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## Chapter No VI

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### Summary and Conclusions

#### 6.1 Introduction

English was introduced in India under the British rule sheerly for practical considerations. Their objective was to educate Indians for the secondary administrative posts. But the introduction of English proved to be historic and of far reaching consequences. English occupied the privileged position. It was thought to be an essential qualification for employment. It became the lingua-franca of the literates and occupied the topmost position in the hierarchy of Indian languages. It acted as a link language of the various parts of our multilingual society. As mentioned by Khushwant Singh it became a language of our protest against our rulers ( vide chapter I ). English language played an outstanding role in the growth of nationalism, growth of knowledge and also in bringing about the Cultural Renaissance.

But after independence English lost its privileged position. Rigorous efforts are made to replace English by the mother tongue though it is not totally banished from the school curriculum, the majority of the students learn it as L3. It is the view that the children should be exposed to the foreign language only after the attainment of the ability to read and write in their mother tongue. Its introduction at the school level was left to the discretion of the States in India As a result in various States teaching of English is introduced at various levels of schooling. It is obvious that in our schools, primarily English is taught as a language of comprehension.

But how can we overlook the benefits that English confers on us?

Still it is a link language and an important promoter of social mobility for ordinary people. Its position as an international language is unassailable. Kothari Commission rightly hails it as a library language as it is rich in all literature. Hence, after a lot of experiences people have realized the disastrous effect of banishing English. One can not afford to undergo the 'intellectual harakiri' if English is totally uprooted from the Indian soil.

As mentioned above, the position of English in India today is like a dethroned monarch. Still, however it is being learnt and taught in India with interest. But there is a vast difference between the learning of a mother tongue and that of the second language. One is a natural process while the other is a deliberate activity. The mother tongue has a wide exposure whereas the latter one is marked by the limited exposure. The learning of the second language is under the influence of many factors like motivation, age, language aptitude, language experience, teacher etc. ( vide chapter No II ). Amongst these factors the role of the teacher is indeed vital. He has to take extra efforts to dispel the unfounded fears about English from the minds of the students. The teacher has to provide all sorts of motivation and incentives to enable the students to acquire proper knowledge of the language. But in spite of the reasonable facilities provided and the laborious persistence of the trained and sincere teachers the majority of the students do not acquire the proper level of linguistic ability. The pertinent question, therefore, is why is the performance of the students in English so miserable? Education in general is a joint activity where the teacher, taught and the parents have a role to play. Family and family background have become a crucial factor to all learning in general. Hence the crux of the present study, therefore, was to assess the impact of the family background on the learning of English. In other words the objective

was to test the hypothesis that the student's learning of English is either made\ marred by the favourable or unfavourable family background ( vide chapter No III ). Hence an attempt was made to obtain a picture of the structural, occupational, educational and social background of the family and that of the family relationships in order to assess its impact on the performance of the students in English in particular.

#### 6.2 Nature of Survey :-

In this study the following methods were followed to collect the necessary data.

A) The scope of the study included 200 students of the 9th standard of the four schools situated in and around Warananagar. The schools had more than two divisions of the 9th standard. But it was not practicable to contact such a large number of students. Hence one division consisting of 50 students on random basis was selected as all the divisions of the schools were equally identical in quality, caste, religion and family background. Hence the division selected for study was representative of 9th standard of the school.

B) A preliminary information regarding the number of students, students' religion, caste, parental occupation etc. was gathered from the school registers. Result sheets, roll call and the students' ranking done by the class teachers was obtained.

C) Further, the schools were visited to find out whether they were equipped with the trained and qualified teachers to teach English and other required aids and facilities necessary for the effective learning and teaching of English. It was revealed that all the schools provide essential educational facilities like library, study room and other teaching aids. Besides the information about the teachers who teach English, like their qualifications, teaching experience, reading habits etc. was collected. In other words these

schools were selected only when we were convinced of the fact that the administrative and academic setup of these schools was conducive for learning.

D) In order to judge students' acquisition of English, it was thought necessary to administer a Test. Before setting the Test paper, the teachers teaching English in these four schools were contacted and the question papers set for the terminal and annual examination were scrutinized. It included 1) objective question 2) a paragraph for reading comprehension 3) composition 4) translation (Vide appendix B )

As pre-testing of the question paper was thought necessary, a few students of 9th standard were invited to solve the paper. Their reactions were noted and necessary changes were made in the paper. Now the Test paper was ready for the final examination which was conducted most vigilently. After the careful assessment of the scripts a result sheet was prepared. It is heartening to note that the result sheet tallied with the marks obtained by these 200 students in the school terminal examination and also with the ranking of the same students listed by their teachers (Vide chapter III).

E) The most important and delicate work was to collect the information about the family background of the students. A schedule including the questions on structural, occupational, educational and social background of their family and also of the family relations was prepared. IN this schedule the questions were given along with their possible answers. The students were interviewed with the help of the schedule. Along with the answers given in the schedule, the answers which were not incorporated in the schedule but given by the students were noted. (Vide appendix A )

F) The data was carefully classified in homogeneous groups like

the students having favorable family background and their marks obtained in the Test and viceversa. The data was tabulated in a systemic and methodical manner. The data collected meticulously was studiously interpreted and the conclusions drawn are presented in this dissertation.

G) The collection of the necessary data for the present project was not done without any difficulty. The headmasters and teachers had initial hesitations and doubts in their minds. After the tenacious persistence they extended their co-operation. The main source of information was the students with whom the researcher with the help of the other investigators had to establish rapport by creating in them the necessary confidence to answer the questions of all types pertaining to their family background.

In short, the findings in this dissertation will throw light on the learning of the second language like English. The efforts are also made here to suggest some effective remedies to get rid of the problems mostly originating from the family background and make the learning of the second dslanguage more effecive.

### 6.3 Impact of family background on the learning of English.

Whatever may be the size and form of the family , it has a deep and far reaching influence on the minds of every individual. Emotional attachment, love and responsibility towards the members of the family play a vital role in the formative years of the individual. India in particular has a large heritage of stable family life and the spirit of family solidarity. But still however, due to the forces of industrialization and urbanisation, the stable family structure and its size are undergoing chages. Again, radical chages are taking place in the spheres of economic and social life which affect the pattern of family living. In other words the social structure of the family is

changing fast. Dr. A.R. Desai states, " The traditional joint family and the familistic rural framework have been undergoing a qualitative transformation." A silent social transformation is taking place in the Indian family. The area under study confirms this fact as the families in the part of the rural area also are responding to the changes. Still the family environment which is the major influence in determining the quality of the next generation is dependent on the size, tenement, location, income and education of the family and attitudes of parents. Hence various dimensions of the family background were taken into consideration in order to assess its impact on the learning of English.

#### 6.3.1. Size, Tenement and Location of the Family.

A) In the area under study three distinct types of the families have been found. They are viz i) large families ii) medium families iii) small families having more than seven, five to six and up to four members respectively. Children living in the large families encounter with the difficulties in their study which hamper the process of learning. Disturbances in a large families are so frequent that one gets less or no opportunity to be away from distractions. In a large family with comparatively small accommodation, the space available is very limited which adds to the problems of the school going children. All 43.5 % (87) students coming from the large families could not perform satisfactorily in the Test. No one of them could get distinction, 71 % (62) failed in the Test. Only a small percentage of students 6.89 % (6) could pass in the second class.

In contrast, in a small family the story is entirely different. The children have more opportunities to interact with their parents and more quickly learn adult vocabulary (Vide chapitre IV ). Parents are able to devote adequate time and attention to each child. This is

amply proved by the fact that in the present study, 10 % (20) students coming from the small families, had done well in the Test. Out of them 10 % (2) were in distinction, 25 % (5) in first class and only 10 % (2) were not successful in the Test.

The medium-sized family seems to be an ideal one as far as the students' performance in the Test is concerned. Mental uneasiness, economic strains and consequent frictions seem to be absent in the medium sized families. 46.5 % (93) students belong to this type of family. Most of them had achieved either distinction or firstclass. Needless to mention that the performance is related to the size of the family. (Vide table No. 1 chapter IV)

B) Location of the Tenement :-

If the location of the tenement is suitably situated then it is helpful for the members to undertake the works demanding concentration. But a location subjected to a lot of disturbances ceases to be a quiet place. The house near the S.T. Stand, Cinema Theatre, Video Centre are the examples of such disturbed situations. 59.5 % (115) students complained about the location of their homes where the disturbances were abundant. 55 % (66) of them failed in the Test and only 4 % (5) students could secure first class and 2.5 % (3) students were the distinction holders. (Vide table No. 2 Chapter IV)

C) Size of the Tenement :-

Size of the tenement is equally a vital factor that influences the process of learning. Exteremely small tenement is a source of lot many distractions. The house becomes over-crowded which is not conducive to learning. The present study vividly points out that 7 % (14) of the students having a single room tenement could not do well in the examination. Out of them 82.72 % (12) students had failed in the Test and only one could secure first class.



In the case of 23.5 % (47) students who had spacious tenement having more than three rooms, the story is different. Out of them 6 students achieved distinction and 5 first class. Percentage of failure was quite low. (Vide table No.3 chapter IV)

Thus the above factors vividly elaborate that the family size and the size and location of tenement have a role to play in the process of learning in general and English language in particular. Large sized family with the small size of tenement to live in, is not a suitable place for learning such a family causes a lot many inconveniences and in turn upsets the concentration of the students. Adequate housing is the minimum amenity required for a comfortable living which provides a necessary motivation to the family members to make certain achievements. This has been proved in the survey.

#### 6.3.2 Occupational Background :- -----

Occupational Background of the family is equally vital factor which either promotes or handicaps the learning. Occupation determines the environment in which the child grows. Occupational careers influence the values of socialization. Difference in the nature of jobs tend to produce difference in attitudes and outlooks which are reflected in the performance of the students in Test. The statistics of the sample shows that out of 12 distinction holders 66.66 % (8) belong to the families having white collared occupations. Not a single student coming from the agricultural background was a distinction holder. In the case of students of the manual workers the percentage of failure was quite high 61.66% (Vide table No4 chapter IV) The students whose parents wanted their children to assist them in their occupations had shown disinterestedness in learning. The parents engaged in the white collared jobs only expect that their children should concentrate on their school work. These students had shown a

remarkable success in the language learning.

56.5 % (113) students who have to do one or the other job to supplement the parental occupation, could not do well in the Test. Out of them 61 % (69) students could not even pass the test.

Attention was also given to the families where the mother has to go out for the job. In the case of working mother, because of her absence in the home, the child is deprived of motherly care and vigilance and becomes maladjusted. (Vide chapter No IV). In the study it has been found that the students whose mothers were either farmworkers, wage earners or maid servants, did not perform satisfactorily in the Test. The percentage of failure in the language Test was as high as 80 % ,95 % and 100 % respectively. (Vide table No. 6 chapter IV).

#### 6.3.3 Educational and Social Background. :-

Parents interest in the education of their children is one of the important factors that influences educational attainment. The motivation can be provided only by the teachers and the parents. Educated parents give all possible and required scope to their children to learn effectively. Only educated parents have a dialogue with the teachers for the progress of their children at school. Needless to mention that the children from the educated families have high attainment in the educational system.

The survey adequately illustrates this point . It is found that children coming from the illiterate families had not done well in the Test. The members of the family having no educational environment are after occupational careers. No wonder if they could not give necessary encouragement for the process of learning. In the case of the students coming from illiterate families they could not score good marks in the Test and percentage of failure was more than 50 %. In

case of the students who have highly educated parents, the % of failure was almost nil and their achievement in the Test was high. (Vide table No. 7 and 8 chapter IV)

The social background of the family is another factor to be taken in to consideration. Parents are the models in front of their children to pick up the behavioural patterns and attitudes. Social contacts of the parents provide necessary incentives for their children to be accepted by their peer groups. Such a situation is conducive to learning. It is amply proved by the facts in the present study. A majority of the distinction holders and high rankers belonged to the parents having good social acceptance. On the contrary, those who could not have better social contacts and hence better social interactions had proved to be a poor model for their children to imitate. Most of them (85 %) had failed in the language Test. (Vide table No 9 chapter IV).

#### 6.4 Background of Family Relationship :- -----

Loving and friendly relationships between the members of the family have an impact on the personality development of the child. Language development is also one of its aspects. Hence, an attempt was made to elicit information on the various dimensions of family relationships and its impact on the progress in language acquisition of the students.

##### 6.4.1 Parent-child Relationship :- -----

The parent-child relationship is basically warm and loving. The study reveals that parental acceptance of the child has contributed largely to the success in the examination. Parents having a keen interest and love for the child are assets in the process of learning. The students who had come off with flying colours in the Test belong to

this category. In contrast the students whose parents have not shown much concern for the welfare of their children and who were deprived of parental affection could not do well in the examination. Out of 20 % (40) students who complained about the parental neglect and rejection, 77 % (31) had failed in the Test. (Vide table No 3 chapter V). They presented a contrast in their school achievements.

#### 6.4.2. Parental Ambitions :- -----

Parental expectations and ambitions also contribute towards the process of learning in general. Too low parental expectation regarding the scholastic activities lead to equally low standard of achievement. At the same time unrealistically high parental ambitions handicap the process of learning. It was found that the students who were really motivated by their parents' [14 % (28)] ambitions developed interest in the language learning. All the high rankers belong to this category. 4 % (8) students found the ambitions of their parents unreasonably high. Majority of them 78 % (7) lagged behind in the language learning. Again the students whose parents have low academic expectations from their children [30 % (60)], majority of them [66 % (40)] had poor performance in the Test. (Vide table No 5 chapter V)

#### 6.4.3 Step-Parent-Child Relationship :- -----

The mother-child-relationship is more affectionate and motherly love is a precious thing which can not be substituted by a step-mother. She generally fails to maintain the natural primary relationship with her step-child. Such a child feels rejected and wanting of confidence and his process of learning gets adversely affected. Out of 6% (12) students who were subjected to the step-motherly treatment, 75 % (5) failed in the Test. The remaining could get through only on the border line. (Vide table No 6, chapter V)

#### 6.4.4 Sibling Relationship :- -----

Loving sibling relationship creates pleasant and frictionless home climate which is indeed favourable for the process of learning. Siblings can help each other in their studies moreover they have a healthy competition amongst themselves. More studious and sincere child becomes a model for others to emulate. On the contrary disharmonious relationship between the siblings proves hazardous to the personal and social adjustment of the child. The learning of the second language which demands more attention and motivation is seriously handicapped because of the sibling rivalry. In the data it is found that out of 80 % (160) students having harmonious sibling relationships, 63 % (101) had done well in the Test and all the rankers belonged to this category. Out of 15 % (30) who were deprived of that, only 7 % (2) could somehow pass the Test (Vide table No 7 chapter V)

#### 6.4.5 Husband-Wife Relationship :- -----

There is no divided opinion on the fact that the happy, cordial and loving relationship between husband and wife is conducive to the development of child's personality. The disharmony between the husband and wife relationship may be caused by the loss of faith, bad habits like excessive drinking, lack of loyalty, honesty etc. The stress situation at home creates the emotional conflict in the youngsters and the progress in learning on the part of the students is seriously handicapped. The present survey stands a proof to the point. Out of 52 % (104) students who lived in the happy home 85 % (89) did well in the Test. All the distinction and first class holders belong to them. In contrast out of 40 % (80) students hailing from broken homes, 91 % (73) could not pass the Test. (Vide table No 9 and 10 chapter V)

#### 6.4.6 Communication :- -----

The close contact and intimate association between the members of the family strengthen the bonds between them. It also dispels the undesirable feelings like misunderstanding, fear, hatred etc. Good communication fills home with warmth and understanding. Such a home is conducive to learning. On the other hand communication breakdown causes disorganisation. The home loses peace consequently the learning is adversely affected. Majority of the students in this sample, who claimed to have a good communication, had done well in the Test. Where as none of the 8 % (16) who complained about the total breakdown of the communication with family members and relatives could not pass the Test. Their performance was indeed disappointing. (Vide table No 12, chapter V)

Thus the family background is a crucial factor in the learning of the second language. The structural, occupational, educational and social background of the family and that of family relationships is a contributing factor in the language acquisition of the students. It is indeed true that what a student learns and how well he learns, depends upon the family background that he is lucky or unlucky to have it.

#### 6.5 Suggestions :- -----

It is a fact that family remains a key to happy living. The family environment, the major influence in determining the quality of the next generation is dependent on occupation, education and attitudes of the parents. It lays foundations of the child's personality, mental health and emotional stability. Further, the schools build on the foundations laid by the family but the schools can never replace the tasks to be performed by the parents. It is a call of the time that both the home and the school together must extend their help to the learner. In the circumstances, I would like to offer the following suggestions.

1. There should be close communication between the parents and the teachers. The parents who are ignorant, over ambitious, indifferent or disinterested need to be informed that their apathetic approach results in the poor school career of their children. The school, for that matter should hold frequent conferences with the parents to discuss school career of their children.

2. Among the factors that determine the wellbeing of the family, the most important is the size of the family. This is the factor that determines living conditions of each and every member of the family. There is a need to create an awareness of population problem to the parents. Schools should come forward to impress the parents that an oversized family is a major factor that affects the learning in general and the second language learning in particular.

3. The school should open up a study-room and place it at the disposal of the students. Teachers should motivate the students to make the extensive use of it. In other words the attendance of the study-room should be made compulsory. The experiment of one of the schools, namely, Shri Warana Vidyalaya, Warananagar in this respect is encouraging.

4. It is also important that the parents should be enlightened that there is no use of exerting extensive and unnecessary pressures on the children to reach standards which are too high for them.

5. Most of the children pick up their parents' prejudices, economic aspirations, convictions, attitudes and ideas of happiness. They view their school career from the parental angle. It is necessary to develop in them an ability to think independently the family as well as school should assume the new role in this respect.

6. Again, an appeal to the voluntary organisations should be

made to help the needy and economically handicapped students since the compelling economic circumstances of the parents handicap the learning.

7. It is true that nobody can replace parental task but the role of a teacher is very significant in our economically and socially backward country. He should not confine his areas of activity to the four walls of the school but should inspire the students and their parents to undertake the educational activity, particularly learning of English, seriously. Teachers' visits to the home of the student may prove more productive particularly when it is not possible for the parents to visit the teachers.

The present study reveals that most of the families are indeed inadequate to cope with the situations satisfactorily. The concomitant consequence is the increasing deterioration in the acquisition of the second language. Parents and children are absolutely helpless as they have to bear with the situation. Hence, the responsibility to enhance the tone of linguistic ability of the students rests on the shoulders of the teachers. The question is will the teachers of English come forward voluntarily to assume this new widened role? The positive answer to this question will hopefully solve all the problems related to learning in general and English in particular.

REFERENCE :-

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