

“The Importance Of English In The Present Day”

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Abstract

In the fast moving world of globalization, importance of English as an International Language is unrefutable. As a Linguistic leader, English has strived to alter the face of world in twenty first century .Of last the world community has understood the benefits of this language fast. It is the only language which has the power to build global unity and generate universal fraternity . Keeping this in view most of the countries are encouraging their youths to assume an active role in the generation with the knowledge of this languages . It is no longer Queen’s language nor it is the monopoly of Great Britain. Moreover it is the people of a world without a territory. English is an international language . People all over the world talk in English . Especially educated people take advantage over other because of English knowledge . It spreads trade and commerce . It is the language of science and technology. It is the medium of communication between statesmen, political agents and at political international conferences . English is a widespread language . Research is being made to simplify it and take it to every door so that the common people can use it. The present English is complex with bombastic words, high sounding phraseology, alliterations, assonances, ornamental languages which give it a poetic touch, increases its literary value .But common people go away from it . No language can survive without the support of country folk. English lacks the acceptability by uneducated, little – educated mass. So attempts should be made to make English lifestyle so that it can be impressive, acceptable and survive longer . Our former Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru once said “THE DESTINY OF A NATION IS SHAPED IN HER CLASSROOMS”. True to this statement, the younger are the Inheritors of tomorrow. Every effort should be made to remind them of their heritage and provide them such guidance and inspiration as may be required, to prepare them to face the future with enthusiasm and confidence .Realising the global importance of English language, most of the Indians are now choosing English medium school for their children. While regional languages have rich literatures such as poerty, novel and drama, they do not adequately serve the purpose of pursuing higher education particularly in the field of science

and technology. With computers becoming an essential part of our everyday life, we cannot do away with English which is the language of the computers. It is through English that we keep track of all that is happening in the fields of science, technology, art, culture, trade and commerce. In giving up English, we shall be isolating ourselves from the advanced nations of the world. English is the only window to the expanding world of knowledge. So we can never afford to do away with English. “ Be short – Be simple & Be Human”. “ Simplicity is the order of the day”. Think before you ink/speak. ‘Who says what, through which channel, to whom, with what effect’.

Keywords: Globalization, Monopoly, Territory, Imperialists, Unprofitable, Fraternity, Language, Communication, Grammatically, Phraseology, Enthusiasm, Missionaries, Post – colonial

To understand the importance of English in the present day we need a historical overview of the establishment of English language in India. Beginning with the establishment of the East India Company, the British came to India in the second half of the eighteenth century, and stayed on as rulers for nearly two hundred years. During this period they gradually introduced the English language and Western Education in order to create a class of Indians who could serve the imperial rulers as officials or functionaries, as well as function as a communicative link between the rulers and the Indian public. The earliest attempts to introduce English in India were made by the missionaries who came primarily for the purpose of proselytizing rather than for spreading English. The efforts of the missionaries can be seen as the first exposure that people in India and South Asia had to English people and their language.

Much later, in and around, 1835 a group of Indians led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, demanded English education for Indians. This group was convinced that English would be more useful for the Indians than Indian languages for academic, socio – economic, scientific and international purposes, therein, resulting in the wholesome development of India. The efforts of this group helped Lord Macaulay pass his famous minutes which was to form “a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect,” (Selection from Educational Records 1781 – 1839 : 116). As the Minute gained official approval, a process of producing an ever – increasing number of English knowing bilingual Indians began. English developed stronger roots in the educational system in India and the whole subcontinent witnessed more and more Indians being lured by English. By the end of the nineteenth century five universities had been set up in India, namely, Madras, Calcutta, Bombay, Allahabad and Lahore. With the spread of English

and increase in the number of English knowing Indians, this language came to be established as the official and academic language of India . It acquired space in the areas of education, administration, trade and business .

The twentieth century witnessed further strengthening of the roots of English in Indian and an influential English Press grew . Braj. B. Kachru, in his book, *The Indianisation of English* ‘ (1993), states that “after World War I, there was a significant increase in educational institutions and schools and colleges spread to the interiors of India . This naturally helped in spreading bilingualism in India further among the middle and lower classes of Indian society .” In fact, since then India has seen tremendous increase in English – knowing Indians . Even after the British formally left Indian in 1947, English has continued to gain ground and has become more and more firmly entrenched in the Indian soil.

In the Indian scenario today, English is recognized officially as the Associate National Official Language and as the inter – regional link language. In academics it is recognized as an essential component of education and as the preferred medium of learning, with specialized education in science and technology available to us through the medium of English only; socially it is recognized and upheld as a mark of education, culture and prestige. In the post – colonial age, when the globe has become accessible, a stage has come where English is considered an integral part of the socio – cultural, educational and administrative domains of Indian life . This spread of English has been accompanied by a general perception that English is the language of opportunity, social advancement, prestige and power .

English Is Not A Foreign Language

We recognize that English is not a foreign language but a second language in India. It is not learnt as part of one’s personal enterprise, out of personal choice, aspirations and ambitions, for which we would learn languages; such as German ,French, Russian, Spanish or Italian. These languages are foreign not only in that, they do not belong to the Indian nation, but more importantly, we call them foreign languages because we learn them for very restricted purposes. These foreign languages while being available to us if we should wish to learn them, are not an integral part of the socio – cultural and linguistic context in which we live . These languages do not form a part of our community’s vocabulary and there , in the sense that our daily routine does not require that we learn these language either for education, for inter – regional communication or for personal interaction with other people within and outside the country. For example, we do not have Russian as a medium of instruction or as a requirement for a job; we do not publish

newspapers and books in Russian; neither do we make public speeches in Russian. Therefore, Russian is a foreign language for us, in the sense that it is foreign to our socio – cultural, educational and administrative contexts. On the other hand, in India, English is used as a second language. We call it a second language and not a foreign language because English has become a part of our socio – cultural reality.

If we consider our educational set up, our administrative and bureaucratic contexts, our trade and commerce, our judicial set – up, and even our personal communicative need, we find that we cannot do without English. There is a constant social pressure to learn and use English and our education system is organized and structured to teach/learn English at different stages. We learn not only English, but we also learn many subjects through English. Thus English is a second language and enjoys official recognition as Associate Official language and Link Language. English is associated with better education, better job opportunities, better inter – regional mobility and communication and higher social status.

Important Area Of English

Being a second language in the post – colonial era English has a powerful presence in India and also throughout the globe. English has come to occupy an important place in these domains:

Education

Even a casual glance at the way our educational system is organized and structured will show that English plays a crucial role in education. Whether a child goes to an English Medium School or a Vernacular (Indian language medium) School, she/he has to learn English for a period ranging from six to twelve years. The three Language formula despite its uneven implementation in different parts of India, ensures that no student can pass out of school and go on to Vocational or Higher Education without having learnt English as a subject. Specialised education in pure and applied sciences, technology, medicine, law, business management, etc. is available only through the medium of English. The effect that education, especially higher and technical education, means **knowing English, using English and being proficient in English.**

Business And Administration

Business and administration which are the “receiving systems” that provide gainful employment to educated young men and women, insist on formal training and proficiency in English. Most of the competitive examinations require the candidates to pass a compulsory or qualifying paper in English; big and middle level business establishments require aspiring candidates to be fluent in spoken English and proficient in written English; multinational companies insist on qualifications which can only be acquired by those who are proficient in

English . In a nutshell, this means that, as far as employment opportunities are concerned, most white – collar jobs in the government and industry (both production industry and services industry) are available to those who know English . So if one wants to become an official in the government of India, a manager in some industry, an officer in the armed forces, a doctor, an engineer, an air – hostess or a sales executive, one has to be proficient in English.

The Judiciary

The way our judiciary is structured, it is possible to use local Indian languages at the lowest level of panchayats and local courts. However, the moment we move on to the High Court and Supreme Court, we find that English has to be used by the lawyers and the judges. In the High Courts and the Apex Court all litigations are in English, all briefs are in English, representation and arguments are in English and the judgements are in English . Moreover, all legal journals and books are available in English .

Media And Publishing

Both print media and electronic median in Indian, give pride of place to English, Music programmes, inter views, talk shows, discussion, news bulletins are regularly telecast or broadcast in English. The English press, with a large number of dailies and periodicals caters to the needs of the people for news, information and entertainment. The publishing world devotes considerable resources to the production of books in English. These books are on a verity of subjects, both specialized subjects, as well as subjects of general day – to – day interest . As a matter of fact, there is a marked preference for printed material in English in India .

Inter – Regional Communication

The fact that Indian is a multilingual country with a large number of mutually unintelligible, prestigious and developed languages, tends to encourage people to use English in interregional communicative contexts . This is true not only of government and business fronts, where all inter-regional communication is in English, but also of personal interactions wherein people from different regions prefer to use English, since they perceive it as a common link language shared by educated people all over India. In typical official and informal interaction, people from Bengal to Tamil Nadu, from Mizoram to Punjab, from Karnataka to Bihar, tend to make use of English . This is done not because of animosity or hostility towards any language or region but simply because English has come to be viewed as the common language bond between linguistically diverse people .

Intra-Regional Communication

The use of English in education, administration, business, media and in inter-regional contexts, as well as the fact that English has come to be associated with ‘educatedness’, sophistication, culture and prestige, encourages people to use English even in situations where a common Indian language is available . One Hindi/Oriya speaker uses English with another Hindi/Oriya speaker in several formal and informal situations, for talking about a variety of topics; one Oriya/regional speaker writes a personal letter to another Oriya/regional speaker in English ; children who share a common Indian language, often use English with one another as well as with their parents; neighbours who share a common Indian language often use English with each other . For approaching or negotiating with officials, businessmen, traders and others we often use English not because we belong to different linguistic background, but because of other social and psychological reasons .

English has become a pervasive presence in the social matrix of Indian . An increasing number of educated English – knowing Indians use it in almost all domains of life,in all kinds of situations and fields for any number of topics .

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