Chapter VI

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English occupies a separate niche of name and fame among all the languages of the world. English is the queen of all languages and it is a direct medium of acquiring knowledge of modern arts, science, humanities, technology, etc. It is the language of computer and internet. Higher education is possible in India only through the medium of English. Statesmen, politicians, scientists, and doctors use this language to publish their inventions and discoveries. The use of English enriches the knowledge and experience of the people.

English widens one’s culture and intellectual horizon. Interaction with the people of the world through English contributes to cultural growth. Thus, one knows the culture of the nation. It also develops scientific, technical, and commercial relation with other countries. Thus, English education sows the seed for further understanding and mutual cooperation.

The study of English enables a person to compare and contrast the merits and demerits of his country with those of other nations. This helps him to acquire a new insight into various resources of thoughts.
and expressions. People who know English can read and enjoy the best stories, dramas, novels, etc., that are available in the English language.

English has become the language of trade, commerce, and industry. Businessmen living in the same province or different provinces make their correspondence only in English. This quickens their work, because, their letters are read and understood by the people of all parts. It is because English is the common language understood by the people of all countries.

English commands a very important position in the world today. In fact, it is the only language which is spoken throughout the world. This is the reason why it is helpful in foreign trade, commerce, political relations, and friendship. As a result, the Indians, try to master this language.

Although English is a foreign language, it occupies a very important place in India. Without this language, one fears, whether India will be united. It is this language which functions as a cementing force to strengthen National Integration. Again, it is through this language that the Indians carry out their trade, commerce, and international relationships.
English is a key to open the gates to the knowledge of the West. Every invention and every branch of knowledge is available in English. One has to go through such things only in English. Any great scientist or a novelist writes in English and to go through that one has to learn English. In other words, learning English will help one to enrich his knowledge. Again, through the medium of English, one can have access to various cultures.

English is the language not only of England but of the extensive dominions and colonies associated with the British Empire. It is also the language of the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. With the advent of the British, the teaching of English came to India. But they did not concentrate their attention on the teaching of English from the very beginning. As they came as traders, their attention was focused on trade. But the missionaries also came with them and they started schools and contributed to the teaching of English in India.

English is taught in India as a Second Language. Among all the modern languages, English claims to be the first rate language because all international communications are carried out in English. English is taught as a tool for international understanding. By learning this language, one overcomes one’s prejudices, fanaticism,
intolerance, and narrow-mindedness and contributes one’s share to promote international understanding.

Library is said to be a treasure house of knowledge. To make a proper use of this treasure house of knowledge, one has to know English. Science and Technology, Medicine, Agriculture, and Astronomy are all available only in English. Graduates, post Graduates, and Research Scholars use this language to continue their studies by referring to many and various books available in the library. Probably, this is the reason why English occupies a prominent position in the world. The Kothari Commission also stresses the importance of English and says that it functions as a library language.

It was English that united India during Pre-Independence period. In the Post Independent era also, it functions as a cementing force. English functions as a link language. India is a multilingual country where many languages are spoken by the people. So, for national communication, English is used in India, as Hindi cannot link all the provinces together. For international communication also English is used.

Higher education is possible only in English in India due to lack of quality books in the regional languages. Moreover, all inventions,
discoveries, findings of researches, philosophy, and other branches of knowledge are available only in English.

Since the world has become a Global Village where every activity is globalised, English occupies an important position. No business and correspondence is possible without English as far as the international and national trade and commerce is concerned. The language of computer is English. Internet and webs use only English. Unless, one knows English, it is very difficult to know the latest developments in all the branches of knowledge.

Those who know English get employment opportunities easily. In other words, students belonging to any branch of knowledge are on the edge of employment, if they are proficient in English.

Bright (2005) documents that the origin of English in India may be traced back to the first half of the nineteenth century. According to him, in 1835, Lord McCauley presented his ‘Minutes’ in favour of English Education. He desired to produce a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, opinion, morals and intellect. As a rejoinder to Lord McCauley’s policy, Lord William Bentinck gave much importance for the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India. Lot of fund was spent on English Education alone. In 1844, Lord Hardinge declared
that for government service, preference would be given to those who were educated in English schools. Leading Indian educationists and social reformers also showed much interest in English education. Thus, English education in India started gaining popularity and the Indian vernaculars were pushed to the background. (Bright 2005, P.5)

Before independence, English was the queen of languages. It was the language of administration and courts of law. It was a gateway for good employment. All kinds of public works were carried out in English.

In the pre-independence period, English was the medium of instruction in high schools and universities. In those days, there were two types of schools. They were vernacular and Anglo-vernacular schools. Vernacular schools were mainly primary schools and they gave education in the vernacular languages. Anglo-vernacular ones were high schools and they imparted education in English. In the intermediate, graduate, and postgraduate levels, English was the only medium of instruction.

English occupied a pride of place in the school and college curriculum. Knowledge of English was equated with good education. Also, English was considered to be one with cultured social life.
After independence, there was a sharp reaction against English in India. Educationists, administrators, politicians, teachers, students, and the common men had controversial arguments over the retention of English in India as an important language. In 1950, it was laid down in the Indian Constitution that English would continue as the official language of the union for 15 years. Nehru was of the view that one hundred and fifty years of contact had made English an integral part of Indian Educational system. That could not be changed without causing injury to the cause of Education in India. Neglect of English would be a heavy loss to the Indians as English had become one of the major languages of the world and a cementing force in India.

The Secondary Education Commission reported that the unity in politics and other spheres could be brought out only through the study of English language. The commission gave some concrete suggestions regarding the study of English. The central Advisory Board of Education discarded the proposals and gave its own three language formula including English in 1956. When the deadline 1965 came, the parliament Act of 1965 declared that English would continue to be used as an associate language of the Union.

In 1966, the Kothari Education Commission submitted its report. It gave a three language formula including the mother tongue,
official language of the union, and a modern Indian or foreign language to be studied by the students. Hence forth, it became a rule that where English is not the medium of instruction at any university, it is necessary to adopt special methods to secure and acquire adequate knowledge of English as a second language.

In 1976, the Lok Sabha adopted the official language Bill. According to that, compulsory knowledge either in Hindi or in English shall be required for the selection of candidates for the central services.

The present thesis concentrates mainly on the English language teaching in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district. Kanyakumari district forms the southern most end of the Tamilnadu State. The schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district are either government or government-aided management schools. Most of the management schools function under the Catholic diocese of Kottar and a few under the Catholic diocese of Trivandrum.

For a meaningful approach to the study of English language teaching in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district, the research studies that are previously conducted in different parts of India and also abroad on
English Language teaching have been reviewed briefly. The investigator has briefly reviewed foreign research studies like Lakachew Mulat’s study on teachers’ attitudes towards communicative language teaching and practical problems in its implementation, Yalin Zhang’s study on student-student interaction in conversation classrooms for non-English-majors in China, Peng-Ju Chen’s study on how different age range in adult learners’ motivation for studying English affect the learners, Takako Nishino’s study on Japanese Secondary School teachers’ beliefs and practices regarding communicative language teaching, and Bai Shuping’s study on the Chinese teacher influence on students’ interest in learning English.

The Indian research studies reviewed include Sonali Geed’s study on the Effect of Learning Environment upon English Language Learning and Students’ Reactions towards Learning Environment, Nusrat Kadri’s study on Developing Teacher Effectiveness through Preparation and Tryout of Multiple Lesson Plans for ELT at the Pre-Service Level, Anshuman Das’s study on the effectiveness of computer assisted learning material on Rhymes in different modes, Munther Mohammed Zyoud’s study on the development of Computer Assisted English Language Teaching for VIII Standard Students, Irfan Shah’s study on the ICT awareness, use and need of secondary and
higher secondary teachers of English Medium Schools of Vadodara city, Jaykumar Rathod’s study on the Development and Implementation of an Information Technology Based Instructional Package for English Grammar to Gujarati medium students of Standard VIII of Jamnagar City, Yadav Kusum’s, study on the development of an IT enabled Instructional Package for Teaching English medium students of Vadodara city, Mohini S. Sharma’s study on the effectiveness of Vocabulary Teaching Strategies on retention and use in relation to certain variables, Hemabati Nganbam’s study on English Language Learning and its use by Professionals and Non-Professionals of Baroda City, Fr. P.P. Joseph’s comparative study of difficulties in English learning faced by different categories of school students in Bhopal, Umer Farooque’s, study on English Language Competence of Teachers and Students’ Achievement in English Medium Primary Schools of Kannur District, and Kshamata Chaudhary’s Comparative Study on Formal and Non-Formal Methods of Teacher Education For Teaching English.

The present research is done with the main purpose of finding out the status of English language teaching in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district. Information about English language teaching in the government aided
management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district is gathered from the teachers of English, the heads of the institutions, and selected students of the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district. The tools used are questionnaires that are separately prepared for the teachers of English, heads of the institutions, and the students, the personal interviews with them and the observations made on English language teaching in the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district.

The area of research comprises of all the government and the government-aided management schools in all the villages that are studded in the coastal line of Kanyakumari district. The samples of the research include the teachers of English, the heads of the institutions, and selected students of the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district.

The study on the status of English language teaching in the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district is done mainly based on the responses of the English teachers, the heads of the institutions, and the selected students of the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district to the questions in the questionnaires,
personal interviews, and the observations made by the investigator on English language teaching in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district.

Accordingly, it is found out that most of the teachers do not have the required qualification or training for teaching English. Most of them lack fluency in the use of correct English. Most of them lack confidence in speaking and writing correct English. The teacher interaction with the students in English is very low and the students are very little exposed to English language teaching. It is also found out that most of the teachers do not follow any special methods of ELT like Grammar Translation Method, Direct Method, Audio-lingual Method, Oral Method, etc., for teaching English. They follow methods like ALM and ABL methods which are common methods for teaching all the subjects.

It is found that teaching of English in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district is mainly content-based than language-based. Teaching of English in these schools is mainly done with the motive of bringing good results in the examinations. The examinations also focus mainly on testing the knowledge of the students on the contents of the lessons than on English language skills.
English is taught as a second language in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district, and the number of hours allotted for English language teaching are found to be very less. The English textbooks for some classes do not cater to the age, standard, and needs of the students. Some portions in the textbooks are confusing and complicated. It is also found that many teachers of English are not even aware of the objectives given in the introductory part of the English textbooks they teach and they do not try to achieve those objectives.

On a close view, it is found out that lack of proper qualification and training for the teachers of English, lack of fluency and accuracy in using English, lack of proper infrastructure and audio-visual aids, lack of interest and cooperation from the students and their parents – all these contribute to the fact that English language teaching in the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district is not satisfactory.

Hence, it has become the need of the hour to improve the level of English language teaching in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district. The government should provide these schools with audio-visual aids and proper infrastructure such as libraries and English language labs. It
should supply free dictionaries to the students. Teachers who are specially qualified for English language teaching should be appointed as English teachers and as language lab instructors in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district. Special training programmes should be conducted for the teachers who teach English in order to equip them with accuracy and fluency in using English. Awareness programmes should be conducted for the students and their parents to make them aware of the importance of learning English. More contexts should be created in and outside the classrooms for the students for better exposure to English language. Students should be evaluated in using English rather than for memorizing the content of the lessons taught.

Hugo Williams (2010) in his article “Making English Language Teaching More Effective” in *The Hindu*, feels that English is the lingua franca of the international community, and is the only language that links all the states of India together. Hence, the benefits of teaching Indian children to speak English are huge. The ever-increasing BPO sector, the largest employer in the private-sector economy, constantly bemoans the insufficient English language skills of Indian graduates. Hugo Williams further observes that among the
elite, it seems that only 15 per cent have the required level to work in business services without first undergoing major additional training.

Williams has also documented that, in a very promising recent development, the Tamil Nadu government has drawn up fresh plans to collaborate with the SSA and The British Council in providing English language teacher training for all state schools across standards VI-VIII. This would be in addition to the English language project already underway for V standard, for which 60,000 teachers have already been trained up. Tamil Nadu is finally starting to eschew the archaic and ineffective approach to language teaching that has prevailed for so long. It is now looking to replace it with one which concentrates on communicative as well as literary aspects of language, and so better addresses the modern educational needs of Indian school children.

It should be noted that improving the level of English language teaching in the government aided management schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district is a long and continuous process which involves strong participation, cooperation, effort, and hard work of the Tamilnadu State Government, the management, the heads of the coastal schools, the English language teachers, the students, and their parents. If only the level of English language teaching in the schools
of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district goes up, one can very well foresee the development of the fishermen community of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari rising up to a higher extent. Hence, let the government care for the schools of the coastal villages and let the teachers and the management authorities work hard for the betterment of English language teaching and thereby making the coastal students acquire the English language perfectly well. This can uplift the backward fishermen society into a far developed community.