

**A Study of English Writing Skills of Standard IX Students
of Kodagu District, Karnataka**

A Synopsis for Ph D Thesis

Guide

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Education is viewed as the potential instrument of national advancement. A modern society cannot accomplish its point of monetary development, specialized improvement and social progression without completely harnessing the talents of its citizens. It is the most vital means for individuals to develop personal strength, build competence levels, overcome restraints and in due course broaden the available set of opportunities and choices for a sustained development in wellbeing. Education not only helps in enhancing human capital, productivity, compensating labour, but also it enables the process of acquisition, assimilation and communication of information and knowledge and thus enhancing the quality of life of each individual. Education is also considered to be a critical invasive instrument aiding social, economic and political inclusion, integrating people into the norms of the society.

The ability to communicate and transfer ones ideas to another is one of the most important factors that differentiate human beings from animals. As language is the primary source of communication, it has become one of the fundamental characteristics of our lives. It is closely tied to the thoughts and identity of the individuals as it is a medium through which most knowledge is constructed. The term Language is defined by the **Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995)** as “A system of communication consisting of a set of small parts and a set of rules which decide the ways in which these parts can be combined to produce messages that have meaning”. Hence it can be rightly said that language is the written and spoken method of combining words to create meaning used by a particular group of people. Language is used to express ones inner thoughts and feelings, to analyze intricate and abstract thoughts, to interact and communicate, to accomplish our desires and prerequisites, as well as to establish rules and sustain traditions and culture. Language can be verbal, physical, and biologically innate or a basic form of communication. According to **Omrad (1995)**, Behaviorists often define language as a learned

behavior involving a stimulus and a response. Languages are not used merely for the sake of instruction, but it is considered to be the most important means of social transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to another. According to **Lakshmi (1989)**, Language is an important aspect of human growth and a tool for social progress.

In this present era no one can negate the importance of English on the global scenario because English is the passport to success in today's corporate world .Today government and administration, law and higher education, science and technology, discoveries and inventions, trade and commerce would sound crippled and handicapped with the absence of English language. Ignoring the importance of English would only mean that we are forcing ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance. If we want to prosper, English is the only means which will help us prevent from getting isolated from the world. According to the **University Education Commission (1948-49)**,

... our students must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasures of knowledge, and in the universities, no student should be allowed to take a degree who does not acquire the ability to read with facility and understanding works of English authors (Report: 319-25).

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF LANGUAGE

Language is closely linked to the thoughts and identity of each individual because it's the medium through which, most knowledge is constructed. Language is said to be the verbal mode of communication and a means to communicate emotions, ideas and desires with the help of a system of voluntarily produced symbols. It is only with the advent of language one can express his emotions and feelings effectively. Language is necessarily the carrier of thoughts, ideas, messages and emotions, whether it is the language of Africans or the polished and enriched language of the

English men. Every individual uses language throughout their life time, if language didn't exist, humans would have had to depend merely on signs and gestures to express their thoughts and ideas and it would be never sufficient. Hence, a life without language would be unimaginable.

Language is considered to be an articulated system of signs and with this it becomes easier for individuals to envisage the past, understand the present and approach the future. So, it is rightly said that language plays a vital role in the psychological, emotional and social development of an individual. It becomes easier to permeate our thoughts and mediate our relation with others only because of language. Indeed language used by an individual is one of the important means to determine if a man is good or bad. The type of language used by an individual can help him win the heart of others or can make him loose his dignity and degrade himself in society.

Even in a classroom setting language plays an important role. It is with the use of effective understanding and use of languages the learners bring about connections between ideas, people and things that relates to the world around. Language education is not restricted to the language classroom alone rather it is used in all the other subjects like science, social science or mathematics also. Language, the constellation of skills, thought encoders and markers of identity, cuts across school subjects and discipline. The language skills such as speaking or listening, reading or writing are all considered to be generalized skills, and the key factor affecting the success of each child depends upon his mastery over them.

According to **Noam Chomsky (1957)**, language as:a set of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements. It is difficult to define language as it is to define life. Therefore, it would be better to analyze the characteristics of language instead of making an attempt to define it.

1.3 THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF LANGUAGE

Language is like air to human beings. The fundamental basic characteristics are:

- Language is an important means of communication and self-expression of human beings.
- It differs from animal communication.
- It is a carrier of civilisation and culture.
- It is a form of social behaviour that enables the individual to cooperate with others in a group.
- Language is an inseparable part of human society.
- Language is arbitrary and vocal.
- Language is a system of systems.

1.4 IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH ON THE INTERNATIONAL FRONTIER

Among all other languages, English is the leading language of the world. According to , **Crystal (1988)**, English is the language 'on which the sun never sets'. The demographic spread of English is indeed phenomenal today as English is being used in most of the countries in the world. English, the queen of languages plays a variety of roles in different parts of the world ranging from mother tongue to link language. It has not only contributed in the literary field with its original production but also by proving itself as an effective medium for translation of the literary and the technical books of the world. Today most of the government of different countries has considered English as their official language and it is used in almost all services especially it is considered as the passport for employability. English is the main source of International contact as it is the only language that connects people with the world. In the different walks of human life the spread and

use of English has quickened especially in the field of science and technology, trade and business, tourism, entertainment and globalization.

The twenty first century is ruled by technology, so is the English language. While analyzing the importance of English worldwide **Kachru et al. (2008)** states that, the numbers of South Asian users of English has exceeded the combined population of the inner Circle of English – the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. He adds that the Asian continent, particularly South Asia and China, have altered the international profile of world English”. All these shows that the world population presently depends on English for their economic and social well-being. The present generation deeply depend on English because it has been proved that English is the entry card for a better career, better remuneration package, advanced knowledge and for communication with the entire world. Moreover, English is considered to be the window to the world because of the present trend of globalization and privatization and due to the numerous opportunities that are opened up in every field of life. English is also referred as global lingua franca since it connects different people from different countries with different culture, language, political and economical issues.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

English language holds a unique position in India. Though English is a language borrowed from six Hundred miles away which belongs to an entirely different nation, yet India’s relationship with this language is unimaginable. It has been always a matter of debate regarding giving English the status of being the official language of the country. Most of the nationalists consider English language to be a barrier which hinders the development of other languages in India. Although English has a sad heritage connected to it reminding the citizens of the past where India was enslaved and tortured by the imperialist masters, yet this language cannot be rooted out as today it

is the language which is projecting our rich culture. This language has been dominating all the fields from the time immemorial and is considered to be the language of the world civilization. English holds its place in India due to its richness, flexibility, elegance and dignity. English language also was one of the reasons for bringing independence in India. During the struggle for Independence, it was this language which helped the leaders belonging to different regions of the country with different regional languages to come together and helped them fight for one single cause, the Indian independence.

In this present era there is a wide increase in the number of people speaking English. It is even surprising to note that English has become a common language used in day to day life. The people who are uneducated and even the illiterates unknowingly use several English phrases. English today has become the language commonly used in by every common people in al common places. It has intermingled in the social life so minutely that it would be impossible to separate it or sieve it from one's life.

There is a great increase in the use of English at international level and at this point ignoring the use of English will be utter absurdity. Yet if ignored it will surely cost India a lot, because it will cause the country to remain backward and will India will get distanced from the rest of the world. Even though, the use of English is limitless, its use should never hinder the growth of the national language, Hindi. To accomplish this each individual should enhance their outlooks and help both the languages go hand in hand for the progress of India.

The use of English language is beyond ones own imagination. It is one of the major factor that Links India to the world in the most important fields like trade and commerce, technology, education etc. The following points illustrate how prominent is English in our country.

1.6 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

India faced a lot of challenges and agony while it was in the clutches of the colonial rule. Though those days are recalled as the 'white rule' in the Indian history, the benefits gifted in this ruling period to India cannot be neglected. The railways, the telephones, the printing press etc. are few of the boons the British rule left behind for Indians when they left the country. Moreover, it can be rightly said that English language is one of the most useful contributions left behind for the country by the British.

It is very clear that, colonization was the main objective of the East India Company when they set their foot on the Indian soil. English language was imparted to the Indians only as an academic programme and for the smooth running of their administrative work. Only a selected few like the staff of the company, their offspring and the Anglo Indians were offered with English education. It was **Charles Grant (1792)** who first rooted English language in the Indian soil with his great idea of slavery through language. He over calculated that a cultural transition can be brought in the Indian youth if they are helped to disseminate the European literature and sciences. He assumed that the forthcoming generation would be greatly affected by this vast knowledge of the world and thus willingly put themselves under the yoke of slavery. This great thought of Grant was accepted by the Government of Lord William Bentinck.

This idea was further enriched by Thomas Macaulay in 1835, with his famous Minutes on Education. This minutes clearly stated the goals of the British Empire and became the 'blue print' for education in India. In his historical statement, Macaulay has clearly reiterated that:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and intellect; to that class we may

leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the western nomenclature and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population (**Krishnaswamy, 2003**)

However, the father of the nation **Mahatma Gandhi** understood the evil effect of the education system of Macaulay and stated

India today is much more illiterate than it was, before fifty or hundred years ago, because the British administrators, when they came to India, instead of taking hold of things as they were began to root them out. They scratched the soil and began to look at the root like that and the beautiful tree perished. (**Dharampal, 1983**)

Although the British had their own perspectives in imparting English language education in India, the outcome of this decision took an unprecedented turn. In spite of accepting slavery, the ‘heathens’ of India interrogated the power of their colonial masters. Indians started using English as a means to communicate with their associates throughout the country. All credit goes to English language for serving as a link language, without which the natives of various states with diversified languages and cultures could have never intermingled and helped in overthrowing the British rule from India. Thus, English language played an important role in unifying the people with different languages and to spread the spirit of freedom throughout India. This also helped the Indian scholars to showcase the Indian literary masterpieces to the world and to gain world recognition. Thus, Macaulay’s plan became a boon to the Indian society .He planned to produce a

class of people, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. But in actuality this fact turned out to be, in the words of **Baruah (1979)**, “..... in the first place, help for the growth of nationalism, which ultimately freed the country from the British yoke”. In addition, The most ironical incident was when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru used the same language to proclaim the Indian Independence to the whole world which was used by the British to enslave the Indian masses.

1.7 ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE POST-COLONIAL INDIA

It cannot be denied that the base of the Indian education system is the English language. Even before India became free from the clutches of the British rule, English was the language of administration and was considered as a compulsory subject at school and college level and also at university level. However this tradition didn't change even after independence, but it only helped Indians to inherit many aspects of British culture. However, it cannot be denied that the position of English in India is one of the controversial matter. When C. Rajagopalacharya favored the retention of English and considered it as the boon from goddess Sarasvati to India, **Mahatma Gandhi** argued the case against English. He opined,

"It is my considered opinion that English language, in the manner it has been given, has emasculated the English educated Indians.

It has put a severe strain upon the Indian students and made us imitators.

He further said, "all the superstitions that India has, none is so great as that, knowledge of English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought”.

On the other hand, **Pt. Nehru** said “one hundred and fifty years of intimate contact has made English an integral part of our education system. Indians can neglect its study only at the

risk of loss to themselves. I am convinced that in the future, the standards of English teaching should be maintained at as high a level as possible".

To emphasize more on the opinion of Pt.Nehru, the former Indian president **Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad** said at a press conference "so far as general studies are concerned it was never my intention to suggest that there should be any falling in the standard of English". To add the importance of English, **Rajagopalacharya** said "we in our anger and the hatred against the British people should not throw away the baby (English) with the bath water (English people)". To add to this **The Report of the Educational Commission (1966)** asserted, "For a successful completion of the first year degree course a student should possess an adequate command in English, be able to express himself with ease and felicity, understand lectures in it and avail himself of its literatures". Hence it is important to lay great emphasis to study English as a language right from the school stage.

English should be the most useful 'library language' in higher education and most significant window on the world. We need English not only for operational purpose but also for identifying ourselves with those who use the language in India and abroad. So our main aim in teaching English to our students is to enable them to use English with ease and comfort, that is, to use it both instrumentally and interactively. That is to say, they should be able to speak and write English effectively.

The multi-lingual and floricultural nature of the society of India makes it clear that we need more than one language for 'national cohesion', 'cultural integration' and 'social and real mobility'. English has been used for years as an Associate Official Language of the country, the associate medium of higher education and also the national and international link language.

However, today English language has established its roots in India very strongly. From the pre-independence period various steps were taken to reform the Indian education system and categorical planning was done about how English education in India should go on.

Krishnasamy (2003) presented the following chronology of events to depict the history of English in post independent India:

1947- The Ministry of Education was established in Delhi

1948- University Education Commission with Dr. Radhakrishnan as its Chairman (with three foreigners as members: Sir James Duff from Durham and Directors Morgan and Tigret from the USA) was constituted, the report was submitted in 1951 - it recommended Hindi as the medium of instruction with the continuation of English.

1950- English was granted the status of Associate Official Language by the constitution (English to be used in this capacity till January 1965).

1951- A committee was set up by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur on primary education.

1952- 53 – Recommendation by Secondary Education Commission also known as the Mudaliar Commission that English and Hindi to be introduced at the middle school level and the medium of instruction to be in the regional language/ mother tongue till secondary school level.

1953- Started University Grants Commission (UGC) and declared autonomous status in 1956.

1955 – Formation of Indian Council for Secondary Education

1956- The Official Language Commission reported literacy in English constitutes 6.41 percent to total literacy percentage and 1.06 percent of the total population.

1958- Establishment of Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, with the co- operation of the

British council and the Ford Foundation.

1960- UGC set up a Committee of Experts (Chairman, Prof. Banerjee) to examine issues involved in the teaching of English.

1961- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was formed. The three language formula at the school was recommended in the Conference of chief Ministers recommends.

1963 - Official Language Act came into force. It was decided that English will be continued as the Associate Official Language even after 1965 without any time limit.

1964-66 – confirmation of the three-language formula by the Indian Education Commission (known as Kothari Commission). It decided to continue to use English as ‘library language’ and as the medium of instruction at the University levels.

1971- Submission of a report by the study group on English (Prof. V. K. Gokak as Chairman) suggesting syllabus for various courses, including one for B.Ed. courses.

1976 - Constitutional amendment placed education on concurrent list. National Policy of Education and Plan of Action (NEP and POA)-reviewed the NEP of 1968 and recommended a dynamic approach. They recommended the development of autonomous colleges, establishment of Academic Staff Colleges for training college teachers and Navodaya Vidyalaya in rural areas for promoting excellence.

1990 - Acharya Ramamurthi Commission was set up to review NEP and POA and endorsed the recommendations of the 1986 report.

In addition, a resolution was unanimously passed by the constitution committee when the constitution of India was being framed. Provision was made by the committee to keep English language as an official language for the next 50 years. This in turn gave way for a protest by the

people who wanted Hindi to be given prominence in India and they protested against the use of English language as the official language .Due to this protest Hindi language in Devanagari script was accepted as the National language particularly by the northern and central Indians. But the amazing fact was the objection by the southern Indians to accept Hindi as a national language. As a result, this agitation became too violent and in 1962-63 to resist and pacify these activities, the Parliament was forced to pass a bill declaring English language to continue the Associate official language of the country for an indefinite time. But surprisingly it was not Hindi language that helped in linking the language of different states rather it was solely English language that brought north and south together.

Whether one likes it or not, modern means of communication like the internet, email and mobile phones have become more accessible throughout the world. It has been estimated that 75% of all internalized communication in writing, 80% of all information in the world's computers and 90% of the internet contents are in English. According to **Crystal (2003)**, "a quarter of the world's 6.5 billion population uses various forms of English for a range of communicative tasks". Analyzing the importance of English in post-colonial India, **Verma and Krishnaswamy (1989)** have remarked: Though some thought that it was unpatriotic to learn the language of the rulers, there was a growing realization that the English language was not the language of the English rulers alone and that a knowledge of English was and is necessary for the economic, scientific, technological and literary progress of India, since English is the most effective catalyst for progress and modernization.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

Education of English language has its own importance in framing the future of every individual. Many writers across the world agree that English is the 'queen of languages'.

Rajagopalachari said that “English was the gift of Goddess Saraswathi”, (**Chakranarayan, 2012**).

The United Nations Organization (UNO) has given English the status of an official language. It is not just because it is one of the most widely spoken languages, but also because the use of English has made the social and economic exchange between people of different communities and cultures practically possible. English helps in bringing people of diverse cultures closer to each other. It also assists us for our inter-cultural understanding inside the country. It is through the medium of English that we are able to keep the different cultural groups of India United.

Pandit Nehru has rightly said, “English is our major window on the modern world.” English is a window through which we can see the scientific, technological, agricultural and commercial development taking place in the world (**Biswas, 2014**). English is the only language through which we have distilled the essence of modern knowledge in all fields of human activity. We also find that English informs us about the advancement or progress having taken place throughout the world. In 1961 **Pandit Nehru** also stated, "All regional languages must be developed and promoted. But that did not mean that English should be discarded. To do that, will amount closing a window on the world of technology— foreign language served as windows on it and to suppose that translations could take their place was a mistake. It was no use getting into an intellectual prison after achieving political independence". He has reiterated it time and again, "English is ours by historic necessity". This indeed shows the importance of English language in the national life of India.

The significance of English language was also emphasized by many educational commissions. **The National Knowledge Commission (2007)** highlighted the significance of English language, not only as a medium of instruction or a means of communication but also as a determinant of access. According to NKC, “An understanding of and command over the English language is a

most important determinant of access to higher education, employment possibilities and social opportunities. School-leavers who are not adequately trained in English as a language are always at a handicap in the world of higher education.” Hence it is evidently seen that acquisition of English language is a necessity in this modern world. It is also said that “The opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s has coincided with an explosion in the demand for English in our schools because English is perceived to open up opportunities” (**National Focus Group Position Paper on English**). On the basis of above important aspects, we can conclude that the role of English in our national life and educational system cannot be denied by anyone.

1.9 STATUS OF ENGLISH IN INDIA

The twentieth century witnessed strengthening of the roots of English in India as an influential language. **Kachru,(1983)** states that “After World War I, there was a significant increase in educational institutions, schools and colleges spread to the interior of India. This naturally helped in spreading bilingualism in India further among the middle and lower classes of the Indian society”. The period since then has seen tremendous increase in English even after the British formally left India in 1947, English has continued to gain ground and has become more and more firmly rooted in the Indian soil. As a matter of fact, since Independence, several committees and commissions have, on different occasions, stressed the need to learn English. The government, on its own part, has consistently lent support to English and encouraged the teaching and learning of English. Government policies are also given official recognition to English as an associate official language. The situation as it obtains today, is that English is recognized “Officially as the associative National official Language, and as inter – regional link – language; educationally it is recognized as an essential component of Education and as the preferred medium of learning, with specialized education in Science and Technology available through the medium

of English only; socially it is recognized and upheld as a mark of Education, culture and prestige.” **(Gupta & Kapoor, 1991)**. In this present world, expertise in English has become a necessity for any employable Indian in the global market.

Proficiency in English has become an added merit for Indians in the fields including legal, financial, educational and business in India. Media, Tourism, Trade and Internet are the other field which are primarily dominated by English. Over half of all personal letters, E-mails are also written in English. Today almost all the information around the world is stored and reserved electronically and majority of these information are in English .The “Act of 1965”, declared the continuance of English as an associate language of the union **(Javalkar ,2012)**. Officially English is accorded the status of associate official language, but in fact, a stage has now been reached where English is considered to be an integral part of the socio – cultural, educational and administrative domains of Indian life. Besides, quite a number of Indian states and territories have adopted English as the official language. The demand for English emerges from many factors, as recognised by the position paper on the teaching of English produced by the National Council of Educational Research and Training **(NCERT 2006)** in connection with the National Curriculum Framework 2005 **(NCERT 2005)** “English in India today is a symbol of people’s aspirations for quality in education and fuller participation in national and international life ... The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of political response to people’s aspirations, rendering almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of a very early introduction”.

Moreover, India is the third largest English book-producing country after the United States and the United Kingdom, and the largest number of books is published in English. Hindi and English are the official languages of the Republic of India and English is now recognized as an associate official language, with Hindi the official language **(Hohenthal.n.d)**. It is recognized as

the official language in four states (Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura) and in eight Union territories. Even today there are various political and nationalistic pressures who has been continuously pressurizing and pushing for the choice of Hindi as a national language. However, it is hard to remove English from its place as a language of wider communication, lingua franca, especially among the educated elite, or to replace the regional languages in mass communication by Hindi,(**Crystal, 1988**).

There are also few Indian Constitutional Provisions for English Language which portrays its place in India. The articles of the constitution which deal with language of English are as follows (**Mallikarjun, 2012**)

Article 120: *Language to be used in Parliament* – This articles stresses on the point that all the procedure that takes place in the parliament should be transacted in Hindi or in English.

Article 210: *Language to be used in the Legislature* – In this article it is mentioned that all the procedures in the Legislature of a State shall be transacted in the official language or languages of the State or in Hindi or in English.

Article 348: *Language to be used in the Supreme Court and High Courts*- According to this article, all transactions in the Supreme Court and all the high Courts of the country and all texts of Acts, Bills and orders should be in English language. With permission of the President, the governor of a state can use Hindi or any other state official language for the proceedings. However, in such case, English version of the documents has to be published in the official gazette of that state.

These are few of the aspects that shows that English holds a high status in India. Its prominence is increasing day by day . **Graddol (2010)**, has rightly said that “The current status of English stems from its overwhelming presence on the world stage and the reflection of this in the national arena.

It is predicted that by 2010, a surge in English-language learning will include a third of the world's people”

1.10 THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

After the liberalization policies in 1995, there has been a drastic change in the teaching of English as a second language in the third world countries like India. According to the **Position paper in English**, “Though learning a second language is different from acquiring the mother tongue, if we can mimic the process of acquisition, along with explicit teaching, the teaching/learning of English will be very effective. Today the demand for English is increasing both as a language and as a medium of instruction in India .However, In 1967, the Study Group appointed by the Government of India headed by Prof. V. K. Gokak had recommended that the introduction of English should be done not earlier than in class V. But today most governments are driven by the instrumental motivation for English language and this has compelled most to introduce English as a language from class one at the state (provincial) level. Recently there was a curricular revision at the national level which culminated in the framework for National Curriculum Framework – 2005 (N.C.F.). It has recorded the half a century development objectively and says, “The level of introduction of English has now become a matter of political response to people’s aspirations rendering almost irrelevant an academic debate on the merits of very early introduction” (**Position Paper Teaching of English 2005**). English is an institutionalized subject in the school curriculum. Twenty six out of the thirty five states and union territories introduced English as a language from class I and the remaining states introduced the language either from class three or five. There is every likelihood that these states would bring it down to class I within a year or two. English language teaching situation presents a mixed picture from top to very low level in terms of Teacher Proficiency and the exposure of pupils to English

in and outside the school, i.e. the availability of English in the Environment of language acquisition. (**Nag-Arulmani, 2000**).

Furthermore, in 1951-52, the Secondary Education Commission gave English a place of compulsory second language at the secondary stage. The Commission recommended that study of English should be given importance in secondary schools and facilities should be made available at the middle school stage for its study on an optional basis. (**Bhatia, 1975**).

According to **Brown (2001)**, second language learning is a process in which varying degrees of learning and acquisition can both be beneficial, depending upon the learner's own styles and strategies. To make the teaching and learning effective and successful, a teacher of English should keep the aims and objectives in her mind while teaching. The ultimate aim of teaching English is to make the learners to get the command over the four skills of the language. It is also observed that there was no separate method to teach English as a second language in a mixed class and English teachers were left in a state of confusion to follow the methods and techniques in class room. This indifference makes the teachers to adopt the method of teaching whichever is appropriate to her. **Kapoor and Gupta (1994)** has rightly said that "Now the failure in teaching English as a second language stems not from the theory, training and mechanics of language teaching but from the intrinsic conceptual inappropriateness in accepting English as a second language (L2) pedagogically and linguistically". In this connection, the problems of teaching and learning English as a second language are of great importance.

According to **Konda (2014)**, the following are some of the problems in teaching English in a mixed class:

- Overcrowded classrooms
- Inappropriate methodology

- Lack of Motivation
- Lack of interest in the students
- Lack of Training for teachers
- Lack of exposure to the target language (English)
- Social, economic, and cultural background of the learners
- Non availability of teaching materials
- Lack of clear cut policies
- Lack of innovative thoughts and trends

Hence, it can be said that many factors affect the teaching and learning of English as a second language. Proper care should be taken by teachers of English to teach the four language skills to the mixed ability learners. The teachers should go down to the level of the learners in order to understand them and make them confident in the target language. English teachers should create the environment in the classroom where the learners can express their views. In this connection the teacher should give the scope to the average learners to take an active part in the teaching and learning process. The teachers have to understand the learners before they teach. To make teaching and learning process smooth and easy it is very important to have this mutual understanding between teachers and students.

According to Konda (2014), teaching is very important step in learning, the primary duty of the teacher is not to teach but also to understand what the student wants and says. Applause is not possible without two hands similarly teaching should be interactive. It should facilitate the learners to face the challenges of the world outside the classroom. In a developing country like India, family backgrounds of the learners make the teaching activity dull and monotonous. The teaching should be carried with the target of acquiring skills but not by the ranks and marks. In the changing global

scenario, English has inseparable relationship with human lives and it occupies a major role in all the fields.

1.11 THE PRESENT CONDITION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AT SCHOOLS

Even though English has ceased to be the medium of instruction in most of the schools, more periods are devoted to make the students learn the language, which has so far been an uphill task. This has led to a situation of frustration, wherein students who are bright in core subjects fail miserably in English. The situation resulted in the realization of the fact that the teaching of English could be made more practical. The position of English in our learning system is clearly indicated by the Official Language Commission through the following lines: Since we need English for different purposes, the content and character of that language as well as the method of imparting it have to undergo a change. English has to be taught hereafter, principally as 'language of comprehension' rather than as literacy language so as to develop in the students learning it a faculty for comprehending writing in the English language, more especially those relating to the subject matter of their specialized fields of studies. No doubt, to a limited extent, a capacity for expression would also accrue and may usefully be cultivated along with the faculty for comprehension; however, the change in the character and knowledge of English appropriate to our requirements hereafter, as distinguished from the past, is clear enough. **(Bharuah, 1979).**

Until recently the teaching of English in schools lacked any clear cut and attainable aim. This aimlessness was primarily responsible for the deplorable standard of achievement in English. The following factors hinder English language learning in the schools. They are:

i. Lack of Specific Objectives

It is sad to understand that for most teachers of English, objective based or goal-oriented teaching is just unattainable. For teachers of other subjects, the entire thing is either skeptical or of lesser importance.

ii. Lack of Updated Textbooks

Textbooks have become a hindrance rather than a help in the hands of the average teacher. S.V. Shastri of Sivaji University has made an interesting observation about the textbooks in Maharashtra and it seems applicable to most of the cases: A number of stories and narrative passages run into two, three or even four parts.... Such passages present serious problems when we consider the question of dividing / organizing the lesson into time table units.... They cannot be divided without damage both to themselves and to teaching (CIEFL News letter, September, 1975.)

iii. Unsatisfactory Evaluation System

The standards for achieving proficiency in English are affected by the evaluation system. Language needs constant practice and this can be ensured only by the conduct of examination at regular intervals. Even though oral practice is emphasised at lower levels, there is not enough provision in the system to evaluate it. This naturally makes the teacher as well as the student ignore this vital aspect of language learning.

iv. Dearth of Competent Teachers

It is true that the best syllabus in the world would not be worth unless there are capable teachers to teach it. Unfortunately the majority of our teachers are ill equipped. It is not their fault since they themselves have been victims of such a teaching-learning system. In the present scenario, where a degree is essentially considered as a passport to one's future, the need for learning to

speak, read and write effectively in English has become mandatory . The needs of learning English by the students are manifold. They can be broadly categorised as

Academic Needs

The use of English is essential for day to day academic activities like learning of a subject, referencing, writing assignments, examinations, partaking in co-curricular activities like paper presentations and seminars.

Communicative and Functional Needs

To communicate effectively in and outside the classroom, the ability to mingle and converse with students as well as faculty is required. To communicate through reading and writing (letters, reports, speeches etc), are some of the functional needs of the students.

Career- Oriented Needs

The use of English to take part in group discussions, team building activities, facing the interview panel and successfully achieving placements locally and globally, communicating effectively by overcoming cultural and language barriers, are some of the career oriented needs of the students.

When compared to L1 acquisition, learning of English as L2 for most of the Indian students start only from a very later stage. The children learn to acquire English vocabulary only from the school. It has to be understood that speech comes first to individuals since it is biologically based. Speaking, “ as a wider range of functions than the written language”. (Stubbs, 1980) The boom in the Information Technology has produced career opportunities globally for the Indian youngsters. The human resource of India is its younger generation. The young technocrats of India are in heavy demand worldwide. Since English is the only language through which they can communicate, it is essential for them to master their communication skills both in reading and writing. The disadvantage of China, which has an equal or more number of young technical

professionals, is the poor communication skills in English. China is now taking efforts to equip its youngsters with adequate language skills in English. This global scenario of professional and economic competitiveness demands the mastery of communication skills in English by young Indian technocrats.

1.12 PLACE OF ENGLISH IN INDIAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM AT SECONDARY LEVEL

English language holds a special place in Indian school curriculum. Its impact and utility has left an indelible mark in the history of Indian education for past almost 400 years. Various commissions were appointed from time to time to suggest the place of English in the school curriculum. In 1940, University Education Commission observed, “English, however, must continue to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature- humanistic, scientific, and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English, we should cut off ourselves from the living stream of over growing knowledge.” The Report clearly said that “Our students who are undergoing training at schools which will admit them either to university or to a vocation must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasures of knowledge” . Furthermore the continuance of the study of English in high schools and in the universities was highly acclaimed by the Radhakrishnan Commission (1948) stating, “We might keep ourselves in touch with the living stream of ever growing knowledge” (**Zoha, 1998**). With the continuance of the study of English, the mastery of the language also was of great concern. With this regard the Kunzru Commission (1955) stressed the significance of the using special methods in English language teaching and suggested the study of linguistics as the essential prerequisites for warranting adequate proficiency in English at the university level. (Zoha, p. 2).

In 1952, another commission was appointed known as Secondary Education Commission which stated, “ it should be recognized that even in regard to many of the diversified courses of instruction as matters stand at present, a knowledge of English will be extremely useful for understanding the subject matter and for further study of the same subject”.It also gave importance to the importance of dynamic methods of teaching all subjects including English. According to this committee, however the best the curriculum or syllabus might be but without proper methods of teaching and the right kind of teaching it would just remain dead . According to the Conference of Professors of English of Indian Universities conducted on 23rd and 24th January, 1953, “English should be taught as a compulsory subject for a period of six years at the Secondary stage, but with improvements in the training of teachers of English it should be possible to curtail the duration of the course by, one year, provided, however, that English is taught for six periods of fifty minutes each per week”. In addition, The Official Language Commission (1956) suggested that English should be taught as “a language of comprehension rather than as a literary language so as to develop in the students learning it, a faculty of comprehending writings in the English language, more specially those relating to the subject matter in their specialized fields of study” (Zoha,1998).

The role of English as a library language was emphasized by The Kothari Commission (1964) which observed, “It should be the responsibility of English units to adjust their teaching to the needs of the different categories of students and to ensure that they are all given at least that essential command over the language which will enable them to use it efficiently as a library language” (Zoha).The commission also gave importance to the position given to English in the school curriculum on the recommendations of which the school syllabi in most Indian states has been framed. As a result of this new wind of change, the following policies are clear:

- English will be taught as a foreign language.
- English will be taught for its utility and hence its functional knowledge will be essential.
- English will be taught as a language of comprehension rather than a literary language.
- A student need not have absolute mastery over the whole of English language. He needs to learn only essential English to have the knowledge of spoken and written English. The emphasis is on mastering four skills viz. understanding, speaking, reading, and writing of English.
- It will no longer be a medium of instruction at school and university level.
- There is reduction in time slot allotted to the teaching of English in school.

The above mentioned policies shows that English language plays a pivotal role in the school curriculum. The common curriculum in second language is prepared at the national level. The NCERT and other national level organisations are actively involved in the preparation. Curriculum is prepared based on sixty five core elements of NPE 1986, which also reflects the national and cultural ethos of our country. The national body only sets guide lines in curriculum for the whole country and it is up to the respective states to prepare need based curriculum in the light of the national guidelines. It should also be kept in view of the needs of the language learned of the region and the state. Generally, the language curriculum in English is prepared based on the following factors. **(Raju, 2010)**

- Objectives of teaching English as the second language viz, comprehension, expression, appreciation.
- Entry behavior of the language learners, in terms of age vocabulary, expression, etc.
- The skills to be developed viz, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

- Carefully selected and graded pieces of prose, poetry, plays, topics of grammar and composition.
- National character, history, political system, moral and human values.
- Flair for English and love for literature.
- Oral and written communication skills required to pursue higher education in science and technology and also to carry out day to day communicative functions.
- Appreciations of art , science, culture, literature and to develop creativity

According to **Mekala (2009)**, The suggestions and recommendations by the the different commissions reveal the importance given to the study of English and the indispensability of the language. She also adds that the literature curriculum needs to be attitude-oriented, which should refer to the kind of learning experience that is attained through various relationships developed in a particular environment that prevails in the classroom. Thus, it can be concluded that the recommendations of the above mentioned commissions restate the fact that, the Indian school curriculum should lay great emphasis on the teaching and learning of English especially due to the exponential growth of the use of English all over the world and thus make the English curriculum rich and vivid.