

CHALLENGES IN LEARNING ENGLISH AMONG RURAL DIPLOMA FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

Mrs. Rekha Prashant Ratnaparkhi¹

1 Mrs. R. P. Ratnaparkhi , Lecturer, Science and Humanities, P. Dr. V. Vikhe Patil Institute of Technology & Engineering (Polytechnic) Loni Bk, Maharashtra, India

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the challenges faced by rural diploma first-year students in learning English. English plays a crucial role in education, communication, and career development in today's globalized world. However, students from rural backgrounds often encounter significant difficulties due to limited exposure to the language, inadequate learning resources, and lack of confidence.

English serves as the medium of instruction for technical education, yet a significant gap exists between rural schooling and professional requirements. Through a qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study identifies socio-economic constraints, psychological barriers, and pedagogical gaps as primary hurdles. The findings suggest a need for tailored bridge courses and communicative language teaching (CLT) to improve proficiency

Keyword - English Learning, Rural Students, Diploma Education, Language Barriers, Communication Skills

1) Introduction:-

English is considered a global language and plays a crucial role in education, employment, and communication. In today's competitive world, proficiency in English is essential for academic success as well as career growth. However, students from rural areas often face difficulties in learning English due to lack of proper exposure and resources.

Most rural students come from non-English medium schools, which creates a gap in understanding when they enter higher education. They struggle with basic language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence further affect their performance.

This study focuses on diploma first-year students, as English is a core subject at this level. The research aims to identify the major challenges faced by these students and suggest effective strategies to improve their English learning.

2) Objectives of the Study:-

- ❖ To identify the challenges faced by rural diploma students in learning English
- ❖ To analyze students' confidence level in using English
- ❖ To study the learning environment and exposure to English
- ❖ To suggest measures to improve English learning

3) Literature Review:-

Several researchers have examined the challenges faced by students while learning English, particularly in rural and non-English-medium contexts.

According to Stephen Krashen (1982), language acquisition depends heavily on exposure to comprehensible input. Learners who are not regularly exposed to English find it difficult to understand and use the language effectively. This situation is common among rural students who rarely use English outside the classroom.

David Wilkins (1972) emphasized the importance of vocabulary, stating that without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed. Rural students often have limited vocabulary, which affects all four language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

In the Indian context, NCERT reports (2006) highlight that many rural students face difficulties in English due to inadequate teaching methods, lack of exposure, and insufficient learning materials. The reports emphasize the need for activity-based learning and communicative approaches.

Another study by Graddol (2010) discussed the growing importance of English in India and highlighted the gap between urban and rural learners in terms of access to quality English education.

Overall, the literature indicates that lack of exposure, limited vocabulary, low confidence, and inadequate learning environment are the major challenges faced by rural students in learning English. These findings support the need for effective teaching strategies and supportive learning environments at the diploma level.

4) Identification of Challenges:-

The challenges can be broadly categorized into four dimensions:

(A) Linguistic Barriers-

- ✚ Mother Tongue Influence (MTI): Heavy influence of local dialects on pronunciation and syntax.
- ✚ Vocabulary Deficit: Lack of exposure to technical and academic vocabulary.
- ✚ Translation Habit: The tendency to think in the native language and translate to English, leading to grammatical errors.



(B) Psychological Barriers-

- ✚ Lack of Confidence: Fear of being judged or mocked by peers for incorrect grammar.
- ✚ Communication Anxiety: Hesitation to participate in group discussions or presentations.
- ✚ Inferiority Complex: Comparing themselves to urban peers who are more fluent.

(C) Socio-Economic and Environmental Factors-

- ✚ Lack of Resources: Limited access to English newspapers, digital media, or language labs in rural schools.
- ✚ Limited Exposure: Absence of an English-speaking environment at home or in the village community.

(D) Technical Vocabulary Bottleneck-

- ✚ Engineering English consists of specific jargon. Students often struggle with "General English" (grammar and syntax) and "Technical English" (definitions and reports) at the same time, leading to rote memorization (cramming) rather than actual learning.

5) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT-

To overcome these challenges, the following innovative ideas are proposed:

- ✦ Bilingual Support: Instructors should use the 'Sandwich Technique'—explaining a concept in English, briefly clarifying in the mother tongue, and summarizing again in English.
- ✦ Digital Language Labs: Use of interactive software to allow students to practice speaking in a private, judgment-free environment.
- ✦ Peer-to-Peer Learning: Forming "Language Circles" where students discuss technical topics in simplified English.
- ✦ Emphasis on Fluency over Accuracy: Teachers should encourage students to speak even if their grammar is incorrect, focusing on building confidence first.

6) CONCLUSIONS

The struggle of rural diploma students with English is not a reflection of their intellectual capacity but a result of environmental and educational disparities. By integrating communication skills with technical subjects and utilizing modern ICT tools, institutes can empower these students to excel in their professional careers.

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