

Strengthening Of Communication Skills Among Tribal And Rural Students

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Abstract:-

English is the language of golden opportunities. It is a must for anyone interested in making a good carrier. However, we should remember that there is no shortcut to acquire good communication skills as indeed there is no shortcut to success in life. Strengthening and empowering our communication skills in English is a continuous and constant process.

Communication is at the centre of almost all the activities that take place in our daily lives. English language and teaching communication skills to tribal and rural students is a challenge for many teachers in the country. And at the same time learning English as a foreign or second language is also a herculean task to many students of Tribal and Rural areas. Effective communication in education is very important in order to ensure that students get optimum benefit out of the teaching-learning process. It is usually seen that sometimes due to certain psychological and socio-cultural constraints various barriers in communication arise. Prior studies inform us that these barriers are experienced more by the unprivileged and deprived communities of a society as compared to privileged and richer sections of a society relative to the privileged and richer sections. Tribal and rural students constitute a major percentage of that marginalized and deprived section.

Key words:- communication skills, barriers, exposure, herculean task, listening, speaking, reading, writing.

Introduction:-

English is the store house of scientific knowledge. It is not only one of the richest languages of the world, but a window on the modern knowledge in various disciplines and faculties. English occupies an important and prestigious place in India. For almost two centuries now, it has been playing an important role in our educational system as well as in our national life. If we give up English under sentimental urges, we will cut ourselves from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge which is readily available in English. If a person knows English he is sure to be understood anywhere in the world. It's of

course a foreign language to our students but at present its usage and importance in our country needs no proof. Its role as a link language and a library and course language, as a service language as a medium of instruction in public and central schools or colleges commerce and communication cannot be underestimated. The role of communication skills (soft skills) in our country is of ever increasing importance's as India is wedded to modernization, secularism, ideals of national integration, international understanding, world peace and progress in all spheres taking us into the modern world.

Effective communication has become the

inevitable source of the lifeline of education, commerce, administration and good management. Hence for an overall success in various walks of life, the ability to speak and write good English is an essential thing. It is natural that the demand for communication is high in this ever-changing world. Language plays a major place in communication and English is no doubt the foremost and most important tool of communication all over the world. Individually every man should strive hard to acquire good communication skills which are the most important prerequisites to excel in one's career. Students in India are exposed to their language studies right from their primary level. English is taught only as a second language in India and there is a great difference between the city-bred children and the tribal, rural children in adapting to English language. The city-bred children are exposed to a lot of methods of learning English with ample facilities and special training in schools to improve their Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills which are the basic skills for learning any language whereas tribal and rural students have only limited exposure to learn English.

Language learning:-

Language learning is a skill that can be perfected only through constant practice and continuous exposure to the target language. Students in India are taught English as a second language even though they are exposed to language studies right from their primary level. There seems to be a great difference between the city children and the tribal, rural children getting acquainted with English Language. Since most of the students in India are from rural and tribal background and most of them are first generation learners, they lack guidance of English language from their parents and others. Rural and tribalness is a longstanding problem hence it takes its own time but by using effective methods and strategies we can strengthen and

accelerate in acquiring communication skills in English language.

Status of tribal, rural and urban students:-

India is a country of villages and therefore the primary concern of every Indian is the rural development. To attain rural development, there must be a collective responsibility to improve the well being of the people living there. Villages are generally located far from cities and towns. The most teachers serving in villages leave their family in cities and dissatisfied with their career. Cities are blessed with different teaching-learning materials and modern articles of teaching equipment , whereas the villages lack all these facilities .The tribal and rural students are mostly ignorant of these and feel quite helpless. The chances of exposure to English in rural areas are very scanty. The city-bred children are exposed to a lot of modules and they have the privilege of learning English through different methods. Special training is available in the city schools to improve the students' Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills which are the basic skills for learning any language whereas the tribal and rural students have only limited exposure to learn English language. To a tribal student every language is a foreign language other than his mother tongue. The training provided in schools, is purely theoretical and bookish and English is taught only in the exam point of view. Hence, even after twelve years of learning English as a subject the students hesitate to communicate in English. This applies to city-bred children also, many of them are good at English but when it comes to the point of communicating in English hesitation prevails more among students. It is time to motivate the students, right from their school by creating an awareness regarding the importance of English language. It is necessary that the teachers who teach English in tribal and rural areas should be committed and have an honest approach to equip the skills of the students. The available

resources should be completely tapped so as to provide an encouraging atmosphere for learning and practicing the language. Today, conventional teaching methods are replaced with modern techniques which rely hugely upon media resources and teaching English with the help of such modern techniques fosters a positive attitude among the tribal and rural students to learn the language which would enable them to meet the demands of the day in a creative way.

Problems faced by the tribal and rural students:-

The first and the foremost factor is the Socio-Cultural and financial background of the family. As most of the parents are illiterate, they are not able to guide their wards as educated parents do. Hence, the students' performance lacks parental supervision and guidance which is very necessary for education. The illiterate parents are unable to realize the importance of education and also they do not understand the importance of communication skills which plays a vital role in their ward's career. The children from rural and tribal areas who attend the school in their neighbourhoods are not exposed to the same type of facilities and motivated as the city-bred children. In cities, the children get motivated through two ways: Instrumental and Integrative motivation. Learning a language only for rewards is instrumental motivation, on the other hand integrative motivation includes the urge to be part of the community which is so strong that drives the child to pick up the language with perfection. Regarding the syllabus, the most important point is in most of the schools English is taught as any other subject. The importance of English as a communicative tool is not realized. So the existing methods followed at rural schools are not enough to train the students to communicate effectively in English. Due to this, the students from tribal and rural areas who take up professional courses face a lot of difficulties. Since they are not good enough

to communicate in English, they miss many opportunities.

Effective Teaching Methods Of Skills:-

Language skills:- English is a living language. To learn this language certain skills are required and the four fundamental language skills are:

1. Listening or Hearing
2. Speaking
3. Reading and
4. Writing

1. Listening: Spoken English is more difficult to follow than written English, because of the peculiarities of pronunciation, unfamiliar intonation, and the rate at which the words are spoken. Specific practice is needed in listening to English and grasping what is being said. We should listen carefully to a person who speaks good English or English programmes on the Radio or T.V or Pre-recorded cassettes in English which are played at the institute on Mondays. We should cultivate the habit of hearing attentively.

Activities for Listening:

The following activities can be implemented to improve the listening skills.

- Listening to recorded speeches, dialogues, interviews and discussions
- Listening to news bulletins, chat shows, commentaries, weather reports and announcements on TV
- Watching English movies on Television
- Watching talk shows on Television
- Listening to speeches of great statesmen & politicians

2. Speaking: After practice of listening, comes speaking. It is not enough if we learn how to

pronounce a particular word or use an expression correctly. We must do deliberate and conscious effort to new words. A word becomes own when we use it.

3. Reading: This skill plays attention to the mastery of ordinary common place English. Later, this will lead to the appreciation literary English too. To aim at language is to pave the way to literature. We should read as many books or journals or newspapers in English as possible. When we read extensively, we come in contact with many new words and expressions. We have to note down them in a note book, otherwise we may forget them. We should also cultivate the habit of browsing in or dawdling over the dictionary.

Activities for reading:

- Separate assignments for reading should be given.
- At the initial stage students should be encouraged to read aloud so that the mistakes in pronunciation, stress and pause could be corrected.
- Students should be encouraged to read the phrases at a single stretch, not going from word to word.

4. Writing: This skill is intended to make the learners write correct English with the working vocabulary they have learnt. Bacon says, "Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man and writing an exact man". By writing only, learners become 'exact' in our expression. By writing daily, we will not only know the correct spelling, but also have a good speed in writing. A graduate must be able to write more than ten pages an hour.

Eventually, we should remember a fact that a language like English is a habit to be copied, an activity to be developed and a skill to be practised.

Conclusion:

English language teaching India is vibrant and dynamic today. English is most widely used language in the world and hence the social responsibilities associated with the promotion and teaching. English is the "Lingua Franca" of the world. It has communicative and educative value. It is a world language, a progressive language and is renowned for its richness. English teacher, especially those who teach rural students need to be very patient and systematic. They are expected to do a miraculous job under adverse conditions. This is a real challenge which may sound impractical, but it would be highly unjust on the part of the English teacher if he/she overlooks the seriousness behind the issue and it would deprive the students' opportunities which are mainly attained through communication skills and the specific purpose of teaching English as a communicative tool would get lost.

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