

## **Creating Awareness and Importance of ‘English’ For Students Hailing From Rural Areas**

**Dr. M. Sandra Carmel Sophia<sup>1</sup>, Dr. M. Nirmala<sup>2</sup>.**

<sup>1</sup>Professor of English  
Aditya Engineering College, Surampalem  
[sandrasophia27@gmail.com](mailto:sandrasophia27@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Asst. Professor of English  
Government Degree College for Women, Begumpet.  
[nirmalamahendra1087@gmail.com](mailto:nirmalamahendra1087@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English creates a huge demand for English learning/teaching around the world. People’s participation in dialogue of cultures requires communication and contributes to the total holistic formation of the human person. English education is the need of the hour and a powerful instrument of economic, social and cultural change. In underdeveloped countries like India, the progress of rural areas is questioned, because of unequal or lack of access to quality education. Poverty and illiteracy remain overwhelmingly a rural phenomena and poverty in rural areas is linked to illiteracy. Therefore development in rural areas faces a key challenge to achieve both poverty reduction and ‘Education for All’. Quality of education depends on infrastructure such as classrooms, sanitation facilities, provision for digital learning, sports equipment facilities, professional competencies of teachers, access to books and learning materials, So the article is a discussion on the importance and creating awareness of English education for students hailing from rural areas since it is the powerful instrument of economic, social and cultural change.

**Keywords:** Communication, English Language, Dialogue of Cultures, Holistic Formation, Quality Education, English Education, Instrument of Social Change, Cultural Change.

### **Introduction:**

Mankind has failed to get rid of poverty and squalor in the world despite tremendous growth in world incomes and unparalleled improvements in standards of living over the past few years. As a consequence, people are facing countless problems in countries like India particularly in rural areas and under developed regions. The major reason for this happens to be inequalities and injustice affecting the lives of the rural poor. Unequal access to quality education or lack of

proper educational facilities, which is so pivotal for social or economic development of an individual or a nation, seems to be the major drawback for the progress of rural communities which is the backbone of ethnic cultures. Kofi Annan stated:

Acquiring literacy is an empowering process,  
enabling millions to enjoy access to knowledge  
and information which broadens horizons,  
increases opportunities and creates alternatives  
for building a better life (Press Release SG/SM/8849-OBV/368  
5 SEPTEMBER 2003).

Therefore Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life in modern society. It is a bulwark against poverty and a building block of progress, an essential complement and a platform for democratization and promotion of cultural and national identity. Above all literacy is a basic human right, the road to human development and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his/her full potential.

Nonetheless, the nature of these challenges is overlooked. Poverty and illiteracy remain overwhelmingly a rural phenomenon and poverty in rural areas is connected to illiteracy and other forms of deprivation such as undernourishment, infant mortality, unhygienic work conditions and poor access to water. The huge majority of the rural residence depends on agrarian way of life to earn their livelihood. Therefore, development of rural areas encounters a key challenge to achieve poverty, reduction or elimination and calls for the slogan 'Education for All'. From this perspective, it is comprehensive to note that preferably Education in English is a powerful instrument of economic, social, cultural political and linguistic change.

### **Plight of English in Rural Areas**

At present English language is the 'Lingua-Franca' of international business, technology, aviation, diplomacy, banking, computers, medicine, engineering and tourism. In arenas of both professional and personal life too, communicating in English language has become the high road to success. The increasing demand for English -both as a language and as a medium-obtained by

the medium-has compelled governments at the central and state levels to introduce English as additional language from primary classes. Though English has been a part of India's education system for many decades, yet English seems to be beyond the reach of most young citizens. The situation in the diversity in English language education in India displays a rosy as well as abysmal picture. Though there is an ever-growing demand to master the language, English has become a bone of contention for reasons of social, political and economic success. In India too English language is sign of people's dreams for quality in education and full participation in national and international life.

### **English Language Teaching – A gist**

The expression 'English Language Teaching' includes teaching of English as a foreign language to the students for the purpose of acquainting them with the language skills. This will enable them to read and understand the English lessons, poems, prose pieces etc., along with various language contents. The students will be able to appreciate the 'content' and analyze it critically thus promoting English language development through various methods such as reading, writing, listening, pronunciation etc., in English which helps them to overcome their problems and barriers in understanding their proficiency in the language.

Man is a social being whose superior intelligence differentiates him from other living species. While human beings can do things spontaneously by making use of their common sense and instincts, other creatures can only do when they are trained. Similarly human beings alone can be educated and have the power of speaking and communication skills while animals are deprived of the need to use language and communicate with their fellow creatures. The point to be noted is that man alone can be educated. To cite the words of T. Williams Raymonds who defines education in the following words:

Education is a process to develop the potentials of man

so as to differentiate him from other living beings.

One of the most important potential that is developed

Through education is man's linguistic potential

*(Culture and Education 108).*

Most of the students in higher education institutions hail from a very poor economical background. The truth is they are from rural areas. They do possess the required intelligence and knowledge for seeking admission into a reputed institution but lack the necessary competence to communicate with their peers in English. So, during academic sessions and classroom activities, they face a lot of problems. To be successful in studies and academic and social activities, it is necessary to possess competence skills in English communication. Hence the responsibility falls not only on the student's shoulders but also on the teachers. Both the learner and the facilitator need to put in integrated efforts which include initiative and active participation in teaching/learning.

The attempts made by the central and state governments and educational institutions to improve the standards of education in rural areas are still questionable because of reasons which cannot be expressed openly. A community cannot foster development without an educated population. It is challenging to find specific modalities to address the demand and supply issues that education faces in these areas. In most of the rural areas schools and colleges do not maintain conducive atmosphere for learning and the teachers too do not insist upon the learning of English language among the students. There are instances of states in India where learners have local languages as the medium of instruction up to their graduation. This is a major obstacle and at every phase of personal and professional life, communicating even in simple English becomes difficult for the students hailing from rural backgrounds. All of a sudden at the post graduate level the students are exposed to learning a foreign language as English and things turn out to be unimaginable and incredible. This is a pathetic situation which needs to be rectified. Other problems faced by the students in learning English are as follows:

**Problems faced by Students in Rural Areas in learning English**

1. **The Economical Family Background:** Most of the states in India are under developed and the dwellers of rural areas find it difficult to earn their livelihood. The socio-economic conditions of these inmates are below average and equal responsibility falls on the children to do menial jobs and look after the family. If the parents of the family are educated, the problem is solved and the student is at home with the foreign language

learning. But if the family background is very poor and illiterate, the children have no access to learn English at all and so where the question of children going to is schools when they have to fulfill the duties of earning for the family.

2. **Education System:** Another key factor that is responsible for lack of English education in rural areas is system of education. The traditional system of learning-tests, examinations, and assignments should be altered and focus laid on listening and speaking because the students are quite well versed in reading and writing. The pattern of evaluation can be changed by implementing open book test system. The students should be given freedom to a certain extent to learn on their own and gain knowledge in all fields. Hence the very system of education in Indian schools should be changed in schools.
3. **Lack of Exposure to English Communication:** Many students from rural background lack exposure to communication in English even with their immediate siblings. At the time of interviews and other job recruitments, students fail to achieve success due to lack of communication skills and exposure around them. This leads to a feeling of inferiority complex and the end result is students develop fear to face interviews.
4. **Lack of Skilled Teachers:** This is the major hindrance faced by the rural students in learning English. Many government schools lack teachers with skills and it is quite disappointing. There are untrained teachers in rural schools. Most of the teachers are unaware of the current trends and advanced techniques of English Language Teaching. In most of the schools and colleges, 75% of the teachers do not possess even the basic and minimum qualification needed for a noble profession as teaching. Rote learning/drilling has become the fashion of times in corporate schools and colleges to ensure full percentage of marks. The time factor is emphasized in these schools instead of updated knowledge in the teachers. The students are made to stay during odd hours and real learning with practical knowledge is dampened in the students. It is high time that teachers should first equip themselves and be honest and committed to the improvement of learning in students coming from rural backgrounds.

5. **General Problems:** The attitude and mindset of the students in the rural areas is negative as they are habituated to listening and conversing in their native tongue. The very word 'new' language instills fear and students show no interest as they are not properly oriented about the foreign language and its significance. More over the students are pulled towards communicating in their vernacular or regional languages. This has a very great impact on their aversion to learning a new language. So to overcome all these problems and make the students have a passion to learn English language especially those living in rural areas, the following measures can be taken and the end result achieved:

### **Implementation of Remedial Measures in Learning English Language**

1. To create awareness of the importance of a second/foreign language.
2. To arouse interest about the need for use of English language.
3. To develop communication in English for good governance.
4. To take more efforts to teach English to attain communicative competence.
5. To motivate the students in an interesting and appropriate manner to learn English.
6. To motivate the students to carry and use pocket dictionary.
7. To make the students participate in small talks, group discussions, role plays and cultural activities.
8. To inculcate the habit of reading exercise and make the students read English newspapers, short stories, novels, articles etc.,
9. To implement simple grammar teaching as this is applicable in everyday life.
10. To encourage the students to listen and watch English channels like CNN, BBC, DD, etc.,
11. To give personal counseling and guidance about career and other aspects.
12. To give orientation on the uses of English language across the globe.
13. To create knowledge of progress in modern technology such as internet.
14. To discourage the use of guides of any type and make the students think and write 'creatively'.
15. To make the students adopt multilingualism as a strategy for learning foreign languages and other subjects to ensure holistic approach to life and find the appropriate context connecting them to life.

## Conclusion:

Rural life has certainly fertilized education in many ways and this rich heritage should be nurtured and enriched. By providing basic education as a priority and improve teaching/learning in rural areas, access to quality education, most markedly English education can be brought to focus and developed enormously. New thinking in economics and management and entertainment genres should be implemented. The proverb ‘one looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touch with human feelings’, should be the motto of all teachers. The curriculum is so much a necessary raw material that warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

## References

1. Byrne, D. (1990). *Teaching Oral English*. Essex: Longman.
2. Byrne, D. (1987). *Techniques for Classroom Interaction*. London: Longman.
3. Cummins & Swain (1986). *Bilingualism in Education*. London: Longman.
4. Crystal, David (1997). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge.
5. Hanjar, J (1990). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
6. Klippel, F (1990). *Keep Talking: Communicative Fluency Activities for Language Teaching*. Cambridge: OUP
7. Long, M (1996). *The Role of Linguistic Environment in Second Language Acquisition*. Academic Press: San Diego.
8. Williams, Raymond (1981). *Culture and Education*. London: Fontana.