

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN MULTILINGUAL POST-INDEPENDENT INDIA****Dr. M. Rameshwor Singh**

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**Abstract**

*India, having linguistic diversity, is linguists' paradise. In addition to it, it is the applied linguists' laboratory where any number of experiments can be conducted: experiments in any of the following or related areas - bilingualism, multilingualism, language planning, language in contact, emergence of Indian English, problems of translation, teaching languages in trying circumstances etc. The problem of a compulsory official language in Indian context is a very complicated phenomenon. The analyses of the complex problems concerning society, language and the teaching of languages in a multicultural and multilingual country like India have great theoretical importance in addition to its practical implications. The present paper attempts to highlight the emergence and the current position of English language in the multilingual India in the post-independent scenario.*

**Key words:** Linguistic diversity, teaching languages, official language, post-independent scenario.

**Introduction:**

The question of national official language is not socially neutral. In fact, in the process of taking decisions about a *common national language*, three important factors are to be taken into account: *language, society* and *communication*. Without communication, no social relationship is possible. If one social group feels it cannot communicate with the other in a particular language, that group feels insecure. The formation of linguistic states in India in 1956 contributed to a revival of national cultures, of languages and their literature, the regional press, theatre, the cinema etc. At the same time, regionalism was just growing into an alarming state. Every linguistic region tried to

develop its own regional sentiments: 'Maharashtra for Maharashtrians', 'Assam for Assamese', 'We Tamils' etc., on the one hand, and 'national integration' on the other. Ideally, the movements should not end up in a conflict. However, the source of conflict lies in socio-economic factors. The dispute between Bengal and Assam or Orissa and Andhra or Maharashtra and Karnataka or Punjab and Haryana and several other inter-state disputes represent the conflicts among regions. People in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka look at Hindi as the language of a region and there is a fear that one region may dominate over the other. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the movements and socio-linguistic factors behind language slogans. The unequal economic development, specific economic conditions, the idealized history of a region, memories activated by the regional political forces as part of the political struggle in a given region and supported by the elite, the zealously guarded regional traditions, the revival of the regional culture, and several other factors are to be considered.

The Indian experiment as a whole required a careful study. There have been so many commissions: the Radha Krishnan Commission (1948-49), the Mudaliar Commission (1952-53), the Kothari Commission (1964-66), and the Ramamurty commission (1990) etc. Despite having so many commissions and their recommendations, the basic problems have not been solved. In fact, more problems are getting serious now. Boris I. Kluyev (1981), a Russian Indologist, in his *India - National and Language Problem* (in Krishnaswamy, N., S.K. Verma et al 1992: 231) pointed out:

*Specific studies of national processes in developing countries, in particular in India, are also necessary to avoid a possibly unproductive approach to these processes, considering them to be exclusive phenomenon with unique specificity inherent only in certain regions of the world. Some sort of transitional conditions whose nature and trend of development have not been revealed with sufficient certainty, and, therefore, regarding them as peripheral phenomena in the general theory of nation.*

The analyses of the complex problems concerning society, language and the teaching of languages in a multicultural and multilingual country like India have great theoretical importance in addition to its practical implications. English is the *associate official language* of the republic of India and Hindi in *devnagri script* being the official language of the union. Though the British introduced English into the subcontinent as an instrument of colonial rule, the language took its roots in India. It is now considered to be the same as that of the indigenous languages of India. For example, the Sahitya Academy evaluates creative literature in Indian English (IE) as it does in all the national languages of India for its annual award.

A number of linguistic studies on Indian English have already demonstrated that the language has been nativized. Moreover, it has been made a suitable medium for expressing values of Indian culture and civilization. These studies discuss not only the nativization of phonology, lexicon and grammar of English, but also the utilization of native conventions of speech and writing in English, and the impact of the bi- and multilingual context of India on creativity in English. What these studies clearly demonstrate is the fact that English is no longer a foreign language in the sense this term is understood in literature; neither is it exclusively an exponent of the British culture. What dictates the norms of the use of English in India is an Indian *grammar of culture* (Koul, 1992).

In a plurilingual interaction, no single language caters to all the needs of the particular language. They are determined by: (i) the pragmatic demands of the situation, depending on the listener's capacity and the speaker's ability as well as their cultivation of the language and (ii) the institutional factors of identification and language, here, serving as a level for status, prestige and fashion. The second factor adds sentimental affiliations with one or the other language. Patterns of

intra-group and inter-group communication and the educational system that encourages the “three-language formula” shows that many parts of the country find utilization of more than one contact language to be congenial. During the past five or six decades, there has been an ongoing debate about reallocating the role of English in India. Given the mosaic of conflicting elites, there is no dearth of solutions at the ideological level. Policies at the union and state level, no doubt, lay stress on shedding the dominance of *imperial English*, and assigning new roles to indigenous languages in public life.

However, during the same time at the societal level, English has continued to be an important part of the communication matrix of urban India. There has been a glaring proliferation of English seeping through the upper crust of the society to the middle class and further down to the grassroots level, particularly in urban settings. Today, we have in the country more English teachers, more students, who learn English, more Indian English writers, a stronger English press and a powerful English media. It is quite different from that of the British-ruled India. The people do not show as much disenchantment with English or hostility towards it as it is evident among a segment of leadership. Today the penetration of English in a variety of domains has begun to sink roots in the Indian soil. Consequently, Indian English is getting further detached from native English speakers. With the growth of literacy, urbanization and technological advancement, the scope and intensity of communication in English for inter-group and intra-group contact is being radically transformed. Today the urban milieu provided more opportunities than before for Indians to interact among Indians through a smattering of English or by a frequent shift from an Indian language to English or vice versa.

In independent India, the continued use of English and the preference for the democratic form of government have now become part of the national consciousness. In case of English, developments in science and technology, communication, global trade and more recently, the Internet and use of smart phones, have only reinforced its importance in India. In fact, it would be fair to say that a majority of educated Indians today probably feel grateful that our erstwhile colonial rulers left behind a more valuable gift of a globally useful language like English. It is more valuable than one econo-politically less popular like French or Spanish or Portuguese.

In the 1960s, Indian politicians regularly referred to English as a relic of the British colonial rule and wanted to hoist Hindi and the regional languages as the medium of official communication and education (Sheorey, 1998). It seemed to us then that the English language could be on the way out, relegated to second-class status as an optional subject of study. Now, as we begin the new millennium, English seems to have become so entrenched a language and such an integral part of India’s multilingual urban culture that it can hardly be ignored or dislodged. The English language’s position in today’s India is better characterized as what Nayar (1997) describes: First, English is (still) not ‘native’ to the Indian environment, although it is used extensively by a small but influential group of people “as a medium of communication in a variety of domains like education, administration and commerce.” There are virtually no monolingual users of English using it in all domains of activity. Second, in multilingual India, English serves as a link language among educated Indian, who typically speak a variety of indigenous languages. Third, there is a certain amount of environmental support for English in the form of popular English media and indigenous literature in English. Fourth, English is one of the official languages of the country with the status of *associate official language* and mastery of English is considered a social and educational accomplishment. Gupta (1995) has given an observation regarding the status and importance of English as a symbol of social and educational accomplishment. He remarked, “Indians secretly believe, if not say, that competence in English makes a considerable difference in their career prospects....Politicians and

bureaucrats denounce the elitism of English-medium schools but surreptitiously send their children to them”. In short, Kachru’s (1986) pronouncement that English ‘has now become an integral part of India’s linguistic repertoire’ is even more correct today.

The overall scene in post-modern India of today seems hardly any different from the post-colonial situation of yesteryears. There seem to be three strands of students in the higher education sector: (i) a majority of students graduate from regional-language-medium schools with some book or rote knowledge but little communicative ability in English. They then enter English-medium institutions of higher education and struggle with varying degrees of success to cope with the English language requirements of higher education. Most of them try to manage to learn enough English, largely formulaic and cliché-ridden to meet the English related demands of their education and of the careers they have been forced to choose. A small segment, having graduated from English-medium schools (convent schools and expensive public schools) enters colleges or universities with adequate fluency and enjoys an initial advantage as well as some social power and prestige over their peers. A much larger group of students from regional schools, who enrolled in colleges, where all subjects are taught in the regional language and where English is only one of the subjects, go through college with very little use of English and end up pursuing careers which require only a minimal use of the language. There is, of course, a disadvantage of being not proficient in English. These students develop an inferiority complex. They also have limited nation-wide career mobility and so they are largely confined to their own native language bounds.

The use of English language in post-colonial India, in a way, reflects the nation’s capacity to accept and make a language as foreign as English so utterly her own. It becomes so evident from our transactions in academic, technological, commercial and administrative sectors, and also in the mass media, tourism and entertainment circles, and among the urban youth. For example: three states of the North East: Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland have granted statutory recognition of English by accepting it as their sole official language. In the light of this, in spite of its genealogical remoteness from other Indian languages, Indian English can be regarded as more Indian than foreign.

In general, the global objectives of language teaching can be defined as ‘helping learners learn a language or languages to perform a variety of functions.’<sup>1</sup> Underlying these functions are two fundamental functions: helping children learn to ask questions, the most important intellectual ability man has yet to develop and helping children use this language effectively in different social networks. Languages in a multilingual setting form a system-network. Each language in this network has a function-determined value of the other languages. A society or a government can assign a new value to any one of the languages in the system network in terms of its own policy of language planning, but the society or government must realize that this assignment of a new value to a language will produce a chain reaction in the network. The values of the other languages in the network are bound to undergo changes. The notion of link language or *lingua franca* has its significance in multilingual settings. It encourages wider mobility, national integration, and a sense of tolerance. It enriches the other languages in contact and vice-versa. Effective bilingualism or multilingualism is a powerful way of enriching the linguistic repertoire of individuals. These resources offered by plurality of languages can be used for rapid social and economic changes and modernization programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> Halliday in *Explorations in Function of Language* refers to five functions: Instrumental, Regulatory, Interactional, Imaginative and Representational.

By the time India became independent, English had already consolidated its position in the school and university education. Leaders of the freedom movement - Gandhi, Nehru, Tilak, Bose, and Gokhale among others used it extensively in their discussions and writings, though they could reach the masses only in their own languages. Creative writing had also discovered Indian voices in Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy, and even in the works of Diaspora writers like V.S. Naipaul and Salman Rushdie among others. In the political scenario, the debates of constituent assembly held in 1949 clearly indicated the significance of English in India. It became obvious that 'Hindi' was seen as a threat by South-Indians - a symbol of North Indian supremacy over the South. On the other hand, those who had fought years for the dignity of their country noticed the continuity of the colonial rule in keeping English in India. A compromise was needed to be evolved. The pressures from the most vocal and elite section of the society were understandably in favour of English, yet English was not listed in schedule VIII of the constitution which included fourteen (now eighteen) Indian languages. Hindi was declared the *official language* of the union and English was given the status of *an associate official language* for a period of fourteen years. As the appointed day (26th January, 1965) for the abolition of English approached, there were widespread riots in several parts of South India. After Nehru died in 1964, Hindi enthusiasts insisted on the implementation of the constitutional provisions regarding English. Students in the South and non-Congress forces joined hands to form anti-Hindi associations: '*Hindi never, English ever*' was their slogan; two self-immolations and sixty-six killings followed in Madras. The government was forced to pass the 1967 official language (amendment) act assuring the continuance of English in addition to Hindi as the official language of the union.

Kishnaswamy and Sriraman (1994) have effectively argued that post-independent India witnessed a continuation of colonial policies with regard to English and as a result, it has become even more deeply entrenched in Indian society. It has an enormous up market value. Be it in higher education, administration, the judiciary, journalism or multi-national companies, high level of proficiency in English significantly improves one's chances for easy entry, and quick professional growth. It is unfortunate that in spite of a long series of committees, study groups and commissions, it has not been able to redefine the space called 'English' according to the prevailing socio-linguistic reality.

So far, concerning the language problem in India, *linguistic chauvinism* has expressed itself in various forms since independence, often led by self-serving leaders who have themselves received an education in English and its accruing benefits. These leaders have gained some support on the hypothesis that recognizes the importance of the regional languages. However, this is a flawed argument, positing one against the other. Teaching of one at the cost of the other is counter-productive since both have different roles and are equally important. Regional languages also provide access to specific socio-cultural milieus, a mutually enabling process. In a situation of skewed development, the importance of empowerment through imparting information through regional languages cannot be overemphasized. However, while this is important, it cannot be at the cost of proficiency in the English language. English is the most widely spoken language globally. It can also be used to overcome regional chauvinism. The attempts to impose Hindi as national language have initiated violent backlash from the Southern states, which see this yet, another form of the Hindi heartland's attempt at domination. In such a society as diverse as India, the attempt to impose the language of one region over another can only be disastrous. While English may also invite resistance because of its foreign colonial origin, this factor can be an advantage too since it does not invite charges of regional domination.



Not only can English link the country, but also it is indispensable as a global link. No other language is so widely spoken or widely used, whether it is in global commerce, diplomacy or information technology. With India attempting to emerge as an IT leader, knowledge of English is a *sine qua non*, something that IT leader Wipro Chairman, Azim Premji recognizes. Asked in an interview whether he did not think more Indian language graphical user interfaces should be developed, Premji shot back saying, "I think English language is the only national language. The sooner we recognize it, the better." (*The Times of India*, January 1, 2001). Premji's comments underlined the reality that as a means of empowerment English is the foremost instrument. In a deeply stratified Indian society, knowledge of English is a means of social and economic mobility. The idea is not to keep those without knowledge of English out, but to provide them with the facility that will give them access to wider opportunity.

To a considerable extent, English language has transformed itself from a symbol of colonialism to a tool for globalization. We need to move from colonialism to globalisation in order to maximize individual as well as national opportunities that the emerging economic global order offers. There is also a need to decolonize English language education in a constructive way in India. Here the question 'whether India would have been a much better place if the importance of English had been realized earlier' is disputable. But what is not disputable is the fact that the familiarity with English has become India's great selling point in the international market, particularly in the field of information technology. Alex Lightman, who calls twenty-first century *The Asian Internet Century*, remarked:

*The internet becomes Asia's tool to bypass all the blind alleys and compete for the commanding heights of hardware, software, communications, storage and tele-services. In the crudest sense, the internet is like a giant glacier that will crush the big mountains.*

The importance of acquiring proficiency in English is not lost on the young people; some of whom clearly feel that they have no choice but to learn English if they are to be forwardly and upwardly mobile. Some Indian students are eager to learn English not just because they consider mastery of English to a social accomplishment, but also because they are convinced that English is the ticket to well paying professional jobs, providing an avenue to establish one's professional credibility, and a gateway to achieve social and economic success. As Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1994) pointed out, "Indian students have figured out that knowing English opens up opportunities not only for pan-Indian mobility but also for more lucrative and satisfying careers overseas". There is, in fact, empirical evidence clearly indicating that Indian students have a positive attitude towards learning of English. Agnihotri and Khanna (1997) after surveying over eleventh hundred participants and interviewing seventy-three professionals, concluded that English evokes mostly positive attitudes and stereotypes and that the urban Indian youth in particular appreciate the association of English with higher education, employment opportunities, social mobility, career advancement and access to knowledge.

The last decade of the twentieth century saw a proliferation of television in India as a source of popular home entertainment. Access to Anglo-American TV programmes like MTV, BBC, CNN, Star Movies etc., have brought native English and its entertainment potential even to rural Indian home. It can also be asserted that the beginning of the present century has created a keen interest in the communicative use of English. All over India, there is a sudden increased interest in the teaching and learning of spoken English. In fact, there is no dearth of 'learn to speak English' classes in every large city in India. There is also a gender-based angle to English education, which has not changed much over the years. For most girls, on the one hand, knowledge of English is a means of achieving

equality of status and power through employment and financial independence. Yet, on the other hand, despite the winds of feminism and greater female participation in public life, English education continues to be an important factor for young women in their marital prospects. Irrespective of what post-marital private status wives may have, men, by and large, still prefer English proficient partners at least for social reason, if not for their potential to contribute to the family matters through employment. It is not a hyperbolic exaggeration that for many urban males, an English-illiterate wife can be a source of social embarrassment.

In the global scenario, the example of China with its rapid growth of economy and tremendous prospects in the near future can be cited as an example. Beijing is, in many ways, a global city. Shimmering glass and chrome high-rise houses, scores of MNCs, and a big Mac can be as easily found as chowmein. Yet, English skills, or rather the lack of them, remain an obstacle in China's projection of itself as a major global player. According to James Robinson, senior consultant with APCO, a Beijing-based investment consultancy, 'MNCs are keen to localize their operations in China'. However, the lack of English language skills and the inexperience of most local managers in operating in cross cultural business environment remains a serious problem. (*The Economic Times*, Sept 23, 2003). The reference to China is an allusion to its inability to compete with India in the IT industry and certain other sectors. However, with 375 million Chinese now estimated to be learning English, almost equal to the entire population of native English speakers, countries like India might soon lose the competitive edge they have in certain sectors due to their large pool of English speakers. Following China's accession to the WTO and the Olympic Games held there in 2008, English education has become an official priority. With the rousing slogan, '*Don't be shy, just try*'; Beijing's municipal authorities have launched a blitzkrieg.

In a situation where India is trying to integrate itself with the global economy, trade with myriad nations, build closer ties with the western bloc and ensure greater opportunities for its largest asset, its human resource, English can provide the competitive edge. Consequently, a number of circumstances in the later part of the twentieth century have necessitated English into becoming an important force in India, which, in turn, has boosted the overall motivation for learning English. Most importantly there is a greater realization of the need for English in the global economy. In recent years, the dramatic rise in computer expertise and the use of internet technology in India has increased the importance of English - the preferred language of the global information highway and, consequently, its learning and teaching. For the new generation of computer-literate middle and upper class young Indians, English is no longer associated with colonial overtones. They see it as a necessary or even unavoidable means for upward and onward mobility not just within India but also overseas.

The increasing demand for Indian computer expertise in Europe and North America has provided an exciting impetus. It can be mentioned that what gives the Indians their preferred priority status is their English literacy. Moreover, the new post-modern generation of Indian youngsters are participants in a new world youth culture, whose voices are most commonly and most powerfully expressed in English. A variety of English that is distinctly Indian and internationally intelligible but largely 'unmarked', preferred also by the Indian broadcasting media, has, for an Indian, the separate function of expressing and indexing his separate national identity as well as the participatory function of global intelligibility. It is clearly becoming the dialect of choice among high school and college students, young professionals, and Indian celebrities. Thanks to the widespread availability of cable TV in India that the upcoming generation of Indians have a great deal of exposure to native English, certainly more than any time in the history of the country. Indians feel

increasingly comfortable with the different native varieties, which are no longer seen as threatening or dominating their own.

To interpret cultural pride through an attack on a widely spoken language not only misses the wood for the trees but also attempts to preserve an ante-deluvian state of ignorance that prevents empowerment. In short, English must be the link language if the multilingual and multicultural post-colonial India has to emerge as a global player and tackle aside linguistic chauvinism. Indeed, English has come to be recognized as a world phenomenon today. It is now used by almost one-third of the world's population. In addition, among the countries using English as an official language, India looms largest by far. The use of it in India, which started as a historico-political accident seems to have now become an econo-academic reality. English as several educational commissions and expert bodies have pointed out is a language of 'opportunity' and 'development'. These commissions are specially instituted to examine and define the role of English in our country, and to plan and organize the English curricula accordingly. Radhakrishnan Commission (1949-49) about the importance of English language in post-independent India, states:

*If under sentimental urges we give up English, we would cut ourselves from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge. Unable to have access to this knowledge our standards of scholarship would fast deteriorate and our participation in the world movements of thought would become negligible..... English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance.*

Some of the points that provide a reasonable justification for the continuation of the teaching of English in our educational institutions have been identified. English is: (i) our window on the world, and a language of modernization; (ii) a language for administration, banking, trade, commerce etc.; (iii) a vehicle of international communication; (iv) a language of opportunity at the individual level; and (v) an instrument with library function for other disciplines and so on.

The concept of English as second language in India, in general, is not a purely pedagogic construct. It needs to be properly understood in the larger historical, social and educational context. It is shown to be a part of that mythology of English that has been assiduously cultivated by the interested elite to such deleterious effects on the Indian mind and culture. The concept is designed to give English a pre-eminent position relative to the Indian languages in the educational and consequently, the socio-political set up. It has also been employed to discourage the study and learning of classical languages, particularly Sanskrit that has contributed to the rootlessness of the young Indian minds. It is argued that there is a fundamental illogic in treating English as a second language along with other Indian languages. In addition, this illogicality accounts for the poor standards of English in spite of the tremendous investments in ELT. Recognizing and redefining the roles and goals of English as a foreign language and by choosing the right language teaching theories and practices can only remedy the situation; otherwise, no amount of methodology and technology would succeed.

The significance of English as second language can only be understood in the larger and the historical perspective. It is to be noted that English in India is a symbol of *linguistic centralism* whereas the numerous Indian languages are seen to represent *linguistic regionalism*. From Macaulay to Mr. Prakash Javdekar (Union HRD Minister), we have seen in India the movement from one to the other extreme. Following the withdrawal of the British from India, the language question naturally came to the fore, in which the central issue was the role and status of English vis-à-vis



Indian languages, both vernacular and classical. The vested interest of the 'English knowing' ruling class demanded the perpetuation of English so that the vast majority of people would continue to remain outside the privileged power-structure. To achieve this, a whole conceptual structure has been developed and manipulated. This conceptual structure has three parts: *modernization*, *mythology* and *language policy*. First, the concepts of modernization and internationalism were involved and English become the language of both modernization and internationalism and by the implication, the Indian languages became associated with 'tradition', which by definition was assumed anti-modern and backward looking. Once this was taken to be true, the next step in the argument was to define the role and relationship of English vis-à-vis the Indian languages. These needs gave birth to all planning, which was in fact linguistic analogue of a particular politics.

Language planning operates with a whole set of lexical weaponry that gradually creates a new mythology. Major Indian languages become in this discipline, regional languages; *regional* is in opposition to *national* and even Hindi is a regional language which has been accorded the status of an official language of the union and some states. English, the associate official language, does not suffer from this disability. Its major strength is argued to be the fact that it cannot be identified with any one region and therefore, English is one '*pan-Indian*' language that would promote national integration as no other language would. Therefore, while the Indian languages, as regional languages, promote divisiveness and fissiparous tendencies, English, a foreign language, promotes unity and integration. This argument for linguistic centralism had an inherent appeal for the intellectuals at a time when an important unitary centralism was the dominant political ideology.

The famous three-language formula is the product of this thinking and policy. It is now recognized that the three-language formula was devised to accord English a pan-Indian status that no Indian language would enjoy. The Education Commission 1964-66 (Kothari Commission) has this to say about the teaching of English (a paraphrase):

*Because for years to come English will continue to be necessary in higher education as a library language, so a solid foundation in English must be laid at the school stage. We have recommended that its study must begin from class V, though we feel that for many students, particularly those in the rural areas, it cannot begin before class VIII. English for a very large number of students will remain only the second or the third languages.*

The National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education (NCERT, 1989) clearly recommends free alternation of English as second or as third language. It reads:

*The three-language formula should be effectively implemented. The first language should be the mother-tongue/regional language. The second language may be Hindi or English in case of a non-Hindi speaking state and one of the modern Indian languages or English in the Hindi speaking states. The third language in non-Hindi speaking states should be Hindi or English whichever has not been studied as second language. Similarly, the third language should be English or modern Indian languages whichever has not been taught as second language (Koul, 1992).*

The provision, in effect, has made English the second language pedagogically and chronologically all over the country. However, as mentioned above, the second language is not just a pedagogic and chronological construct. It is a linguistic construct and it imposes certain requirement of fitness on which language or languages can function as second language. One very interesting and, indeed, thought-provoking argument is that English as a foreign language cannot linguistically

function as a second language; but for political and policy reasons, it has been imposed uniformly as second language all over the country.

Conclusion:

The ELT situation in post-independent India needs a new thrust. There has to be a serious re-thinking on several issues like - making use of the resources of the first language, the positive use of translation in the first language, and the positive use of translation in the teaching of the second language, evolving a pluralistic poly-methodological plan of action. Opportunities for the choice should be given to the learner according to his/her style of learning and requirements. Any learner at any level, who wishes to learn any language for any purpose, for any length of time must be allowed to use the medium (s)he likes.

The absence of any kind of language planning and lack of political will in implementation and lack of co-ordination among various agencies - Central, State, Universities, etc. resulted in an aimless drift. Most of the Boards of Education and Universities in the country do not have a clearly defined set of aims. In fact, the aims and objectives are decided only by the examination system. The ideal of '*delinking of degrees from jobs*' made by the Government of India in 1985-86 (Challenge of Education - A policy perspective, also known as NPE) reflects the quality of education imparted in the schools and colleges. However, so far in actual practice, it seems failed to meet the ideal as per suggestion. The theorizers are trying to theorize, teachers are busy trying to cover the 'portion' they stand exposed.

Learning English as a second language in India is a process of learning '*how to mean*' in a new socio-cultural setting. It is a process of enculturation, of capturing, expanding, and refining a network of formal, social and cultural systems in interaction. English in India is what is because of its functions, which are controlled by its internal structure by its socio-cultural setting and by its interaction with the major Indian languages. This socio-functional approach to English in India is designed to show how the lexico-grammatical systems of a language are shaped and reshaped by its functions. There is, therefore, no reason to feel that English in India is or will be less effective or less efficient as a system of communication than English in any other part of the world, but there is every reason (linguistic or sociolinguistic) to say that it has and will continue to have a marked Indian flavour.

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