Chapter I

Introduction
CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

English is an international language and the study of English as a modern foreign language has tremendous vocational importance. It offers opportunities for many and varied vocations like, diplomatic and foreign services, business, commerce, medicine, law, and teaching.

English as a global language is spoken in many countries both as a native and as a second or foreign language. It is taught in the schools in almost every country on this earth. It is a living and vibrant language spoken by millions of people as their native language.

Thirumalai (2002) observes that English is spoken habitually in the United States, the British Isles, Ireland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, Liberia and many territories under the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It seems that nearly 300 million people speak English as a second language, and an additional 100 million people use it fluently as a foreign language. It can be roughly estimated that at least 1000 million or one billion people around the world have some knowledge of English,
either as a native language, as a second language or as a foreign language.

In countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and many other nations which were ruled by Britain, English continues to be the associate official language. They use English both as an optional medium of instruction in their schools and as one of their official languages. In the islands of the Philippines, English is used as an important tool for education, administration, and for mass media purposes. English is the main foreign language taught in the schools and colleges of Europe, South America, Asia and Africa.

Some countries that were ruled by the French still continue to teach French as their most preferred second language. Yet, English is gaining ground even in those countries. Russian was the dominant language in the former Soviet Union. But, after the break of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian Republics have rapidly introduced English in their educational institutions as a foreign or second language. Presently, in Russia and Japan, English seems to be gaining ground as the most popular and the most favoured second language or foreign language.

The predominant language of international commerce is English. The United Nations and its various agencies have more than
one language for transaction. But most often English is chosen as the most preferred language of communication between the participating member-nations.

Thirumalai (2002) further explains the ascendancy of English in the following statements:

All this has happened within the last one hundred years. The ascendancy of English as the most preferred language began two hundred years ago with the colonization of North America, Asia, and Africa by Britain. The Industrial Revolution in Britain, its ever-expanding maritime power, development of material wealth, progress in scientific research and consequent power, all helped the spread of English, even as Britain marched as a great empire. In the Sixteenth Century, English was spoken mostly in England, southern Scotland, and small areas of Wales and Ireland. There were only about two to three million people speaking it as their native language. At present one in seven in this world speak English either as a native language or as a second language. English was well established as the dominant language in North America in the 17th Century. But its rapid growth was in the 19th Century. (Thirumalai, 2002, chap 1, para 6)
English is now the lingua franca of a greater part of the world. Its status is more or less what French enjoyed in the eighteenth century. It is the language of diplomacy, the language of international trade and commerce, and the language widely used by the tourists of the entire world. Throughout the middle Ages, Latin was the main medium of education in Western Europe. From the 17th to 20th centuries French was the language of diplomacy. But presently, no language in this world can be compared to the position occupied by English as the international language. Languages like Spanish and Chinese may claim a large number of native speakers. But neither Spanish, nor Chinese, nor Russian, nor French can ever equal the level or the variety of uses to which English is put in the world.

Everyone in this world seems to be interested in learning English. This is because that the people have found out that knowledge of English is like a passport for advanced knowledge, better pay, better career, and for communication with the entire world. English possesses in it boundless literature. English is also learned for the literature it possesses and for the variety and rich experience it provides. English has replaced French as the language of diplomacy. In this IT era, English as a global language has expanded its domains of use everywhere.
English is popular in India, not only as a second language but also as the mother-tongue of a small Indian community, the Anglo-Indians. Baruah (1991) has documented that according to the 1971 census nearly two hundred thousand Indians use English as their mother-tongue. Besides, quite a few Indian States and Union Territories, viz., Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Sikkim, have adopted English as the official language. Mr. M.C. Chagla, when he was the Chief Justice of the Bombay high Court, once ruled that English was an Indian language, and the Supreme Court upheld this judgment. English is recognised as one of the Indian languages by the Sahitya Academy of India. Jawaharlal Nehru, when he was the Prime Minister of India, wanted to include English in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, thus giving it statutory recognition as an Indian Language. Ardent patriots like Raja Ram Mohan Roy were the precursors of the Anglicist movement for spreading of useful knowledge of science and literature through the medium of the English language. Macaulay supported this movement with the genuine belief that knowledge of English would prove beneficial to the Indian people. The learning of English emphasized by the British system of education, though had the intended result of turning out enormous number of pen-pushers, proved beneficial in more than one way.
Nationalism grew with the help of English and it ultimately freed India from the British yoke. Many of the Indian national leaders were inspired by the writings of the great thinkers like Abraham Lincoln, Ruskin, Carlyle, and others who wrote in English. It is also significant to note that Allan Octavian Hume, the founder of the Indian National Congress was an Englishman. (Baruah, 1991, P. 1-4)

During the struggle for India’s independence English served as a great unifying force. It is through English that leaders from the different parts of India could communicate and work out their common plans of action. Even at present, English is playing the role as the national link language for the purpose of inter-State correspondence and as the language of trade and commerce between different parts of the country. There are so many regional languages and dialects prevalent in India. Yet, English is the only means of inter-state communication in India. For example, anyone from Chennai can ask for his breakfast in Delhi in English.

Indian languages and literatures are enriched by the study of English language. In order to enrich the vocabulary, almost all the Indian languages have freely borrowed words from English and have coined new words and phrases on English models. The world literature has largely influenced the vernacular literatures of India and
this is directly attributable to the popularity of English literature in India. Most of the renowned writers of India were proficient in English. They were aware of the great literary movements in England and elsewhere through their study of English literature and this deeply influenced their writings. English has an evident cultural value. When a person knows two or more languages, the person comes in contact with more than one culture intellectually and spiritually. English equips everyone with the terminology pertaining to each profession. English still continues to be the only source of knowledge of the latest developments in any field.

In India, English has contributed to the growth of knowledge to a great extent particularly in the field of science and technology. It has led India to the various developments in the international scene and has made Indians understand the world situations properly.

English became the dominant language of communication in India among the educated classes after the famous Minutes of Lord Macaulay in 1833. The British people, after their arrival at the Indian port-towns, were trying to learn the court languages Pharissee, Arabic, Urdu, Sanskrit or Hindustani for the purpose of communication or the study of ancient literature. Later on, by the end of the eighteenth century, the East India Company succeeded in establishing its realm in
India. The British Parliament renewed its charter for trading as well as for ruling India. The Charter Act of 1813 provided an annual sum of Rs. one lakh for the promotion of education among the Indians. The oriental languages and literatures impressed the British so much that they gave aid for running madarsas and Sanskrit schools, and also tried to publish oriental literature by subsidising the cost of printing. But when Lord Macaulay arrived all these changed on the educational scene. Lord Macaulay in his famous minutes argued that the money should be spent on the promotion of English education for the Indians than on the advancement of oriental learning. The educational policy of Lord Macaulay was endorsed by the then Viceroy, Lord William Bentinck, and was followed subsequently by his successors also. Sanjaya (1996) has documented the words of Lord Macaulay as follows:

“We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”.

(Sanjaya, 1996, P.19)

English was taught to the Indians to endear them to the British power and to increase the radiance of western knowledge. This stage could
be termed as the transportation stage. The approach and technique of teaching English in India had in it the aim to bring English culture to India through the language. So, English literature was taught and it acted as the culture-carrier. The grammar-translation method was used initially and it was found effective for the masses. Later on, various varieties of English emerged in India.

The British civil servants used the Sahib variety. It was spoken with a proper intonation and accent particularly in the cantonment areas and by the wealthy class. The Indians who learnt English for official purposes used the Babu variety of English which was otherwise called the clerk’s English. The servants who were Indian in origin but working in the British households used the butler English. The British Civil Servants did not like this kind of the use of language.

Sharp (1967) has documented that in 1854 Sir Charles Wood made it clear by stating,

“We must emphatically declare that the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe, in short, of European knowledge”

(Sharp, 1967, P.126)
The East Indian Company’s attempt led to the commencement of the modernization of India in the nineteenth century. It sparked off a bitter and prolonged debate regarding the medium of instruction. Finally, the authorities arrived at the firm decision that English was the only possible medium for education in European literature, philosophy and science. Thus, English became the standard medium of instruction in India.

English was adopted as the medium of instruction for the higher level of education and also in the secondary schools. Sanjaya (1996) has further observed that Wood’s famous Education Despatch of 1834 expressed the view that English and the modern Indian languages should together become the medium for the dissemination of European knowledge at the secondary stage. But instead, English became the sole medium in secondary schools. The entire school curriculum was dominated by the study of English.

Though much emphasis was laid upon English education, it was also felt that education in India was not so good. Due to this concern, the Hunter Commission was set up in the year 1882. It recommended that the primary education through indigenous institutions should be considered as a part of the whole system of public education. The government opened schools in every district and gave model
education to all the primary schools in a given locality. In every
district at least one high school was established to serve as a model
school. In the upper classes of the high schools, two divisions were
made. One division lead to the entrance examination of the
universities and the other division was intended to fit the youth for
commercial or non-literary pursuits. The importance of non-
government institutions was also recognized and the grant-in-aid rules
were liberalized.

When Lord Curzon ruled India, the government took up the
active growth of primary education. The standard of the high schools
was raised with the motive of receiving grand-in-aid or recognition.
Religious instruction was banned from the schools which were
receiving grant-in-aid. Education became secular in quality.

The Government of India Act was passed in 1933. Accordingly, all the educational activities were divided into two
categories - federal and state. The Imperial Library, the Indian
Museum, the Victoria Memorial, education in defense forces, Banaras
Hindu University and Aligarh Muslim University, the preservation of
ancient and historical monuments, archaeology and education in
centrally administered areas were included under the federal subjects.
The state subjects included all other matters regarding education.
It was recommended by the Sergeant Committee report that the state government should resume all educational powers. It was also recommended that the school boards for smaller areas should be set up in places having people with the requisite knowledge, enthusiasm, integrity, and standing in order to retain local interests. (Sanjaya, 1996, p. 21)

Richley (1922) has observed that the British educationists in India wanted to set up schools in all parts of India as they know that setting up of schools was good for the people and the country. Simultaneously, they were more concerned with what they thought was good for British India. Accordingly, it was recommended that English language should be taught in any general system of education where there is a demand for it. Moreover, it was also suggested that such instruction should always be combined with the study of the vernacular language of the district. The general instruction in the school should be in the vernacular language. When a person has acquired sufficient knowledge of the general instruction in the vernacular language, he/she should be made to continue his education in English language, the most perfect medium of education. The vernacular language should be used to teach the students who are
ignorant of or imperfectly acquainted with English. (Richley, 1922, P. 135)

Aggarwal (1984) has documented that the need for free and compulsory education, especially elementary education, in India was expounded in 1912 by Gopala Krishna Gokhale. He put forth the objects of and reasons for compulsory primary education, in his speech in Madras in 1919. Aggarwal documents the words of Gopala Krishna Gokhale as follows:

“The experience of other countries has established beyond dispute the fact that the only effective way to ensure a wide diffusion of elementary education among the mass of the people is by a resort to compulsion in some form or the other and the time has come when a beginning at least should be made in this direction in India”. (Aggarwal, 1984, P. 28)

The missionaries and other non-official British and Europeans also contributed for the spreading of English in India. In 1614, the missionaries started the initial effort and in 1659 became more prominent. But, the policy changed in 1765 and the encouragement of missionary activities was abandoned. (Kachru, 1994, P. 497)
In June 1800, William Carey, a preacher, started the first vernacular school for Indian boys at Serampore. The school became very popular soon and it imparted education in English, literature, liberal arts, science and the vernacular. Within ten years nearly 300 boys were enrolled in the Serampore College. (Howells, 1927, P.20)

Howells (1927) has also documented that the missionaries were the pioneers of English education in India. They set a high standard for teaching and learning English. English literature was included in the curriculum. In the higher classes, literary works like Milton’s Paradise Lost and Bacon’s Essays were taught. British merchants, radical Indians and many others encouraged English in India. It is noteworthy to point out the outstanding contribution of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and David Hare. (Howells ,1927, P.20)

Ayyar (1987) has observed that even Indians preferred English education to Sanskrit and Persian. For the first five classes English was made a compulsory subject. The Department of English was made stronger and the salary was raised for the teachers of English. (Ayyar ,1987, P. 217). Sherring (1897) has documented that in educational institutions like Mayo College of Ajmer, English was considered as the most vital language and was regarded an essential subject in the syllabus. The school had six English masters against only two in Urdu.
It had sixteen hours of teaching of English out of a total of 30 hours in a week. (Sherring, 1897, P.94)

Sinha (1978) also, has noted that the geography examinations were conducted using an English globe. Students were encouraged to recite poems in English and passages from well known English plays and other literary works in the presence of reputed members of the society. (Sinha, 1978, P.35)

In India, the attitude to English changed so much. English became the preferred language for communication among the members of certain families. According to Kachru (1994), in the beginning, the role of English in South Asia was basically that of a foreign language. But within 150 years, Indians were learning English language not only to buy or sell or to find employment. English language had started acquiring an integrative role. Soon, the situation in India came to be in such a way that being educated meant knowing English.

In 1950, Article 343(1) of the Constitution of India considered necessary that English as the official language of the Union should give place to Hindi by 1965. In 1965, there were aggressive language riots in India, particularly in the southern and north-eastern states. So, a constitutional amendment was passed in order to allow English to
Subsequently, English language in India faced a number of problems. In this regard, Aggarwal (1984) has observed that the destiny of English in India faced many fluctuations from then on. During the freedom struggle, Indians became hostile to the English language along with the Englishmen. Later, after India became independent, the government acknowledged the recommendations of the Radhakrishnan commission. Accordingly, it was decided that the central languages should be developed through assimilation and English language should be replaced by an Indian language. It was also recommended that gradually, the three-language formula ---the regional, the central and English--- should be adopted as a medium of instruction in the educational institutions. It was also suggested that English could be studied in high schools and in universities so that one can keep in touch with the existing stream of continually growing knowledge. Thus, keeping in mind the importance of English language in the present and future context, various articles were placed in the constitution while framing it. (Aggarwal, 1984, P.28)

English occupied a privileged position during the British rule in India. But when India got independence, the role of English in Indian
education as well as in Indian national and social life came to be gravely questioned. It was obvious that English could not continue to occupy the privileged position it had been occupying during the British rule. There was a lot of controversy over the status of English in the changed context. Many of the Indian leaders considered English to be an instrument of colonial exploitation. They saw English as a shameful badge of Indian slavery. Many of the Indian leaders were worked up by this conviction and they wanted to gain cheap popularity. They raised great hue and cry to banish English from the Indian soil. However, wise decisions were taken and English continued to be used as a national link language, as an international link language, and as a library language. (Baruah, 1991, P. 2)

Baruah (1991) has further documented that the Constitution of India, adopted in 1950, had envisaged Hindi as the only official language of the Union of India and English was to continue for 15 years from the date of adoption of the Constitution. This was strongly opposed by the Southern states. As a result, Parliament enacted the Official Languages Act in 1963. Accordingly, this act provided for the continued use of English for an indefinite period. Jawaharlal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India, assured the Southern states that English would continue to be the Associate Official Language and this
will be until the time the non-Hindi States agree to accept Hindi as the only official language of India.

English is the only language which is understood by the educated people all over the country. It is the Associate Official Language for inter-State communication and communication between the States and the Centre. Both official and private communication between the different parts of the country would have been completely cut off without English. The clear and emphatic view of Jawaharlal Nehru in this connection is as follows:

“If you push out English, does Hindi fully take its place? I hope it will. I am sure it will. But I wish to avoid the danger of one unifying factor being pushed out without another unifying factor fully taking its place. In that event there will be a gap, a hiatus. The creation of any such gap or hiatus must be avoided at all costs. It is very vital to do so in the interest of the unity of the country. It is this that leads me to the conclusion that English is likely to have an important place in the foreseeable future”. (Baruah, 1991, P.3)
The continuance of English in national integration and for higher academic work was also recommended by the Indian Education Commission (1964 - 66).

Sanjaya (1996) has documented some of the articles of the Indian constitution, concerned with the use of different languages in various fields at the centre and in the states as follows:

1. “The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.

The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.

2. For a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement:

Provided that the President may, authorise the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language during the particular period by order and of the Devanagari form of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union.
3. Notwithstanding anything in this article Parliament may by law provided for the use, after the said period of fifteen years, of-

a) The English language, or

b) The Devanagari form of numerals for such purposes as may be specified in the law”. (Sanjaya, 1996, P.25)

According to the electronic source www.indiankanoon.org/doc/india, articles 345, 346 and 347 in The Constitution of India (1949) deal with the subject of English language. Article 345 is about the official language or languages of a state. Accordingly, the official language or languages of states are subject to the provision of Articles 346 and 347. The legislature of a state may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the state or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that state provided that, until the legislature of the state otherwise provides by law, the English language shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the state for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of the constitution.

Article 346 is about the official language for communications between one state and another or between one state and the union. Accordingly, the official language for communications between one state and another or between one state and the union for the time being
authorised for use in the Union for official purposes shall be the official language for communication between a state and the Union, provided that if two or more states agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such states, that language may be used for such communication.

Article 347 is about the special provision relating to language spoken by a section of the population of a state. Accordingly, on a demand being made, in that behalf, the President, if he finds that a considerable proportion of the population of a state desires the use of any language spoken by them to be recognised throughout that state, can direct that such language shall also be officially recognised throughout that state or any part thereof for such purpose as he may specify. (Sanjaya, 1996, P.26, 27)

It was decided that a sudden and hasty expulsion of English would affect a developing nation. Thus, it was determined that English would persist to be ‘an associate language’ till Hindi and other regional languages grew enough to take its place. Later, as stated above, it was decided that English should remain at least as a library language, because major international researches could be available to Indians only with the help of English, which is an international language. However, some of the Indian leaders legally felt that the
development of a free country would remain imperfect as long as its own language did not become the principal medium of administration, education, commerce and trade as well as inter-regional communication.

The H.N. Kunjru Commission Report published in 1965 as the Report of the English Review Commission recommended the following:

A. "that the change from English to an Indian language as the medium of instruction at the state universities should not be hastened;

B. that even when a change in the medium of instruction is made, English should continue to be studied by all university students;

C. that it would be necessary to have textbooks prepared on scientific subjects. Education should take up this question for consideration;

D. that in relation to the three-year degree course, which is now proposed to be introduced in Indian universities, the teaching of English be given special attention in the pre-university class;

E. that the teaching of English literature should be related to the study of India literatures so that, apart from its value for
linguistic purposes, it could be an effective means of stimulating critical thinking and writing in Indian languages;

F. that it is desirable to have the question of study in English and methods of teaching English at the state universities examined by an expert body and the recommendations of that body adopted by all the universities;

G. that where English is not the medium of instruction at any university, it is necessary to adopt special methods to secure and adequate knowledge of English as a second language;

H. that far greater attention should be given to linguistics in Indian universities and teacher training colleges in India;

I. that it is in the educational interest that English should be retained as a properly studied second language in Indian universities, even when an Indian language is used as the ordinary medium of teaching.” (Kunjru, 1965, P.39)

The commissions that followed thereafter endorsed this policy at both the school and college levels. Several surveys, Chaudhary (1988) have found that people prefer English for education.

Chaudhary (1988) has observed that nearly 99% of the respondents of the Ford Foundation study claimed that English was
their best bet for a good career. All respondents said that if their children learnt only one language, they would like them to learn English. This opinion is also shared by some tribal students in Bihar. (Chaudhary, 1988, P.70)

Chaudhary has further documented that only 31% of the respondents said that English was the best language for primary education of their children, 52% made such a claim for secondary education and 86% for higher education, including education in science and technology. Among tribal students, 99% thought that good education at any level could be had only in English. In the Ford Foundation study, only 67% of the respondents had claimed that English was essential for good jobs. (Chaudhary, 1988, P. 71)

Consequently, the syllabus of English was revitalized many times. More concern was shown in general for improving the standard of teaching and learning of English. The opinion that English was a vital aspect of Indian education was wide-spread. It was also understood that if India fails in providing English education for its further citizens, India’s development would decline. Most of the older Indian generation and the governmental authorities had an emotional attachment for English language. Though they approved upon the importance of Hindi, they still thought of English as an inseparable
part of Indian culture. They looked upon English as a composite multidimensional entity and as a product of the integration of several cultural forces, both native and foreign. They were also aware that English language had carved a niche in the Indian life with the passage of time. Dr. Radha Krishnan had also said that the rejection of English would amount to a motiveless elimination of a precious source of world culture. (Sanjaya, 1996, P.34)

Various drastic measures were implemented to discard the use of English and the slogan ‘Hindi Lao Angreji Hatao’ (Bring Hindi through English) was raised everywhere. But in spite of all these, almost the whole state machinery ran through the medium of English. (Sanjaya, 1996, P.35). Moreover, in the face of governmental promulgations, administrative works were primarily conducted in English right from the centre to the district level. Even the central and state legislatures were not able to replace English completely. Likewise, selection in the civil and defense services was made through English. English plays the most vital role in Indian judiciary. As a result, it is understood that the English language with its rich vocabulary, flexibility, and wider scope and perspective has made itself so vital in India. English has occupied a significant place in Indian universities. Most of the Indian Universities use English as the
medium of instruction. Passing in English examinations has become one of the important eligibility requirements at the secondary and higher secondary levels. Some states have introduced the regional language as the medium of instruction. But it is only for the undergraduate level. In majority of the universities, postgraduate teaching and research are done only in English. Furthermore, English plays a vital role in the faculties of science, mathematics, medicine and technology. The reason for this is the comparative inadequacy of the Indian languages to express notion, ideas, and concepts in various fields of life as well as the complexities of several academic subjects and technologies. This situation may continue until the Indian languages acquire enough terminology for precise, scientific and economical expressions in various avenues of social life. The policy frame prepared by the University Grants Commission regarding the development of higher education in India, as documented by Sanjaya (1996) is as follows:

“Learning of the English language should be promoted not by way of creating an impediment for any student for this or by further studies but should be available as a positive help in the form of reading service at every stage of education, including the post-graduate level or even
after that, English should be used for building knowledge and not for building status. If this role of the English language as a positive instrument of knowledge is accepted, then facilities for its learning in various forms and content should be made available to each group of students according to their own needs. This type of an approach will be an approach of service rather than subjecting everyone to a uniform pattern, irrespective of need.” (Sanjaya, 1996, P.30)

To a considerable extent, English in India is now the language of business, commerce, education, government, industry, justice, law, mass media, politics, sciences, technology, trade, etc.

The Government of India uses English in many recruitment and admission tests. The Union Public Service Commission, Subordinate Services Staff Selection Commission, Combined Defence Services Board, the Indian Institutes of Technology, Management, etc., also permit English along with the scheduled Indian languages. National accreditation tests like the Graduate Aptitude Test in engineering can now also be written in English as well as other Indian languages.
Most of the educational institutions in India aim at the global standards and this has led to the flourishing of the English medium education in India. English has given the students and the academics universal mobility. Books and other learning materials are easily available in English. But there are only a limited number of books available in Indian languages in the social sciences and still less in sciences. (Chaudhary, 2002, P.49)

The present study focuses on English language teaching in the government aided management schools of the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district. Kanyakumari district is in Tamilnadu State. Hence, it is necessary to know some details about education in Tamilnadu and English language teaching in the schools of the state.

Tamilnadu is the southernmost state of the Indian sub-continent. As documented in the website www.tamilnadueducation.com, education in Tamilnadu, was a matter of private affair upto 1813. The Governor of Madras Province, Sir Thomas Munro, established the Board of Public Instruction in 1826. This is considered as the origin of the Education Department. The educational system developed on the foundation laid by Wood's dispatch on education in 1854. The Madras provincial government established a Department of Public Instruction in the state in accordance with the recommendations of Wood’s
dispatch. The rules and regulations were designed to help the local institutions to improve themselves and to give some assistance. In 1855, the first set of grants for aided schools was issued. A considerable portion of indigenous institutions had become aided schools by 1881. Thus they moved from the category of private to public schools.

The Local Boards Act was enacted in 1871. According to this act, Local Boards were constituted and empowered to open schools and get subsidy from the government. In 1920, the Madras Elementary Education Act enabled the local bodies to levy an educational cess on land or property tax for development of elementary education. In the same year, elementary education was taken from District Boards and entrusted to Taluk Boards and Municipalities. The power of recognition to aided elementary schools was transferred from the Department of Education to the District Education Councils. Later in 1934, the Taluk Boards were abolished and the administration of the elementary schools was entrusted again to the District Boards. In 1939, District Education Councils were also abolished. The power to recognize elementary schools was restored once again to the Department of Education.
The Structure of education in the state is based on the national level pattern with 12 years of schooling (5+3+2+2), consisting of eight years of elementary education, that is, five years of primary and three years of middle school education for the age groups of 6-11 and 11-14 years, respectively, followed by secondary and higher secondary education of two years each, besides two years of pre-primary education. The entry age in class 1 is 5+. Pre-primary classes admit students of age group 3 to 4. The higher secondary school certificate enables pupils to pursue studies either in universities or in colleges for higher education in general academic streams and in technical and professional courses. English is taught in government aided-schools at the pre-primary school level itself.

Williams (2010) has observed that the current system of state education in Tamil Nadu has introduced the progressive Activity Based Learning system (ABL) for standards 1-4, and Active Learning Methodology (ALM) to standards 6-8. These new teaching methodologies stress greater inclusion and interaction of children in the learning process, aiming to bring variety and enjoyment back into the classroom.

It seems that the state government, the SSA and UNICEF have all been delighted with the impact of these reforms in Tamil Nadu.
They have seen a marked improvement in the academic capabilities of primary school children under the new system and in their levels of confidence and willingness to be involved in the learning process. Following the success of the Tamil Nadu reforms, nearly all other states have followed or are planning to implement similar methodologies.

Though the state primary sector is successful, there seems an existing failure at the secondary level because of the archaic teaching methods. The learning experience of these children is mostly passive, boring, and uninspiring. Often, the obligation is placed tremendously on passing exams. For this, they need only to memorise the contents of their textbooks, rather than actually learning the skills they need. (Williams, 2010, para. 2, 3).

Kanyakumari is the southern most district of Tamilnadu. Before it became a part of Tamilnadu, it was a part of Travancore State. Kanyakumari district tops the state in literacy and also in high levels of education in Tamilnadu. According to online source en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kanyakumari_district, there are nearly 83 preprimary schools, 413 primary schools, 147 middle schools, 121 high schools and 120 higher secondary schools in Kanyakumari district.
Kanyakumari District has a literacy rate of 87.6%. A variety of colleges of higher education are found throughout the district, mainly arts, science and engineering colleges. The Scott Christian College, founded by Ringle Taube in Nagercoil, is more than 100 years old.

The Christian Missionaries, as elsewhere in India, were the pioneers of English Education in the erstwhile Travancore State and more particularly in the South - Travancore, the area that presently forms the Kanyakumari District. The first missionary Rev. William Tobias Ringle Taube was a native of Prussia and a man of great force and character. He came to the State in 1806 and opened schools wherever he established churches. He taught the students English, Tamil, Mathematics and Scripture. Ringel Taube gets the credit of being the first to introduce English Education in Travancore.

After Ringle Taube it is Charles Mead, who deserves the credit for introducing systematic English Education in Travancore. In 1819 Mead started a seminary in Nagercoil. His wife and the wives of other missionaries stationed at Nagercoil started girls’ schools as well as boarding schools for the poor girls. Mead also started schools exclusively for the Hindus and Muslims. The seminary started by Mead grew into a Second Grade College in Travancore in the year 1893. This college had produced eminent men useful to hold high
posts in the government. Hence, it attracted the king and he sought the help of the missionaries for a similar educational work in the entire country. Missionaries established a network of schools based on all their mission centres catering to the need of the citizens of Travancore without caste or religious discrimination. The missionaries also started industrial schools with a view to provide employment.

Though Kanyakumari district is known to be a highly literate region in the state, the literacy rate of the fishermen living in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district is very low and lower, so is their chance of getting higher education. Most of the villages have Elementary Schools but not High Schools and Higher Secondary Schools. The literacy rate in the coastal villages is 30%. Many people even now use thumb impressions for signature. Many do not know how to read and write. On account of poverty, many parents are unable to send their children to schools. The root cause of underdevelopment in the fishermen villages is lack of education.

The coastal landscape of Kanyakumari District is mainly composed of beach ridges of rocky, sandy and swampy nature in the estuarine regions. The 68 km long coast has a heavy concentration of fisher-folk, almost one village per 1.5 km. The coastal line of Kanyakumari district extends from Arokiapuram in the East to
Neerodi in the west. The fisher-folks distributed in the 48 villages of Kanyakumari coast constitute about 26 percent of the total fishermen of Tamil Nadu. Most of the villages have tiled and thatched roofs. In each village, very few houses have concrete roofing. A few educated fishermen settled down in the inland are doing teaching and other office jobs. Still, the economy of the coastal villages is not satisfactory. The marine capture fisheries sector has an important place in the District's economy. It is sad to note that, among the fisher-folk population, only 44 percent is fully employed, 52 percent occasionally and 4 percent partially. The fishing job may not be secure during lean season particularly during the month of June.

The fishermen of this coastal belt belong to two castes: the Paravas and the Mukkuvas. Each of these castes has two sub-castes. They are Kadalodies, mainly sea-going fishermen and Menakkadans who are educated and doing business of other kinds. Both groups are considered by the government as the most backward communities for getting aids in connection with education, employment, housing, etc.

More than ever, the fisher men community has come to realise their vulnerability, especially in the wake of natural disasters like the tsunami. They have come to realise that their future is not solely on the sea as it has become so unpredictable and dangerous. Slowly, they
are also realising their mistake of not giving proper education to their children for a long time. Sadly enough, when they realised this, they do not have the capital or capacity to send them to schools or to expensive professional colleges.

The forty eight villages in the coastline of Kanyakumari district have pre-primary schools, primary schools, middle schools, high schools, and higher secondary schools. Most of them are government-aided management schools functioning under the Catholic Diocese of Kottar and a few under the Catholic diocese of Trivandrum. There are also a few matriculation and English medium schools run by the private sector.

The people in these coastal villages are still in backward condition. They mainly do fishing and give little importance to education. Their children, who are mostly the first generation learners, learn their lessons in their mother tongue and are little exposed to English Language, which is a global language. At this time of globalization, it is high time for the students of these coastal villages to be imbibed with the knowledge of English in a proper way.

The present study attempts a detailed study of English Language teaching in the government-aided Tamil medium schools in the coastal villages of Kanyakumari district.