Chapter 1

Background to the Study

1.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with a clear introduction to the background of the current study. It provides the details of geographical conditions of India. The chapter discusses the significance of English in India, innovations in ELT, the recent changes in English language and developments in English. In addition, it also discusses the need for the study and concludes with the research design of the study.

1.1 Glimpses into Geographical Conditions of India

India is a South Asian subcontinent. It is the seventh largest country in the world with an area of 3,28,263 square kilometers. It is surrounded by the Arabian Sea on the Southwest, Lakshadweep to the West and the Bay of Bengal on the South East. India has all cultures of all religions. The culture, food, architecture and other things depend on the specific culture within India.

It has diverse languages and many other distinctive features. It is a democratic country with a great constitution. Its geographical diversity is one of the interesting features of India. The beauty of the culture lies in its diversity.

1.2 Importance of English Language

India is experiencing the joy of learning and using English language for its well-being. It is not only the linking language but also a survival language. Technology plays a very important role in connecting people through English language. The roots of English language especially spread through technology and we owe to it a lot. It is a widely
accepted truth that English does occupies an importance place in the present day world
therefore, it is important to see whether students possess the ability to interact and
communicate in English. Tyagi (2015) highlights a present day challenge before the
teacher, to cater to the practical needs of the learners. It is a dire responsibility of a
teacher, to make learners practically interactive and develop good communicative skills.

1.3 English Language Teaching and India

As stated in the document, NCERT (2005) the classrooms in Indian setting are
often overcrowded and thronged with many students. There is hardly any space to move
between the seats in the classrooms. This is one predominant reason for the lack of
interest in students regarding their attendance in the school.

Many schools do not have playgrounds for the students to play for physical
exercise. The school setting often creates interest or boredom to students. The document
states that infrastructural facilities depend upon the school. Often private schools are
sufficiently well structured and accommodated for students’ well-being, whereas the
schools, funded by the government lack all these facilities. There is a huge difference in
the physical structure of the schools because of the economic system.

Initially, English was taught through the grammar translation method but in the
1950s there was a shift in language teaching methods. The syllabus was structurally
graded like Botany, Physical Science and other subjects (Prabhu 1987, p. 10). Later in
the 1970s, the behavioural, physiological aspects of language teaching had been
incorporated into language teaching giving rise to structural method of teaching. Further,
language teaching took many other shapes from structural language teaching to skill
focused teaching. The language spoken in a context was given importance. Therefore, the
importance gradually changed from grammatical competence to communicative competence. A new emphasis on communicative competence and communicative-based approaches give importance to meaning-based communicative contexts.

At present, teaching English has become a ritualistic job without any passion. Learners are made passive participants without much involvement in the classroom activities. It has become purely an exam-focused and qualification-acquired programme. English teaching has not been made contextual to be associated with real life communication Patil (2012). Though we are in the post-Indian independent era, we are still practicing and following the West in all aspects of life including education. The impact of colonialism on education is still fresh and is in a practical mode. The educational practice/programme with objectives and syllabus in Indian way, curriculum based on Indian culture and contexts has not been implemented widely in India. According to Patil (2012), teachers are teaching language but not teaching how to use the language Patil (2012). In the opinion of Shukla (as cited in Patil, 2012), teachers have to make students not afraid of using English, so that they can be free from the guilt of making errors.

1.4 Globalization and English Language

The impact of globalization on the post-colonial trends of teaching can be observed in language teaching. It is believed by Shukla (2012) English language teaching has become a business transaction with giving and teaching policy. In the present context, we see many English learning centres emerging for the candidates who want to learn the language to communicate well for their professional benefits. All these are originating as a result of globalization in the post-colonial era. In the present teaching scenario, there
have been many changes in language curriculum, teaching and methods. There used to be an English medium education at secondary school level in the past, but in the present times, one can notice a shift in the teaching policy. Sridevi (2017) draws attention to an explosion of globalization in the modern era, which paved the way for teaching English for specific purposes (ESP) and the students who are competent enough in spoken and written English are hired by many business companies. The government of India has introduced teaching of English at the primary level of school education; these students are enjoying a luxury of learning English at the initial levels of their education. The impact of globalization on the tools of teaching materials is visible in teaching-learning scenario. The innovations in the global world led to the innovations in teaching tools. The use of web tools in a language class is encouraging for the learners.

As said by Changkija (2017) English language not only enjoys its status by its significance but also influences and impacts other languages. The significance and contribution of English language is not only seen in one field but also in all other streams like Psychological, Political, Social, Science, Critical, and Literature and so on. According to Crystal (1998) English should claim global status as a global language. As pointed out by Graddol (2006) English language education is also about the concept of national identification and also comes under providing social and intellectual education to our off springs. English is not only a language of one nation but a global language.

Many changes have taken place in the recent times with regard to the assessment, and evaluation of students’ progress. A continuous evaluation of students’ progress is an example of this kind, where the assessment of students’ performance is checked and evaluated periodically by the teachers. This was not the situation in the past, as students’
progress was checked annually at the end of the academic year, but now, the trend has changed by the winds of changing teaching methodology.

The report of National Knowledge Commission (NKC, 2009) has given unsatisfactory feedback on teaching /learning of English that throw a bad light on the state of affairs. However, we can observe the changes in Teaching of English. The entire system of teaching English using only traditional materials (like black-board and a textbook), has undergone some changes. For instance, several materials are being widely used by the language teachers. A wide range of resources are brought into the class for a clearer view of understanding the concepts taught by the teacher. This includes the use of digital language labs with individual booths set for each student to check the phonological and grammatical accuracy. It is an ideal place for practicing one’s language after they learn from different conceptual inputs, given by the teacher in a language class.

1.5 A Quick History of English Language in India

English Language in India is no more the elite language but has become the layman’s language too. It is the ‘lingua franca’ of this era that is often used as a link language. It not only serves the purpose of communication across many countries and people in the world, but also helps in comprehending the diversity and variety of Indian culture and tradition. It exists for many other purposes. For instance, it not only brings ideas and innovations but also connects many people of different values, and lifestyles through a common platform. A vast gap between people of different status and gutters is vanishing, as English is within the common man’s reach now-a-days. During the pre-colonial period, English was only accessible to the higher society, but with a time gap, it is within the reach of all the people in the society. It has secured a prominent place in
India. It is chiefly spoken in all domains. Anyone who wishes to go abroad for any educational purposes must qualify in English. It has achieved the status of a global language. Every person can have access to information on another person’s life, culture, values, information and many other things though the universal language ‘English.’

It is worth discussing the history and development of English in India. In the 1830s people were sensitized to English language by East India Company (Vijayalakshmi & Babu, 2014). Many other social reformers encouraged English language for the better living of people and subsequently, Lord Macaulay proposed English as the medium of instruction replacing Sanskrit and Persian. All their efforts and encouragement paved the way for English to be an important language in India, which would benefit every Indian. Many books and literature produced by the Indian writers are in English, and a lot of information is conveyed through it.

Though Lord Macaulay’s intention was to change the mindset of people as somebody who could think like English people, he was able to create awareness that learning English would create better opportunities in life. In the same way, the British government wanted to employ an Indian in the administrative field who had an adequate knowledge of English. English education was sought by some people while majority of the Indians were handicapped without language education.

Things have changed since colonial period. After India won freedom, the government of India decided on a new policy English. It decided that Hindi would be an official language, and later all the states in India, urged for an official status to English. Many schools and educational institutions grew gradually and English started gaining its importance. Now it has become a main stream language. The standard of English rose to
higher levels with an increasing awareness of English language. India has been widely acclaimed in the international level also due to the knowledge and awareness in English language shown by Indians representing culture, status, knowledge and importance of India. With the emergence of many universities and colleges giving importance to English, many changes in the development of education, employment and also in economic levels have occurred.

The Central Institute of English was established in Hyderabad 1958, for an excellent training to the teaching of English worldwide. It trained several teachers in teaching English and drew the attention of passionate teachers. Regional institutes in Bangalore, and Mysore extended their services to trainers, and raised the standards of teaching English to higher levels.

English is widely accepted and developed in all walks of life. Many software companies are in need of people who can communicate fluently in English. Many centers for spoken English are being established in all the states in India. English is gaining its importance also in the social media as many television channels like NDTV and CNN. And many other popular channels are in a way, contributing to the wide spread importance of English. Undoubtedly, English has become an ‘associate official language in India.’

There are many reasons for learning and gaining mastery over English in the present scenario. In the opinion of Sharma (2011) English is one of the prominent and global languages and people can have access to rich literature, and knowledge of everything across the world.
1.6 Teaching English

Education Commission gave three-language formula for the development and introduction in English language in schools. The teaching of two languages must be compulsory: mother tongue and English. The first language of course should be mother tongue and the second language can be either Hindi or associate language English of the union. In 1968, The National Policy of Education proposed that State Government should see that the three-language formula is seriously followed.

The NCERT on National Curriculum Framework propagates that language is mainly responsible for learning of different things in life. It is a common bridge that builds up all different ideas, concepts and various things in life on a common platform. It gives access to all areas of life of different people in the world Anjaneyulu (2015).

As India is a multilingual country, many pluralistic views, ideologies and other world views exist, and language act as a common base through which all these are transmitted. It also promotes unity and diversity in India in a country where multilingual people exist. It also gives enough scope to development of all values and interests of people. Language also develops free and independent thinking of an individual and helps to grow beyond narrow thinking of the world concepts.

English as an associate official language has been given a role in educational sphere as per the recommendations and suggestion by several committees. The central board of education proposed three-language formula which was recognized and accepted in 1961, at the chief ministers’ conference. The report submitted by an education commission, suggested teaching of English after the end of primary level in the school. With that, English is also one of the major three compulsory languages to be introduced
after the completion of upper primary level but with several modifications and recommendations made in the policy, it has been decided that English should be taught at the primary level of education.

1.6.1 Recent Changes and Developments in English

There have been changes in English language and also teaching. Undoubtedly, English was brought into use by British after its rule in India. This is the best asset every Indian can secure for present and future generations. We cannot overlook the fact that English is enjoying a prestigious status than all other languages. As emphasized by Nagaraju, Madhavaiah and Peter (2013) we have to admit the fact that all divergent cultures, ideologies and multilingual people converge at a common place because of the English language. Everybody should avail the opportunity of learning English for one’s well-settlement and a prosperous life.

English has become an important aspiration of all educated people. They are striving and struggling to get through the phase of learning English as all other employment sectors are looking forward to recruit the people who speak good English. Usha and Bala (2012) provide information about compulsory and free education to children from 6-14yrs. Teaching English is also one of the objectives of this programme. In 2009, The National Knowledge Commission (NKC) recommended English to be taught from class 1, so that students would learn and use the language better. The Right to Education Act (as cited in NKC, 2009) provides a quality elementary education for the children who are disadvantaged on social, economical, physical, geographical and disabled grounds. The aim was to educate these children at least up to primary level. Currently, many states have introduced English at the primary level of education for the
students who are 5-6yrs of age. Such states which introduced English in class 1, are Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Kerala, Chhattisgarh and many other states. In Andhra Pradesh, after 2012, English was introduced in class I. In majority of states, English is the compulsory subject introduced from class 1 itself.

Many developmental programmes are being undertaken for teaching English. One such developmental project undertaken by the British Council in Andhra Pradesh, India is “Andhra Pradesh Quality English Language Teaching Initiative.” The main objective is to develop the quality of language teaching in 64 schools primary and secondary schools in Visakhapatnam and Andhra Pradesh. The project is undertaken especially for the children who are from different tribes. Those children could be taught by the teachers from the same background because they can understand students’ problems in a better way. So, the training for tribal teachers is given and the teachers, who are tribal, can understand the language problems of the tribal learners. To help the societies like those which are looked down upon and not taken care of, projects like these are mushrooming in all states.

“The language teaching world today experiences an array of different paradigm shifts” (Sudeepthi, 2015a, p. 101). The language teachers do not have to use same old methods to teach language. There are a number of innovations and developments taking place in ELT in India. Developments in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for teacher educators and teachers are in place. Many CPD programmes are being conducted in many parts of India to train and shape the teaching of English language. Social media and networking for CPD is another recent development in ELT in India. There are many online and face- to-face mentoring programmes for developing English language
teaching. There are many new language teaching concepts coming up in ELT which demand teachers’ attention. For instance, concepts like feedback as an effective tool for developing learning of students, classroom-based action research, many recent innovative practices in language assessment, evaluation and learner-centered methodologies, approaches to language teaching, task-based teaching, many humanistic approaches and other are being practiced in language teaching. Alongside those like e-learning, online teacher education, digital courses, in-service teacher training based on technology and many other teacher training programmes are being developed Tyagi (2015).

1.6.2 Issues to consider

As stated in the document of, Usha and Bala (2012) though there are several developments in English language, there are some states which oppose English to be taught as an important language as they feel that English might overpower the use of one’s mother tongue.

They want to practice only the mother tongue in schools. Though policy makers have proposed English in schools at early stages, they are not checking on whether English is being taught properly or not.

The logistics of the English teaching in schools are not checked. Another problem is the question of teacher training. Though the policy makers have laid out a rule that English is introduced in the primary education level, there is no proper training for teachers in schools for efficient teaching. Many teachers lack training in teaching English, and as a result students are affected badly without any proper learning.

Another problem that persists across all teaching-learning contexts where English is introduced is the lack of proper materials. There are no proper materials to be used by
the teachers of English. Teachers without materials are like driving a ship without proper directions. Teachers without any training, and also lack of proper materials are affecting the schools very badly and the current study reflects on the issues of teaching and learning problems in the regional medium schools in Andhra Pradesh.

Even the teaching and learning of English in the past to the present times has been undergoing many changes. The way English is being taught in the present times is different from the way it was in the past. A lot of changes can be observed in the teaching methodologies and approaches of English language. A detailed discussion on approaches and methods of teaching has been dealt with in chapter 2 titled ‘Review of Literature.’

Aims and objectives of language are continuously redefined and remodified in the present days by the changing winds and shifting sands of English language. It is not a static language instead many changes and innovations in teaching and learning of English are taking place in the present day modern era.

1.6.3 Innovations in ELT

From the twentieth century to the present day, there have been many innovations in language teaching set up. One such feature is the teaching of English on radios and television. They are the sources of common man’s access while the use of sophisticated mobile apps and tablets are affordable for others. One could realize, learning English has become a basic need of everyone who are in various professions. Many language courses are offered online for a certain period of time on payment basis. A variety of language courses are offered through various programmes. Further, to discuss various innovations and developments in English language program further, we can acknowledge the role of technology in creating various opportunities for learning English. There is an excessive
access to language learning through multimedia. Online dictionaries and other web tools for vocabulary development are easily available. Mobile assisted Language Learning (MALL) and Podcasting are the heights of language teaching innovations using modern technology. The use of tasks and activities by a language teacher is another source of language development. A new variety of materials in the form of tasks and activities add colour to the methods of teaching English. A shift from the use of black board to modern resources is a shift in the teaching materials. The use of mobile phones and computers for language learning is the latest tool used by the learners. A wide range of language usages are prevalent in social network everywhere. Many language classes are available online and people can have an easy access to these. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) can be best said to be the examples of modern web-based teaching and have been popular in many set ups. In addition, innovative methods and approaches of teaching English can be discussed in the following section.

Language teaching/learning through comics is another feature of language development. This technique has both elements like visual images and verbal chunks of language to make learning more interesting. There is a possibility for young learners’ minds to be captivated by the comic strips used by a language expert. In an attempt to teach some language chunks to the young minds, this technique would be very useful. “Comic books and graphic novels due to their multimodality and motivational benefits that they can bring great potential in the language classroom” ELT spectrum (Saurabh, 2016). The writer is of the opinion, that bringing comic books into the classroom brings learning benefits to students. As believed by Saurabh (2016) bringing comics is like a
good set of materials that would act as a scaffolding device for the students. This type of strategy for teaching English could attract the attention of the learners for better learning. Another positive feature of this technique would be to bring a change in the language teaching scenario. However, this type of strategy would be adopted by the teachers who are in favour of using innovative materials in a language class. Majority of the teachers may not embrace this way of using materials, but the innovative teachers who would like to experiment and try different strategies would use this strategy.

These are some reflections on innovations and developments in English language teaching program. Though there have been many innovations in language teaching scenario, the English language teaching in schools is not very updated and modernized in Andhra Pradesh. The current study focused on the problems especially in language teaching scenario and tried to provide some suggestions to the language teachers. Before focusing on the teaching scenario in Andhra Pradesh, it is important to understand its geographical location, social and economic aspects of Andhra Pradesh.

1.7 Geographical Location of Andhra Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh is geographically located and surrounded by Chattisgarh and Orissa in the North, Tamil Nadu in the South, Bay of Bengal in the East and Karnataka in the West. It has the second largest coastline in Vishakhapatnam. The important rivers in Andhra Pradesh are Krishna and Godavari.

1.7.1 Overview of Andhra Pradesh

Overall development includes multidimensional concept which includes the growth of all sectors; economic, educational, communicational and many other aspects. Though Andhra Pradesh has many schools and colleges for encouraging quality
education, it is not short of gaps in some regional places where students receive poor education while many elite sections receive quality education.

The official language of Andhra Pradesh is Telugu. Telugu is spoken in all sectors. The influence of mother tongue on other language is so strong that they speak English like Telugu. To minimize the effect of mother tongue would be a challenging task but it is not impossible.

Andhra Pradesh has nearly 70.4% of rural population, 29.6% of urban population and the literacy rate is 67.41%. It has many religions and regions with pluralistic ideologies and views.

1.7.2 The Effect of socio-economic Factors on Education

It is an undeniable fact that students in regional medium schools are the products of socio-economic levels. Many students who are from upper strata of society achieve good results and receive quality education than the students from low-class society (Nimmala et. al, 2016). They cannot afford to educate their children in better schools where education is properly given. It is observed that, many students discontinue their education after class X and the reason they give is that, their parents want them to get married after class X as their financial condition is very poor. So, the economic conditions of these people are indirectly affecting the education of students. Many students do not have proper awareness of education and its benefits in the future, as their parents do not encourage them to get educated. Many students reported in the present study had said that parents discourage them to continue their studies further, as they do not realize the value of education. But, it is very surprising to hear from them that their parents do encourage them to learn English well. A recent research study reports, that
teaching English to rural students is a herculean task as most of them hail from rural background Nimmala et. al.(2016). Yes, it is a disappointing fact that teaching English to regional medium learners is a challenging task because students’ reception of language would be very slow and gradual. Teachers with great passion and patience should take up this challenge and only these teachers could do some justice to their profession. Teaching students who are well receptive and quick learners is very encouraging and motivating but teaching the learners of this type needs a lot of patience, passion and also effort. The consequences of passive teaching would lead to disappointing repercussions in the later stages of learning and teaching. A reference to the passive teaching and its drawbacks is vividly discussed in the later sections of the chapter.

1.7.3 Teaching of English in Andhra Pradesh

Humans are the most intelligent species and that we can communicate our thoughts which animals cannot do. A child automatically learns his/her mother tongue by hearing from its relatives, friends and family but when it comes to speaking in another language ‘English’ she/he automatically hesitates in the beginning and slowly get accustomed to listening and speaking. It is not unusual to be confused when learning a second language as it is certainly not one’s mother tongue. Sometimes, a child gets perplexed imagining the complexity and magnitude of a second language. In such cases, a teacher should motivate learners instilling confidence and hope that it is not impossible to learn. Regional medium learners especially feel overwhelmed when learning a second language as they do not have access to a variety of resources to learn English like urban children do.
Teaching English in the government or regional medium schools is essential in Andhra Pradesh as majority of the population consists of rural people and many illiterates are from rural background. Teaching English becomes very difficult in India especially in rural settings. Similarly, teaching English require excessive effort and commitment on the part of teachers. Teachers not only need passion and dedication to teach but also proper infrastructure and suitable materials. There is a lot of development and innovation happening in the 21st century but availing all these resources depends upon the teacher. There are many innovative methods and approaches emerging in the present teaching context. A teacher should make effective use of all these resources in the classroom for the effective learning of language. It would be biased to say that teachers need only knowledge and communicative skills. A teacher along with knowledge and skills also needs passion and attitude toward successful teaching. The current study observes passive attitude of teachers and the negative effects of it. The current research study recommends for a passionate attitude and efficiency in the teaching of the subject for regional medium learners.

The major languages spoken in Andhra Pradesh are Telugu and Urdu. The official language is Telugu, and it is widely spoken in all contexts including learning-teaching contexts in Andhra Pradesh. It has been observed in several occasions reported in the current study that teachers were using mother tongue throughout teaching without using English. In Andhra Pradesh, especially in all regional medium schools, the use of mother tongue would be more than the use of English in English classes. Students would not get any opportunity to learn English, if English teachers themselves are not speaking English. The effective teaching mainly depends upon teacher’s ability to make use of all
teaching approaches and suitable aids in the language class. A teacher has many responsible roles to play. A balanced role of teacher would yield better results in the classroom context. A teacher has to set goals and aim at reaching those goals, and also should check whether the students in the class are able to follow and learn language from her/his teaching. A teacher has to strike a balance between both reaching the goals and understanding the pulse of the students whether they are following the teaching or not. It would be good if the teacher has clear objectives for teaching every concept. A strategic lesson plan is needed for every lesson, so that the there would be a clear direction to go about in teaching. Unlike the subject classes like Science and Social studies, English needs much more assessment and evaluation in all areas like grammar, punctuation, communicative functions. Studies on teaching in AP, report that there are various factors affecting second language learning: cultural, social, economical, psychological and also political aspects Nimmala (2016). There are various reasons impeding the effective teaching. The reasons found out in a study are as follows Nimmala et. al. (2016).

- No self-motivation for teachers who teach English
- No proper teaching strategies
- Time constraints due to which the teachers rush to finish the syllabus without proper teaching
- Teachers do not follow ESL activities prescribed by the curriculum experts as there are no proper infrastructure and tools to make use of them
- Lack of teachers’ competence in teaching language
- Students’ reluctance to get rid of the use of mother tongue and inability to use target language due to powerful influence of the mother tongue
- No proper interaction among learners itself. No proper space for practicing target language.

These factors are responsible for defective teaching in all contexts and especially true in regional medium contexts. These are stumbling blocks for effective teaching. The current study reports the same problems observed in the regional medium language setting.

There are many problems observed in Non-English Medium students. Mainly, students will not be able to understand anything taught in the lectures because of the inability to comprehend things. Many researchers who observed the performance of regional medium learners observed the same condition (Nagaraju, Madhavaiah and Peter, 2013). These learners carry inferiority complex and show lack of inquisitiveness. It is a very pathetic condition to see students like this. They will be very passive and silent in the class in comparison to English medium students, but in reality they are not very passive. They are born with good intelligence but always feel very inferior to English medium students. They lack proper motivation and confidence. They achieve good scores in all other subjects except English.

1.7.4 Schooling in Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, the schooling is categorized in the following ways: classes 1 to V class is primary schooling, V to VIII upper primary and classes VIII to X are high school secondary. English was not introduced in the primary schooling till 2013 but this is successful only in a few government schools. Still some government schools have not introduced English in class 1 and it remains at a proposal level. The government of Andhra Pradesh runs parallel medium teaching in government schools offering both
English medium and also Telugu medium education in the same school. A school which has both Telugu and also English medium education is called a ‘success school’ and a school which does not run parallel schools but only Telugu medium school is said to be a ‘non-success’ school. So, in Andhra Pradesh both success and non-success schools exist. Both English medium and Non-English medium have the same English text book. Due to this, students of English Medium schools find it to be lower than their level of proficiency and the level of language pitched in the text book is below the standard of English medium students.

1.7.5 Teaching in Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, teachers are recruited in the schools directly after their District Selection Committee exam (DSC). Teachers who qualify DSC exam will have to take Teacher Eligibility Test (TET), and if they qualify they will be recruited as School Assistants (English Teachers). Teacher’s educational qualification will be either Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Master of Arts (MA). Majority of the teachers are educated in the regional medium schools and they are not sure of English grammar not only to speak and write but also to teach learners. Now we can understand the pathetic plight of the learners in the hands of these teachers. Very few of them manage to specialize in English.

1.7.6 Lack of Teacher-training in Andhra Pradesh

English Teachers in government schools are not given any special training in language teaching but the only language teaching exposure they would have is their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed). This is a degree which all teachers pursue before they enter the teaching field. As part of B.Ed course, all teachers should go for practice teaching and they are also taught some teaching strategies. Teachers who teach in the
government schools do not get any teacher training during their career like in-service training. They receive only induction training for 1 year after their recruitment. The government of Andhra Pradesh gives only induction training for teachers. And teachers are not given any in-service or pre-service training to improve their proficiency for their professional development. Some years ago, the government of India offered orientation programme for English teachers of Government schools. It was an orientation of all methods and teaching strategies. It was funded by the central government of India and the English and Foreign Language University (EFLU), formerly CIEFL used to organize this program for giving professional and proficiency development training in the name of orientation program, but sadly the program has been cancelled and teachers no more receive any training program.

There is no scope for learning and it leads to no scope for proper teaching in the regional medium schools. Majority of the teachers lack training in teaching. Some teachers want to update themselves with innovative and modern teaching techniques but they do not have any exposure to all these modern methods and approaches. When teachers themselves do not have any proper exposure to language teaching, it becomes difficult for them to give their students proper exposure in the language.

1.7.7 Lack of Training in Material Development

Material development is very crucial in teaching-learning context, and is very important for teaching a second language. Teachers in addition to using textbooks should be able to design and produce materials according to the needs of the learners. These will be supplementary materials to textbook. A good teacher always creates materials for his/her learners depending on the gaps in learning. Training in material development
helps the language teacher to design sufficient resources on his/her own in the language classroom. Training in Materials development is a part of teacher-training program. Assisting the teacher to transfer his/her ability or knowledge to specific classroom realities would make a teacher efficient and resourceful Tomlinson (2003). Developing teacher’s ability by providing efficient training in materials development would resolve many teaching-learning problems in the L2 classroom. In AP, there is no training for materials development in secondary and primary education schools.

1.7.8 Persisting Problems in the Teaching Context of Andhra Pradesh

Teachers also have many problems in language teaching as they have many doubts in teaching grammar and other language areas. Teachers lack sufficient training for teaching communicative grammar. Though they are interested in teaching grammar through communicative mode they lack inputs for teaching this. As a result, they are unable to teach communicative functions and grammar which are useful for real-world purposes. As reported by Anjaneyulu (2015) many studies have been conducted on the teaching and learning of regional medium learners. They report that learners do not have proper facilities like classroom arrangements, seats and tables, proper ventilation, fans and etc. They get exhausted physically due to lack of ventilation in the classroom. Teachers should see that learners are comfortable in all these areas (Ramakrishna, 2017). Another study conducted on learners in Mahaboobnagar, Telangana reports that learners of this context have many problems in learning English. They are also affected by the scarcity of water facilities. Many teachers complain that they do not have teaching aids and proper materials for teaching English. In addition, they also do not have a library for
developing their reading skills and updating themselves with current affairs Anjaneyulu (2015).

The Government of Andhra Pradesh newly introduced digital language classrooms for the name sake but in reality, they are of no use for learners. Teachers do not have enough knowledge of handling the digital classrooms. A very few competent teachers operate the digital classroom. Teachers need some training for using the digital classrooms. This was the information collected by the researcher during the period of data collection. All these challenges and issues created the need for the current research study.

1.8 The Need for the Study

The present study ‘Developing Essay Writing Skills of ESL Learners Using Task Based Language Teaching Approach in AP’ was conducted after observations by the researcher over a long period of time, witnessing many problems in the regional medium context. Several problems are mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter. Those issues paved the way for this study. Primarily, teachers’ passive attitude toward teaching, learners’ inefficiency due to poor teaching and students’ inability to speak and write in proper English created the gap in teaching and learning trend in Andhra Pradesh. Students’ interest in learning English contradicts with their poor performance in writing. In the present days, many private schools are mushrooming and many parents desire to enroll their children in private schools rather than government schools. Parents who are economically backward and cannot afford to pay school fees in the English medium schools would join their children in the regional medium schools. Affluent families would not even dream to educate their children in the government schools. As such,
many corporate schools are established with all the facilities for children. The families who do not want to send their children to schools for education are somehow convinced at least to send them to these government schools otherwise they would want their children to remain at homes and work along with them in the fields. Such families send their children to the government schools.

In government schools, the learners are taught grammar in a traditional way. They do not use modern strategies of teaching grammar in a communicative way. The learners are not tested through continuous assessments but summative assessments. The negative wash back effect on this type of assessment, results in a partial testing of students’ performance. Students are not tested continually but only at the end of the year. By summative assessment, the overall results of students do not reflect students’ actual performance but their rote learning is clearly reflected in this exam. Students try to memorize the content by a rote learning method and appear at the final exam for passing the examination. If they pass this annual exam, then they would be promoted to another level. Therefore, getting through this annual examination is important for students so, they try to memorize the content for examination purpose. To sum up the entire discussion on assessment, it would be better if there is continuous assessment of students’ progress in all areas like speaking, writing, pronunciation and other communicative functions.

Very less research has been done on the learners’ initiative in the classroom Ellis (2013). The researcher wanted to make learners the centre of the classroom scenario and see how learning takes place. The real situation that persists in regional medium schools is that students are not exposed to any particular skill properly. Many opine that speaking
and writing skills are emphasized and reading and listening skills are marginalized but in reality, students are neither good in speaking and writing nor listening and reading. They are very poor in their performance with regard to listening, speaking, reading and writing. TBLT is a suitable approach in this type of context. The main reason for using TBLT is that students from regional medium context are less motivated and not serious in learning a second language but when they are made to engage in tasks which appear to be near to the real life situations, they find it curious and interesting. According to a study, conducted in the regional medium context, on developing sub skills of interactional competence, it was found that TBLT approach was much useful and had a positive effect on learning of the regional medium learners Sudeepthi (2017). The study shows that the role played by tasks in developing interactional competence was effective and the regional medium learners of that context were motivated and interested in learning language through tasks. A similar attempt was made in the present research study for developing writing skills of ESL learners.

In conclusion, by looking at all the evidences in various studies on using TBLT in regional medium context, the present study was designed by the researcher. Considering students’ basic problems in all LSRW skills and passive attitude of teachers toward teaching in government schools created the necessity for conducting this research study.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The researcher had conducted pre-tests in the study and arrived at a conclusion that students found it difficult to write essays. So, based on their performance in pre-tests, the researcher wanted to use tasks for engaging them in writing and thinking in English. The attempt was to develop their writing skill especially in narrative and descriptive essay
writing. So based on these reasons, the researcher formulated some key assumptions and proceeded to probe into the learning situation of the regional medium learners by intervention study using a task-based cycle. The following are the assumptions of the research study:

- The learners can be taught how to write narrative and descriptive essay writing by tasks and a task cycle.
- All the students can learn better if they coordinate and cooperate with fellow students for accomplishing the given task.
- The learners can increase their use of content words in the essay with the help of tasks and also going through the task-cycle.
- The learners can also increase their use of function words in the essay with the help of tasks and the task-cycle.
- The target learners can also increase the use of using linkers in their essays after learning from the intervention study.
- The learners’ interest can be developed if they are engaged in the tasks.

1.10 Hypothesis

A good hypothesis guides the study in a proper direction. It is one of the integral aspects of the study as the researcher sees the solution to a problem at a distance and tries to formulate its assumptions based on need of the study. It is an attempt by the researcher to give a solution depending on the problem. “A hypothesis is a tentative supposition…. Observation,” Sidhu (1984: p. 61). He says a hypothesis is a temporary assumption which tries to explain the problem in the light of further investigation. Though hypothesis has a very small place in the research design, without it the researcher cannot proceed to
further investigation. A thesis without hypothesis leads to aimless investigation of the research study. It provides a certain direction to handle the problem that persists and provide a possible solution to it. It shows some light in the darkness of research. It provides a goal and guides to reach its destination. It provides clear and focused direction to research. The importance of hypothesis cannot be underestimated in any way as it is like a light house of the research.

After diagnosing the learners’ problems in the pre-tests, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis for the present study. The practice of Task-based language teaching approach would improve the essay writing of regional medium learners.

1.11 Objectives of the study

The following are the objectives of the research study:

- To develop writing skills of ESL learners through TBLT approach.
- To observe and study the effective role of TBLT in improving the writing of ESL learners.
- To improve the performance in essay writing of the regional medium learners though TBLT approach.
- To teach content, function words and linkers, necessary for essay writing.
- To teach narrative and descriptive essays with the help of all these content, function words and linkers.
- To develop an essay format with the help of TBLT approach.

1.12 Research Question

A research question was formulated for the present study and the intervention study was designed accordingly.
1) Does the task-cycle have any impact on students’ essay writing? How does it impact the essay writing of ESL learners?

The research study has one research question and in the later part of study, a detailed description of the impact created by the task-cycle would be discussed. This study aims to check the impact of the task-cycle and tasks on the learning of students and also to find out the effect of the task-cycle on essay writing of students. The study discusses to what extent the task-cycle has an effect on essay writing of the learners.

1.13 Rationale for Using Task Based Language Teaching Approach

TBLT approach encourages learner initiative and engagement of the mind in tasks. When learners are engaged in accomplishing a task, they would focus more on the task and concentrate on the work they are doing. TBLT provides such scope for the learners to take initiatives for learning the language that will result in positive learning. The main reason behind choosing the TBLT approach is tasks that comprises of real world communication Richards and Rodgers (2001). TBLT is concerned more about the meaningful communication. It focuses more on the process than the product and learners can acquire language in a proper context Shehadeh (2005).

TBLT does not impose grammatical rules on learners but gives enough scope to learn in a communicative context. Approach like this would help learners to understand language usage in a better context. TBLT not only achieves successful learning but also promotes collaboration and coordination among the learners. Language can be better learnt if learners have support from each other so that they take interest in their task and work collectively.
Learners in general are worried and afraid of making mistakes. They develop very negative attitude towards learning and using of grammar. In TBLT, learners need not learn grammar consciously drawing rules before they actually perform the tasks. So, it provides a tension-free environment where learners’ errors are drawn into focus either by implicit or explicit feedback given by the teacher. The grammar points are taught in a meaningful context. Based on the above mentioned reasons, the researcher chose to take up TBLT approach for developing writing skills of regional medium learners through TBLT approach.

1.14 The Significance of the Study

The current study will contribute to the stream of second language acquisition and would give a new input in ESL studies and language acquisition through TBLT approach in regional medium schools. This would be a rare and useful contribution to the field of English language studies. This is a very rare study in the field of ESL studies in the context of regional medium. This research study on regional medium learners using TBLT approach will be a contribution to ESL studies especially for the learners for whom English is a foreign language. Further, the study also provides recommendations to English teachers in regional medium schools, policy makers and also material developers. Specifically, the study makes appeal to all the teachers in regional medium schools to make use of the TBLT approach in the language classroom.

1.15 The Research Design of the Study

The researcher designed an experimental study to see the impact of TBLT approach on essay writing of ESL learners. The present study was designed to conduct in two regional medium schools for improving essay writing skills of regional medium learners.
A pre-test was conducted prior to the intervention study. The researcher came to notice the problems of the learners in the pre-test and planned the procedure for the research study. The researcher designed tasks and planned an intervention study for developing essay writing skills of the learners. Before conducting the intervention study, the researcher planned to test the present day capacity and performance of learners. The schedule for the intervention study was planned and implemented according to it. After the intervention study, the questionnaire was also designed to be administered to the learners. A plan for an informal interview with learners was also scheduled and semi-structured interview questions were also prepared.

After the completion of the intervention study, the researcher attempted to analyze the scripts and compare and contrast pre-test results and post-test results of the learners. Interpretation of the results and drawing conclusions of the findings of the study were carefully planned by the researcher.

1.16 Conclusion

The present chapter has discussed geographical conditions of India at its beginning, and continued with English language teaching in India, globalization and English language, a brief history of English language in India, teaching of English, recent changes and developments in English, language assessment and evaluation and drawbacks of present evaluation system. In addition, the chapter also described the geographical location of Andhra Pradesh, the effect of socio-economic factors on Education, teaching of English in Andhra Pradesh. Further, the needs for the research study, assumptions, hypothesis, research objectives, and research questions have also been discussed.