

## Need Of Reforms In National Education Policy For The Teaching Of English As A Foreign Language At School Level

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### **Abstract:**

The approach towards English language teaching has changed drastically post globalization. English language teaching is now intended for academic as well as professional purpose. This is the reason why ELT has made a gradual shift from being teacher centered to student centered. Now, English has gained an important stand in the lives of people. It is believed by some that without the appropriate knowledge of English language there is no bright future. This is why English has turned an inevitable part of people's lives. Today in India, English is taught as a compulsory subject. The students in most of the schools score well but even then they are not able to use the language in their day to day chores which is ultimately hampering their credibility globally.

This paper aims to bring into notice the need of reforms in National Education Policy for the teaching of English as a foreign language at school level.

### **Introduction:**

English is among the most widely spoken languages across the world. It is spoken by almost 20% of the Earth's population which is considerably a good population. Not only this, the language has gained a good momentum on the Indian soil. In India, English turns out to a prominent language much ahead of Hindi with respect to its popularity and acceptance all over. English becomes the base, the only stepping stone in molding the careers of the students, hence, it becomes a necessity to update, restructure, analyze and evaluate the education system in order to make English learning student friendly. At the school level, these aspects have to be well taken care of. The face of education has changed drastically after globalization. It has not just changed the way education was imparted so far but it has also changed in terms of the purpose for which education is imparted. This is why the education system has taken a gradual shift from being teacher centered to being student centered. The ideology of education being student centered has given rise to a teaching process that is more tasks based and experimental in nature. In the times of immense changes across the world, education is standing in the top priority list in providing employment opportunities to the masses. This has knowingly or unknowingly enhanced the importance of quality education globally. Hence there is a need of reforms in National Education Policy for the teaching of English as a foreign language at school level.

### **Current status of English language teaching in India:**

English has been playing a major role on the Indian soil since it was injected in the Indian soil. It has become so engraved in the mind of the people that they consider no life without knowing or having knowledge of the same. A person capable to speak English is seen to be more acceptable in the corporate world or anywhere when it comes to the employability of an individual. This is the reason why English has

gained more importance in India now much more than what it was earlier. In India, English is taught as a compulsory language at school and undergraduate level now. Even after being in contact with English for such a long period, students are not able to apply the language in written or verbal communications. Such condition of the students actually questions the system of education in the country.

The main reason behind this is that the students deal with the subject only for acquiring good results in exam. They are least bothered about the language acquisition which takes a toll in their overall performance in the later part of their career. This is surely a matter of great concern for the Indian education system. Not just the students, the educators of English are bound to follow a set syllabus which is to be completed within a given time frame, which also affects the teaching learning process drastically. In India, the entire teaching is focused on syllabus, the fixed time frame to complete the syllabus, the prescribed texts and a set pattern of evaluation system, i.e. the exams.

### **Views of the teachers about the current status of English in majority of school students and the possible reasons behind it:**

During the course of gathering relevant inputs for the paper, important response was gathered from the teachers. Everyone was eager to present their opinion and they shared their relevant experience on the said topic with immense concern. The inputs received are as follows:

1. Majority of the students don't have clarity in the basics of English grammar.
2. The students of higher secondary classes were unable to frame simple sentences in English.
3. The teachers felt bounded due to the set syllabus and the restrictions of time frame.
4. The teachers other than the English teachers expressed their problem stating that their teaching outcomes were hampered due to the inability of the students to read and understand the English language as a whole.
5. Teachers expressed that the students without any English background were the most difficult to deal with.
6. Teachers expressed their requirement of getting exposure and trainings in teaching of English as a foreign language to the students coming from different language backgrounds.
7. Students were more interested in dealing with the English subject only during the exams and during the last minute study schedule.
8. The large classrooms with excess students hampered the language acquisition.
9. The students expected from the teachers to help them pass the exams. Very less were eager to acquire the language.
10. Majority of the student were least aware of the importance of acquiring the English language.

### **Reforms in National Education Policy for the teaching of English at school level:**

The committee for draft of National Education Policy, in a letter written as a forward to their draft submitted to Mr. Javedekar (the Honorable Minister of Human Resource Development, Government of India), writes, "We have tried to prepare a Policy, which to the best of our wisdom, will change the educational landscape so that we prepare our youth to meet the variety of present and future challenges. It has been a journey in which each one of the team members, both individually and collectively, have strived to cover the varied aspects of our country's large education scenario. The Policy is founded on the guiding goals of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability. We have looked at the sector in a single organic

continuum from preschool to higher education and also touched on related sectors that form part of the larger picture.”

The National Education Policy 2019 can play a very important role in changing the face of the present education system of India. It is already known and experienced by almost every other person that there are certain aspects of the Indian education system which need to go through thoroughly structured reforms. With reference to the topic of the paper, sincere and urgent reforms are awaited through the National Education Policy 2019 for the teaching of English as a foreign language at school levels. The following reforms can be made in the NEP 2019:

1. Absorbing teacher education and training must be aligned to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Teachers need to know about the CEFR. As a part of their continuous professional development, they should be given CEFR-related training to familiarize them with the CEFR and with appropriate approaches of teaching, learning and learning materials.
2. Training of teachers in TOEFL to be made mandatory for the teachers dealing with students from the very early age groups. The government can collaborate with the high standards of institutions responsible for maintaining the standards of English proficiency.
3. Increasing the engagement of students with English outside the classroom as a major part of the educational experience provided by the school. This can be achieved by means of strategies such as an increase in English language activities, programs and increased learning time.
4. Training of teachers at a regular interval to keep them updated with the current trends in teaching and learning methodologies, and the approaches to attain them.
5. Attention is to be paid to the up skilling of teachers in terms of their English proficiency and their knowledge of teaching.
6. English teachers must be trained to integrate information technology in English language teaching.
7. Relaxing the syllabus prescribed or the curriculum framed, and giving the teachers the monopoly to choose the syllabus and teaching methods to attain the specified level of language acquisition at different stages of a child's growth.
8. English should be made a compulsory language at all the stages of schooling and awareness should be created in the students and their parents about the need to acquire English language skill.
9. The Parent-School Engagement programs can be made mandatory. The main aim of this initiative is to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning, achievements and potentials. Schools can be guided on how to engage parents to be more involved in school activities, while parents can be shown how to assist their child's learning at home.
10. Teach for India initiative can be launched to reduce the achievement gap between the rural and the urban schools, the private and the government schools. High performers from various backgrounds can be selected as role models to teach for two years in mainly rural areas by providing certain incentives.

### **Conclusion:**

Indeed, there is an urgent need of reforms in teaching of English as a foreign language in the schools of India and this can only be possible through the National Education Policy 2019. As it is a well known fact that English has already gained momentum at a global front, hence its importance becomes at the peak. The Indian students should be trained well enough to increase their credibility at a global level and for this the

major loop holes of our education system must be removed from the root. With the correct reforms in education the aim can very well be achieved. The National Education Policy 2019 must comply to the suggested reforms in English language teaching in India beginning with the very early stages of schooling.

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