Abstract

The study attempts to understand the constitution of the literate in mainstream English curriculum. The chief aim of this study is to critically examine the anomalies and ambiguities embedded in the curriculum designed to nurture equal education for all. Subscriptions and claims of the reform agenda are scrutinized to analyze the effects of marginalization of the literate. The perspectives and issues surrounding the question of change argued for in education implicate a powerful postcolonial discourse. Reading the social and political space mediated by policy proposals as they stand to impact classroom practice is the chief thrust of the study. Policy will be used as a shorthand for a whole range of social phenomena. In this sense, policy, not only represents written documents of the government, but also more crucially, the structures and mechanisms of institutional decision-making affecting a whole gamut of 'lived experience' on the ground. This framework will enable us to understand some of the problems of the English classroom. In short, how do the processes of reform frame the literate? The idea of the modern literate is nowhere so well rehearsed and constructed as through education policies, curriculum, textbooks and institutions and their routines and symbolic rituals. But also primarily, it is the role that language has been made to play in this discourse. Problematizing language as culture it will be necessary to see how the 'literate' has been represented in several texts – the teaching of English (General) at an undergraduate level, English as a subject at the postsecondary stage, non-formal literacy texts and the
concept of reform within the Syllabus Reform in English movement (1976-77). For pragmatic purposes, a very broad spectrum of undergraduate and post-secondary English classroom and the Literacy classes in Adult Education have been identified as contexts against which such inquiries will be made. Glimpses of the possibilities in critical practice – ‘reading the word in the world’ - through the ‘lived curriculum’ within both formal and non-formal set up will be strongly invoked.