

Chapter –II

**ENGLISH IN INDIA :
PRE-AND POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD**

2.0 Introduction:

The present study aims to study the pedagogical practices in the field of teaching of English at primary level in some Marathi Medium Schools in Shirol Taluka in Kolhapur district, Maharashtra. It is basically an empirical study, located in the ethnographic methodological tradition of research in ELT. In recent years, researchers have increasingly come to realize the importance of taking up such studies in order to characterize the features of the live context in which English teaching takes place. It is only after arriving at the description and characterization of the live context that we can seek to make ^{improvements} ~~scenario~~. Since I myself come from this area and have been involved in teaching English at the college level, I was also interested in finding out more about the ELT scenario at the primary and secondary levels. The present study was undertaken out of this urge.

In this Chapter, in order to provide a frame of reference for the study, we take a brief review of the beginning of and subsequent developments in English language teaching in India in general and in Maharashtra in particular.

English language teaching policies in India is such a vast area that several volumes can be written on it. However, keeping the vastness of the area and limitations of space and time in mind, we have decided to consider only the major issues in the development of English language teaching for the purpose of this study.

2.1 Teaching of English :

The teaching of English began in India right from missionary enterprise as a response to the Dispatch of 1659 and the Missionary Clause 1698. It began in the charity schools of missionaries (Biswas et al,1986,3) further Charles Grant's agitation (1797) led English education to 'Macaulay's Minute' and Government policy on English as a medium of education (1835). The controversies regarding the medium of instruction were very shrewdly calmed down by Wood's Despatch of 1854 by recommending vernacular medium at lower level and English at the higher. This 'Magnacharta of Indian Education' seemed to be in favour of Indian languages at the primary level of instruction. But after fifty years of independence, English has



come to be favored as medium of instruction not only at the advanced but also at the primary level of instruction as it can be seen in the mushrooming of English medium schools everywhere, at least in Maharashtra.

2.2. English Language Teaching During British Rule

(Colonial Period) :

The British came to India with the establishment of the East India company in 1600. They were not at all interested in the spread of European education in India as they had to repent over with the experience in America as :

“We had Just lost America from our own folly in having allowed the establishment of schools and colleges and that it would not do for us to repeat the same act of folly in this regard to India.”

(Parliamentary papers, 1852-53, XXX II,113)

2.2.1 Charters Grant And English As a Medium of Instruction :

The policy of the East India company of religious neutrality after the battle of plassey (1757) and the companies interest in the education of Indian people through the medium of vernaculars

irritated the missionaries, Grant, one of the foremost agitator, the then member of Court of Directors, submitted his treatise to the court in 1797. He observed that Indian society was in deplorable and wretched state and the only remedy lay in the introduction of English languages. This anticipated Macaulay's Minute. Charles Grant's observation was the first most important document in the history of Modern Indian Education with the Introduction of English language. Because of it the company was compelled by the Charter Act of 1813 to admit dominions for spreading 'western light and knowledge' in the education of Indians.

2.2.2 The Despatch of 1854 (Woods's Despatch)

The Despatch of 1854 well known as Wood's Despatch declared that the object of education was to spread western knowledge and science, give encouragement to oriental learning at collegiate level. It formulated a policy which used both English and native languages of the people in schools at the secondary stage.

The teaching of English in a systematic way starts from the promulgation of Wood's Despatch of 1854, which has been called 'Magna Charta' of Indian Education. As a result of this by 1900 practically all the institutions of higher education used English as the medium of instruction and aimed at the spread of western knowledge and science. Though initially quite a few schools were opened in Maharashtra to impart instruction to the natives through the Mother tongue, Marathi. Several translation projects were taken up to graft the European Knowledge on to the native language, Marathi in order to produce textbooks in various subjects, such as history, geography, physics, chemistry etc. These were regularly used in the schools.

Woods famous Education Despatch of 1854 the 'Magna Charta' of the education in India expressed the view that English and the modern Indian languages together would become the media for the dissemination of European Knowledge at the secondary stage. But as it happened, English become the sole medium of instruction in secondary schools. The study of every other subject was Subordinated to the study of English under this system.

2.2.3 Hunter commission:

By this time it had become abundantly clear to the British, that educated Indians were deeply involved in creating unrest in India. Sir William Hunter, the Chairman of the Indian Education Commission in 1882, therefore inaugurated in a new education policy which is known as 'Hunter Commission's Policy.'

The main aim of this policy was to prevent Indians from obtaining university education. The main motto of this policy was, "Seek No Further Education After the Highschool." The policy served total concentration on elementary education. It favored use of English as a medium of the highschool stage. The teaching of English become the prime object of the secondary course by 1902 (Nurullah etal, 1943,351)

The 20 years between 1901 and 1921 represented a period of intense and ever increasing political unrest in India. In 1902, Lord Curzon formulated a policy of total officialization of Education, and the quality of education had deteriorated (Nurullah and Naik,1943, XX) During this hour Dayanand Saraswati towards the

end of 19th century and later Tagore (1906) and Gandhiji (1916) were the leading proponents of vernacularization of education.

Gokhale and other intellectuals saw the need for universal elementary education, and also put forward pleas for use of mother tongue in administration. Gokhale, the leader of the moderates in the Congress Movement argued: The quality of education assumes significance only after illiteracy is liquidated (Khubchandani, 1981, 10)

Tagore and Gandhiji rejecting both the manner and content of English Education, laid emphasis on bringing education and life together through vernacular medium.

The Politicization of language issue in India during the struggle for independence dominated the medium controversy, pushing into the back ground the ideological issues concerning the content of education.

2.2.4. Mahatma Gandhi And English Education:

Mahatma Gandhi, the architect of most of the nation building activities, was against the prevalent system of English education He said,

“ The existing system of education is defective – 1) It is based upon foreign culture to the almost entire exclusion of indigenous.

2) It ignores the culture of the heart and hand and confines itself simply to the head.

3) Real education is impossible through a foreign medium --- The foreign medium has caused brain fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfilled them for original work and thought and disabled them for filtering their learning to the family or the Masses.”

(Gandhi M.K., Young India 1921)

He further demanded

“The medium of instruction should be altered at once and at any cost the provincial languages being given their rightful place.” (Harijan 9-7-1938)

Gandhiji’s observation and interpretation were so keen that even fifty years after independence when NCERT Publishes a ‘Discussion Document’ in January 2000 from the point of view of educational reforms in India, it opens with his thoughts on Indian

education and his opinions are preferentially considered in each chapter.

When Gandhiji gave a call to castigate everything that was English, language , manners, clothes, English education suffered a serious set back.

The period of seven years between 1940 to 1946 remained educationally inactive as the learners concentrated on the intensified freedom struggle.

2.3. English in Post Independence India :

One of the perplexing problems that we had to face soon after Independence was the position of English in our country. The problem was the place of English in our educational set-up. There were generally two groups whose thinking was contrary about the place of English in an independent India. From 'Angrezi Hatao' at one extreme to English as the sole medium of education at the other. There have been varying shades of opinion about its place and function. The Hindi-speaking areas have hardly any motivation for learning English. In the non-Hindi speaking area,

English was welcomed heartily and there has been a certain degree of resistance to the learning of Hindi. (Yardi,1987, P.101)

2.3.1 Constitutional Status of English:

After Independence there was re-thinking about the status of English in India & also in the educational set up.

English is a non-Indian language which is recognized constitutionally in Articles 343 of 351 as the Associate National Official Language for 15 years for all purposes for which it was used before. By 343 (3), the official language act was passed in 1963 and it was amended in 1968. The use of English as official language (referred as OL here after) of the union must also not be discontinued until the non Hindi states agree for such discontinuance. Article 346 provides that the OL of the union (Hindi or English) shall be the OL for communication between the Union and a state and between the states. (The Constitution of India, 1984 , 108-10)

Commenting upon the constitutional place of English, the first Educational Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said in a press conference,

“-----One hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English, an integral part of our educational system. ----- English has today because one of the major languages of the world and Indians can neglect its study at the risk of loss of themselves.(Bhatia, P.5.).

Out of fear of getting the education system of India handicapped after independence, the Indian political leaders and educationists felt it necessary to continue the place and status of English in the education of India that had been influenced by the British Education System for almost 150 years. It was realized for the first time in the history of India that only English can play the role of an inevitable link language in India.

Let us examine the various commissions constituted to examine the place of English and recommend policies about its development.

2.3-2 Education Commissions And Committees, And Policies Regarding Use of English Language in Post Independence India:

When there was a crying need for the spread of primary education, the Government of India set up University

Education Commission in 1948-49 under the Chairmanship of Dr.S.Radhakrishnana. The commission recommended that English should continue to be studied in High-Schools and Universities in order that we may keep in touch with the living stream of ever growing knowledge (Agrawal 1984-; 86). It is expected that the pupils at the higher secondary and university stages be made conversant with three Languages. the regional language the federal language and English.

2.3.2.1 Secondary Education Commission:

The secondary Education Commission” under the Chairmanship of Dr. Mudliar in 1952-53 had not any concrete and innovative recommendations in case of English language teaching, but chose to continue the earlier ones.

The Kunzru Committee appointed by the University Grants Commission in 1957 was also in favour of the continuance of English language as an OL and as they recommended that the medium of instruction at University level, English should be given special attention in the pre university classes (three year degree courses)



2.3.2.2. Three Language Formula:

The ' Central Advisory Board of Education' devised the formula known as the three language formula at its 23rd meeting held in 1956. It recommended that three languages should be taught in the Hindi as well as non-Hindi areas at the middle and high school stage and devised the following formula for this purpose :

- 1 (a) i) Mother tongue
ii) or, regional language
iii) or, a composite course of mother tongue and regional language.
iv) Or, a composite course of mother tongue and a classical language
v) Or, a composite course of a regional language and a classical language
- (b) Hindi or English
- (c) A modern Indian or a modern European language provided it has not already been taken under (a) or (b) above.

- 2 (a) As above
- (b) English or a modern European language
- (c) Hindi (for non-Hindi – speaking areas) or any other modern Indian language (for Hindi speaking areas).
- (study of English in India,1965,12,13)

2.3.2.3 Recommendations of Conference of Chief Ministers Held in 1961 :-

In the conference of chief ministers held in 1961 about the firm decision about English, the three language formula given by the previous commission was simplified. The three language formula was endorsed at the chief Minister's conference. English was given a suitable place in the formula.

THE THREE LANGUAGE FORMULA WAS :-

- a) The regional language or the mother tongue when the later is different from the regional language.
- b) Hindi, or any other Indian language in Hindi speaking areas and
- c) English or any other modern Europe an language.

(The study of English in India, Ministry of Education,1967,P.13)

The sense of equality among the languages inherent in this recommendation was not in question. The intention was to make the load of language learning equal in all parts of the country and also to achieve national integration through the use of English. However the formula proved impracticable due to the lack of motivation among students in the Hindi speaking North to learn any other Indian language, and (perhaps reaction to this) the continuing the political opposition in Tamil Nadu to the Introduction of Hindi. Speaking in the Rajya sabha ,in Hindi incidentally, miss Jayalalitha (ATADMK) attacked the three language formula – Tamil and English – was being implemented effectively in Tamil Nadu and that there was no need for Hindi (Yardi,1987,P.103)

2.3.2.4 Kothari Commission (1966):

Realizing the shortcomings in the earlier education system and its implementation Shri. M.C.Chagla, the then Education Minister, appointed the Education Commission in 1964 which is well known as ‘Kothari Commission’ (The sixth commission in the history of Indian Education) The chairman was D.S.Kothari. The

commission began its work on Oct. 2, 1964 and submitted its report on June 26, 1966. The Report of the commission was considered by the Board as a "National Education Policy" since independence. It gave ^{the} three language formula a comprehensive dimension. It suggested three languages :

L1 The mother tongue or the regional language.

L2 Official language of the Union Hindi and Associate official language English.

L3 A modern Indian or foreign language not covered under 1 & 2 and other than that used as the medium of instruction.

(Reports of the Education Commission, 1964-66, 192)

For several linguistic minorities it has virtually become a four language formula, as many state Governments insist on the compulsory learning of regional language.

Two states- Tamil Nadu and Mizoram- have backed out from the compulsory provision of the third language as envisaged in the formula this avoiding teaching of Hindi.

According to Agnihotri and Khanna (1994, 67) the three language formula failed miserably because there was strong resistance to the study of Hindi in non-Hindi area and the people in

Hindi area did not see any reason to study an additional Indian language. Dasgupta (1970) feels that heavy costs and efforts involved as well as the opposition to heavy language load contributes to its failure.

The controversy and objection during the last three decades are concentrated not on the place of English in curriculum and mother tongue or regional language as medium of instruction as suggested in the Three Language Formula, but on the place of Hindi as a link language, and the official language of the union by the non-Hindi states, and on a modern Indian language for Hindi states by Hindi area.

Therefore, though the Three Language Formula is a failure in popularizing the place and study of Hindi, and a modern Indian language in India, no controversy is noticed in case of medium of instruction that is mother tongue or the regional language. On the other hand English seems to be accepted as a second language, as a library language, as an international language and not so much as a link language or official language.

However, it is to be noted that the Commission strongly recommends not to begin the study of English before class V,

before the student acquires adequate command over the mother tongue. The study of three languages at the elementary stage will interfere considerably with the development of the child's mastery over his mother tongue and his intellectual growth. There are controversies among the educationists, psychologists, intellectuals about the introduction of English at the particular age group. One group opposes introduction of English at the primary level believing that mother tongue is the best medium for the students' development of knowledge. It also supports to the point that introduction of two languages (L1 & L2) formally in the same standard will harm students linguistic development. On the other hand, the group who is in favour of introduction of English at the primary level puts forward the view that at the age of 6 & 9 child can learn maximum languages. However the commission strongly recommends introduction of English only at std. V, that is, after the primary education is over and middle school begins.

2.3.2.5 National Policy of Education:

The national policy of education was formulated in 1968. The policy noted the use of regional languages as media of

instruction at the primary and secondary stages. The proposal of the policy included the motivation of Hindi as a link language, and English as a second language. However, the recommendations were not put in action on account of its marginal acceptance.

2.3.2.6 1986 National Policy of Education:

The 1986 National policy of Education and plan of Action doesnot make any innovative suggestion in case of the place of English in curriculum especially in higher education. It has persisted the recommendations of Kothari Commission regarding introduction of English i.e. not to begin before std. V.

ACHARYA RAMMURTI COMMISSION :

The Acharya Rammurti commission appointed to review the 1986 National Educational policy, Submitted its report in 1990. About the learning of Hindi and English, the commission reiterated a statement made by Kothari Commission, that the criteria should be, not years of study but hours of study and even more importantly levels of attainment.

The Discussion Document published by NCERT, New Delhi in January 2000 seriously considers the issue of place of English.

NCERT Suggests,

“The current practice of imposing a new language as the medium on the learner right from the pre-school stage and the primary classes is highly detrimental to pupils’ growth, results in unproductive mugging up of text materials which is a heavy load of non comprehensibility and seriously hampers any attempt of self learning or self directed learning. Besides it also does a serious damage to pupils’ progress in and commend of their first language which asserts the development of their overall personality”

(NCERT, New Delhi, Jan 2000,64)

Therefore, till the end of the primary stage, no other language except the pupils first language should be permitted as medium of instruction.

As can be seen from this very brief review, the issue of mother tongue as the medium of education has a very long history. Most of the Indian Intellectuals, like Tagore, Gandhiji, argued for the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level. The various commissions have recommended that English as a subject should be deferred till at a lower stage. And yet the recent trends in ELT in Maharashtra reflect a radically

different formulation of policies as the government of Maharashtra has introduced English at the primary level. Let us therefore look at the history of the development of ELT policies in Maharashtra.

2.4 Teaching of English in Maharashtra: An Overview:

To trace the development of ELT in Shirol Taluka, Kolhapur District, it will be useful to place the study in the frame of reference of Maharashtra. Shirol Taluka is a part of Kolhapur District which remained a part of Mumbai Region before it became a part of district of Kolhapur & Maharashtra in 1949. This chapter intends to present development of ELT in Maharashtra in ^{the} pre-and post-independence period.

2.4.1 Pre-Independence Period:

To trace the beginning of teaching English language in Maharashtra, it is necessary to go back in history of Mumbai Region before Maharashtra state was formed in 1960. It was Elphinstone, the then Governor of Mumbai region who, for the first time ordered to survey the condition of education in the

Region on 10th March, 1824 in order to reformulate the education system in the Region.

Education was perceived by Elphinstone as a political necessity, as a way of ensuring stability. This was coupled with the belief in the role of Britain as a Messiah to civilize the natives. The approach of Elphinstone towards medium of instruction was liberal and humanitarian. Sanskrit, modern Indian languages and English sought equal motivation in education.

In the course of time, Poona college was opened where all the three languages, Sanskrit, English and Marathi were studied. But later on with the introduction of Macaulays' policy of education, the attention was concentrated on the English language teaching. Around 1850 a number of English medium schools were opened by missionaries. However educationists and intellectuals like Mahatma Phule, Lokhitwadi, Justice Ranade protested against Macaulay's "Downward Filteration Policy". Mahatma Jotiba Phule, the pioneer of the education of masses in Maharashtra, very strongly protested against Downward Filteration Policy' in his agitation before Hunter commission on Oct.1982. According to him, the policy might have had some practical implications in

Europe but so far the contemporary Indian social set up was concerned, the superior (Brahmin) class would neither sustain nor accept the responsibility of education of the shudras (non-brahmin). (Phule, 1971, 715-25). Phule was among the first intellectuals and social reformers to realize the importance of education in the heavily caste ridden Maharashtrian societies.

With the promulgation of the famous Wood's Despatch (1854) the so called "Magna Charta" of Indian education, a deceptive language policy was established in India, as discussed in the early part of this chapter. English began to be taught as a second language at secondary level and became a medium of instruction at higher level. And since then English has enjoyed a highly prestigious position at the secondary school and university level and continued to play a significant role in the academic and administrative fields till 1947 and even after that.

Tarkhadkars' (1867) Anglo Marathi Translation series based on Arnold Henrys 'First Latin Book' and Plate's 'Lehrgander English Sprachhi Part I and II' was widely used, Grammar Translation method was widely adopted. The teaching of English

in the classrooms was pedantic, dull and largely wasteful (Saraf, 1975).

In short so far as the education in Maharashtra is concerned, the liberal policy of Elphinstone and the appreciation of British policy of education by Mahatma Jotiba Phule and other social workers created a good background for the education of masses in Maharashtra. However the issue of use of the regional languages as medium of instruction as against English was not discussed much, probably because of the prestige Sanskrit enjoyed among the higher caste.

The real crisis on ELT Policy in Maharashtra begins in the post independence period. Now we turn to the ELT policy in Maharashtra in the following section of the chapter.

2.4.2 Post-Independence Period:

The standard of English deteriorated in Maharashtra after independence. There was an explosion of opportunities and the number of schools and students board high. Yet the standards have constantly been deteriorating in Maharashtra. Students from Maharashtra show very poor performance in English in S.S.C.

Examination each year. (Dastane 2000, 48) At the national level Maharashtra expressed strong emotions about English.

The Government of Maharashtra took a bold decision in 1948. The teaching of English was removed from Std.V to VII. The decision was intended to provide opportunity to the people to pass their matriculation by studying English for four years i.e. Std. VIII to XI and to downgrade the status of English and upgrade the regional language. Though the intention was good, this decision proved very harmful. Even the Central Government tried to persuade the Government of Maharashtra (C.M. Moraraji Desai) from reducing the hours given to the teaching of English.

(Vyavahare 1980)

The policy proved to be a great failure because.

- 1) Over all slackness among the teachers of English and learners increased.
- 2) It produced incompetent teachers of English for the subsequent generations.
- 3) Maharashtra remained a backward state in the standard of English in the country.

The introduction of structural syllabus in the country (1956) was an innovative step in the history of English language teaching in India. Maharashtra too remained active in the perpetration of new syllabus conducting two all India seminars at Mahabaleshwar and Nagpur (1957)

However, there was a lack of uniformity in educational and English language teaching patterns in different parts of the state mainly because of the reorganization of the states in 1956. A bigger bilingual state was formed with the inclusion of some districts from the state of Hyderabad and M.P. than it was earlier. There was difference in the pattern of level of study and standards. e.g. Western Maharashtra and Marathwada introduces English from Std. VIII to XI while in Vidarbha English beginning with Std. VII to X (Saraf 1975).

Nothing much significant happened during 1956 to 1962 except the establishment of the state institute of English for Maharashtra at Bombay in 1965. It was an important stage in the development of English language teaching in the state. The main functions of the institution are to train teachers, produce teaching materials and carry and extension work and research.

The government published a white paper proposing uniformity in the educational pattern in 1969 to elicit public response on the reconstruction. As a result of the public opinion and demand of Zillah Parishads, the government introduced English from Std. V in 1970. English was made compulsory in 1972 all over the state and the uniformity of secondary education was once again achieved after 24 years. The process of the new pattern was completed in 1975 which about 4 lakh students all over the state appeared for SSC examination with English as a compulsory subject.

The following language formula was accepted in Maharashtra .

Lower Primary Level (I to IV)

i) L1 – Marathi

Higher Primary Level (V to VII)

- | | | | |
|----|----|---|---------|
| 1) | L1 | - | Marathi |
| 2) | L2 | - | Hindi |
| 3) | L3 | - | English |

Highschool level (VIII to X)

1)	L1	-	Marathi
2)	L2	-	Hindi (Compound Hindi Sanscrit)
3)	L3	-	English

A decision of new pattern of the division of ten years of schools into 5 + 3 + 2 pattern was taken and it was reported in the program of Action, 1986 that :

The states where the first ten years are divided into 4 years of primary, 3 years of upper primary and 3 years of high school will attempt to switch over to 5+3+2 pattern by 1995.

All the steps and efforts taken so far to improve standard of English in Maharashtra during 50 years after 1947 proved to be unsatisfactory. The results of English subject at SSC level decide the results of the school. The average results of SSC and HSC for last 15 years are around 50% only. (Dastane 2000). Against this undesirable background the Government of Maharashtra (Vilasrao Ddeshmukh Govt.) has taken a radical step in teaching of English in schools of Maharashtra , English is introduced from Std. I in

primary schools from June 2000 (Circular Govt. of Maharashtra, शालेय शिक्षण विभाग, शासन निर्णय क्रं. सुप्राअ १०९९/१८०/१९९/प्रा.शि.५ दिनांक डिसेंबर ३० १९९९.)

In chapter II, we have taken a review of the development in ELT and the debate over medium of instruction in the pre and post independence period. We have considered policies regarding ELT, first at the national level and at the state level. The chapter also presents a brief review of opinions of ELT experts on ELT. Thus the chapter provides a frame of reference for the present study.

Now, chapter III which follows aims to present critical summary of aims, objectives, curriculum and textbooks etc. at the Std. I to IV. .