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GLOBALIZATION'S INFLUENCE ON OUR ENGLISH TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

Today the buzz word is globalization and in context to India which is a developing nation, globalization has not only fuelled the advancement in science and technology, goods and services but has also paced economic growth by means of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In fact the dire need of a lingua franca to draw advantage from globalization trend has been satiated with the introduction of English language at the grass root level i.e. by adopting English as a language of instruction right from play school to college level.

In this paper researcher has tried to do a comparative study of the fact that how strong knowledge of English language has helped a nation to draw maximum benefit out of globalization while others failed and what are the various methodologies, strategies and approaches in English language teaching that has helped or can help India to draw maximum benefit out of globalization.

Key Words: Globalization, English language, Advancement, Reforms, Challenges

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INTRODUCTION

The whole world is experiencing a wave of economical, social and cultural transformation due to 'globalization'. Before we delve deeper into the diverse aspects of these changes, it is vital to understand the term globalization. In the words of Friedman, it is the defining international system based on "the inexorable integration of markets, nation states and technologies." As per Keohane, the increase of globalism with "is the state of the world involving networks or interdependence at multi-continental distances...through flows and influences of capital and goods, information and ideas, and people and forces, as well as environmentally and biologically relevant substances. Another way of saying this is that globalization is the extension, acceleration, and intensification of consequential worldwide

interconnections. Or it can be simply said that globalization is a universal phenomenon that acts as a catalyst to the growth and extension of an entity across the globe.

Across the globe, the nations are welcoming this trend as it is giving them opportunity to gain from the leaders of the world in almost all arenas of growth and development i.e. be it the life style or employment opportunities, the infrastructure, manufacturing and production, as well as political reforms. It would not be an exaggeration to say that globalization has eliminated all sort of geographical and territorial boundaries and knit the whole world as one. It is vital to emphasis on the fact that the term globalization was introduced and popularized by R. Robertson in 1983.

ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION IN INDIA

In context to India, the initial phase of globalization was marred due to trade and investment impediments. But the era of nineties witnessed the dawn of globalization when the numerous policies pertaining to investment and financial flows started and majorly contributed in removing obstacles to the path of growth and fuelled the globalization process. Key steps like scrapping of the industrial licensing regime, reduction in the number of areas reserved for the public sector, amendment of the monopolies and restrictive trade practices act, start of the privation program, reduction in tariff rates and change over to market determined exchange rates etc were initiated to pace up the liberalization and globalization strategies in early nineties.

The term LPG that refers to Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization came into existence as part of new economic reform. Myriad of advancement in the field of industrial, financial and trade sector emerged thus branding India as fastest growing and competitive economy. To substantiate financial reforms, India has opened numerous sectors like telecom, infrastructure, insurance and many more for foreign direct investments and portfolio investments. To further strengthen the growth rate, the Indian tariff rates reduced sharply over the decade from a weighted average of 72.5% in 1991-92 to 24.6 in 1996-97 but it touched 35.1 in 2001-02. Although India is committed to reduce these rates and even most non-tariff barriers have been dismantled by March 2002.

It has come as no surprise that increasing integration of India with the global economy coupled with liberalization of the domestic economy has resulted in shooting up of GDP growth rates from 5.6% in 1990-91 to a peak level of 77.8% in 1996-97. Although it is quite unfortunate that presently, India's GDP per capita is \$3,900, which is 62% lower than the world average of \$10,200.

Growth of other Asian States

Post Singapore's independence in 1965, the city-state of Singapore has evolved dramatically; beginning as an export economy, becoming a newly industrialized economy and presently a "wannabe" world state. Globalization has helped Singapore to

move from third-to first-world status within a generation. Singapore routinely tops the Foreign Policy magazine's annual globalization survey. Undoubtedly Singapore has gained tremendously from globalization. If we see the GDP PPP per capita (USD) of Singapore, it is \$59,700, which puts Singapore in the top 5th percentile in the world. This means that Singapore produces among the highest values of income per person, which suggests that both Singapore's economic productivity levels and standards of living are also among the highest in the world. According to KOF Index of Globalization 2012, Singapore stood at 1st position among most globalized economy.

In case of other Asian country i.e. Malaysia we find that its acceptance of global economic integration for over 3 decade has helped it attain the title of one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Its approach to open its market coupled with endeavors to reduce tariffs and foreign investment requirement has greatly contributed to its success story. In fact during this period, Malaysia witnessed 7% growth per year. 2012 KOF Index of Globalization put Malaysia at number 30th. Malaysia's GDP per capita is \$17,200, which is 69% higher than the world average of \$10,200.

English language and Asian Countries

In 1947, the newly independent India recognized the importance of English, and it was legally sanctioned by the constitution as the associate official language. The retention of this colonial legacy in the post-colonial nation state did not come as surprise to many. English had come to perform several functions in India after 1900. In fact the decision of the Nehruvian government, to take the path of industry and commerce rather than follow the pre-independence-agrarian economy increased the importance of English. It was Nehru's government that recognized the importance of English as the language of the future. In the year 1967, with the amendment to the Official Language Act (OLA), English language acquired a special status in the Indian constitution as an "associate official language".

In the case of Singapore, after the World War II the government came to the realization of a lingua Franca so as to effectively carry our

communication between diverse racial and dialect groups. Although Bazaar Malay was briefly considered for the same but realizing the fact that English enjoys the status of a World Language, both were declared as the primary language of the nation. It is quite surprising to note that the schools/institutions that were either not teaching English or were teaching as secondary language, either closed down or switched to teaching English as primary language. In Singapore, mother tongue is taught as an academic subject only while all other teaching as well as outside class activities are performed in English language. Here, primary, secondary and junior level education is completely and strictly in English. It is quite evident that it is Singapore's English language expertise that has greatly contributed in joining local workers and industries to the global economy.

Malaysia is another nation that has declared 'English' language along with its 'Malay' as primary language. In the year 1970, English-medium teaching was phased out of most schools which had a catastrophic effect as its workforce lacked in the language of commerce and technology thus resulting in stagnation of economy. Soon it had the realization that how English-speaking Singapore was growing and attaining towering economic success. To replicate their success, Malaysia implemented an English-medium education policy introduced across the country in 2003, known as PPSMI.

Language Barriers and Economic Growth

It is quite unfortunate that in India where we have the advent of numerous social and economical opportunities, there is still a language gap that needs to be filled. With India government's focus on our 'Primary Language' as only 'Hindi' has in a way become hurdle in our route to progress. In fact this language limitation has affected internal growth of the nation as well. Within India only there are numerous states where our primary language 'Hindi' is not practiced in any form of communication i.e. be it verbal, written or spoken thus causing a major problem in exchange of ideas and views. Surprisingly these states along with all major states are well versed with English Language thus giving English somewhat our primary language status.

We must observe our fellow nations as discussed in the paper which were also in the category of developing nations have attained the status of developed nation in a short span of time and the credit goes to their major reforms including their shift to global language i.e. English. Countries like Singapore and Malaysia stand at quite a good position i.e. 11th & 12th while India has 21st position in the present EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI). It is quite evident from the given facts and figures that various Asian nations have surpassed even European states in their economic growth and India still has long way to go to achieve its aim of becoming a developed nation.

Key Measures

In India, still the orthodox and traditional ways of teachings are practiced in most of the government and private schools with focus on academic subjects which are primarily in Hindi. As per the conventional teaching system, English language used to part of academic curriculum almost after initial five years of schooling i.e. by the time a child used to be almost ten to eleven years old. By this time child has wasted fruitful years of language learning i.e. as per many child psychologists and researchers, the initial years of childhood are best to expose a child to any language. In fact various studies show that children grab the best and maximum during these tender years but unfortunately they are deprived of this learning due to poor educational policies of the government. Above that even the teachers in most of the schools are not themselves competent and well-versed in English language thus further aggravating the English learning. So by the time child finishes his school and college years, his English language skills are still in nascent stage of learning thus making him incompetent to take up advance study which is primarily in English or be part of global work force.

It is important to note that the child, who is immersed in the language of his environment, becomes capable of expressing his thought through inner speech, babbling, and imitation (Clay, 1991; Madaule, 2008; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). It is vital for our government to come up with academic reform in which due focus is given on English in the

curriculum as well as pedagogy. Not only the teaching staff but also the educational environment should be such for these young minds that English language becomes an integral part of their day to day life. Keeping in mind the fact that the young child's burgeoning understanding of language syntax or how language works, develops through human interaction (Hirsch-Pasek, Golinkoff, and Eyer 2003).

CONCLUSION

It is rightly said that :

It is everywhere. Some 380 million people speak it as their first language and perhaps two-thirds as many again as their second. A billion are learning it, about a third of the world's population are in some sense exposed to it and by 2050, it is predicted, half the world will be more or less proficient in it. It is the language of globalisation—of international business, politics and diplomacy. It is the language of computers and the Internet.....It is now the global language.

"A World Empire by Other Means: The Triumph of English,"

The Economist

India aims to be among the developed nations and be a world power in coming years that is possible only if we produce global citizens- who are not only sound professionals but expert users of English language as well. Thus our coming generation should be given access to the international language 'English' at the grass root level i.e. from first day of their educational expedition. It is vital that rural areas like villages, small towns, districts etc. should also be part of these academic reforms as still a majority of population exists in these areas.

Undoubtedly, there have been educational reforms like mushrooming of various English medium public and government schools as well as governments policy of introducing English language in primary classes. To add further to the growth of the language, even society, media, and families have also become more receptive towards English language and are putting their best efforts to make English language learning easy for coming generation.

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