

New trends in English language teaching in Rural areas

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Abstract

Tamilnadu is a Tamil speaking state. English enjoys the status of a second language, as a compulsory subject on the curriculum for secondary education and a medium of instruction in English medium schools. Tamilnadu has a big tribal population. The tribal people have their own language and dialects. They generally know Tamil, Kannada, Telugu and use it to some extent. English is available to them in schools. In all Tamil medium government schools in Tamilnadu, English has now been introduced from Class I.

Throughout their schooling Tamil medium students are exposed to English only for 6 periods a week whereas for the English medium students the case is totally different as instruction in all the subjects except Tamil is in English which makes a lot of difference.

The following research questions emerge in this context:

What is the status of ELT in the tribal area of Southern Tamilnadu?

What are the issues related to ELT in the tribal area of Southern Tamilnadu?

What are the challenges of ELT in the tribal area of Southern Tamilnadu?

What could be an Alternative/Suggestive model for ELT in the tribal area of Southern Tamilnadu?

In order to seek authentic answer to the above-mentioned research question the present study has been taken up.

Of course, such kind of research work is not possible without the help of the supervisor, experts, teachers, students, relatives and friends as well.

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The aim of this research is to study the stakeholders' perception of English and of ELT in Tamilnadu. For this a sample of sixty government secondary Schools of tribal region of Southern Tamilnadu was selected. An Enquiry Form and a Questionnaire were administered to study the difference in the stakeholders' perception

of English and ELT. The results show that there is no significant difference in stakeholders' perception of ELT in tribal region of Southern Tamilnadu.

Key words: *Tribal Region, Tamil, second language, English*

1. Introduction :

Various policies and commissions on education including University Commission (1948-49), Mudaliar Commission (1952-53), Kothari Commission (1964-66), National Education Policy (1968), National Policy on Education (1986), NCF (2005), etc. have rightly recognized the role of English in the national development and progress.

2. English Language in the Tribal Region of Tamilnadu:

Tamilnadu is a Tamil speaking state. English enjoys the status of a second language, as a compulsory subject on the curriculum for secondary education, as well as a medium of instruction in English medium schools which are by and large owned by missionaries and private enterprises. Tamilnadu has a big tribal population. The tribal people live in the tribal areas of Tamilnadu. They have their own language and dialects. They well understand oral/spoken Tamil and use it to some extent. English is available to them in schools. In all Tamil medium schools in Tamilnadu, English has now been introduced from Class I onwards. But in reality the performance of students in English is rather disappointing. According to an article (published in The Times of India dated Feb 6, 2017,), Tamilnadu has recorded the highest number of children in Class I who failed to clear basic language skills test. The Annual Status Report on Education (ASER) mentions that 73.3% of the children in Class I in Tamilnadu cannot even read letters of the English alphabet.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary :

Perception is "the way you think about or understand someone or something, the ability to understand or notice something easily." "Perception" in the present research refers to the opinion of students, teachers and ELT experts related to the status of English, its introduction to students, methodologies, evaluation techniques, etc used.

In this context, the cardinal question is : What is the stakeholders' perception of English and of ELT ?

An attempt has been made here to specifically address the above mentioned cardinal question .

3. Study of Related literature:

A review of related study was conducted and it was found there was no directly related research study available.

However, the research studies conducted by Dario Abdullah Mando (2008), Hernandez, Marisol (2009), and Kawamura, Michelle (2011) and other studies were found to be very useful in conceptual understanding of the research problem, in formulating hypotheses, in constructing tools, in considering methodology, in applying statistical techniques, and in drawing conclusions and reporting.

In the present paper an effort has been made to analyze and interpret the data related to teachers', students' and ELT experts' perception of English by keeping in view the following research questions :

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