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**Difficulties In Acquiring English Skills In Rural Communities**

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**Abstract**

Language is vital to the human experience, allowing people to express complex ideas and share knowledge. English is the global language and one of the world's most dominating languages, which impacts every field of work. Teaching and learning English as a foreign language has become a challenging task both in rural and urban areas. Since it is a global language that can open up many career opportunities, it's a requirement for many fields and professions. Similarly, it has become an inevitable requirement for various fields and professions. In this fast-evolving world, it is essential to have a common language that we can understand to make the best use of data and information available. As a result, the English language has become a storehouse of knowledge, varying from social to political fields. If we focus on the status of English, particularly in the Indian context, the language has established itself in India as a language of trade, media, technology, commerce, social media, and, most importantly, in education as a second language. However, on the other hand, the situation in village schools is severely vulnerable concerning pedagogy and learning of the English language. This paper attempts to bring up the issues related to the problems of learning English in rural areas.

**Keywords:** Language learning, global language, pedagogy, second language, rural classroom, foreign language, student-teacher ratio.

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### **Introduction**

Language is the medium of communication. English is an influential vehicle of communication that serves as a link language in a multicultural and multilingual society like India and also as a global linguistic mediator. The English language has a remarkable history. Over the years, it has emerged as a language of choice for economic growth and social mobility.

The changing times have witnessed the growing importance of English in all walks of life. One out of five people can speak or at least understand this language. A good knowledge of English allows us to access literature, music, film from hundreds of countries around the world that offer programmes in English. The vitality of English language in the recent times has made the countries to reform their English language education system.

Conscious and unconscious use of the words in our everyday conversation from English language bears evidence to this fact that this language has utmost importance in our lives. Education has been the primary factor in the more formal broadcasting of English around the globe. It increases the chance of getting a good job in multinational companies within the home country or of finding work abroad.

As English is the official language of around 53 countries, it is used as a lingua franca (a mutually known language) by people from all around the world. Hence, learning English by the students is a must in today's generation. Teaching students this language has consistently emerged as one of the top expectations of parents from school. The government also acknowledged the importance of learning English, and it took the initiative to introduce it in government schools. These circumstances have emphasized the need to learn and teach English for communication as the language is serving as a global language of information and technology. In such a way, English has become essential for each one of us to learn in a skillful manner.

### **Literature Review:**

Teaching is the process of attending to people's needs, experiences, and feelings and intervening so that they learn particular things and go beyond the given. One of the major problems faced by English teachers is overcrowded classes and the effect of such conditions on the teaching and learning process. Rural is the place for municipalities outside the commuting zone of urban centers with a population of 10,000 more people. Rural schools often encounter problems such as a lack of supplementary teaching materials, teachers, low-quality teachers, and technology for learning. Furthermore, Urban schools often represent a diverse population of students

from a variety of cultural, religious, socio-economic class, and ethnic backgrounds. The problem of violence and poverty may pose challenges to urban education. They are also afraid of the neighborhoods where they work.

### **Problems faced by the teachers and students in rural areas**

#### **1. English as the language of fear:**

Learning a language is a natural process for the natives. The method to this learning process is called the 'behavioristic approach'. But for the students of other languages, deliberate efforts are required by the students to learn a foreign language which requires a 'mental approach'.

Rural students from poor families of laborers, farmers, and household workers find no atmosphere of education. The English language seems to be incompatible with them. Instead of developing interest in the subject, they tend to develop fear, hesitation, and shyness. As a result, they end up stuttering. Even though they try to overcome this phobia and tend to speak the language, society laughs at the faults of others. Due to this, the student goes back into his shell and never tries to speak in the first place because of his or her mistakes being highlighted. Their love for learning the language is nipped in the bud.

#### **2. Teaching methodologies:**

The language of English and its learning is limited to the learning of various sets of vocabulary, learning a few English sentences, and completing a course book up to the upper primary level. The curriculum set by the government should not only be the source of teaching, but seminars, elocutions, and random interactions in English would help the student to think in English and work on their mistakes. Further, the teachers only teach within the textbook rather than using innovative methods of teaching. So, the teaching methods at the school level also play a key role in the process of learning English. The poor foundation and methods of teaching hinder the students' ability to understand.

#### **3. Lack of professionally trained teachers:**

Teaching of English needs a drastic change for the benefit of learners in rural schools and colleges. Lack of trained teachers, particularly in rural areas, has become a reality; this shortage can lead to poor educational outcomes and high student-teacher ratios. Therefore, it hinders the students' learning capability and grip on the subject. Professionally trained teachers should be appointed or hired by the schools for proper guidance in learning English. The teachers use the strategy of teaching the lessons in their native or regional language as they themselves are incompetent at communicating in English.

#### **4. Incompetence of students:**

The real problem is the inferiority complex that has been inculcated in the minds of the students - it starts from within. Hence, there exists a need for a facilitator who could ignite the minds of the students for their social upbringing. We are discussing rural students, in particular, as they face a lot of obstacles while learning English. Among them, the major reason is the lack of time. Since these students have financial crises, after school, they end up taking the responsibilities of their parents and helping them with their work. As the work is tedious, the student does not get to put effort into learning new things and/or working on new projects.

#### **5. Technology:**

Nowadays, every house has a smartphone as it has become a necessity. So instead of getting occupied by watching things that are not useful, students can learn a lot and develop their skills. However, in rural areas, internet access and network issues might interrupt the process due to limited resources and financial crises. This should, therefore, be their second choice to acquire the skill. Hence, these students need a proficient teacher who can bring up their hidden talents among students and guide them in a proper way in the process of effective learning. Thus, they should utilize the technology properly and make the most of it.

#### **Solutions to the Problems in Learning and Teaching English Language**

In our so far study, we pointed out the problems and difficulties faced by the students as well as teachers in the schools of rural areas of India. In the preceding paragraph we will try to find the solution to those problems and difficulties faced by the students as well as the teachers in the rural schools.

#### **1. Creating an environment to learn English at home: an initiative by parents and government:**

Most parents in rural areas have little or no knowledge of the English language. Therefore, children find no English learning environment other than textbooks and homework. In order to solve this problem, the government has to initiate the implementation of at least one library per village with required writing and learning materials to help students make use of them.

#### **2.Necessity of professional teacher training:**

More focus should be placed on teaching the four language skills viz learning, speaking, reading, and writing. The teachers of rural areas are themselves of diffident and a phobia to English language. To overcome this problem, the teachers should be hired from nearby cities who can teach students as well as the teachers using modern learning technologies.

### **3. English as a subject and not as a skill:**

The system followed in the rural schools is directed towards the completion of the course before exams. In rural schools, no attention is paid to learning language as a skill and not as a content subject, i.e., they consider English as a course and not as a language. The only objective of the Teacher and the learner is to clear the exams. The students never get to realize the importance of learning English as a language. To achieve the desired effects, the goal of a course must be kept in mind, whether it is aimed at reading, fluency in speech, or inculcating translation skills. All these objects shape the methodology of thinking. The inner urge to learn the language should be developed. And there needs to be continuous enrichment of vocabulary and sentence construction. Since it is a foreign language, continuous efforts must be made by the students to acquire the skill. In order to do so, students must come out of their comfort boxes and do projects, gather information, additionally from what is in the test book, and try to communicate in English rather than their native language.

### **4. Motivational upliftment:**

In every field, students need the motivation to achieve their goals and step forward towards their success. Sometimes, the students are distracted from their goals, too. Then, motivational speeches and other motivational activities help them get back on track. The teachers have to arrange motivational sessions for students once a month to aid both teachers and students in learning and teaching the English language.

### **5. Parental support:**

Learning a language or any language without parental support is impossible. Same is the case with learning of English as a second language therefore it is the duty of every parent to support their wards in every possible way in learning English. Apart from their financial crisis the parents has to spend some money on book and materials with the help of the local government.

### **Conclusion:**

Thus, to conclude, we can say that learning English for students in rural areas is very difficult because of the lack of an environment in which English is learned. This article provides valuable insights into the impact of realism on the learners of this English language. It highlights the necessity of the language that has to be ingrained in the minds of the teachers as well as the reader. The study contributes to the advancement of learning English and encourages further exploration and optimization of language learning, leading to more efficient and accurate usage of language in the real-world applications and day-to-day conversations of rural students.

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