

Executive Summary of UGC Minor Research Project

Topic: A Comparative study of English Pedagogies employed in Rural Primary Schools and Urban Private Schools of Chandrapur district

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In the context of comparing the pedagogies used in the rural and urban primary schools, the focus was on understanding the methodologies used by the teachers in the classrooms and their impact on the learning of basic language skills. The status of English pedagogies has been studied through the questionnaire, the interview schedule provided to the teachers of rural Government-aided and urban un-aided primary schools and by observing the classroom practices. The present status of the basic language skills (LSRW) of the students has been known through the proficiency test conducted in the classrooms. The causes of the poor proficiency of the basic linguistic skills, especially reading and writing, particularly of the rural students have been studied through the analysis of the proficiency test.

In the proficiency test it is found that the four basic linguistic skills- Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) of the students of Government schools in rural area are very weak as compared to the students of private schools in urban area. Rural students are not trained enough to listen and comprehend simple routine English words and sentences. Most of the students are unable to speak a single sentence on any topic of their choice. Many students lack the confidence to read the text of a lower grade class. The writing skills need to be improved as they are weak in writing simple and short grammatically correct sentences.

The listening and speaking skills of the private school students are average and need improvement. Most of the urban students are good in reading and writing English as they have been getting exposure of English from other academic subjects in school. The teaching of English in rural Government schools is not skill oriented but content oriented. Teachers spend most of the time in explaining the text through translation in Marathi. Lesson planning is weak and not according to the curricular objectives of English textbook. Most of the Teachers blame rural background of students for low standard of English. They lack motivation in designing innovative pedagogies using local resources with a focus on skill-oriented teaching and learning.

There is a gap of proficiency between actual skills and the expected skills. This gap is huge in case of rural students. Students have not been getting extra coaching to fill this gap. There is an urgent need of a support system for teaching English apart from regular school hours. Most of the teachers in urban private schools are not regular. They do not get enough salary as compared to government school teachers. They leave their jobs if they get any good opportunity in public sector or private sector. So, the teachers are focused on completing the syllabus. Question- answer method is mostly used in teaching. Group and pair work activities are not found during the teaching. Teachers use English while giving instructions and asking questions, but most of the content explanation is done in Hindi. Teachers give more stress on writing activity by giving questions from the textbook for homework. Teachers do not give enough exposure to listening and speaking activities in classrooms.

The pedagogies of English in used in rural and urban schools are not student friendly and do not motivate them to learn. These methods could be useful for studious students but not suitable for average and below average students.

The children of well-educated parents (graduate/ post graduate) are good in using language skills. Parents work as a support system for English language learning at home. In rural areas, children of well-educated parents are good in applying English language skills in their studies. They have better understanding of English and are motivated to learn English.

English teaching in both types of schools are not activity based. Even the prescribed activities in the text are not carried out by teachers. The individual and group projects given in the textbook are not assigned to students. Rural and urban Teachers are 'trapped' in prescribed textbook. They forget that it is only a source out of many sources. All their classroom activities revolve around the textbook.

Based on the results out of the analysis of proficiency test and teacher questionnaire, certain corrective and preventive measures have been suggested to rural and urban teachers to improve their English pedagogies. A theoretical model has been prepared for the teachers based on the feedback provided by students and teachers which would help them in designing their pedagogies according to their different working conditions.