



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print);2321-3108 (online)

ENVIRONMENT OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN RURAL GENERAL COLLEGES OF DIBRUGARH DISTRICT OF ASSAM

Dr. NIBEDITA PHUKAN

Associate Professor of English

Namrup College (Affiliated to Dibrugarh University)

nibeditap18@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.7119.141>



ABSTRACT

The status of English in India is second language and it is taught as an academic subject in the educational institutions from the primary to the higher educational level. It is taught as both literature and language. As literature it studies the most general and fundamental problems of human life through the different genres of literature. To teach English as language is to teach the students the four basic skills of the language.

Higher education is changing in terms of its content and context. The present education system is moving from the teacher-centered to the learner-centered system. In such situations the teacher plays the role of a facilitator, manager and manipulator. The active role is being played by the learners in teaching-learning situations. In such teaching-learning situation different teaching aids are used for an effective outcome. These aides include the print material, audio-visual aids, computer, ICT, film, radio, TV etc. Language laboratory is one of the major infrastructures for teaching English language.

The objective of the paper is to study the availability of teaching aids and a suitable teaching environment for teaching English as both language and literature. The paper also discusses the requirements for a qualitative global standard teaching environment in rural area colleges. The study is based on primary data which is collected through purposive sampling method from Namrup College, Naharkatiya College and Duliajan College. It is found from the study that the rural area colleges apply some of the aids which create an effective teaching-learning environment to teach English as an academic subject.

Key Words: Print material, audio-visual aids, computer, ICT, language laboratory.

Introduction

Education is the only pre requisite for overall development of a country. Without education civilization cannot progress. The Indian constitution has made education as a fundamental right for every citizen. Every citizen of India has the right to

equal and quality education indifferent to various differences among themselves. Higher education acts a pivotal role in progress of the country. Growth and development depends on the quality of human resources and this qualitative resource can be achieved only through the higher education of a nation. Higher education imparts in-depth

knowledge and understanding so as to advance the students to the new frontiers of knowledge in different walks of life. It broadens the intellectual power of the individual within the narrow specialization, but also gives the students a wider perspective of the world around. About two centuries back, education was merely informative. Education imparts only the gathered information to the learners. Students were treated as a pitcher into which the teacher poured "gallons of empirical facts". Intellect was neglected than personality. In such teaching-learning situation learners were made to remain quiet and receptive; the teacher was a dictator and the learners could do only those things which were being asked by the teacher. In this situation students are the passive and the teacher is the active role player. Curriculum was bookish and rigid. Hence students were made to adjust to it. Education was static and progress through education was insignificant. But at present time the method of teaching-learning changes from the teacher-oriented to the learner-oriented along with the teaching aids. In learner-oriented teaching-learning situation students or the learners play the pivotal role and the role of the teachers are transformed into manager, facilitator, guide and pointer. As the method changes the teaching-learning situation also changes from the past and some innovations are always welcome.

The objective of the study is to find out the use of technological teaching aids in the general colleges of rural areas of Dibrugarh district of upper Assam. The paper studies the availability of teaching aids and a suitable teaching environment for teaching English as both language and literature. The paper also discusses the requirements for a qualitative global standard teaching environment in rural area colleges to cope with this digital era.

Methodology

The study is an empirical study based on primary data which is collected through purposive sampling method from teachers of Namrup College, Naharkatiya College and Duliajan College of Dibrugarh district. Secondary data is collected from books and journals.

Results

To walk along with the global necessity and standard, the usage of ICT, computer etc. are becoming mandatory. A study was conducted to know the status of usage of some of these modern technologies in teaching-learning situations in rural area colleges of Dibrugarh district. Through purposive sampling method data was collected from teachers of three colleges to find out whether such modern technological teaching aids are being used in the rural area colleges in Dibrugarh district. Data was collected from Naharkatiya College, Duliajan College and Namrup College. The questions asked were the use of computer, ICT, blog by the teachers in their classroom situations. The attitude of the teachers regarding the use of these aids and the students' acceptability of these modern technologies was known from the interview. It is found that use of modern teaching aids in teaching-learning situations in these colleges is only the personal initiative of the teachers. Though teaching English is given very much importance for functional purpose in the degree syllabus, it is found that none of these colleges possess language laboratory for teaching English language. These colleges do not have even a well-equipped classroom for power point presentation and showing films and documentary to the learners. It is also found from the study that the teachers below the age group of forty takes such initiatives of using modern technological teaching aids indifferent to gender. Teachers themselves need to be highly technologically literate, and needs the competence and confidence to prepare students for a global information society. Teachers are using technology to empower themselves because in the present education system they are no longer the sole 'fountain of information' but a facilitator and pointer towards information. The Dibrugarh University degree syllabus for English also has created a demand for use of digital teaching aids. The seminar presentation is a mandatory test for undergraduate students where power point presentation is always encouraging.

Discussion

English is an international language. The status of English in India is second language and it is taught as an academic subject in the educational institutions from the primary to the higher educational level. It is taught as both literature and language subjects. As literature it studies the most general and fundamental problems of human life through the different genres of literature. To teach English as language is to teach the students the four basic skills of the language.

English language and literature education has an important place at the tertiary level in Assam. The students of Assam have been learning English literature from the very beginning of higher education in Assam. At present situation students are interested to learn English both as literature and language subjects. Learning a language means the ability to use the language in academic, social and global context. Students are more interested to the language for better job opportunities in their career and a social mobility. They are more interested for a quick and equal higher education in this global world and digital era.

Teaching-learning is a pedagogy for which a suitable situation can be created in the classroom itself. Teaching aids are important part for an effective teaching-learning situation. Hence, the teaching-learning situation of English both as language and literature subjects can be improved by using modern and digital technological teaching aids.

English is an international language. It is widely used all over the world as first and second language. It is the first language of over 300 million people of the world. It is used as the first language in several countries like America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Africa and the Caribbean countries. Hundreds of millions of people use it as second language. It is used as second language in south and south-east Asian countries.

In India English language is taught and learnt as second language. It is the legacy left by the British colonialism in India. English education was initiated by T.B. Macaulay in the year 1835 to create

a group of Indian people who were Indian in blood, but British in taste. The purpose was to sustain the British rule in this vast country of cultural and linguistic diversity.

Assam is a state where English education started late comparing to the other states of the country. It was started in the nineteenth century when the missionaries came to the state for the expansion of Christianity. English is being learnt as both literature and language in the educational institutions of Assam. Demand for English in utilitarian perspective for better job opportunity is in high demand in the state at present educational scenario.

The utilitarian objective lies behind learning this language at present situation in Indian context. At present time English is taught as an academic subject in India from the primary level to the tertiary level. It is the medium of instructions in the academic institutions. It is the library language and through this language people can enter the world of knowledge. This language is taught as both language and literature in the academic institutions of India. English is taught as an academic subject in Indian context. It is taught as compulsory general subject in the educational institutions, and can be learnt as a major subject. The basic objective to teach English as a general subject is to teach the students the language skills for better communication. On the other hand the objective of teaching English as major subject is to teach the students the literature written in that language. Through the different genres of literature problems of human life and mind are focused. Though these are abstract concepts and ideas of human mind that reflected in literature, but these can be taught through teaching aids. To teach English as language and literature modern technology can be used for a clear, precise and quick understanding of the study material. Teaching aids are tools for making teaching interesting and helps students realize the text material well.

In the recent times higher education is changing in terms of its context and content. The different branches of knowledge sprout from one particular subject. Again it is found that the concept

of teaching methodology is also changing from the teacher-oriented to the learner-oriented. Students are not passive listener in this modern world of education. They are always in quest for more knowledge and not satisfied with the traditional and conventional teaching method and material in the class-room situation. Their role is not the conventional one like the old classroom situation. The teachers are to provide the students the learning materials and to guide them how to improve their learning ability. The changing role of teacher and students in the higher education in modern world has brought vast significance. It changes the lives of the individuals and also contributes towards the process of national development as a whole. While changing the modern higher educational system from the teacher-oriented system to learner-oriented system, the quality of education improves. Such education system can be compatible only with the global standard education system.

Teaching a subject only through lecture method and the teacher-oriented teaching method is an antediluvian approach. Teaching method is subjected to research and experiment and as a result new methods come into existence. It is found that learner-oriented teaching methodology is more effective than the teacher-oriented teaching methodology. In learner-oriented teaching methodology students are the active role player in the teaching-learning situation and the role of the teacher is the facilitator, motivator, manager and the operator. The teacher helps the learners to grasp the content, the material and the idea of the material taught through the teaching aids. For that purpose the teacher has to prepare with more effort for an effective teaching-learning situation. It helps to enhance standard and quality in higher education.

Teaching English as Literature

English was taught as literature subject mostly till the last century in India. The literature of England was the content of the syllabus. The different genres of literature, poetry, prose, drama, novels and short-stories are taught to students who take major in English. It is worthwhile to mention

that drama is an important genre in English literature and drama is basically for stage performance which is visual. A live performance or recorded stage performance is helpful for understanding and realization of the play. If it is possible students can enact the different roles of the play in the classroom situations. But it is not possible in most of the colleges of the state for various factors. There are various constrains in this regard. Hence, a well-equipped digital classroom for playing the CD or DVD of the play is always encouraging for a lively and enjoyable teaching-learning situation.

For teaching poetry also recitation of a poem is always facilitated. It provides students with realization of the poem, which is the objective of teaching poetry. Realization of poetry gives pleasure to learning. The teacher in the class can recite the poem for the students. But a professional poem recitation is more appealing than an ordinary reading of poetry. At present time, recording of some poems by the poet himself/ herself is also available in the market in digital form. Such listening is enjoyable for the students and helps to acquire the correct pronunciation, stress and intonation of the language.

Teaching English as Language

At present the demand for English language is increasing day by day in global context. English is an international language and the window to access to the world of knowledge. In such context the Indian students are eager to learn the language for better job opportunity and to access knowledge in global context. In this modern and competitive world expertise and accuracy are some of the qualities sought among the young generation. Therefore, it became an important factor to learn the language to compete in the global scenario. For accessibility to learn the language in conformity with global context, the modern technological teaching aids can provide these opportunities to the learners. English language has some specificity in pronunciation, stress and intonation. To teach students correct pronunciations, stress and intonation in English a digital classroom is an opportunity.

Aids for Teaching English as Language and Literature

A teaching aid is a tool used by teacher or tutor to help learners to improve their listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Curriculum changes as the expansion of knowledge, same way the method of teaching also changes. The use of teaching aids along with the lecture method in classroom situation is more effective. It makes learning interesting and enjoyable too. In teaching English the conventional teaching aids such as text books, reference books, journals, magazines etc. are available. Again, computers and some other audio-visual aids can be used with great extent for more effective and enjoyable teaching-learning situation. For a quick and equal teaching-learning situation modern technological teaching aids are mandatory. The following teaching aids are very useful in teaching English both as language and literature.

Printed Material

Printed material includes text-books, reference books, magazines, journals, periodicals, newsletters etc. All these are the prime materials for study of a subject. These are the basic reading tools for the learners which acquaint them with the main concepts of literature. These help learners to understand the concept and problem of the subject.

Audio-Visual Aids

Audio-visual aids include computers, projectors, sound system, radio, television etc. These also include the films, documentaries, power-points presentation etc. These teaching aids help learners to understand the materials in minute details and for them it makes the material easy to remember. In teaching English as literature such audio-visual aids can be used in the classroom situation. The genres of literature include drama, poetry, prose, short-story and novel. To teach drama, story and novel etc. films, documents etc. can be used as teaching aid. Films made on classic drama and novels are available in DVD and are available in the internet too. These are very effective way of teaching students the historical and social background of a drama and novel, story etc. This makes learning more immediate. It helps the

learners to understand and remember the characters, plot and scenes etc. of a drama and novel. Thus it makes students understand the concept of the text material, the human mind and the problems of human lives in a clear way.

Information and Communication Technology

More recently it is found that technology in the area of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) develops in an unprecedented way and enters into the world of education. Therefore it is found that technology is being introduced successfully in the field of teaching-learning situation in India also. Several Policy frame works are coming up in order to promote ICT in India. UGC wants to support the use of E-learning by all institutions of higher education. Thereby UGC wants to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in the educational institutions. It helps to make education more productive and individual. It gives the educational institutions more scientific base and helps to cope up the students with the global standard qualitative education. It makes learning more immediate and access to education more equal. The first and foremost impact of present technology has the trend towards a mass instructional technology. This technology is governed by machines and systems suitable for that purpose. The main purpose of mass instruction technology is to benefit more students with fewer teachers to obtain quality education. The information and communication network in colleges would provide internet facility through which teaching can be imparted. Thus usage of ICT in educational sector can enhance an overall academic ambiance in higher educational institutions throughout the country. Communication technology is offering new challenges for students of all abilities. They can discuss issues of concern with their fellow students from around the world. This helps developing communication and interpersonal skills, fostering a mutual understanding across countries and cultures. New areas of learning and thinking can be explored through ICT. Students no longer need to be physically present in the teaching-learning situations. It can work as a catalyst to enhance quality teaching in places that lacks in academic and physical infrastructure and good

faculty strength. It can solve the problem of teacher burnout and a quality education can be imparted.

Blogs and Social Networking

Blog is a private site for publishing creative and some other writings. Using internet these creative works can be self-published through the blog. Teachers and students can create blog and social networking for publishing their writings quickly. Teachers can write necessary teaching materials through the blog and the students can access to all these via library and even home computers. Social networking sites help to have a good discussion and the teacher and the students can post their opinions. Thus, blog and social networking provide the teacher and the students the opportunity to work together and is a great inspiration for all.

Role of the Stakeholders

For an effective teaching-learning in higher education there should be some pre-requisites. There should be initiatives from all the four levels of teaching-learning situations in the higher educational sector.

Institutional Level: The higher educational institutions should take initiatives to provide well equipped classrooms for an academic environment. They have to follow the UGC guidelines regarding the using of Information and Communication Technology in the teaching-learning situations. There should be a library of the DVD, CD etc. of the films and documentaries of the relevant texts of the syllabus. It is necessary to collect the movies and documentaries on the text materials of the syllabus. Moreover, language laboratory is a must for teaching students the English language to teach correct pronunciation, stress and intonation pattern in that language. Facility of digital classrooms can be provided by the institutions. It is the duty of the institutions for providing training to the teachers for better teaching performance.

Faculty Level: For an effective and meaningful implementation of modern technological teaching aids, a positive attitude of the teachers is very important. Teachers should keep themselves update with the latest development in teaching content,

material, aids and the implementation of these aids. Some training can improve the teachers' performance ability. Teachers should be encouraged for continuous learning. Teachers should be treated as a researcher and knowledge seeker and they should not be treated like machines to produce results and doing paper works. Research interest and innovative practices of teachers should be encouraged by the authority for creating an environment of an amiable teaching-learning situation.

Student Level: The students of English literature should be interested in using the modern teaching aids along with the study materials. They should have to work hard for utilizing the technological aids for a better understanding of their syllabus. These teaching aids help students to rationalize their text material. A pictorial and visual presentation helps learners understand the relevant text appropriately and quickly. In such teaching-learning situation students should prepare themselves before hand for a better understanding of their text material. Students should be willing and prepare to use and share their opinions and knowledge through blogs for exchanging knowledge. Students can develop their knowledge using ICT which is available in the colleges.

UGC and Government: UGC and state and central governments should provide necessary funds to the rural area colleges for developing proper infrastructure. It is the duty of these stakeholders to pay attention to the financial needs of rural area colleges for maintaining a global standard.

Conclusion

English is now both a literature subject as well as a language subject and learnt and taught from both the perspectives. It is known to all that for a global standard quality education the education system should cope with the latest content of teaching material and technological teaching aids. Knowledge booms and a quick and equal learning situation for all students can only ensure overall development of the country. Teaching-learning only through the printed text materials are not enough for a qualitative teaching and learning. Technology is an assistant to walk

along with the advanced world of expanded knowledge. To bring a compatibility with the global context in education the availability of technological and digital teaching aids in the colleges of Assam is the call of the hour. In this context all the stakeholders of higher education in Assam have duty and responsibility to impart quality and global Standard English education to the students of Assam. The general degree colleges in Assam should establish language laboratories for imparting a quality, quick and equal global standard education to the students of Assam. These colleges of the state should follow the UGC recommendation for using ICT in educational sector for advancement of education in the country. Teachers of such colleges should be provided with necessary training for effective teaching-learning environment.

References

1. Dhawan, Rani, "Higher Education: Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement", *University News*, 51(13), 01-07, 2013. Print.
2. Goel, D R and Chhaya Goel, "Teacher in the Digital Age: Issues & Concerns", *University News*, 50(53), 31-6, 2013. Print.
3. Jain, Seema and Farha Hashmi, "WebQuest: A Fresh Approach to English Language Teaching", *University News*, 51(06), 11-17, 2013. Print.
4. Pandey, V.C., *Emerging Challenges of Educational System*, Delhi: Isha Books, 2005.
5. Sirswal, Desh Raj, "Teaching Aids and Modes in Academic Philosophy", *University News*, 51(18), 06-12, 2013. Print.