CHAPTER II

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This chapter examines a crucial episode in the history of language policy in India during the British rule. The bitter dispute over colonial language in education policy during this period raised fundamental questions about the roles and status of the English language, Indian vernacular and classical languages in the diffusion of western knowledge and ideas on the sub continent. The chapter analyses the content and purpose of Macaulay’s Minute and also the short-term and long-term consequences of Macaulay’s scheme in India and its influence on Indian education system. Macaulay wanted “to refine the vernacular dialects with the terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population” (Macaulay 1835). It is highly debatable whether either of these things actually happened.

In post-independent India, there was no clarity regarding the goals of English education or educational planning with respect to English teaching. Therefore, various Committees and Commissions were formed, but there were no clear-cut directions or well-designed
coordination among the agencies that were to implement the policies, even the major recommendations of specialist bodies. This chapter examines the recommendations and reports of University Education Commission, Kothari Commission, National Policy on Education and Programme of Action and the Report of Acharya Ramamurti Commission.

**Bilingualism in India**

Introduction of bilingualism in India can be divided into three phases according to Kachru Braj, a renowned linguist of India. The first one of them, the missionary phase, was initiated around 1614 by Christian missionaries. The main motive behind this is to make Indians dependent upon a remote and unknown country for all their ideas. The second phase was considered as an important phase because it was initiated by some Indian scholars who were of the opinion that the spread of English was the result of the demand and willingness of local people to learn the language. There were prominent spokesmen for English. Kachru mentions two of them, Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833) and Rajunath Hari Navalkar (1770). Roy and Navalkar, among others, were persuading the officials of the East India Company to give instruction in English, rather than in Sanskrit or Arabic. They thought that English would
open the way for people to find out about scientific developments of the West.

Raja Rammohan Roy expressed his opinion that the available funds should be used for employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences, which the natives of Europe had carried to “a degree of perfection that has raised them above the inhabitants of other parts of the world” (Braj B 1983:113).

The third phase began in 1765, when the East India Company's authority was fully stabilized in India. English was established firmly as the medium of instruction and administration. The English language became popular because it opened paths to employment and influence.

**Macaulay's Minute**

During the Governor Generalship of Lord William Bentinck in the early nineteenth century, India saw many social reforms. English became the language of record of government and higher courts, and government support was given to the cultivation of Western learning to understand science through the medium of English. On March 7,
1835, the Governor General William Bentinck agreed with Macaulay’s Minute and wrote that great objective of the European literature and science among the natives of India was to promote and establish a permanent position for the use of English language in Indian educational institutions. After being approved, the Minute became the cornerstone of Indian education policy.

The logic and the argument of Macaulay, particularly his diatribe against Indian culture, religion, theology, arts and sciences may be questioned. He wrote the Minute hundred and seventy two years ago, as a representative of a ruling power but the words used in it hurt every Indian even today when read. However, the number of Indians who wish to learn and use English has been growing steadily for the last two centuries. The ruling Indian castes or classes have embraced English with suitable modifications in the content and the lexicon that are used in textbooks and taught in classrooms. English has become the language of higher castes and poorer classes who try to emulate the model set by their peers or bosses.

Macaulay concluded that the grant at the Government’s disposal could be mainly used to promote learning of English language in India. He proceeded to discuss the most useful way of utilizing it. Since all parties agreed that the vernacular languages contained
“neither literary nor scientific information” (Macaulay 1835:28) and were thus too “poor and rude” (28) to be used as instructional media, the General Committee of Public Instructions formulated in the year 1820 was faced with a straightforward choice between Sanskrit/Arabic and English, the central question being, according to Macaulay, “which language is the best worth knowing?” (Philips 1977:31). Macaulay’s case for English was founded on his belief in the intrinsic superiority of English literature and science over Indian learning and on his conviction that a strong desire for English-language education existed among certain segments of the Indian population.

Macaulay maintained that his low estimate of the value of Indian learning was shared by his adversaries: “I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia” (1405). According to Macaulay, the claims of English were hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stood pre-eminent among the languages of the West. Whoever knew English had “ready access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created and hoarded in the course of ninety generations” (1405). The important political and economic role that English was
beginning to assume in India and in the emerging Empire also provided a strong justification for promoting education in the language. Thus, whether viewed from the perspective of Britain’s growing imperial interests, or its value as the repository of a superior body of knowledge and thought, English was the language, which Macaulay believed would be “most useful to our native subjects” (1406).

Apart from extolling the virtues of English literature and science vis-à-vis traditional Indian learning, Macaulay sought justification for his plan by arguing that Indians evinced a far stronger desire to learn English than Sanskrit or Arabic. In setting out his case, Macaulay challenged the time-honoured Orientalist argument that the promotion of Oriental studies helped to conciliate the influential classes in Indian society. Macaulay contended that “unanswerable evidence” (Young 1935:112) existed to prove that “we are not at present securing the co-operation of the natives”(112); in fact, the policy of engraftment was having quite the opposite effect. For Macaulay, the “state of the market” (112) should determine language policy. He observes:

We are withholding from them the learning which is palatable to them. We are forcing on them the mock learning, which
They nauseate. This is proved by the fact that we are forced to pay our Arabic and Sanskrit students while those who learn English are willing to pay us. (113)

Having presented his case for English, Macaulay advanced the idea of “downward filtration”, which proposed that the meagre parliamentary grant be used to cultivate a class of anglicized Indians who would not only serve as cultural agents between the British and their Indian subjects but who would also refine and enrich the vernacular languages and thereby render them fit media for imparting Western learning to the masses:

In one point I fully agree with the gentlemen to whose general views I am opposed. I feel with them that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. 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 tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. (27)

While the sentence advocating the creation of acculturated Indian elite is justifiably regarded as the epitome of cultural and linguistic imperialism, Macaulay’s critics have tended to overlook the
significance of the preceding sentence. This indicates that his controversial scheme was entirely dictated by government parsimony, and has been similarly chosen to ignore the import of the following sentence. This reveals that the development of vernacular education constituted an important element in the Anglicists’ project.

Macaulay accompanied his plan with three specific measures designed to strike at the root of the bad system which has hitherto been fostered by us. Though careful to stress that existing interests should be respected, he nevertheless proposed that the Calcutta Madrasa and Sanskrit College (Calcutta) be abolished, that the printing of Arabic and Sanskrit books be discontinued, and that no further stipends be awarded to students wishing to pursue Oriental studies at the Delhi Madrasa and Sanskrit College (Benares). Macaulay concluded his Minute with a characteristically dramatic flourish, threatening to resign from his position as President of the General Committee on Public Instruction if his proposals were rejected. He knew that this was an empty threat, and as he anticipated, Governor General Bentinck immediately gave his entire concurrence to the Minute.
**Consequences of Macaulay’s Minute**

Macaulay’s recommendations had both immediate and long-term consequences. Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General, accepted the recommendations, acknowledging that “the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and Science among Indians” (Young 1935:74) and decreeing that “all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone” (74). While existing schools and colleges of native learning would not be closed and while existing professors and students would continue to receive their salaries and stipends, no further stipends for students would be sanctioned. When a professor of Oriental learning vacated his situation the government would “decide upon the expediency of appointing a successor” (75). No portion of government funds would henceforth be provided for printing Oriental works. “All funds would henceforth be utilized for imparting the native population a knowledge of English literature and science through the medium of the English language” (75). The withdrawal of government support—keeping in mind that these funds grew out of Indian goods, Indian labour, Indian materials and resources to native learning and to the
printing of books in Indian languages—meant that these would languish, as indeed happened.

During British rule, the class in question— the babu class as it came to be called—did not always play the role of the interpreter; quite often it tended to gratify its own interests which it does even now. As this class did not contribute as much as it should have or could have to the refinement and development of Indian languages and literature or scientific knowledge in these languages, English gradually became the language of government, education, advancement and "a symbol of imperial rule and of self-improvement" (McCrum 1988: 68).

Although Macaulay is credited the most influential individual in the language question, the issue is more complex than simply Macaulay arriving in India, writing the Minute on education and then heading off back to England with having English firmly transplanted in the colony. In his view, then, “it is important to understand that Macaulay just articulated a position, which had been discussed for a long time already” (Pennycook 1994:218).
He goes on further to argue that the Indian bourgeoisie was demanding English-language education as much as the missionaries and educators, seeing knowledge of English as an essential tool in gaining social and economic prestige.

**Acceptance of the Minute**

In the following years, English was established firmly as the medium of instruction and administration by the British Raj (1765-1947). Indian education was ever greater anglicized as the English language became rooted in an alien linguistic, cultural, administrative and educational setting. The first universities were established in India in 1857 (in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras). English became accepted as the language of the elite, of the administration, and of the Indian press. English newspapers had an influential reading public. “Indian literature in English was also developing” (Braj B 1983:14).

India, after becoming independent in 1947, was left with a colonial language, in this case English, as the language of government. It was thought that the end of the British Raj would mean the slow but sure demise of the English language in South Asia. This, of course, has not happened. “The
penetration of English in these societies is greater that it has ever been” (Braj B 1994:26).

Nationalist imperative wanted continuous use of English. Nationalists were of the opinion that an indigenous Indian language should be adopted as the official language. Hindi seemed most qualified for that, since “it had more native speakers than any other Indian language and was already widely used in interethnic communication” (Fasold 1984: 39).

In addition, it was thought that linguistic unity was a prerequisite for political and national unity. Thus, Hindi was designated by the constitution as the language of communication between and within the states. It was to replace English within 15 years. The plan was that Hindi would be promoted so that it might express all parts of the "composite culture of India" (Spolsky 1978:186).

There were, however, several problems in selecting Hindi and since the protests were often violent (e.g. the riots in TamilNadu in May 1963, protesting against the imposition of Hindi), the government wanted to adopt a policy which would help to maintain the status quo. First, “Hindi is not evenly distributed throughout the
country; e.g. in Tamil Nadu, in the south, only 0.0002 per cent of the people claimed knowledge of Hindi or Urdu, whereas in the northern states this figure can rise up to 96.7 per cent" (Krishnaswamy 2003:71). Secondly, it was thought that the speakers of other languages would be offended by its selection; other Indian languages, for example Tamil and Bengali, had as much right to be national languages as Hindi. The other Indian communities felt they would be professionally, politically and socially disadvantaged were Hindi given the central role. Thirdly, Hindi was thought to need vocabulary development before it could be used efficiently as a language of government. In spite of these problems, Hindi was chosen as the national language in the constitution, and English was to be replaced by Hindi in fifteen years' time. However, due to the continuous opposition in the south, this replacement was not politically possible. In 1967 a law was passed which allowed "the use of both Hindi and English for all official purposes — and that situation still exists" (Fasold 1984: 43).

The controversy between Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani made the case for Hindi even worse. Support for Hindustani almost ended with independence; Hindi supporters' enthusiasm was not, also, channelled
in a constructive direction. As a result, "English continues to be a language of both power and prestige" (Braj 1986: 45).

The British were given a lot of political stature due to their political power, and they were required to adopt a pose that would fit their status. Language became a marker of the white man's power. Kachru quotes E. M. Forster in "A Passage to India" "India likes gods. And Englishmen like posing as gods" (51). The English language was part of the pose and power. Indians accepted it, too.

English was used in India and elsewhere in the colonies as a tool of power to cultivate a group of people who identify with the cultural and other norms of the political elite. European values were, naturally, considered somehow inherently better whereas the indigenous culture was often considered somehow barbaric. English was considered as a "road to the light", a tool of "civilization" (Braj 1986c:53). The Europeans thought that they could bring emancipation to the souls; they considered this as their duty. They sincerely thought they would contribute to the well-being of the native people in the colonies and their language was elevated into being almost divine.
English provided a medium for understanding technology and scientific development. Non-western intellectuals admired accomplishments of the west. European literature was made available in colonies. In India, English gradually acquired socially and administratively the most dominant roles: the domains of language use defined the power and prestige of language. Ultimately the legal system, the national media and important professions were conducted in English. In the words of Kachru, skilled professional Indian became the symbol of Westernization and modernization. Raja Rammohan Roy was committed to the idea that the "European gentlemen of talent and education" (Braj 1987:4) should be appointed to teach English to the natives of India. English came to be used by Indians, as well. By the 1920s English had become the language of political discourse, intra-national administration, and law, a language associated with liberal thinking. Even after the colonial period ended, English maintained its power over local languages. English serves two purposes. First, it provides a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of a country and secondly, it serves as a language of wider communication. "Functions of English in the Indian socio-cultural context are to perform roles relevant and appropriate to the social, educational and administrative network of India" (Braj 1987: 41).
English is used in both public and personal domains and its functions "extend far beyond those normally associated with an outside language, including the instrumental, the regulative, the interpersonal and the innovative, self-expressive function" (Braj 1996:28). As pointed out before, the role of English is not replaceable: it overlaps with local languages in certain domains.

When the colonial rule came to an end, most nations embarked upon a process of textbook contextualization to teach English. The original pieces of writing by the native speakers of English are sought to be replaced by the writings of the natives who were masters of English prose and poetry. In their creative writing, metaphors, idioms, and set phrases from the national languages, which imply local culture and religion, were freely used. Translations from the local tales are more frequently substituted for tales from Europe. In addition, government-inspired documents on ideology became part of the textbook. Nations (and individuals) wanted to appropriate English as a language minus the culture and religion it represented and communicated. And this trend had been successfully established in the last fifty years in India. Macaulay's diatribe was simply a nuisance at the moment for the ruling castes and classes, but his momentous decision to introduce English in the Indian School
System was followed with a force never before seen in the Indian subcontinent for any language.

The expansion of English education during this period reflected the strong demand for English in the principal urban centers of British India. As in other colonial contexts, this demand sprang from an awareness that a smattering of English opened up the prospect of employment in the lower rungs of government or European-controlled commercial organizations. “The Indian students who attended English-medium schools were generally from the poorer classes in society (rather than the traditional learned elites), and were primarily interested in the language rather than the content of a Western education” (McCully 1966:97). Since their interest in English was largely motivated by occupational concerns, students tended to abandon their studies once they had acquired a rudimentary knowledge of the language in order to take up clerical positions in the public or private sectors. While this practice was deprecated by European educators in India, it might be observed that students’ workplace language needs were not best served by the academic curriculum. Examinations offered in the English-medium stream, reflected current practice in British schools, were wholly
inappropriate — both linguistically and culturally — for students studying in a second language.

It was also recognized that English cannot be taught by the native speakers of English in India. This is economically impractical and politically inconvenient and sometimes would be viewed as a disastrous step. The former colonies of Britain such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and several African nations have provided for the teaching of English mainly through their nationals. Some countries like Japan and China open their doors to more number of native speakers of English to teach English. This step has far-reaching consequences for the quality of English language instruction and use in India, but the people of the Indian subcontinent have admirably “resolved” the problem with their own nuances. Better schools and colleges continue to seek a competence for their students similar to that of native English speakers.

**English in Post-Colonial India**

Even after Independence the nation did not redefine the goals and priorities in education and more specifically in English education as in every other sphere of activity. English education in Post-Colonial
India has been a continuation of the colonial experience. English is still the language that examines students in the universities, conducts foreign affairs and transacts business with the world outside. The people who are eager to learn English are increasing every day.

Raja Rao's famous statement captures the dilemma of English in India:

One has to convey in a language that is not one's own the spirit that is one's own. One has to convey the various shades and omissions of a certain thought-movement that looks maltreated in an alien language. I use the word 'alien', yet English is not really an alien language to us. It is the language of our intellectual make-up – like Sanskrit or Persian was before but not of our emotional make-up. We are all instinctively bilingual, many of us writing in our own language and in English. We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression therefore has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be distinctive and colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it. (Raja Rao 1974:6)
The fact, however, is that English education in post-colonial India has been a continuation of the colonial experience and that the challenge sensed and described by Raja Rao has not been really met. India never had a common language since it was not politically unified country before the British colonial rule. Sanskrit was a common language of the subcontinent but it was the language of the learned class and not of the common people. English today like Sanskrit in the past, has become a lingua franca or a sort of link language, but again restricted to the English-educated urban class and not of the rural masses. It has become the official, associate and additional language.

Jawaharlal Nehru observed in 1956 during the parliament discussion on the report of the States Reorganization Commission that the language of the people was a vital matter for their development whether it was education, administration, or any other matter. But there was a distinction between developing the language to the fullest extent and calling it a burden. He accepted the statement that people cannot really grow except through their language, but it does not follow that in order to make their language grow, a barrier must be erected between them and others.
... for an indefinite period — I do not know how long — I should have, I would have English as an associate, additional language which can be used, not because of facilities and all that, but because I do not wish the people of non-Hindi areas to feel that certain doors of advance are closed to them because they are forced to correspond - the government, I mean - in the Hindi language. They can correspond in English. So I would have it as an alternative language as long as people require it and the decision for that, I would leave not to Hindi - knowing people, but to non-Hindi knowing people. (Report: 1971)

Recommendations and reports of the Committees

The Radhakrishnan Committee

The first education commission appointed in free India was the University Education Commission, also called the Radhakrishnan Commission. The Commission submitted its report in 1949. It was the tertiary level, which received attention first. The committee conceived the role of university education in detail. It emphasized the goals like awakening of the innate ability of men and women to live the life of the soul by developing wisdom, training for self-development and the development of values like fearlessness of
mind, strength of conscience and integrity of purpose rather than specifying the goals in relation to the immediate socio-political, economic and linguistic context in post-independent India. With regard to the medium of instruction, the commission observed that "For the medium of instruction for higher education, English be replaced as early as practicable by an Indian language which cannot be Sanskrit on account of vital difficulties" (Agarwal 1984:19) That this "Indian language" should be Hindi was not made explicit though the commission took that Hindi would be the federal language of the union.

The commission, however, recommended that English should continue to be studied in high schools and universities in order that we may keep in touch with the living stream of ever growing knowledge. The commission while recommending the medium of instruction to the pupils at higher secondary and university stages is conversant with three languages—the regional language, the federal language and English. It did not examine the question of different learning loads; the load would be obviously lighter in universities where the regional language was the same as the federal language.
The Secondary Education Commission

The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) was the first official body to concern itself with methods and materials of teaching, and evaluation system. The commission was, of course, dealing with the teaching and evaluations of all subjects but its observations and recommendations had and still have particular relevance for the study of English. According to the recommendations of commissions any method good or bad links up the teacher and his pupil into an organic relationship with constant mutual interaction. It reacts not only on the minds of students but on their entire personality, their standards of work and judgement, their intellectual and emotional equipment, their attitudes and values. Good methods which are psychologically and socially sound may raise the whole quality of their life, bad methods may debase it.

Every teacher and educationist knows that even the best curriculum and the most perfect syllabus remain dead unless quickened with life by the right methods of teaching and the right kind of teachers. (Agarwal 1984:71)

This observation seems especially valid as most of the revised syllabus failing as a consequence of the indifference of the teachers
or of the unreality or irrelevance of the methods of teaching. The Commission insisted that the emphasis in teaching should shift from verbalism and memorization to learning through purposeful, concrete and realistic situations and for this purpose the principles of "Activity Method" and "Project Method" should be assimilated in school practice.

A well-thought out attempt should be made to adopt methods of instruction to the needs of individual students as much as possible so that dull, average and bright students may all have a chance to progress at their own pace. (Agarwal 1984:82)

On the question of textbooks, the commission showed a combination of realism and idealism. It suggested that single textbooks should not be prescribed for every subject of study, but a reasonable "number of books which satisfy the standards laid down should be recommended leaving the choice to the schools concerned. In the case of languages, however, definite textbooks should be presented for each class to ensure proper gradation". (84)

The stipulation on pupil strength as mentioned in the report was not enforced uniformly. The commission recommended that the Optimum number of boys to be admitted to any class should be 30
and the maximum should not in any case exceed 40; the optimum number in the whole school should be 500 while the maximum should not exceed 750.

Language planning in India arrived at a crucial stage in the sixties. After more than a decade of independence, the relative status of English, Hindi and other regional languages was still not clear in the minds of people or even in official documents. The anti-Hindi riots in the South as well as the anti English campaign in some parts of the north lent urgency to the problem. The conference of Chief Ministers in 1961 recommended the adoption of the three-language formula in all schools. This meant:

1. the regional language, or the mother tongue different from the regional language.

2. Hindi, or any other Indian languages in Hindi areas and

3. English, or any other European language.

The sense of equity behind this recommendation was not in question; the intention was to make the load of language learning equal in all parts of the country and also to achieve national integration. As a consequence of the continuing political opposition
in Tamil Nadu to the introduction of Hindi, the three-language formula was not uniformly adopted.

The Kothari Commission

The Kothari commission in 1966 reiterated the three-language formula. The commission took note of other riots in Tamil Nadu but still recommended that both Hindi and English should be link languages, even though it felt that English could not serve as a link for the majority. It was felt that English should continue as a library language and as the medium of instruction in all major universities and that a reasonable degree of proficiency in it should be essential for the award of a degree. The Commission also recommended that special units be set up for teaching English as language skill, as distinct from teaching it as literature. This was evident from the emphasis on English as a library language and as a vehicle of international communication.

The Kothari Commission also specified how the three-language formula is to be implemented. Only the regional language is to be taught from Class I to IV; two languages are to be taught from Class V to VII (one of them being the regional language and other language either English or Hindi); three languages are to be taught from Class
VII to X—the regional language, Hindi and English to be taught only for three years. The Commission also gave a plan for two levels of English teaching and learning:

(i) English for those who opt for it from class V (i.e. for six years)

(ii) English for those who opt for it from class VIII (i.e. for three years)

However, in practice, different States in India started English in different classes in government schools. In some States, it is introduced in class III and in some in Class V or VI; in some States it is compulsory and examinable and in some it is optional. Education being on the “Concurrent List”, States have the freedom to take decisions, which are sometimes based on political compulsions.

The Establishment of CIEFL

The structural syllabus prepared by the London School was brought to India by the British Council and introduced in Madras in 1952, through the Madras English Language Teaching (MELT) campaign. The first English Language Teaching Institute (ELTI) was established in Allahabad in 1954 with the collaboration of the British
Council. When the All India Seminar on the Teaching of English, held in Nagpur in 1957, suggested the revision of English syllabus at schools at national level and accepted the structural approach as the basis for such revision, the services of the British Council were considered essential. The Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL) was established in Hyderabad in 1958, with the collaboration of the British Council to provide the services.

**National Policy on Education**

Study groups appointed by the Ministry of Education submitted reports on the study of English in India in 1967 and 1971. After the Kothari Commission in 1966, the National Policy on Education (NEP) was formulated in 1968, largely to implement the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. It noted that the regional languages were already in use as medium of instruction at the primary and secondary stages and proposed that urgent steps should be taken to adopt them as medium of instruction at the university level too. The NEP stated that English deserves to be specially strengthened as "world knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology" (Krishnaswamy 2003:32) and "India must not only keep up this
growth but should also make her own significant contribution to it" (33).

The Study Group Report

The Study Group Report on the Teaching of English records many reasons for the non-implementation of some of the major recommendations of the previous committees. It states that there is a grave shortage of trained and fully qualified teachers of English at almost all stages of the educational system. Secondly, there have been frequent changes in government policy towards the teaching and learning of English in several states. Thirdly, the State Education departments have been slow in taking decisions and even where decisions have been taken resources are not available to carry them out. The next recommendation was that facilities available for reform and reorganization have been inadequate and that supervision of English teaching in schools has continued to be neglected, with hardly any trained specialists engaged in this task. Lastly, it points out that in majority of schools there is great gulf between the approach and actual practice.
The next significant landmark of the National Policy on Education was the formation of Programme of Action (NEP and POA in 1986). But the document of POA merely reiterates the 1968 NEP and states:

The education Policy of 1968 had examined the development of languages in great detail; its essential provisions can hardly be improved upon and are as relevant today as before. The implementation of this part of the 1968 Policy has, however, been uneven. The Policy will be implemented more energetically and purposefully. (Report 1971:13)

The 1986 Policy does not make any mention of medium of instruction in its chapter on higher education but states that “a major effort will be directed towards the transformation of teaching methods and that urgent steps will be taken to protect the system from degradation.” (Krishnaswamy 2003:18)

The Acharya Ramamurti Commission

The Acharya Ramamurti Commission, appointed to review the 1986 National Policy on Education and the Programme of Action, submitted its report in 1990. The report made a frank analysis of the problems in the implementation of the three-language formula. However, it observed, that the three-language formula had "stood the
test of time” and that it was not “desirable or prudent to reopen it”
despite the difficulties or the unevenness in the implementation. The
Ramamurti Commission made the pertinent observation about the
learning of Hindi and English that the criteria should be, not years of
study, but hours of study and levels of attainment. The commission
made suggestions that Kendriya Hindi Sansthan (KHS), the Central
Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL) and Central Institute of English
and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), the three-national level institutions,
charged respectively with the development of Hindi, English and
modern Indian languages should come together and in consultation
with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National
Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) and the state
governments, “spell out modalities of ensuring uniformity in the
matter of acquisition of language competency by the students in the

On the question of medium for higher education, the report makes
specific recommendations about the steps to be taken to effect a
smooth changeover from English to the regional languages by
producing university level text books in Indian languages and giving
options to students for taking examinations at all levels in the
The report also states the need for a fresh linguistic survey of India.

**The Report of Curriculum Development Centre**

The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) set up by University Grants Commission specifies vital recommendations regarding the place of English Education in India. The directions given to these CDC’s appointed for various subjects stated that the proposed curricula should shift the emphasis “from teaching to learning” and that curricula should be so designed as to make “education more meaningful to the needs and aspirations of its beneficiaries as well as to make it socially relevant” (CDC Report 1989:4)

The CDC Report on English proposes a new undergraduate curriculum that comprises a General English course and a Special English course. The former, “which has to cater to a heterogeneous tertiary level student population”(10), consists of different units and modules suited to different levels of learners. The report has concentrated on only the learners and not the teachers after taking into considerations the learner-oriented teaching. The 1986 Report, which maintained that “methodologies will be developed for evaluation of teacher performance through self-appraisal, through
peer groups, and also by students" (10) has obviously been forgotten. The National Committees have never asked or considered the learners what they expect from the courses meant for them, why they want to learn English, how they want to learn it, what materials they prefer, etc. The CDC Report on English states the following:

If education was to be viewed as an instrument of human resource development, then, it was argued, why an MA programme in English literature (and that too, Chiefly British literature) only? It was felt that we should introduce a multiplicity of MA courses in English ... as several universities in Britain and America currently do. While there was a broad agreement on this view, it was felt nonetheless that the time was not yet ripe for such diversification-chiefly because we do not have the human resources necessary to implement it (31).

The recommendations of all these committees and Commissions led to disparity in the introduction of English at school level, variety of syllabi and different media of instructions at schools, sociological and psychological problems which affected the language skill. The student with this background when entering a technical institution finds the scenario quite challenging. The demand for
effective language acquisition has increased as the present day students, particularly in professional courses are to involve themselves in variety of language learning activities to meet the global competitions and challenging situations. In view of these demanding requirements, English Language teaching therefore should consider the perspective of the communicative dimension of language which was not given importance in present school curriculum.

The scheme for the development of autonomous colleges envisaged in the National Policy of Education 1986 could have designed such programmes to accelerate the process of curricular reforms, design courses, reform teaching and evaluation procedures. In each stage of the language tasks, learners should be involved to acquire sufficient communicative competence. Indian teachers should shed their dependence on Euro centric Western approaches to language learning and teaching by evolving English teaching programmes to match the role of English in modern India to suit the intellectual and technological climate of contemporary thinking and requirements.