



Impact Factor:4.081

## ENGLISH LEARNING DIFFICULTY OF RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

(A Pilot Study at Khanamukh area, Amguri, Sivasagar)

**Dr. Sudipta Chakraborty**

Assistant Professor,

Department of Education,

Sibsagar College, Joysagar Assam, India

Email ID: [sudiptachakraborty75@gmail.com](mailto:sudiptachakraborty75@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

*The major objective of this study was to identify English Learning Difficulty (if any) of rural primary school students studying in selected rural schools of Khanamukh, Amguri, Sivasagar. It was a pilot study. Two primary schools of Khanamukh, Amguri, Sivasagar were selected for the present study. The researcher had interviewed the primary school teachers to know the English learning difficulty of these selected rural primary school students. A self-made questionnaire having 'Yes' 'No' items was also used by the researcher for knowing the parental perception towards the importance of learning English language of these selected rural primary school students.*

*Key words: English Learning Difficulty, Primary Schools, Challenges and Recommendations.*

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

It is the time of globalization. Due to recent innovations and technological expansion, the world has turned to a globalized world. In adjust with this 'One', we need 'One' language which is comprehensible to everyone. Here comes the importance of English language. Though by using English language, modern world is developing rapidly, but the rural and interior areas are still lagging behind in English teaching and communication. The reason is traditional school teaching system in rural

areas where many traditional school teachers are still not familiar with this language as well as with new strategies about how to teach this language in rural schools (Mishra, 2015). In this present society, there are some interior rural schools exist where the students studying do not get any motivation of speaking, writing and learning English language (Ponmozhi and Thenmozhi, 2017). In a study conducted in Pakistan, it was found that in rural areas, primary school teacher faces number of difficulties in teaching English (Behraam et. al. 2015). In another study conducted in Bangladesh, the researcher found that learning English language is a fear for students. In this particular study, urban students were found comparatively better than rural students in learning English language because of parental support and skilled teachers who were well trained in English language communication and teaching while rural students were found poor because of economical constraints and lack of guidance from parents who were not educated (Hossain, 2016). Teacher must have the habit of conducting action research to know what are the difficulties the student is facing in learning English. The teacher must review the different research studies conducted by different researchers to know the factors and challenges associated with English teaching and learning. Results of those research studies can be adopted by the teachers to understand the class room situations, the problems a student is facing in the class while learning English (Derakhshan and Shirmohammadli, 2015) The learner must get motivation for developing and sustaining attention in learning a new language. English as a second language need regular practice. Students get this language difficult because it is not their mother tongue. So, they do not get the opportunity to use this language in their day to day life situations. Automatically that motivation of learning this language decreases if they do not use this English language for communication (Behraam et. al. 2015 and Arroji, 2016).

### ***Review of Related Literature***

Khamari et. al. (2014) in their study revealed some causes of the problem of teaching English in the primary level. Among various causes, one of the most important cause is lack of trained teachers of teaching English at primary level. It was further found in the study that the teachers use direct method of teaching English in the class. No innovative methods are applied for teaching English. Moreover, it was found in the study that the teachers do not access the progress of the students regularly and properly.

In a study, it was found that parental education and parental occupation have a significant relationship with English learning difficulties. On the basis of the findings, it was further suggested in that study that teacher can promote English learning inside the class and can give individual attention to students only if the number of students is less (Ponmozhi and Thenmozhi, 2017). Similar kind of result was also reported by Erkan (2012). He conducted his study in Turkey. The study revealed that if the classroom is crowded, then the efficiency of teaching English decreases.

Anjaneyulu (2015) conducted a study on problems related with teaching English in Government States of Telengana. In his study, it was revealed that among various problems, lack of school facilities like proper seating arrangements is major problem of teaching English. Moreover, it was further found in the study that the school authority do not invite language experts for teaching English.

All these research studies motivated the investigator to select this particular field of study.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The major objectives of the study are –

- 2.1 To identify the English learning difficulty of school students studying in selected rural primary schools of Khanamukh locality, Amguri, Sivasagar
- 2.2 To find out the factors create difficulties in learning English by these selected rural primary school students of Khanamukh locality, Amguri, Sivasagar
- 2.3 To reveal the parental perception towards the importance of learning English language by these selected rural primary school students of Khanamukh locality, Amguri, Sivasagar
- 2.4 To recommend remedial measures for minimising the problems of English learning difficulty of school students studying in selected rural primary schools of Khanamukh locality, Amguri, Sivasagar

### **3.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The pilot study is only limited to two rural primary schools of Khanamukh area, Amguri block, Sivasagar, Assam. The result does not represent all the Primary schools of Sivasagar District as a whole. The samples selected for this study were from these selected two primary schools having lower primary classes (class I to V). And the students studying in these lower primary classes were selected for the present study.

### **4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Descriptive survey method was used in the present study. Two primary schools of Khanamukh, Amguri Sivasagar was inclined by the investigator for the present study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools and incidental sampling technique was used to select the students studying in these schools. As the number of the students studying in these two selective schools is small, so all the students studying in these two selective schools, teachers and the parents of these selective students were used as samples for the present study.

For identifying the English learning difficulties of Rural Primary school students, the investigator interviewed the teacher as well as the students. A self- made unstructured interview scheduled was constructed by the investigator in this direction. Further, for knowing the parental perception towards the importance of learning English language by these selected rural primary school students, a self-made unstructured closed ended questionnaire was also used in the present study.

### **5.0 COLLECTION OF DATA**

Care has taken to collect information from the schools and from the person concerned. The investigator visited the schools and collected the required data from teachers, students and from parents. Moreover, the investigator personally observed the academic environment of the schools.

### **6.0 ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Qualitative analysis technique was used in this present study. The responses given by the parents, teachers and the students were carefully collected, recorded and interpreted.

## 7.0 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### Section – 1

#### *English Learning Difficulty of Students Studying in Rural Primary Schools of Khanamukh Locality, Amguri, Sivasagar*

##### *Personal Observation of the Researcher:*

The researcher personally observed the academic environment of both the schools. The researcher got almost similar type of results in both the schools. It was observed in the study that in both the schools, there is no separate classroom facilities for each class. All the students of primary classes (class II to class V) use to sit in the same classroom. So, it is quite difficult for them to pay attention in classroom teaching. As a result of which, some of the students' loose curiosity and interest for English learning.

##### *Researcher's Interaction with Students:*

The researcher observed the reading and writing skills of the students. It was observed that almost all the students pronounced well. But some of the students had problem in pronunciation of words. However, the students were found energetic and interested in spelling English but there were some minor defects in their pronunciation. It was further noticed that the confidence level of some of the students were low. But the number of those students were few. Majority of the students were found fluent and much more confident in speaking in their mother-tongue as well in English. It was further observed that the writing skills of some of the students were low. Some of the students of both the schools face some problem in writing composition. Some of the students have problem in letter formation. But majority of the students had performed well in their reading writing skills.

##### *Researcher's Interaction with Teachers:*

While interviewing the teachers, the researcher came to know that most of the students do not have the habit of using dictionary. Majority of the students have limited vocabulary. Due to this, students can not relate their day to day life learning with their real life experiences. The teachers further reported that not all but some of the students loose interest in the class when they hear prose and poetry in the class.

But it was also observed that some of the students were concentrated well when the teachers were taking their classes.

***Section – II***

***Factors create difficulties in Learning English by these Selected Rural Primary School Students of Khanamukh Locality, Amguri, Sivasagar***

***Researcher's Interaction with Teachers:***

It was found from the study that the newly appointed teachers of both the schools are having B. Ed and D. EL. ED training which is satisfactory. One teacher of one primary school has good computer knowledge also. But for applying their micro and macro teaching skills in actual classroom settings, the teachers need proper teaching learning aids in the class. In the view of the teachers, one of the most important aid which is needed in classroom is computer. But the teachers of both the schools reported that they do not have electricity facility. Automatically, there is no question of computer application in classroom. They need financial assistance from government in this regard. Moreover, the teachers further reported that the number of students and teachers in both the schools are very less. One teacher use to teach all the subjects. There is no question of separate classrooms. The teachers feel it as an excessive pressure. Automatically they do not get enough time for their lesson plan preparation. One teacher of one primary school also reported that they have given very less time to complete their course i.e. 35 to 40 minutes. As a result, he gives first priority of course completion in one academic year.

On the basis of the responses of the teachers, it can be concluded that there are some hidden causes like teacher ratio, insufficient financial support from the government, no separate classrooms for all stages (stage I to V), no electricity, library and books availability create hindrances in successful implementation of English learning in rural primary schools.

*Section – III*

*Parental Perception towards the Importance of English Teaching and Learning*

The researcher conducted a small survey on parents of the students studying in these two selected primary schools. A self-made questionnaire having ‘Yes’ ‘No’ items were used for the study. The responses of the parents are interpreted here.

Almost similar type of responses were given by the parents of both the schools. On the basis of the responses of the parents, it can be said that most of the parents have positive perception towards English teaching and learning. Majority of the parents think that knowing English language can help their child to get a good job. Most of the parents also believe that for personality development, knowledge about English speaking is important.

It was found that majority of the parents are satisfied with the English text book. They believe that the school text book of English subject is properly designed and easily comprehensible. But interestingly, when the researcher asked the parents that did they see the units of the English text books of their child, then most of the parents said that they did not see the units written under the school text books but they think that the lessons are properly written as their child never complained about the text book. This showed that the parents do not have much idea about the text books of their child. When the researcher asked them among all his subjects, which subject the child should study more? Then majority of the parents replied that among all the subjects, the child should study the English subject more. Because they feel that English is a tough subject. This showed that though they feel the importance of English teaching but their direct involvement in their child’s English learning was found inactive.

The parent’s perception towards teacher’s role in their child’s English learning was found positive. When the researcher asked the parents about their participation in school related activities, then majority of the parents replied that the school teachers encourage them to participate in SMC (School Managing Committee) meetings, parent teacher meeting, to get involved in completion of their child’s home works etc. It was found that most of the parents do not participate every day in school related activities. Some of the parents are wage earners and some are farmers. They don’t

want to miss their daily duties. That's why sometimes they miss SMC meetings but in most of the times, they successfully attend those meetings. In case of completion of the school homework, the researcher has come to know that mothers participate more than fathers in completion of child's homework.

In the present study, majority of the parents were found to be satisfied with the involvement of the school teachers in their child's education. Most of the parents have reported that the school teachers sometimes visit their house to see the child's progress. The parents also reported that the school teachers sometimes take personal initiative and bring their children to school. The school teachers sometimes give financial help also to their children as reported by the parents. The parents were found very satisfied with the academic and social involvement of the teachers in their child's learning.

The above-mentioned findings revealed that though most of the parents have positive perception towards English teaching and learning at school but their academic contribution in their child's learning was found inactive.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

The researcher has observed in this study that almost all the students studying in these elected primary schools are very inquisitive and interested to learn new things. Majority of them have performed very well in their reading and writing skills. The teachers also found very active and facilitate the students to learn. But inspite of this, some students are suffering from English learning difficulties. Although the number of such children are very less, but they are having problems in English learning which cannot be neglected. These major problems are - wrong pronunciation, incorrect spelling and difficulty in understating the subject matter. Among various causes, major causes which create hindrances in their English learning are- teacher ratio, lack of governmental grant on time, no provision of separate classrooms for all stages (stage I to V), no electricity and library and books availability. While observing the parental perception towards English learning, it was further found that though most of the parents have positive perception towards English teaching and learning at school but their academic contribution in their child's learning is found inactive.

## 9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

*Practice* is needed to understand the subject better. The *duration of classes* should be increased. More teaching aids especially *audio-visual aids* should be provided in the classroom. *Training* should be given to teachers about how to communicate the lessons in schools. *Tests on speaking and listening skills* should be included in the exams. Students should be encouraged to give *adequate response to the English classes*. *Incentives in the form of prizes* should be given to the child. The child should be motivated to recite English poems inside the class. The teacher should praise the child for his good reading inside the class. *Language learning competitions* like prose reading, poetry recitation, and English newspaper reading can be organized in the school. Teacher can bring *Stimulus Variation* inside the class for creating and sustaining the attention of the learners in the classroom. For that purpose, the teacher can maintain the eye contact with the students while teaching in the class. His hand movement, gesture, posture etc. are essential skills which a teacher can apply to attract the child towards the lesson. The teacher can follow the method of *task analysis* in which the prose or the poetry can be divided into small parts having a proper sequence. The child can be encouraged to finish each small parts first. After getting mastery over the part, the child can be instructed to move to the next part. In this way, the subject English can be taught under a proper sequence. Teacher can *illustrate* the subject matter with the use of blackboard, drawing, diagram, maps, charts, globes. Students can be encouraged to *read the dictionary* regularly. This will increase the word stock of the students. Every week, one *English Speaking Class* can be organized where if possible trained resource persons can be invited for classroom communication.

**REFERENCES:**

- Anjaneyulu, Thotapally (2015) Problems faced by Teachers in Teaching English Language in Government Schools in Telengana State, *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, Vol-3, Issue-3, pp-225-231, Retrieved on:15-1-2019, from: [file:///C:/Users/Family/Downloads/Problems%20Faced%20By%20Teachers-2155%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Family/Downloads/Problems%20Faced%20By%20Teachers-2155%20(1).pdf)
- Arroji, Srinivas (2016). Challenges of Teaching English in the Rural Context, *Research Paper*, Vol-5, Issue-3, Retrieved On: 15-11-2018, from: [https://www.worldwidejournals.com/paripex/recent\\_issues\\_pdf/2016/March/March\\_2016\\_1457964931\\_106.pdf](https://www.worldwidejournals.com/paripex/recent_issues_pdf/2016/March/March_2016_1457964931_106.pdf)
- Behraam, Sobia., Mehmood-Ul-Hussain, Parveen Shagufta and Nadeem, Muhammad (2015). Difficulties of Teaching English at Rural Primary Level in Rural Areas of Pakistan, *International Journal of Information Research, and Review*, VOL-II, Issue- IV, pp-646-648, Retrieved On: 15-11-2018, from: <https://www.ijirr.com/sites/default/files/issues-files/Download%200285.pdf>
- Derakhshan, Ali and Shirmohammadli, Marjan (2015). The Difficulties of Teaching English Language: The Relationship between Research and English, *International Journal of Linguistics*, Macro Think Institute, Vol-7, No-1, pp-102-110, Retrieved on: 15-11-2018, from: <http://www.macrothink.org/journal/index.php/ijl/article/view/6648>
- Ekran, Senem Seda Sahenk, (2012) Problems of English Language Instruction in Primary in Turkey and their Suggestions, *Elsevier, SciVerse Science Direct, Procedia (Social and Behavioural Sciences)*, 46, 1117-1121, Retrieved on: 12-11-2018, from: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/82056788.pdf>
- Hossain, Mahroof (2016), English Language Teaching in Rural Areas: A Scenario and Problems and Prospects in Context of Bangladesh, *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, Australian International Academic Centre, Vol-7, No-3, Retrieved on: 15-11-2018, from: <http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/all/article/viewFile/2239/1969>

- Khamari Jubraj, Guru Nivedita , Tiwari Sanjeet Kumar, Sahu Nirupama, Hanspal Parvinder, Hadke Kshipra and Naidu Sapna (2014). An Investigation into the Problems of Teaching English at Primary Level, *IOSR Journal of Research and Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, Volume-4, Issue -1, Ver-V, pp-30-42, Retrieved on: 12-11-2018, from: <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jrme/papers/Vol-4%20Issue-1/Version-5/F04153042.pdf>
- Mishra, Binod (2015). Innovative ways of English Language Teaching in Rural Areas through Technology, *International Journal of English and Literature, Academic Journals*, Vol-6(2), pp-38-44, Retrieved on: 17-11-2018, from: <https://academicjournals.org/journal/IJEL/article-abstract/5F2818A49922>
- Ponmozhi, D. and Thenmozhi, A. (2017). Difficulties faced by the Rural Students in learning English at High School Level, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol-2, Issue-6, Ver-13, pp-31-34, Retrieved on: 15-11-2018, from: <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol.%2022%20Issue6/Version-13/F2206133134.pdf>