CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

English is said to be the world’s most important language and has communicative and educative value. It is one of the most common languages spoken around the globe and is considered to be the ‘Lingua Franca’ of the world, i.e. the language used for the world’s convenience. It is believed that the world’s knowledge is enshrined in English. “The English language is spoken or read by the largest number of people in the world for historical, political and economic reasons.” [Dr. K. T. Bhatia] With the IT Revolution, most of the software and operating systems are now in English. In addition to this, English is prominent for its expressiveness and its rich and vast literature.

The Australian poet Peter Porter emphasized on the importance of English in a World Conference Welcome Poem, published in the Times Literary Supplement (28th February 1992) as given below:

“Everything will be exposed in English
so delegates and lovers understand”

The emergence of English as the language of business communication globally has brought into focus the issues around teaching this language in schools in those parts of the world where it is not the native language. The gap between the haves and have-nots, the developed and developing countries, urban and the rural areas still exists. Over the last few years, this gap has widened due to a variety of factors. Much effort is required on behalf of the linguists, the scholars and the teachers to ensure that the gap between the English literates and the English illiterates of the world does not widen, and make efforts to build a bridge between the two halves of the population. It has become necessary to analyze the intricacies of the English language and simplify the methods of teaching and learning it.
1.1 Historical background of English

“Language is a door through which a child contemplates the past, grasps the present and enters into the future.” The world widespread up of British Empire established English as the main source of information, knowledge and communication. In most of the African and Asian countries English has become the national language. As Wren C.L (1977) states it, “The English language is spoken or read by the largest number of people in the world for historical, political and economic reasons; but it may also be true that it owes something of its wide appeal to qualities and characteristics inherent in itself”. Some of the inherent characteristics of English language as stated by Wren C.L (1977) are as follows:

A. The extraordinary receptive and adaptable heterogeneousness — the varied ease and readiness with which it has taken material from different corners of the world and has infused it to create new elements of its own.

B. The simplicity and inflexion — the ease with which it indicates the relationship of words in a sentence.

C. The relatively fixed word order — in a language which does not change the forms of its words according to their relationship in the sentence significance the order or words is likely to be relatively fixed; and a fixed word— order in relation to meaning in the sentence takes the place of the freedom made possible by the system of inflexions.

These qualities have helped English to develop as an international language.

In the Indian mind, the English language symbolizes superior education, rich culture and high intellect [Supriya Bhandari]. In India, the study of language acquires a different dimension altogether, due to diverse cultures and communities that constitute the nation. English is one of the languages in three language formula adopted by the government of the country and English was accepted as the practical solution to the multiplicity of languages in the country. The role of English in the present day life of any Indian, and the educational set up of the country can only be determined after one has reviewed the role that English played in India in the past.

The origin of this educational set up can be traced back to the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1835, Lord Macaulay presented in favor of English education. He expressed his desire to produce “a class of persons, Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.” [Dr. K. T. Bhatia] So he introduced English as a medium of education in India. And day by day, English started occupying the place of administration all over India. It rooted easily in Indian administration because of the multi-lingual states in India. Thus, during the
British rule, English was the medium of instruction in India and many people took the opportunity to learn it.

The incoming educational policy was further strengthened when Lord Hardings declared in 1844 that companies would prefer those who had received an education from English schools. This language immediately gained popularity because of great interest shown in English education by a few leading educationists and social reformers. Thus, English as medium of instruction started getting popularity and the Indian native languages were pushed into the backyard.

A. The Position of English Language Before Independence

[1] English was the queen of language. It was the language of administration and of judiciary. It was the lingua franca of the educated sections of the society.

[2] During the pre – Independent India, English was the medium of instruction in the high schools and universities.

[3] English occupied pride of place in the school and college curriculum. It was thought, “The time given to English was time given to good educations,” was the concept prevailing during that time.

B. Position of English After Independence

After independence, efforts were made to remove English and replace Hindi as a national language in India. But there were differences of opinion among the great leaders of that time. Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore always emphasized on mother tongue as the medium of instruction. After India threw off the British yoke and got Independence in 1947, far sighted leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister and Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, the first education minister, who felt that “…if English was done away with, the work of more than a century would seriously affect the education in the country, It would have amounted to throwing away the baby with the bath water” [Dr. K. T. Bhatia,].

Pandit Nehru said: “One hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English an integral part of our educational system and this cannot be changed without injury to the cause of education in India. English has today become one of the major languages of the world, and Indians can neglect its study at the risk of loss to themselves” [Dr. K. K. Bhatia].

The 1949 University Education Commission recommended a gradual change over a medium of instruction from English to Indian languages at the university stage also. But some eminent scholars like C. Rajagopalachari and the then minister of Education, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad recognized the importance of English and insisted on English to be kept in the school curriculum.
These differences of opinion resulted in frequent changes in policy regarding the position of English in school curriculum.

In 1951-52, the Secondary Education Commission gave English a place of compulsory second language at the secondary stage. The Commission recommended, *A study of English should be given importance in secondary schools and facilities should be made available at the middle school stage for its study on an optional basis* [K. K. Bhatia].

The secondary Education commission (1953) observed that the study of English language and literature contributed to the national unity in political and other spheres [K. K. Bhatia].

1956 *Official Language Commission* also supported the stand taken by Secondary Education Commission with a slight change that English should be taught with a clear-cut distinction between English language and English literature. The report states, *It stresses the need for a new attitude towards teaching English to suit the changed conditions* [K. K. Bhatia].

The Parliament Act of 1965 declared that English would continue to be used as a second language of the Union.

*The Indian University Commission* appointed soon after independence to look into this problem and pointed out that if the country gave up English following sentimental urges, it would find itself excluded from the living stream of growing knowledge as English is the only means of preventing India’s isolation from the world and protecting the country from being enveloped in the darkness of ignorance [Dr. K. T. Bhatia].

*India Education Commission* of 1964-66 gave the *threelanguageformula* and advocated the study of English on an optional basis at the higher primary level i.e. from V to VII standards and on a compulsory basis at the lower secondary level i.e. from VIII to X standards. At the Higher Secondary level i.e. from XI to XII standards, it was on optional basis again, for the entire country. The position of English has been described as a library language. This commission has given a stable position to English teaching in India. Now, English as a second language is introduced at 1st standard only for oral. It has prescribed written paper from 3rd and six teaching periods per week of thirty minutes duration.

**C. Present Position of English in the school curriculum**

While recognizing the importance of continuing the learning of English, we have to admit the fact that it cannot continue to occupy the same place in the educational and political set-up in the country in the post – Independent India as it did in the past. English cannot enjoy today the status of being the *lingua franca* of the country. That position has to and must go to an Indian language.

The Constitution that India adopted in 1950, has envisaged *Hindi* as the official language of the *Union of India* while English was to continue for 15 years. This was vehemently opposed by the
southern states of India. As a result, English was adopted as the *Associate official language* by an Act of Parliament in 1963.

The position given to English in the school curriculum was clearly laid down by the *Kothari Commission* (1964-66), on the recommendations of which the school syllabi in most Indian states has been framed. As a result of this new wind of change, the following policies are clear:

- English will be taught as a foreign language.
- English will be taught for its utility and hence its functional knowledge will be essential.
- English will be taught as a language of comprehension rather than a literary language.
- A student need not have absolute mastery over the whole of English language. He needs to learn only essential English to have the knowledge of spoken and written English. The emphasis is on mastering four skills viz. understanding, speaking, reading, and writing of English.
- It will no longer be a medium of instruction at school and university level.
- There is reduction in time slot allotted to the teaching of English in school.

But the method of teaching English in Indian schools, particularly in Mumbai, is in a disordered state today. Pupils are taught English in about 6 periods a week of thirty minutes each for 6 years. But it is evident that it is difficult for them to learn English words at the rate of one word per period. They do not know how to use the most basic and common structures of English [Dr. K. T. Bhatia].

The language tangle has been finally resolved by the recommendation of the *Kothari Commission* that advocated the introduction of the three language formula at the school level.

The Commission gave more importance to the mother tongue as the first language. Hindi has been assigned the place of a compulsory second language as it is national language of India. English has been given the position of third language in the curriculum.

According to Dr. S. S. Mathur- *The diversity of language is the most formidable obstacle in the path of national unity. This country is so unfortunate that even after twenty years of independence it could not adopt any national language.*

**Problem on hand**

The beginning of English in India is generally associated with *Macaulay’s Minutes* of 1835. The British opened up to Indians the doors of outside world through English language. Of course British rulers had their own purpose- to train Indians through English language, for initiating
them in the services in their bureaucratic administration. However, this was a welcome initiative for Indians, as they were also involved in the flux of reformation.

**Present day importance of English language in India**

English as a library language acquaints Indians with global phenomenon within a short span of time across the world. It has become so popular that approximately 70% of official works is carried out in this language. It is used in seminars, meetings, discussions and negotiations to create international intellectual society. Education through English medium and knowledge of this language is very important in today’s world. Unfortunately, the approach adopted by Indian society towards learning of English has been mostly negative. There are obviously, certain reasons to neglect it deliberately, however the fact lies in its importance in day to day life. Though it is neglected as a foreign language, we cannot deny its pivotal role in modern globalizing era. We cannot stand off without the knowledge of this language in this competitive globe. More practically, one cannot earn his bread and butter, unless he knows it.

**Present Situation- Demographics**

English language has overwhelmed the whole Indian society. Prominently, it has reached the urban society. But slum and rural India is deprived of it. Even after, around 175 years of its glorious history of learning English, India has remained at the back foot in popularizing this language and understanding its importance.

This situation is caused by several factors:

**Indian Education System**

Education system treats English as step mother. English is no longer a compulsory subject at the school and college level in many states of India. It is no longer the medium of instruction at the university level as well. Its study has become ‘optional’ in several parts of the country. In most of the universities English is taught only for one or two years of the degree programme. A few universities do not consider marks of English in students’ overall ranking. English is treated as a ‘half subject’ compared to other subjects. These facts give us a feeling that there has been decline in the status of English in India. Even in competitive examinations like Public service examinations, English is given less importance.

**Student interest**

Though most of the state governments have introduced English from the primary level, though some of the universities have made it a compulsory subject, students are unable to pick up the
language. They cannot speak or write English even after graduation. The blame goes to teaching methods adopted by the teachers and also the negative attitude of students.

Nevertheless, teaching English to students is difficult task particularly to those who are not interested in the academic curriculum, or not really aspiring to achieve competence in professional career.

**Media & Society**

National networks rarely use English except for the news programme, on a regular basis. Zee TV is more popular than BBC or Discovery channel and viewers prefer the Bollywood movies and soap operas in Hindi or regional languages. Hence we see that the need for English is changing too, and it can be clearly seen that English is becoming less and less popular. However, this is happening only, in some fractions of society.

**Teacher Quality**

To a great extent our success as teachers depends on how well we understand the needs of our students. If we do consider our learner’s needs, we can also help to motivate them. There is a dearth of competent and devoted English teachers who will enjoy teaching and learning English. Prof. V. K. Gokak has rightly said, *the Foundational years for the teaching of English in schools are in the hands of teachers who neither know enough English nor are familiar with the latest and far reaching development in the pedagogy of English*. [KK Bhatia]

English language as a “window to the world” is necessary for higher studies, opening up areas of knowledge to the growing student.

If we look at English as more than a library language, we will see that English is essential for learning instructions, writing letters of applications, academic reports, taking notes during lectures, phone conversations, in social contexts, instructions for doing something and so on and speaking in English is important when we talk to foreigners or to other Indians from different states and so on. It is not just for reading that English is needed. International media networks demand the use of one well known language which is English, which some parents do not understand. Hence they never inspire their children to speak, read & write in English. Knowledge of English not only empowers a person but it is also a status symbol.

**Parents**

Educated parents admit their children in English medium schools as they know the value of the language which will enable their children to take higher education and foresee excellent career
and sound life. But illiterate or semi-literate parents admit their children in vernacular medium schools as they think it is economical and easy to learn as medium of instruction is in mother tongue, so their children will get higher grades easily.

*Need for research*

Out of two approaches to learning language, English medium students acquaint very happily to the *behaviorist approach*, as they are exposed to English from pre-primary level and all subjects are taught in English. Whereas special deliberate efforts are needed by vernacular medium students which require the *mentalist approach because vernacular medium students are exposed to English language only in the English period and all other subjects are taught in vernacular.* Vernacular medium students in slum areas mostly belong either to lower middle class or lower socio-economic class. Vernacular students usually show much negativity in learning or understanding this language. They never take it seriously out of its fear or it seems beyond their mental reach.

Problems are severe particularly in slum area schools, where some schools do not have library facility. If it is available, there is lack of readable or interest oriented books. Teachers/Trainers are occasionally efficient in but don’t impart their knowledge amongst students. Teaching methods and techniques are not appropriately implemented.

Teachers also have a very apathetic attitude while teaching this language. Teachers need to get the clarity that they should not teach English as a subject only to be taught but rather as a language to be imparted. In such a situation, teachers cannot teach effectively. Students don’t listen to teachers, teachers can’t control them and the saga goes on. Once the atmosphere becomes negative in this way, it continues further and neither student learns nor teacher teaches whole heartedly. Everybody aims at just marks or results. Students pass from one class to another without knowing the language. Even they get through at graduation or post- graduation level; they cannot write or speak English correctly.

The Educational Board has adopted schemes at regular intervals but no implementation is made.

The students of vernacular medium, not habituated to lectures in English language, expect translation of each word and sentence in their mother tongue. This mind set is formed right from primary level. The teacher has to succumb and follow translation method which most suits the students. Ultimately both are the losers, students never get rid of the fear of English and do not show interest in learning it.

This is how the students of vernacular always lag behind and never improve and speak English fluently. They remain away from the opportunities to develop professionally and become international citizens.
The prime objective in teaching English language is to develop communicative approach. In the class, when teacher starts teaching there remains no scope of interaction or discussion. Even Discussion Method never works in teaching, as students never reciprocate. Lecture Method, though not fruitful, is accepted as the most suitable method. It does not evoke students in learning English Language. Elocution competition, storytelling, class assembly, seminar, and debate are the best methods of learning but never adopted by teachers. Students hesitate to participate, and if participate, they do it parrot like. They do not put their head and heart. Students are too shy to speak due to fear and lack of confidence. This attitude leads them to become non-communicative and discourages language learning and the problem remains. In such situation teaching English becomes challenging for the teachers.

**Statement of the problem**

It is necessary to study the difficulties faced by the English teachers in Vernacular Medium Schools. Keeping in view this need, I have taken up the study for my research on the Problems of teaching English to Vernacular Medium students of slum area of developing countries with special reference to Mumbai

**Need and importance of the study**

It is difficult to obliterate the influence of mother – tongue. English teaching too is influenced by mother tongue in India. The students in slum areas are deprived of better life. The basic skills of English listening, reading, writing and speaking should be well developed in school days. Good knowledge of English will help them to change their life in future by obtaining good education and good jobs. If good education is provided to slum students; especially of English as it is a global language, we can help to minimize the dropouts and improve their standard of living.
1.2 **OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

At the dawn of modern era, English language possesses great importance in different walks of life. At such crucial point of time, the responsibility of the teacher increases automatically, as it’s not the subject to be taught but the language to be imparted.

This research shall attempt to find out the finest possibilities to teach this subject effectively. The research also attempts at lucid language teaching by using different techniques and methods to boost up the most embarrassed students of vernacular medium.

The key objectives of the present study are:

1. To identify the problems faced by teachers in teaching English to vernacular medium students in slum schools:
   a. Educational problems.
   b. Administrative problems.
   c. Problems originating from skills, attitude, family background of students.
   d. Problems originating from skills, attitude, background of teachers.

2. To evaluate how these problems affect achievement of learning outcomes in vernacular medium students from slum areas of Mumbai:
   a. Attitude towards learning English as a subject at school.
   b. Learning of English as a subject as demonstrated through marks or grades.
   c. Development of English language skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening.
   d. Ability to apply English language skills in real life situations and towards vocational development.

3. To recommend measures which can be adopted by teachers to overcome these problems and enhance learning outcome in vernacular medium students from slum areas of Mumbai through:
   a. Understanding context of students from slum areas- socio-economic conditions, family and educational values.
   b. Evaluation of educational policies, alternative teaching methods and pedagogical approaches.
   c. Recommendations on changes needed to be implemented in the context of slum areas in Mumbai.
1.3 HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

In order to understand the present state of affairs a primary research study was conducted in vernacular medium schools in slums of Mumbai. The attempt was to study the perception of students, class 5 to 10. Skill, attitude, motivation of students and teachers act as obstacles in learning process.

Hypothesis: 1

Ho1: The teachers do not face Educational and Administrative problems in teaching English to vernacular medium students in slum schools.

Ha1: The teachers face Educational and Administrative problems in teaching English to vernacular medium students in slum schools.

Hypothesis: 2

Ho2: Problems do not originate from skills, attitude, family background of students and teachers.

Ha2: Problems originate from skills, attitude, family background of students and teachers.

Hypothesis: 3

Ho3: These problems do not affect the attitude of vernacular medium students towards learning English as a subject at school.

Ha3: These problems affect the attitude of vernacular medium students towards learning English as a subject at school.

Hypothesis: 4

Ho4: These problems do not affect the development of English language skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening

Ha4: These problems affect the development of English language skills- reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Hypothesis: 5

Ho5: These problems do not affect the ability to apply English language skills in real life situations and towards vocational development
Ha5: These problems affect the ability to apply English language skills in real life situations and towards vocational development

Hypothesis: 6

Ho6: Understanding context of students from slum areas- socio-economic conditions, family and educational values teachers cannot overcome these problems and enhance learning outcome.

Ha6: Understanding context of students from slum areas- socio-economic conditions, family and educational values teachers can overcome these problems and enhance learning outcome.

Hypothesis: 7

Ho7: The teachers cannot use evaluation of educational policies, alternative teaching methods and pedagogical approaches to overcome these problems and enhance learning outcome.

Ha7: The teachers can use evaluation of educational policies, alternative teaching methods and pedagogical approaches to overcome these problems and enhance learning outcome.

Hypothesis: 8

Ho8: Recommendations on changes are not needed to be implemented in the context of slum areas in Mumbai.

Ha8: Recommendations on changes are needed to be implemented in the context of slum areas in Mumbai.
1.4 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The research carries survey method under which slum schools are surveyed. Observation method carries some test of students of vernacular medium. The researcher also attempts at to study psychological method.

Data Collection

A. Primary data – The participants in the study are schools located in slum areas. This study follows the Survey method using a structured questionnaire to collect data from teachers and students. Additional information was collected through interviews with teachers, students, parents and school authorities. The sample selection was done through Random selection. Some slum schools of different mediums from Kandivali, Kurla to Mulund are selected as samples.

B. Secondary or Additional Data - Secondary data is collected from following sources:
   • Research Journals and articles.
   • PhD and M. Phil. Dissertations.
   • Various Central and State Governments publications.
   • Public records and statistics.
   • Books, magazines, newspapers and periodicals.
   • NGO’s publications.
   • Interaction with slum people.
   • Other relevant websites.

For this investigation data collection was done by means of following tools questionnaire method and interview guide.

 o Questionnaire for the Teachers and Students:
   The questionnaire covered two main areas:
   ▪ Educational problems.
   ▪ Administrative problems.

 o Interview Guide for teachers, students, parents and heads of the schools:
   The questionnaire covered five main areas;
   ▪ Status of English,
   ▪ Importance of English,
   ▪ Create interest and motivation,
   ▪ Involvement of parents,
   ▪ Govt. policy.
Analysis and Evaluative methods:

The collected data from various sources is in the raw form and hence it is processed, analyzed and interpreted through percentage, frequency distribution, pie-charts and tables are used for analyzing and interpreting data logical conclusion are drawn after interpretation of data and presented in the respective chapters.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

• The difficulties in teaching and learning process are studied from different angles, by taking field work in Schools of vernacular medium in slum areas of Mumbai.

• This study limits to its scope to the problems of vernacular medium schools of slums in Mumbai only.

• This study is conducted within 30 schools of city slums, having different medium, culture, background and social condition.

• This study is under taken on students of 5th-10th standards of vernacular medium only.

• The researcher is restricted to do her task on vernacular medium of Mumbai slums only, so she cannot go out of this, though the same problem is faced by English medium schools even.

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any research project however vast its scope may be, it is bound to have certain limitations arising from deficiencies inherent in the tools employed and the resources in terms of time, money, energy and the area at the disposal of the researcher. The present study has the following limitations:

• This is a small project. Though the problem is faced by all the teachers teaching English all over the world, only 30 vernacular medium schools of slums of Mumbai are selected, assuming that their information can be generalized.

• Time was limited for the completion of study. Hence, the problem had to be tackled in an efficient yet restricted manner.

• Tools used in the research project are limited. This is a descriptive survey, so only
Questionnaire and Interview methods are used.

- The Questionnaire which has been used as the tool of research has its own inbuilt deficiency. It is often referred to as the lazy men’s way of gathering information. Though the investigator tried to make the evaluation as objective as possible, the One man’s way of gathering information.

- Size of the sample is also comparatively small. Limited schools, teachers and students are taken for the study of the problems.

- Information received from respondents may not be reliable, accurate and/or complete.

1.7 **UTILITY OF THE STUDY**

The researcher has taken this topic in order to discuss specific changes in the existing scenario where there is a great vale between English and vernacular medium. The very purpose of this study is to bridge the gap between learning mediums crisis.

1. To create a better understanding between teachers and students regarding the difficulties and problems faced by each other.

2. To update the teachers’ knowledge of the latest techniques and innovative ideas of language teaching.

3. To create awareness among the people regarding the need of staff and other resources in vernacular medium schools in slum areas.

4. To help teachers:
   - To help students acquire knowledge about English through various modes e.g. audio-visual etc.
   - To impart the basic knowledge of English by play way.
   - To make them capable to take higher studies and better job opportunities.
   - To help them to raise their standard of living and social status.
   - To minimize the number of dropouts from schools and colleges.
5. To strengthen the bond between teacher and student through various creative and constructive activities.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH REPORT /SCHEDULE OF THE STUDY

The organization of chapters has been as follows:

Chapter one is the introductory chapter. It discusses various aspects of the problem. It deals with the historical background of the problem and views and opinions of parents, students and teachers, explanations of past and present status of English in India, need and importance of discussion of the problem, the purpose and the objectives of the study, the methods of study, scope and limitations, assumption and organization of the chapters.

Chapter two is the review of literature. A brief summary of related studies done in different states of India and out of India is mentioned. The researcher has tried to compare the present situation of teaching and learning of English with that of findings and suggestions of previous researchers. It shows how the present study contributes or advances the available knowledge for application in the future. It serves as the background of the present study. Also it is the test of required knowledge with which the researcher is acquainted.

Chapter three skills of teaching English deals with the syllabus or curriculum of teaching English in vernacular medium schools. It discusses with the four basic skills of language – listening, reading, writing and speaking. It also discusses role of grammar, literature and the traditional and innovative methods or techniques of teaching English. It discusses significant role of age and environment in second language learning.

Chapter four comparative study of slums deals with the slums around the world, life in the slums of the world: a comparative study, the slums of Mumbai, barriers of education in slum schools, the wretched condition of those living in the slums, efforts of Indian government and NGOs for upliftment of people in slums. The investigator wants to paint present condition and life of the people in slums of India and show the situation faced by the slum people of some of the developing countries.

Chapter five deals with the research design. This includes selection of sample, study area, geographical condition, nature of data, methodology of study, questionnaire, interview schedule,
pilot study, data collection, content validity, concluding remarks, limitations. It describes the specific terms, the nature of the problem and purpose of study.

Chapter six deals with the analysis of the data collected through questionnaire distributed to English teachers and students and data analyzed with the help of statistics. Tables, graphs and figures are given in this chapter. Descriptive analysis is done of data collected through the interviews of teachers, students, parents and heads of schools.

Chapter seven gives the summary of the study, the implication of the result, comparisons, criticisms, interpretations, conclusions drawn from it and suggestion made for improvement.

REFERENCES

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