Preface

Teachers are regarded as the most imperative school-based factor that influences students’ achievement levels. Poor academic performance by numerous students in both secondary and higher education has gained significant attention by most researchers in the field of educational management. There exist several factors that influence students’ academic performances, but teachers’ competence remains one of the major determinants of students’ academic achievements. Teacher competence in teaching process is a multidimensional concept that measures numerous interrelated aspects of sharing knowledge with learners which include communication skills, subject matter expertise, teaching skills and teacher’s attitude.

English, the language of ambition and aspiration, continues to occupy an important place in Indian education. The knowledge of and proficiency in the language are crucial for achievement of students both in academics as well as in other walks of life. Despite its importance being acknowledged the present level of achievement of students in English is far from satisfactory. An investigation for finding the reasons and analyzing them for remedies of deficiencies in English teaching and learning would help improving the situation. The teachers’ role is pivotal. Their teaching competency, especially English language teaching competency, is the determining factor. On the other hand, the factors closely associated with the students are to be taken into
account for formulating a suitable and effective strategy for teaching and learning the language.

Research has established the place of social interaction, social activity and social context in language acquisition. Language is one of the potent weapons of any progressive society. The society is made or marred by the roles played by the communicative skills and imperatives of the available languages in a society. The descriptive study of the effect of any and all aspects of society, including cultural norms, expectations, and context, on the way language is used is called sociolinguistics. It is the overall effect of the society on language use. It also studies how language varieties differ between groups separated by certain social variables, for instance ethnicity, religion, status, gender, level of education, age, etc., and how creation and adherence to these rules are used to categorize individuals in social or socioeconomic classes. As the usage of a language varies from place to place, language usage also varies among social classes.

Like several other states in India, in Jharkhand too the English is taught through the Grammar Translation Method that puts stress on grammar and vocabulary. Generally, in these schools, the teaching process follows a system where the vernacular meanings of English words and phrases are given to the students and they learn it by rote. But, mostly it is seen that teachers themselves
are not well-equipped to teach correct English pronunciation, speaking or reading skills to students. The reason being these teachers are the same people who have passed out from a similar educational system, where their exposure to English had been at the most basic level. Even trained graduate teachers are not specifically trained to teach English. As most of the teachers themselves had limited exposure in mastering language skills, they do not have adequate language proficiency. Specialized English teachers are quite few in number and hence negative impact is created in the teaching-learning process.

Jharkhand is a predominantly tribal state. For catering to the educational needs of the students the geographical, social and cultural aspects unique to the state are the factors for foremost consideration. The present study is an attempt to investigate into the causes responsible for unsatisfactory achievement level of students in English. It also attempts to find out the extent to which the English language teaching competency of teachers is associated with the students’ achievement vis-à-vis the educational realities of the State.

Investigator

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