CHAPTER - 7

CONCLUSION

Research into the problems of teaching and learning English is no longer a novel pursuit. It has in fact become so much wider and extensive that it is now a global phenomenon. Aptly did Eunice Crook describe ELT as a ‘globally controlled discursive practice.’ Innumerable studies done into investigating the problems of teaching English in various situations have come out identifying innumerable sets of problems – some of them universal in nature in their applicability while others there are that are situation-specific. And the solutions suggested have always been in the light of what works best in the particular situation under study as the recent trend in evolving solutions in ELT is not to look for borrowed or imported pedagogic or methodological answers or prescriptions but to take into account the needs of the native situation that warrant the study.

The present study was also carried out with the objective of investigating the problems of teaching English in the vernacular medium (Assamese medium in this case) secondary schools in the district of Kamrup and it was carried out with the spirit of this recent trend in ELT research. The method adopted in it was the survey method which was conducted quite intensively. The tools used were three sets of questionnaire – one each for the teachers of English, the students and the Heads of the schools, interview of teachers and classroom observation of teachers in teaching. While the questionnaires helped in collecting data from the samples, the tools of interview
and classroom observation helped in validating the responses in the questionnaire or the data and hence due care and caution was exercised in administering the tools. A relatively big sample was selected for the study to ensure better and wider representativeness of the population and the coverage of the survey work proved challenging and trying in view of the wider geographical space that had to be covered in visiting the schools that lay scattered across the length and breadth of the district. All this was done with all sincerity and a deep sense of commitment and every bit of the survey work was done by the researcher himself who preferred to abstain from engaging any messenger or any such person in the work. It won’t be out of place here perhaps to make a passing reference to the problems and difficulties faced during the process of the survey work. One such problem was that a few Heads of schools refused to fill in the questionnaire meant for them on the pretext of being ‘busy’ all the time, although, of course, they extended the other forms of cooperation in the matter. One of them also refused to allow the investigator to meet the students of her school for collecting data from them as this person could not afford the loss of a ‘valuable classhour’ for her students. A few others were there with whom it was a trying job to collect the filled in questionnaire and a minimum of 2 to 3 copies of the questionnaire had to be supplied to them after the first ones were reported missing from their table. Same were the difficulties faced with some of the teacher respondents who were found delaying the return of the filled in questionnaire on the pretext of being ‘very busy’ or ‘forgetful’ to such an extent that the researcher was left with no option but to exclude some of those teachers from the sample. On the other hand student respondents were
found very much willing and enthusiastic to take part in the work. The situation was such that in most of the schools students willing to take part in the work were more in number than the researcher could accommodate. Another problem faced was that some of the government offices failed to supply latest data on some vital issues.

In the next phase the data collected has been analysed and interpreted both qualitatively and quantitatively and as the data collected represented three different points of view on the problems, an objective assessment in the light of the researcher’s own disinterested logic and perception based on his personal survey of the whole phenomena is made. A comprehensive historical overview of the ELT practices – more particularly its pedagogic perspectives in Europe and America with special reference to India and Assam has been made so that the global and the national view may be brought in to bear upon the present study. Similarly care has also been taken to carry out a comprehensive review of related literature in order to build up the theoretical base for the study and the researcher’s visit to the K.K. Handique Library of Gauhati University; The Library of ELTI, Assam; The Library of Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), North East Campus, Shillong; Romesh Mohan Library of CIEFL, Hyderabad; The Library of Indo-American Centre For International Studies (Formerly American Studies Research Centre (ASRC) Hyderabad; The Library of Tezpur University; The Library of Omeo Kumar Das Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati; and the Library of North Eastern Regional Language Centre, Guwahati with their ample stock of resources has proved rewarding in this regard.
All the hypotheses of the study except for the hypothesis of low interest and motivation of students for learning English have been proved and hence accepted. The hypothesis about low interest and motivation of students in learning English could not be proved as data gathered in this respect proved that students' motivation and interest were rather very high and not low as hypothesized. This hypothesis thus stands rejected.

The study thus arrives at a number of significant findings and proves that a host of problems continue to plague the teaching of English in the vernacular medium (Assamese-medium) secondary schools in the district of Kamrup. A few significant features are also seen to have marked the findings such as – 1) The rural-urban variations with regard to most of the problems identified were found insignificant in sharp contrast to the usual popular notions as well as empirical proclamations about the presence of such variations. Similar is the case with male-female and SC/ST – General (Students) variations in the perception of the impact of the problems felt, while the gap between theory and practice in ELT in the schools of the district that stands focussedly revealed in the study appears to be at the top of the problems that have been marked out. The need of the hour is a prompt remedial action – a collective endeavour involving not only the planners but also the implementers – the real practitioners in the field plus all other stakeholders to put the programme of ELT on the rails and the recommendations made in the study, if implemented in right earnest, are sure to pay dividends in this regard.