English is the largest. (P63). The languages of children, more the languages in our tribal locales as also languages spoken by less number of people would find a comfortable position in the school curriculum. English will continue to dominate the school curriculum not only as a language, but as a medium of learning too. Given the important roles to English in education and in the larger society (Tickoo 1996), this will have greater implications for language education, particularly English language education in rural settings. The anti-English spirit or English hatred is dying out and will slowly diminish in coming years as the language is perceived as language of hope and better life. While some of our native languages are loosing their battle for survival where English is taking the ‘killer’ role and the curricular documents calling for collaborative bi-/multilingualism, what in reality felt is subtractive bilingualism. This dangerous trend may lead to mass conversion to English medium instruction in our schools, both urban



and rural schools. We must ensure that English as a language in education is fully realised in terms of the basic conditions for learning the language and those educated through native medium schools attain the proficiency that would not hamper them to move forward to higher education and employment any other urban English medium educated child would compete. Much discussed Common School System needs to be taken seriously along with right to education to realise a comprehensive language-in education strategy that would keep our rural learners comfortable.

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