

Mohd Rafiq

Ph D Research Scholar

A. P. S. University Rewa, (M.P.)

India.

mohdrafiq85514@gmail.com

## History and Evolution of English Language in India

### ABSTRACT

English as a language in India has an archive of about three hundred years. It existed in India with the entrance of the British in the Indian coasts. English as a language from that time to still now has a substantial journey in the Indian subcontinent. The people from different religions, communities and cultures have attempted to adopt English for many reasons. Consequently, in the present context we cannot think our life comfortable in India without English. Therefore it is the need of the hour to understand the history and evolution of English in India as well as to review the way in which we are progressing with the English language and the same is being highlighted in this research paper.

**Key Words:** Ruling class, hegemony, Supremacy, Minutes, Colonised, Minutes, Transmission, Idolatry and Superstition.

## Introduction

Although, English language was spoken by the lower classes of England during the mediaeval era but presently it progressed to become a language which is being spoken by half of the world population. It is essential to find out the reasons behind this rapid development of a language which is ruling the world in the present era. As a matter of fact, the growth of a language takes place when the language is that of the ruling class. At the end of World War II the dominance of British in the global politics began to face a downfall and lost the supremacy it had over the colonized countries more about the British were forced to leave the paralyzed Nation but their language did not become vanished and inactive in the colonized countries. As far as India is concerned, the British left India in 1947 but the language was left behind which was assimilated, adjusted, modified and moderated into the Indian context to give birth to such English which is different from Queen's English. Similarly in the colonised countries English language adopted a different shape and consequently many English existing side by side along with British English.

From the time the British arrived India, they had political desire to rule over India and for this purpose they use different strategies such as implied agreements and warfare to arrogate different states of India. As soon as they had got entire dominance over the Indian subcontinent, they intensified on consolidating their power by establishing cultural hegemony. English studies were conventionally introduced in India in the year 1835. It is Thomas Macaulay's Minutes on Indian Education in 1835 which reveals that the money invested by the British colonial government on the education of the nation would be used for the justification of English education. Macaulay's Minutes on Indian education is usually regarded as the foremost document which changed the history of education system in India as it is a Chronicle which is thought to be exclusively responsible for the introduction of English studies in British India. Besides this, Macaulay asserts many other remarks in the minutes

which are of greater significance to the people. He asserts that all the literature of the East or the Orient can be compared to “a single shelf of a good European library”. He further states that he suffered from the “White men’s burden”.

Moreover he further attempted to state that objective of English education should be to establish a class of English educated individuals who will be “Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect”. But it is not fact that the English education started in India post 1835, as it was introduced in India much earlier than 1835 there has been much insistence and purview of English education in India, particularly in the metropolitan cities such as Kolkata where Christian missionaries had set up schools in which English education was being provided. In other words, it is not wrong to say that before the British started to introduce English studies, there was already a scope for the same in the India. The main reason behind this demand was that the Indians were interested to learn English to become closer to the colonial Administration and probably to get the job opportunities. Apart from Macaulay’s Minute on Indian education 1835 there are some other historical documents required to be understood to highlight the introduction of English studies in India. These are:

- I Raja Ram Mohan Roy’s letter to Lord Amherst.
- II Trevelyan’s on the Education how the people of India 1838.
- III Lord Bentinck’s Approval of Macaulay’s Minutes.

To analyse these three characters it is essential to go back into a history of colonial India. In the year 1792, Charles Grant an employee of East India Company advocated the proclamation of European literature and census among the Indian people through the medium

of English. In his essay *Observations in the State of Society Among the Asian subjects of Great Britain* Grant portrays a very miserable and gloomy embodiment of Indian society where enormous evils are perceptible and conspicuous such as superstition, immorality and idolatry. He gave the arguments that English education will be beneficial to diminish the gap between the colonial and the natives. With the proficiency of natives in English language, it will be easy to trade with them and it will also ensure loyalty from the natives. He also asserted that the English education will assist in the British commerce in India and consequently be useful for more and more profit by East Indian Company. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a prominent social reformer who efficiently.

#### **Raja Ram Mohan Roy's Letter to Lord Amherst:**

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a prominent social reformer who efficiently worked for the betterment of the dilemma of the Hindus, particularly Hindu women. As he was a well-educated man and therefore discrimination of the people led him to write a letter to Lord Amherst to introduce English education in India on 11<sup>th</sup> of December 1813. This letter is regarded to be the most essential intervention on this part of the native Indians in the context of English education in India. Actually, this letter was in opposition and disagreement to the colonial regime's resolution to open a Sanskrit College in Calcutta. He asserts that the Sanskrit system of education would be entirely responsible to keep this country in darkness.

#### **C.E. Trevelyan "On the Education of the People of India", 1838:**

Charles E. Trevelyan was an unyielding disciple of perspective that the native Indians should be given education in English and accordingly in his "On the Education of People of India" he insisted on the English education which was formulated in 1838. He made an

analysis and census of the religions of India. Moreover, he promulgated that English education should be firmly accomplished in India so that the Indians can be transformed to lead a comfortable life.

### **Lord Bentinck's Approval of Macaulay's Minutes:**

T.B. Macaulay's suggestions which remembered as his Minutes has got the approval of Lord Bentinck and it was issued on 7<sup>th</sup> of March, 1835 and thereafter an official resolution which countersigned Macaulay's Policy of Colonial education through English medium was passed. As a matter of fact, a real change existed when the teaching of English in a systematic way initiates from the promulgation of Wood's Dispatch of 1854, which is known as the Magna Carta of Indian education. Here the English language is referred to be the medium of intention in the higher branches and the vernacular in the lower. English is to be implemented where there is a requirement of it but it is not being exchanged for the language spoken by the ordinary people in the country.

As a result, the English education started becoming profound and extensive progressively and it was in 1857 that three universities were established at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta for the higher education of Indians. Besides this, two more universities at Punjab and Allahabad were established. The setup of these universities pronounced a new stage in the history of Indian education. Consequently, more and more schools and colleges were established which automatically resulted in the increase of more Indians who got mastery in the English language. English language becomes the medium of communication when Indian National Congress (INC) was set up in 1885. Many leaders from across India assembled on one platform and assessed the obstacles and dilemmas faced by the people across the nation. They thought that if it is the English language by which the British colonized us then it is the same language can assist and support us in searching common grounds for communication in

the country. The British likely did not perceived that when they introduced English in India that the same language will be used by Indian intellectuals and the politicians for the purpose of decolonization and national movements. So when the British government planned to the state aid to English education, Indian people from all the states reacted and the proposal was immediately cancelled by the order of Lord Curzon who was Viceroy of India in that era. He desired to improve the disorganised condition of educational institutions.

The government of India appointed Calcutta University Commission in 1917 to recognise the significance of mother-tongue. The commission appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. M.E. Salder and they argued that mother-tongue must be used merely in high classes. In the higher classes they proclaimed the ownership of English. Moreover, The Wood Abbot Report recommended a preference of simplified English in order to maintain the flow of education through the medium of English. Consequently at the secondary and the university stages, English continued to influence over in pre-independence days. All the courses of action in life, all the ways of approaching a problem could be uncovered merely with the keys of English.

By the time, India got independence in 1947 from colonial power; the predominance of English had been confirmed all over India as well as in the world. Furthermore, English had a significant role to perform in our national unity and struggle. As a result it was very abnormal that English would lose its status in the independent India. It was accepted that the privileged class of India at that time of Independence had already a great command over the English language. Educationally, culturally, politically economically as well as socially they understood that if they do away with English then globally they would lose their highest rank in the society. So, it was finalised that English would remain an important and part of the independent India. Therefore, it becomes apparent that English, the language which was imposed during the British Raj has extremely rooted in India and presently has almost

become a part and parcel of day to day life. The significance of English has been entirely realised by various education commissions appointed by the government of India.

### **Conclusion:**

Basically the transmission of one language into another nation happens as a result of interference and interaction of two or more languages. As far as English in India is concerned, it is completely based on the colonization of British in India. Firstly, English and the Indian language come in contact with each other in the early 16th century when the British decided to setup their trading posts in India and transmitted English to a new territory. Many Christian schools were established in India by the English missionaries due to the massive influence of English colonization. Consequently, India's education policy was framed on the 2nd of February, 1835 and many English teaching universities were established in different parts of the country. As a result English was formally established as the academic and official language of India in the early twentieth century. In the present scenario, the English language is being used in all the fields of education, administration, mass media, law science and technology in India.

## References

Anand, Mulakh Raj, and Sahitya Chayana. *On Education*. New Delhi: Penguin Books

India, 2010. Print.

Basu, Amarnath. *Education in Modern India*. Calcutta: Commonwealth Publishers,

New Delhi, 1989. Print.

Chatterjee, Suniti Kumar. *The Cultural Heritage of India*. New Delhi: Commonwealth

Publishers, 1989. Print.

<http://www.academia.edu> A-Brief-His...Accessed on 25 July 2019

<http://www.ukenays.com> essays his...Accessed on 28 July 2019.