CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER -I

INTRODUCTION

Language is an indispensable vehicle of all human knowledge. All human cooperation is based on the sound foundation of language. The great civilizations of the world have prospered by making language their chief tool of communication. The greatest gifts of science and technology enjoyed by us today have reached us by using this wonderful gift of God. People living in different geographical areas spread all over the world speak a large variety of languages. In this multicolored spectrum, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, English, French, Hindi, Arabic, Bengali, Russian, Punjabi and Japanese have emerged as top ten most spoken languages the world over. Out of these famous few, Standard English is often referred to as a ‘World Language’ because of its unique status. Several factors have contributed to this unique status of the English language.

Before discussing the ‘global’ status of English, it is essential to examine the history of its origin, the journey of its worldwide spread, and its arrival and spread in India- as this will help in understanding this phenomena in relation to the underlying historical circumstances which pushed it to this position of global eminence.

1.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Language evolves over a period of time. There are at present 7,105 living languages of the world (Ethnologue 2013, 17th Edition), each with its own history of origin, and English language is no exception. The history of this ‘global’ language can be divided into three periods namely Old English which dates back from earliest times to 1150; Middle English (1150-1500) and; Modern English (1500 to present). The English language owes its origin to three Germanic tribes- Angles, Saxons and Jutes who arrived in Britain about the middle of 5th century and soon settled in different parts of Britain (Baugh & Cable. 1993; Blake, 1996). It seems that their new Germanic tongue possibly displaced the indigenous Brythonic languages and Latin in most of the areas of Great Britain while the original Celtic languages sustained in parts of Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, although with some early language mixing with the new Germanic language. The word ‘English’ has evolved from the Angles
who came from the ‘angle’ or corner of land in present day Schleswig-Holstein. In the next several centuries, four distinct dialects of English emerged namely Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon and Kentish. Later invasion by the Vikings supplemented by the arrival of Christian missionaries from Ireland, the Norman Conquest and the Renaissance lend to the language influence of Scandinavian (Old Norse), Latin, French, Greek and other languages over the Anglo-Saxon Base, the chief among them being the Latin and French influences. But despite the great flood of words into English from these languages, the heart of the language remained Old English of Anglo-Saxon times. Over the period of time, this ‘living’ language has undergone considerable changes in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and pronunciation along with of course a wealth of contributions from other sources such as developments in the field of science and technology, new literature, genres of entertainment and theories in economics and management to name a few.

1.2 REASONS FOR EMERGENCE OF ENGLISH AS A WORLD LANGUAGE

The journey of the success of English language in the international sphere is attributed to certain favourable circumstances which facilitated its international spread and further growth in stature. In fact, a combination of political, economic and scientific reasons worked in its favour. Eminent British linguist David Crystal (2003) has given a vivid description of the circumstances which were instrumental in elevating the status of English to that of a global language. The growing imperialist power of British empire around the globe in the 19th century owing to its powerful strategies along with the spread of British people to different parts of the world facilitated the worldwide spread of English, which was augmented by the emergence of American world influence in the 20th century, rapid technological and scientific power of the industrial revolution and the economic power of the 19th century amidst which English was the prime source of communication. The emergence of Britain as world’s leading industrial and trading country on account of the advent of new communication technologies in the form of telegraph, telephone and radio which urged the creation of massive multinational organizations; unprecedented growth of international marketing and advertising; boom in entertainment media in the form of
movies and music and; the resultant drive to make progress in science and technology fostering the need of research and further education among other nations of the world supported the expansion of English. In the twentieth century, this was further propelled by the formation of international organizations such as the United Nations, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency which fostered the need of a lingua franca for mutual communication among the participant countries on matters of common interest. In this manner, the language travelled to different parts of the world and people adopted it- although in this process they adapted it to immediately suit to their cultural and linguistic circumstances thereby creating striking variations in English in the form of American English, British English, Australian English, Indian English, South African English, Ghanan English, Singaporean English and in recent times- Danish English, Dutch English, French English, German English so on and so forth. This process has created a repository of ‘World Englishes’. The world users made their own incorporations in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary of this language. Indian English, for instance, has thousands of words, thousands of pronunciation variations and dozens of grammatical constructions local to India. Besides these variations at the international level, even at the local level, in parallel to Standard English, there are several other local dialects operational at national level as well several parallel regional dialects. With all its variations, English has acquired a pre- eminent place as a ‘global language’ in contemporary times. There are certain significant factors which justify its ‘global’ status.

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

In India, English was introduced with the arrival of East India Company who initially used the language for trade and commerce activities in the country and later, with the spread of British Empire; it came to play a significant role in the political and educational life of the country. Lord Macaulay intended to promote European literature and science in India. He made this obvious in his famous Minute in which he desired to produce, “a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in tastes, in opinion, in morals, and in intellect.” Thus, English was introduced as a medium of instruction at school and college level supplemented by its usage as a lingua franca of the literate. After attaining independence in 1947, a series of
deliberations by educationists and political leaders both in favour and against the retention of English finally led to its retention as an ‘Associate Official Language’ of the country for another 15 years by the Indian Constitution framed in 1950. Subsequent efforts to replace English with Hindi- the ‘National Language’ of the country were foiled by people in the South. Thus from 1963 onwards, English was declared as the ‘Associate Official Language’ of the country for an indefinite period. Since that period, the language has played a significant role in the political, social and educational life of the nation. Though this acquisition process, as stated above, has been simultaneously paralleled by certain changes in vocabulary, pronunciation and grammatical constructions by different groups of users thereby giving rise to an ‘Indian’ variety of English, but for formal use and teaching purposes, certainly the ‘Standard English’ version is used. Today English is visualized as the greatest force behind Indian renaissance, an agent of progress and an effective source of career advancement and better prospects in all walks of life.

1.4 ENGLISH AS A ‘GLOBAL’ LANGUAGE

The present status of English as a ‘global’ language can be attributed to the following facts:

1.4.1 English is lingua franca of various nations

Originating chiefly in the western part of world, in contemporary times, science and technology has spread its wings of progress everywhere, which has in turn, lead to a phenomenal expansion of international trade and industry. International frontiers have come closer together and the nations of the world are sharing the same platform. In this scenario, English has emerged as the sole medium of international communication. A number of facts support this pre- eminent position of English. English is spoken by people throughout the world as their first language, second language and foreign language. Today, there are more non-native than native users of English, and English has become the linguistic key used for opening borders: it is a global medium with local identities and messages (Kachru, 1996). It would not be an understatement to call English as a Global language. Kachru (1997) states the increase in the use of English in Asia as "overwhelming": at present, the estimated population using English in Asia adds up to 350 million. India is the third largest English-using
population in the world, after the USA and the UK. As per the figures of 2001 Census on Bilingualism and Trilingualism, out of the total Indian population of about 1,028,737,436 people, there were 125,344,736 English language speakers constituting 12% of this total population. Out of these, 226,449 people were identified as first language speakers, second language speakers constituted 86,125,221 people, while 38,993,066 speakers used it as the third language. The figures revealed that more Indians speak English than any other language, with the sole exception of Hindi. Moreover, English speakers in India outnumber those in all of Western Europe, not counting the United Kingdom. Recently, SIL Ethnologue (2013, 17th Edition) estimated that between 2003 to 2011, with 335 million native speakers, the total number of English language speakers worldwide exceeded 765 million. Internet- the fastest means of electronic communication has emerged as a strong/powerful vehicle of knowledge sharing all over the globe. The Internet Statistics on `internetworldstats’ (June, 2004) reveal that English is the top most language used on internet with 293 million internet users. English has official or special status in at least seventy five countries with a total population of over two billion. It is the most widely taught foreign language in more than 100 countries, including China, Russia, Germany, Spain, Egypt, Brazil, and Indonesia.

Even in international forums, the language is playing a vital role. It is one of the official languages of United Nations and plays an official or working role in the proceedings of most other major international political organizations including the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Commonwealth, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Besides, it is the only ‘official’ language of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and the only ‘working’ language of the European Free Trade Association. Crystal (2003) cited that the overwhelming use of English is revealed by the striking figures put forth by the Union of International Associations (1996) which showed that there were about 12,500 international organizations present in the world in 1995–6 and out of these, about a third had listed the languages that they used in an official or working capacity. A sample of 500 taken out of this group showed that 85 per cent (424) made official use of English which was certainly far more than any other language. More
significantly, 169 organizations constituting a third of this sample used only English to carry on their affairs. In Asia and the Pacific, about 90 per cent of international bodies carry on their proceedings entirely in English. Furthermore, many scientific organizations, several sporting organizations and many organizations from several other domains conduct their proceedings only in English. In addition, several bodies use English in more than one way—official language as well as working language.

Besides, English has penetrated other aspects of modern world by becoming the language of Airline communication, politics, business meetings, academic conferences and seminars, tourism, entertainment, mass media, international conventions, community rallies, sporting occasions, military occupations, other official gatherings, and signboards. English is also recognized in the over-all language policy of the nation.

“One of the most significant educational trends world-wide is the teaching of a growing number of courses in universities through the medium of English. The need to teach some subjects in English, rather than the national language, is well understood: in the sciences, for example, up-to-date text books and research articles are obtainable much more easily in one of the world languages and most readily of all in English.” (Graddol 1997: 45)

A similar scenario prevails in India too as a significant proportion of courses in Universities including especially those in the disciplines of sciences, engineering and management are taught through English medium. A high level of proficiency in English acts as a passport to enter the most prestigious professions including the civil services, medicine, engineering and management as the competitive examinations like IAS, PCS and other entrance examinations are organized through English medium tests. Realizing the increasing usefulness of English in seizing better opportunities in higher education and employment along with its possession being increasingly recognized as a symbol of high social status; parents usually encourage their children to learn English language.

1.4.2 English is a vital channel to reach the world

Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru rightly observed that “The language link is a greater link between us and English speaking people than any political link or commonwealth
link or anything else.” With the advent of modern means of communication and travel, the whole world has turned into a ‘Global village’. This, in turn has created dire necessity of information sharing between various nations on vital issues of political, academic, scientific, business and cultural interest. India can voice its opinion and gain a worldview of vital issues of immediate international concern by actively participating in international bodies including the United Nations, UNESCO, Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Commonwealth, World Economic Forum, SAARC, International Trade Fairs and many more such organizations. Furthermore, a good command over English helps people in establishing effective trade links with their counterparts from other countries as this language is most commonly understood everywhere.

The expertise of India in world trade market is acknowledged due to the links created by this language. For instance, India has emerged as one of the leading exporting countries solely due to the ability of its traders and manufacturers to use English effectively for establishing trade links with the world. Moreover, many entrepreneurs have excelled highly in their ventures by utilizing this language to book orders from foreign firms. Another account of this ‘success story’ is written by the call centres that use English to communicate with firms abroad, and are the source of employment for many promising youngsters.

In recent times, globalization has opened up an array of employment and academic opportunities for young generation in various corners of the world. Developed countries like USA, Canada, Australia and UK have opened up programmes to welcome skilled professionals and students; and a sound knowledge of English has facilitated physical mobility to these countries. People desirous of immigration or pursuance of their academic interests abroad can turn their dreams into reality by displaying a reasonable level of proficiency in English through the standardized tests like IELTS and TOEFL. The English language deserves gratitude from Indian graduates passing out of the prestigious IITs and IIMs who have managed to compete in the global employment market to find suitable placements as well as prove their excellence. However, another side of the coin is that this age of rapid material progress needs to be accompanied by the treasure of spirituality. India has a
rich repository of spiritual and cultural heritage which can be shared and spread throughout the world for the benefit of mankind through this global language.

Not only in the international sphere, at the national level too, the English language proved itself as a vital binding force. Owing to the multilingual nature of our nation, English is playing a vital role as link language for healthy social give and take among the various social groups in our country. While envisioning/foreseeing the role that English language could play among the many languages of India, in 1872 William White commented:

“As we link Calcutta with Bombay, and Bombay with Madras, and by roads, railways, and telegraphs interlace province with province, we may in process of time fuse India into unity, and the use and prevalence of our language may be the register of the progress of that unity.”

The following facts justify this ‘unifying’ role: As per the figures of Indian Census of 1961, there are 1,652 different languages in India (including languages not native to the subcontinent). The 1991 Census recognizes 1,576 classified "mother tongues". Further, the People of India (POI) project of Anthropological Survey of India reported 325 languages which are used for in-group communication by the Indian communities, while SIL Ethnologue lists 415 living "Languages of India." It is quite evident that there is a great deal of linguistic diversity in our own nation, which adds to its cultural beauty. But it is equally true that amidst such a plethora of regional languages across the length and breadth of India, it would be quite impossible to make one intelligible to the speaker of a different mother tongue living in another part of the country. Here, English language works as a panacea. It acts as the binding force between a Punjabi and a Bengali, a Marathi and a Tamil, and these groups of people can be at ease with each other- communicating their thoughts, their needs, and their aspirations, all without much effort. Here, it is noteworthy to mention that although Hindi is the National language and is mutually intelligible to people in the North, it is abhorred by people in the South and thus cannot be used effectively for inter-regional communication.
Likewise the international sphere, interstate trade links can be established by salesmen, businessmen and representatives of various industrial units for achieving practical gains. There are 29 states and 7 union territories in India. Since English is used for inter-state communication, it can be used for mutual benefit of the State Governments as their officials can sign agreements on joint enterprise in English. This mutual dependence is highly required at Center- State level too as various policy measures need to be adopted by the centre from time to time to ensure smooth and efficient functioning of administration. In this situation, English facilitates smooth flow of communication between the Centre and the State governments. Since English is the common medium of instruction in almost all states in India, it enables the students to migrate from one state to another easily without any hindrance to their academic growth. Thus in various forms, English serves as a vital link language both at the national and the international level.

1.4.3 English keeps us aware of the current world scenario

English language keeps us abreast of the current world scenario in all walks of life. The University Education Commission (1948) observed,

“It (English) is a language which is rich in literature-humanistic, scientific and technical. If under segmental urges we should give up English we could cut ourselves from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge. Unable to have access to this knowledge our standards of scholarships would fast deteriorate and our participation in the world movements would become negligible. Its effects would be disastrous to our political life, for living nations must move with the times and must respond quickly to the challenges of their surroundings. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of the dark curtain of ignorance.”

This observation by the Commission holds much value as worldwide advancements taking place in the field of science, technology, machine or any other human activity are all recorded in English language.

Crystal (2003) observed that English language had been an important medium of the press for nearly 400 years. Citing the data compiled by the Encyclopaedia
In 2002, he revealed that about 57 per cent of the world’s newspapers were being published in those countries where English language had special status, and reasonably, majority of these were in English. Further, he told that the estimates about the influence of individual newspapers on a world scale indicated that the top five papers were all in English: top being *The New York Times*, followed by *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and the two British papers *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Of particular importance were those English-language newspapers intended for a global readership, such as the *International Herald-Tribune*, *US Weekly* and *International Guardian*. Besides, about a quarter of the world’s periodicals including literary reviews, hobby journals, comics, fanzines (fan group magazines), technical reviews, scholarly journals and much more were published in English-status countries.

The pre-dominance of English language in the knowledge era is conspicuous even today as major progress in the field of science, technology, literature, commerce, agriculture and education is all recorded in English. For instance, if an International Conference or a Seminar on an important issue of scientific interest takes place in any part of the world, its proceedings will be recorded in English. In addition, English records all major developments in the field of politics, sports, social and cultural life. Hence, undeniably it is the ‘window’ through which we can peep into the affairs of the world while being in the comfort of our homes, and thus can keep ourselves updated.

1.4.4 English is a storehouse of knowledge

World’s richest literature in all branches of knowledge is accessible through the English language. The works of eminent poets, novelists and philosophers including our Indian statesmen of all times are available in this language. Indian Education Commission (1964-66) has rightly stressed that English would play a vital role in higher education as an important library language. The Commission has directed that no student should be considered as qualified for a degree, in particular, a Master’s degree, unless he has acquired a reasonable proficiency in English (or in some other library language).” In the Conference of Vice Chancellors in New Delhi (1969) Sh. V.K.R.V.Rao, the then Education Minister of India opined:
“Far from abolishing English, university students will in future, have to acquire an adequate command over English to read and understand English books in their chosen subjects and use English as their library language.”

These recommendations and remarks signify the importance of English in gaining access to the vast treasury of world knowledge. According to one of United Nations Organizations’ publications, more than 50% of world’s richest literature in all branches of knowledge is found in English language. A majority among these constitute original publications in English while the remaining ones are the translations of important publications in other languages.

A large proportion of online academic databases including JSTOR, ERIC, Springerfield, Wiley’s Online Library, Taylor’s and Francis, SAGE Infonet, DOAJ, PubMed Central, Proquest, Scopus online, Knimbus, EBSCOHost, Science Direct, Questia, African Journals online, DELNET, UNESCOs online periodicals and many such more are in English. Each of these has thousands of useful articles and dissertations encompassing a large number of disciplines of study. Most of the encyclopedias, dictionaries, world books, classical literature and regional literature are in English, along with books in higher education, as well as the new research works carried out in the field of Sciences, Arts and the technical computer and management subjects. Moreover, a large proportion of new releases and books published in the world are written in English. Most of the papers published on new findings are available in English language. While acknowledging the presence of a large amount of research in the field of literature and computer science, Crystal (2003) remarked that in 1995, even in a language-sensitive subject such as linguistics, nearly 90 per cent of the 1,500 papers listed in the journal Linguistics Abstracts were in English whereas the proportion was even higher in computer science. He further added that most academic journals with international readership were in the English language. In the present study, the investigator herself utilized a fairly large number of such online resources and gathered significantly useful and relevant data pertinent to the research work.

Being a computer friendly language, English has been used to develop major Operating Systems and the Application Software of computers. Moreover, it is the
medium of instruction at many post-graduate institutions, All India Institutes and other professional and technical institutions of higher learning. Thus in several ways, English language has proved to be a very effective storehouse of world’s knowledge.

1.5 ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIAN EDUCATION

The above discussion reveals the versatile nature and utilitarian value of English language in practically all walks of life and consequently, its impact on the global economy is undeniable. For every individual- including the researcher, the programmer, the executive, the public servant, the software engineer, the entrepreneur, the doctor, the teacher, the student, so on and so forth; English opens the door to a wide range of opportunities and resources which are inconceivable without it. It has the vast potential to substantially increase the earning power and efficiency of people. Recruiters and Human Resource Managers around the world report that candidates with unusually good English ability for their country garner 30-50% higher salaries than similarly qualified candidates without English knowledge. Due to the highly beneficial role of English language in the lives of present day world citizens, strong communication skills in English language are need of the hour. The British council has forecast that by 2020, two billion people will be actively learning English. While recognizing the vital role of English language in bringing prosperity in the lives of people at the national as well as the international level, NCERT’s National Focus Group on Teaching of English (NCERT, 2006) asserts:

“English is in India today a symbol of people’s aspiration for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Its colonial origins now forgotten or irrelevant, its initial role in independent India, tailored to high education now felt to be insufficiently inclusive socially and linguistically, the current state of English stems from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena.”

Undoubtedly, the emerging utilitarian value of the English language for individuals as well as the nation had been perceived long ago by the Indian policy makers. Consequently, the subject has acquired a prominent position in the Indian scheme of studies. The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53) favoured the
retention of English because “much of the national unity in the political and other spheres of activity has been brought about through the study of English language and literature.” The Central Advisory Board of Education (1956-57) secured an important place for English in the 3-language formula devised by it when pronounced: “English should be one of three compulsory languages for students at the secondary stage. The other two being Hindi and the mother tongue or the regional language.” The Indian Education Commission (1964-66) suggested to include “the associate official language of the Union so long as it is recognized as such” in the modified 3-language formula. This has, in turn led to “Mass Learning” of English language which has brought in its wake certain pitfalls:-

In the first place, any language is a skill, so is English and it should be taught like that. But contrary to it, the subject is taught more as a knowledge subject. The language is poured as bits of knowledge into the supposedly empty minds of the learners which they are required to learn, or more specifically- to cram. As a result, the real aim of teaching English has lost somewhere. Also, English should be taught by really competent teachers who have an in-depth knowledge of the subject, and have been trained properly via preservice and inservice training to teach the language by employing the right techniques and methodologies. Moreover, to keep pace with the latest innovations in language teaching-learning, they need to keep themselves updated by engaging in continuous professional development programmes. But vice versa is happening. Barring a small proportion of the enlightened and enthusiastic teachers, by and large the teachers show little interest in their professional growth. As a consequence, the incompetent teachers with little knowledge impart poor skills to the learners. To make the conditions worse, are the pathetic conditions of Indian classrooms which are overcrowded and unhygienic, thereby creating an unpleasant learning environment for the students as well as the teachers. In large-sized classes, even the most enthusiastic teachers fail to pay individual attention to each student which is vital in language teaching. Besides these uncongenial conditions, teaching of English is facing the challenges of faulty examination system which is focused more on the evaluation of reading and writing skills, and neglects the skills of listening and speaking which actually are crucial in good communication; dearth of good textbooks.
insufficient provision of the subject in the school timetable, undue interference of parents and so on. While many good schools have been following the modern standards of teaching English, the conditions prevalent in a large proportion of schools still demand attention.

It is evident that strict policy measures need to be adopted by the government to overhaul the conditions of teaching-learning English language throughout India.

To earnestly address the issues of the English language teaching-learning situation in India, the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) constituted on 13th June, 2005 by the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh and headed by Sam Pitroda, a communication expert submitted its report after thorough consultations with a wide range of people in government, academia, media and industry. Emphasizing the significance of language as a tool for developing a knowledge society, the National Knowledge Commission stated:

“An understanding and command over the English language is a most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities. School-leavers who are not adequately trained in English as a language are always at a handicap in the world of higher education. More often than not, teaching is in English. Even if it is not, in most subjects, books and journals are available only in English. And those who do not know English well enough find it exceedingly difficult to compete for a place in our premier educational institutions. This disadvantage is accentuated further in the world of work, not only in professional occupations but also in white-collar occupations overall...”

However, adjudging the inadequacy of required English language skills in the youth, the Commission remarked:

“..... There is an irony in the situation. English has been part of our education system for more than a century. Yet English is beyond the reach of most of our young people, which makes for highly unequal access. Indeed, even now, no more than one per cent of our people use it as a second language, let alone a first language.”

To address the issue firmly, the NKC recommends that:
“The teaching of English as a language should be introduced, along with the first language (either the mother-tongue or the regional language) of the child, starting from Class I in school.... Language learning cannot be separated from, and must be integrated with, content learning. Therefore, English should also be used to teach some non-language, content subjects, starting from Class III in school.”

While identifying lack of contextual pedagogy in English, assessment of learner outcomes based on the mastery of single texts rather than proficiency in the use of language, unequal access to English studies, faulty pedagogy laying stress on grammar and rules instead of learning experience, poor quality of English language teaching and, inadequate support systems in the form of teachers and teaching material as the major factors responsible for learners' poor mastery over English; the NKC optimistically envisioned to integrate English language in the school curriculum by introducing English as a required programme of study from Class I, making English the medium of instruction to study non-language subjects from Class-III, reviewing the existing teacher training system in order to emphasize the “centrality of language to curriculum”, training nearly four million school teachers all over the country to improve their proficiency in English through vacation training programs or other short-term courses, supplying benchmarked teaching materials with the help of expert groups and civil society organizations, equipping the classrooms with appropriate supplementary audio-visual and print material, setting up resource libraries in every classroom with books, magazines, newspapers and posters, employing media to create learning opportunities outside the classroom, creating Knowledge clubs and, providing financial assistance for developing English language resources.

The envisioned program of action of NKC reveals that the commission is positively determined to enhance the level of language proficiency of English language learners by revamping the English language teaching-learning situation in the country.

Here, the English State Partnership Projects initiated by the British Council, an international organization of the United Kingdom in collaboration with the public/state sector, CSR foundations and NGOs also deserve a mention. British Council is primarily engaged with English language testing and enhancement programmes. With the aim of raising the standard of English of young aspiring people
to facilitate their access to education and career opportunities, since 2007, the British Council has worked in collaboration with the State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and other public and private partners. Under these programmes, the organization designs and delivers various interventions impacting teacher trainers, teachers and learners. According to the figures cited by the organization, 8,070 Master Trainers have been trained who have directly impacted over 836,190 teachers to date through these projects. The English State Partnership Projects initiated by the organization include: English for all Mumbai, Maharashtra English Language Initiative for Secondary Schools, Punjab English Language Teaching Initiative, Punjab English Enhancement Programme, Bihar Language Initiative in Secondary Schools, Maharashtra English Language Initiative for Primary Schools, Vocational Education and English Skills Training Project, Tamil Nadu English Language Development Programmes, Karnataka English Language Teacher Education Programme, Times of India-Teach India Programme, Aim Higher in Assam and, West Bengal State English Project.

Out of these, two projects have been initiated in the Punjab state. On the first project viz. Punjab English Enhancement Programme (PEEP), the Punjab State government, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) Punjab and the British Council have worked since April 2011 with the aim of improving English language teaching and learning with key stakeholders in the state, and have provided training to 160 teachers designated as Master Trainers (MTs) in two phases over two years who have twice passed their training to 3000 teachers. The programme has yielded a very positive feedback from the state government and the participants who feel that it has substantially enriched their knowledge and skills. The second project viz. the Punjab English Language Teaching Initiative (PELTI) Secondary project is a three year state-wide project running from 2013–2016, and is continuing work done as part of the Punjab English Enhancement Programme initiatives between 2010 an 2012. In this project, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Punjab and the British Council are working together to develop the English language teaching skills and language confidence of secondary level English language teachers in government schools across Punjab by further developing the skills of 170 Master Trainers (MTs) who will pass on the input to 3000 teachers across the state.
The above discussion has conspicuously/discernibly stressed upon the necessity of developing proficiency in the English language for the successful integration of individuals in the globalized world of today. It is thus vital to throw some light on the concept of English language proficiency which has been discussed below:-

1.6 ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Language proficiency or linguistic proficiency is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in an acquired language.

There are four parameters to adjudge the English Language proficiency of an individual. These are also known as the Linguistic skills including the Receptive skills Listening and Reading, and Expressive skills Speaking and Writing.

Listening paves way for the acquisition of other skills and any impediment in its way will affect the linguistic development of the other three skills. The importance of the listening skill can be adjudged from a study by Wilt (1950) in which it was found that 45% of communication was listening, 30% speaking, 16% reading and 9% writing. In the act of listening—two poles of communication are involved namely the speaker (encoder) and the listener (decoder). Initially, the speaker uses a set of code to encode the concept or message and sends it to the listener who decodes the message by identifying the sounds, understanding the syntactic pattern and structures, identifying information (by scanning or skimming) and recognizing the prosodic features like tone, intonation, pitch, stress, etc. used by the speaker. Richards (1990) draws two way process of listening comprehension: bottom-up and top-down processing. In the Bottom-up process, the incoming data is used as a source of information about the meaning of the message whereas in the Top-down process, background knowledge is used to understand the meaning of a message.

The key components of speaking skill are: production of syntactically accepting forms, correct sound contrasts, proper stress, rhythm and intonation, grammatically correct language which is also appropriate to the occasion, using linking words whenever necessary and, a good stock of words to convey meaning. Along with listening, it is the second key component of oral communication. Ranging from the communication of one’s casual thoughts and ideas with fellow beings, speech can even be utilized for enlightening the minds of the people.
By making use of proper eye movements, a good reader discriminates the words properly, forms association between the visual signs and their corresponding speech sounds, interprets the underlying meaning, has a good reading speed and has the ability to understand the subject matter.

The fourth skill viz. Writing involves good handwriting, correct spelling, punctuation; proper application of the language material, vocabulary, grammar, syntax and content. Since writing skill can be used for multifarious purposes such as letter writing, essay writing, descriptive writing, narrative writing, informative writing and report writing; each and every type of writing has its own method of execution.

A proficient user of the language displays reasonably good performance in all four skills while committing as minimum errors as possible.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training in its position paper (NCERT, 2006), has also recognized the importance of language proficiency in language evaluation, and has duly stressed upon the reorientation of language evaluation to measurement of language proficiency instead of limiting it to achievement with respect to a particular syllabi.

The ever increasing popularity of English in international professional and academic environments has led to the development of international standards for accepting candidates in academic and professional domain. Renowned and well-recognized international organizations have introduced tests and they classify the candidates/learners on the basis of their varying levels of performance in the skills of English.

Accepting all standard varieties of native speaker English, including North American, British and Australian, the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) which is jointly owned by global education and language experts: the British Council, IDP: IELTS Australia and Cambridge English Language Assessment, has categorized the candidates (non-native users) into 9 levels of English competence each level being represented as a ‘Band’ as follows:

Band 9: Expert user: has fully operational command of the language: appropriate, accurate and fluent with complete understanding.

Band 8: Very good user: has fully operational command of the language with only occasional unsystematic inaccuracies and inappropriacies. Misunderstandings may
occur in unfamiliar situations. Handles complex detailed argumentation well.

Band 7: Good user: has operational command of the language, though with occasional inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings in some situations. Generally handles complex language well and understands detailed reasoning.

Band 6: Competent user: has generally effective command of the language despite some inaccuracies, inappropriacies and misunderstandings. Can use and understand fairly complex language, particularly in familiar situations.

Band 5: Modest user: has partial command of the language, coping with overall meaning in most situations, though is likely to make many mistakes. Should be able to handle basic communication in own field.

Band 4: Limited user: basic competence is limited to familiar situations. Has frequent problems in understanding and expression. Is not able to use complex language.

Band 3: Extremely limited user: conveys and understands only general meaning in very familiar situations. Frequent breakdowns in communication occur.

Band 2: Intermittent user: no real communication is possible except for the most basic information using isolated words or short formulae in familiar situations and to meet immediate needs. Has great difficulty understanding spoken and written English.

Band 1: Non-user: essentially has no ability to use the language beyond possibly a few isolated words.

Band 0: Did not attempt the test: No accessible information provided

The ‘Council of Europe’ widely used as a standard by educational establishments, language testing systems and publishers of language-learning materials throughout Europe, has introduced the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) to classify the learners into six levels of language proficiency based on their performance in the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing as:

- Mastery, Proficient User, C2
- Effective Operational Proficiency, Proficient User, C1
- Vantage, Independent User, B2
- Threshold, Independent User, B1
- Waystage, Basic User, A2
- Breakthrough, Basic User, A1

This classification broadly equates to the commonly used descriptions for language proficiency as follows:

Table 1.1 Comparison of CEF classification and commonly used descriptions for language proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEF classification</th>
<th>Commonly used descriptions for language proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient User, C2</td>
<td>near native/fluent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient User, C1</td>
<td>excellent command / highly proficient in spoken and written English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent User, B2</td>
<td>very good command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent User, B1</td>
<td>good command/good working knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic User, A2</td>
<td>basic communication skills/working knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These standardized descriptions very distinctively classify the prospective applicants based on their level of English Language Proficiency.

1.7 MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

Medium of instruction is the language through which the whole process of education takes place. Thus, it is pertinent to identify the role of medium of instruction in the acquisition of English language proficiency.

According to the statistics of Seventh All India School Education Survey, out of total 75 different languages used in India’s education system, 31 different
languages are used as media of instruction. 92.07% schools at the primary stage teach through mother tongue, out of which 92.39% schools in rural area and 90.39% schools in urban area teach through mother tongue. 91.34% schools at the upper primary stage teach through mother tongue. Out of these, 92.71% schools in rural area and 87.37% schools in urban area teach through mother tongue. Also, 12.14% schools at the primary stage, 14.47% schools at the upper primary stage and 18.53% schools at the secondary stage have two or more media of instruction. Further, English as medium of instruction is used in 12.98% schools at the primary stage, 18.25% schools at the upper primary stage, 25.84% schools at the secondary stage and 33.59% schools at the higher secondary stage. Hindi as medium of instruction is used in 46.79% schools at the primary stage, 47.41% schools at the upper primary stage, 41.32% schools at the secondary stage and 48.11% schools at the higher secondary stage. Besides, 32 States/Union Territories are imparting education in the languages other than that of majority language at primary and upper primary stages of school education, to cater the needs of linguistic minorities. At upper primary stage, 90.61% schools follow three-language formula.

NCERT, in its National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2005) has supported the use of mother tongue as medium of instruction. In its executive summary, it has been stated, “In language, a renewed attempt to implement the three-language formula is suggested, along with an emphasis on the recognition of children’s mother tongues, including tribal languages, as the best medium of education. The multilingual character of Indian society should be seen as a resource to promote multilingual proficiency in every child, which includes proficiency in English. This is possible only if learning builds on sound language pedagogy in the mother tongue.”

There are zealous promoters of English language who opine that use of English as a medium of instruction will eventually pave the way for successful acquisition of overall proficiency in the language. But this very idea of raising English language proficiency through English as medium of instruction is vehemently opposed by a group of people. It is argued that just to increase proficiency in English, when the medium of instruction of a child is changed from his mother tongue to that
in English, the psychological principle that the child learns better in his mother tongue is violated. It subsequently leads to improper comprehension of the other school subjects.

Even after using English as the medium of instruction, it is not certain whether the student will attain proficiency of English language to the desired extent.

Here, it is worth mentioning the proposed methods of teaching English which have evolved over the period of time and have either promoted or restricted the use of English/mother tongue as a medium of instruction. On one hand, the promoters of ‘Direct Method’ hold that in order to teach a language, it is essential to establish a direct link between the object and its meaning which can be achieved effectively only if we make use of direct method of teaching English in which, only English language is used to teach English to the learners and the use of mother tongue is prohibited. Here situations are created in the classroom to facilitate the learners in grasping the teaching points. Since in this method, the learners learn English in the same natural way in which they had learnt their mother tongue, it enhances learners’ ability at free thinking and expression who eventually display a higher level of English language proficiency. Though this method has not been found to be very effective for higher classes who have large syllabi to cover and a lot of time is wasted on recreating the situations in the classrooms, it certainly favours English as a medium of instruction to enhance learner’s proficiency in English and can be effectively used for young learners. On the other hand, are the promoters of old traditional method of teaching English – the ‘Grammar Translation Method’ which emphasizes upon translating every word, phrase and sentence into the mother tongue of the child simultaneously when he is being exposed to the foreign language (English). Thus, this method calls for a great deal of intervention of mother tongue in foreign language learning. It is opined that the method is a time saver and will pave way for better accuracy in the foreign language. But this method has been criticized on account of the fact that it leads to loss of free expression by the learner because he is forced to first think in his mother tongue every time he wants to express some idea in the target language (English). Another method, a via between the above two methods – the ‘Bilingual Method’ rests on the principle that it is unnecessary to recreate the situations for the
ideas already learnt by the learner in his mother tongue. Thus, it endeavors to achieve both accuracy and fluency in target language (English) by enabling the use of mother tongue by the teacher at the initial stage to make meanings of certain ideas clear, followed by a rigorous practice in the target language (English) by the students who are not allowed to use their mother tongue. Thus, with the restricted use of mother tongue in the foreign language classroom, the method aims at inducing both accuracy and fluency in English language among the learners.

In this context, it becomes important to understand the phenomena of English language proficiency development.

1.8 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Socio-economic background is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. This interpretation is based on the literal meaning of the composite words in the term 'socio-economic' viz. socio and economic, along with the term 'background'. Socio is concerned with society which is joint stock company to which parent of students belongs and economic denotes the material belongings of a person. The word 'economic' is used generally for the motives involving earning a livelihood the accumulation of wealth and the like (Drever, 1964). The term 'background' refers to a person’s education and his social circumstances. When analyzing a family's socio-economic background, the household income, earners' education, and occupation are examined, as well as combined income, versus with an individual, when their own attributes are assessed. Socio-economic background is an index of power and prestige of family and it invariably refers to an individual's social and economic standing as stated earlier. A person who has high standing in terms of respect, power and influence along with material belonging in the form of a furnished house of good quality is said to have a good socio-economic background. Based upon the level of social and economic position of an individual’s family, socio-economic background is classified into three categories viz. high socio-economic background, middle socio-economic background, and low socio-economic background, which actually refer to a pattern of inequality- the inequality, which is the characteristic of all human societies.
existing from ages in their simplest to the most complex forms. These have borne social inequality in terms of power, prestige and distribution of wealth. The term ‘socio-economic background’ is used interchangeably with the expression ‘socio-economic status’. Certain proposed definitions of this term further illuminate its underlying meaning.

According to Chambers' Twentieth Century Dictionary (1970), meaning of socioeconomic status is 'state, condition, standing of a person.'

Green (1970), the sociologist, defines it, “a position in a social group of grouping in relation to other positions held by other individuals in the group or groupings.”

Good (1973) defines socioeconomic status, as “The level indicative of both the social and the economic position of an individual or group. In other words, a set of potentially influential factors generally associated with home is called the socioeconomic status of the child.

Hawes and Hawes (1982) stated that, “Socio-economic status is the background or standing of one or more persons in the society on the basis of both social class and financial situation.”

It is widely accepted that socio-economic background of a child bears an impact on his overall personality development. Children from high socio-economic background have better opportunities for their academic development, which in future lead to better career prospects for them and better position in society. Much of the literature on youth and education cites socio-economic background as key variable related to differences in youth development as access to resources is expected to have an impact on a youth's life, development and transitions. It affects things like access to other learning resources (people, places and things) and availability of personal contacts in positions of influence in the labour market, to name a few. Based upon the results of his Elmstown's study, Hollingshead (1949) stated that lower class children have limited their horizons to the class horizons and in the process have unconsciously placed themselves in such a position that will occupy the same levels as their parents.

24
But on the other hand, we have before us the living examples of great political, literary figures and educationists who, though not blessed with a good socio-economic background, received highest laurels in the field of education and later shone as the leading figures of contemporary society.

Another point of consideration is the possible difference in learning opportunities on the basis of gender. Owing to the conservative image of certain strata of Indian society including especially those from the rural backgrounds and low income group, it is widely perceived that the educational and career growth opportunities available to girls across the range of socio-economic strata widely differ from those available to boys. Thus it is guessed that the social context may have an impact on the process of learning of males and females. Also, learning an alien language- English increases the challenges for males and females due to socio-cultural context as learning possibilities differ. But if we browse through the list of men and women who have made some mark in society by excelling in a particular field, it is not uncommon to see an increasingly high number of women achievers besides men achievers and interestingly, many women achievers are from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. Thus, it is also intended to examine the real nature of linguistic proficiency in socio-economic context.

1.9 EMERGENCE OF THE PROBLEM

In the present times, English has emerged as a global language and is exhibiting its utility in all spheres of life. It has become the prime tool for seizing better employment and academic opportunities at national as well as international level; strengthening the ties between various nations; knowledge sharing at the global level; developing international business and cultural relations; so on and so forth. The transformative power of the English language has urged the nations the world over to reframe their educational policies in a manner to develop strong English communication skills among the youth.

Deliberations have been going on in the academic circle regarding the role of medium of instruction in attaining English language proficiency. Already, many countries have adopted English as the medium of instruction in the educational system.
in an endeavor to provide the learners ample practice in the four linguistic skills viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing- eventually targeting at English language proficiency. In this direction, the Indian government too has adopted various policy measures from time to time- from the inclusion of English as a compulsory subject along with the other languages to- including it as the medium of instruction at the school as well as the university level. But the government also gives due recognition to ‘sound language pedagogy in the mother tongue’ to facilitate learning.

However, an analysis of the conditions under which English is taught in India presents a dismal picture whereby the English language teaching takes place under unconducive circumstances, and the level of English language proficiency continues to be a dismal low. This scenario has urged the government to revamp the existing English language teaching context, and the National Knowledge Commission has made result-oriented decisions in this regard.

Also amidst this scenario, different views have emerged on the role of English as the medium of instruction in attaining English language proficiency. While the zealous promoters opine that teaching via the English medium facilitates acquisition of English language proficiency, another set of people oppose it as ‘it goes against the psychological principle that the child learns best in his mother tongue’. Furthermore, many theories too support the use of mother tongue in learning other content subjects.

Secondly, socio-economic background of the child is often linked to his academic development as well as English language proficiency. High socio-economic background is perceived as an indicator/guarantor of better academic and language development opportunities. But contrarily, the exaltation of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to eminent literary and political positions in contemporary society puts this speculation to rest. It is therefore; important to identify the real extent of effect of socio-economic background in this context.

Another factor which is perceived to exert an influence on English language proficiency is the gender of the learners. It is widely believed that learning and career growth opportunities for males and females vary considerably across the range of socio-economic strata thereby bearing a possible impact on their academic and language development. But again, the increasingly high number of women achievers from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds invalidates this perception too.
On reviewing the pertinent literature available in the field, it was found that many studies related to socio-economic background or medium of instruction and English language proficiency or certain aspects related to medium of instruction and socio-economic background have been conducted. Some researchers have studied the relationship of socio-economic background with certain aspects of language development. In some studies, certain aspects of socio-economic background have been related to some selective aspects of language proficiency whereas in other studies, medium of instruction has been related to language development among the students in varied ways. Furthermore, selective aspects of English language development have been related to aspects of medium of instruction. The monolingual/bilingual environment in which the medium of instruction/communication for the learner is either his mother tongue/target language alone or mother tongue in combination with the target language, has also been studied in relation to different aspects of English language proficiency. In some studies, English language proficiency is studied in relation to native/ESL speakers or years of English as a foreign language study while some researchers studied the impact of an English language development instruction on the acquisition of English language proficiency.

However, a careful analysis of these studies reveals that they have been conducted in piecemeal and none of the studies investigated the combined effect of all the three significant factors viz. medium of instruction, socio-economic background and gender on total English language proficiency.

Since all the above three factors seem to be related to the phenomenon of English language proficiency, in order to understand the relation of medium of instruction and socio-economic background with total English language proficiency, and also to understand more clearly the conjoint relationship of socio-economic background and medium of instruction with language proficiency, the present study was conducted. It is hoped that the findings of the present study can further help in deciding future policy matters in this direction.

1.10 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem was identified as:-

Since all the above three factors seem to be related to the phenomenon of English language proficiency, in order to understand the relation of medium of instruction and socio-economic background with total English language proficiency, and also to understand more clearly the conjoint relationship of socio-economic background and medium of instruction with language proficiency, the present study was conducted. It is hoped that the findings of the present study can further help in deciding future policy matters in this direction.

1.10 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem was identified as:-

Since all the above three factors seem to be related to the phenomenon of English language proficiency, in order to understand the relation of medium of instruction and socio-economic background with total English language proficiency, and also to understand more clearly the conjoint relationship of socio-economic background and medium of instruction with language proficiency, the present study was conducted. It is hoped that the findings of the present study can further help in deciding future policy matters in this direction.
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY OF COLLEGE STUDENTS OF PUNJAB IN RELATION TO SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION IN SCHOOL.

1.11 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to achieve the following objectives:-

1. To study English language proficiency of college students in relation to medium of instruction in school.

2. To study English language proficiency of college students in relation to socio-economic background.

3. To study English language proficiency of college students in relation to gender.

4. To study the interaction effect of medium of instruction and socio-economic background on English language proficiency of college students.

5. To study the interaction effect of medium of instruction and gender on English language proficiency of college students.

6. To study the interaction effect of socio-economic background and gender on English language proficiency of college students.

7. To study the interaction effect of medium of instruction, socio-economic background and gender on English language proficiency of college students.

1.12 HYPOTHESES

The study was designed to test the following hypotheses:-

1. There is no significant difference in (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency attained by college students having either English or mother tongue as medium of instruction in school.

2. There is no significant difference in (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency
attained by high, middle and low socio-economic background college students.

3. There is no significant difference in (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency attained by male and female college students.

4. There is no significant interaction effect of medium of instruction and socio-economic background on (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency of college students.

5. There is no significant interaction effect of medium of instruction and gender on (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency of college students.

6. There is no significant interaction effect of socio-economic background and gender on (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency of college students.

7. There is no significant interaction effect of medium of instruction, socio-economic background and gender on (i) English listening skill proficiency (ii) English speaking skill proficiency (iii) English reading skill proficiency (iv) English writing skill proficiency (v) Total English language proficiency of college students.

1.13 DELIMITATIONS

The present study, in view of short time was delimited in the following contexts:-

1. The language proficiency of college students studying in Degree colleges affiliated to Panjab University, Chandigarh and Punjabi University, Patiala was studied.

2. The language proficiency of college students of Punjab was studied by a self-designed and standardized English Language Proficiency Test.
3. Only Analytical approach to analysis was used for the analysis of data.

1.14 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE TERMS

*English language proficiency*

English language proficiency of an individual is his ability to perform in the listening, speaking, reading and writing skills which are summated to form his/her total English language proficiency.

*Socio-economic background*

Socio-economic background of a college student is the sum total of economic and social position of his/her family based on income, education and the material commodities that are present in his/her home.

*Medium of instruction*

Medium of instruction is the language in which the learner has received his school education. In this context, the learner who has studied his school subjects in English language is said to have studied with English as the medium of instruction and, the learner who has studied his school subjects in his mother tongue is said to have studied with the mother tongue as the medium of instruction.