

CHAPTER - III

3.1. Findings and Recommendations

The broad goal of teaching English as a second language has been the attainment of the skill of communicative competence. We have to enable the learners to develop this communicative ability in the language by helping them not only to master the structures of the language but also how to put those structures to language function in real life situations. And in order to achieve these it will be necessary that the students are engaged in meaningful activities and task where language is used for communication. Besides, the objectives of teaching English at this stage are – to enable the students to understand English when spoken to, to enable them to speak English fluently and correctly in real life situation, to enable them to read English correctly and at a reasonable speed, to enable them to write English, to enable them to develop familiarity with the love for rhyme and verse.

The students of Handique Girls' College questioned some students about their problems in learning English and listed below are some of the problems they could identify.

1. Insufficient exposure to English.
2. Inadequate motivation at the school as well as college level.

3. Over-crowded classes.
4. Low aptitude to learn English.
5. Classroom anxiety (do not enjoy the class, fear of speaking English in front of teacher, etc.)
6. Insufficient remedial teaching.
7. Lack of opportunity to use English.
8. Syllabus not suitable for communication competence.
9. Inadequate effort on the part of the teacher.
10. Inadequate motivation at home.

The student researchers also discussed about the problem of teaching English with certain English teachers. The teachers could identify the following problems:

1. Inadequate Infrastructure facilities.
2. Lack of need based syllabus.
3. Large classes.
4. Insufficient teaching time.
5. Inadequate exposure to English on the part of the student.
6. Students lack of interest.
7. Unsuitable teaching methods.
8. Low intelligence and aptitude of learners.
9. Dearth of competent teachers.

10. Teacher's resistance to change and form.

Some common problems have been identified and discussed below.

- **The problem of dearth of trained and competent teachers:** There is an acute dearth of trained and competent teachers in the schools and colleges of the district. Though the percentage of trained teachers is 37.79, a large chunk of them (43.07%) have got training within a very short duration (3-15 days). Besides majority of the teachers are weak: both in the speaking and writing skill in English. Professional awareness and competence of most teachers are deplorably poor.
- **The Problem of large classes:** Almost 78.18% of the schools and colleges suffer from the problem of large classes. This problem proves formidable for the schools and colleges in view of their infrastructural inadequacies to meet the demands of large classes as well as their teachers' professional and pedagogic incompetence to handle large classes.
- **The Problem of Inadequate Infrastructure Facilities:** Infrastructure facilities are inadequate in most of the schools and colleges. Infrastructure here refers to the physical facilities of the colleges like buildings, classrooms, general accommodation, furniture, library facilities and overall

resource status of the schools. Many teachers claim that the facilities in their schools and colleges also prove vague as the libraries do not have adequate books suitable for students learning English.

- **The Problem of Unsuitable Learning Environment:** A suitable environment conducive to learning is very essential in any professional institution. This is important for learning in general as well as for learning English in particular. This is linked to the infrastructure as well as resource status of the schools and colleges. A good resource-status both human and material in a college contributes to the growth of a healthy and effective teaching-learning environment in it - with good teachers, good facilities, healthy practices, ample opportunities for learning and using English and plentiful exposure to the target language. Many teachers and students, etc. have expressed their dissatisfaction with the environment in their respective colleges.
- **The Problem of Low Aptitude of Students:** This has been yet another problem in the schools and colleges under study. Students lack aptitude to learn English and only few students have claimed mastery over the language.
- **The Problem of Unsuitable Teaching Methodology:** The Grammar-Translation Method is one of the favourite methodologies practiced by

maximum teachers at the school level. This method with its prime focus on translation of the lessons into Assamese and on the writing skill deprives the learners not only of exposure to the target language but also of learning the language properly. This eventually becomes a problem for the students at the Higher Secondary and Under Graduate level.

- **The Problem of Inadequate Exposure to English:** Sufficient exposure to the target language is very vital in any second language learning situation. But in the colleges of the area under study, students' exposure to English is inadequate. In the teaching-learning situation of these schools and colleges the teacher is the only source of English for the students. But since communication with the teachers outside the classroom hardly occurs the students are deprived of opportunities to interact in the target language. Lack of proper reading habit also acts as a hindrance in the learning process.
- **The Problem of Unsuitable Socio-Cultural Environment:** The socio-cultural environment around the college also influences language learning and teaching to a significant degree. Social and cultural attitudes have a deep influence not only on the institution of learning but also on the learners. The teaching of English is not an isolated phenomenon of the classroom; it depends upon many more factors vitally connected with it. The socio-cultural environment surrounding the colleges under study is not suitable for

promoting the learning and use of English. Many teachers, students and students of colleges consider the socio-cultural environment around their college as unsuitable.

- **The Problem of Curricular Inadequacy:** The curricular framework of the English teaching programme at the secondary stage is inadequate. This has been perceived by many teachers and students. Curricular inadequacy here refers to the inadequate vision of curriculum components to help realize the objectives of teaching English at this stage. There should be some more tasks or activities added besides the teaching of the prescribed text-books. Many teachers of English feel that since English is a foreign language and a difficult one the time allotted for teaching the subject should be increased. They think that an increase in the teaching hours of English will lead to an increase in contact length or frequency of the learners with the language thereby yield better results.
- **The Problem of Gap between Theory and Practice:** There is a big gap between the curricular objectives and specifications of the ELT programme and the real classroom or pedagogic practices in implementing them in the schools and colleges under study in the district. As a result the very objectives of the programme get lost and defeated.
- **The Problem of Cultural Constraints:** There is an intimate relationship

between a language and its culture as the meanings expressed in a language are largely culturally-determined. The teacher must understand this intimate relationship between language and culture to be successful and effective in his teaching. A thorough knowledge of the cultural ethos and association of the target language with the target situation is therefore an indispensable professional requirement for the teacher.

- **The Problem of Handling Mixed Ability Groups of Students:** The handling of mixed-ability groups of students has also been viewed as a problem by a section of the teachers. Though a general problem, the English teachers of the schools and colleges under study have complained of its effect in the English classes as adverse. This creates the problem of choosing the right teaching methodology suitable for learners of all levels of ability to the teachers and thus hampers the pleasure and progress in teaching.
- **The Problem of Inadequate Preparation of Students at the Lower Level:** In any language programme it is essential that the learners are taught properly at the initial stage of the introduction of the study of the language. In our system English is introduced from class V onwards. But on account of some reasons English teaching at this senior basic stage remains poor and ineffective with the result that the students enter the high school stage without any mastery of the language. Teaching English to such students is a

problem as well as a challenge.

The following recommendations are made to the various authorities and holders of the programme of ELT and the same are expected to bring into to the problems if implemented in right earnest.

- i) English should be taught as a skill subject rather than as a content subject and the multi-skill approach ought to be followed.
- ii) The objectives of teaching English at the secondary stage should be clearly understood and teaching be done so as to help learners achieve those objectives.
- iii) Classroom practices should be such that they include all the essential aspects of a true and successful ESL class.
- iv) The Grammar-Translation Method of teaching English should be replaced by the Bilingual Method which is the choice of many students.
- v) Students must be inspired to practice reading of books and other materials in addition to the prescribed text books.
- vi) Interaction in English should be promoted and inspired in the English classes.
- vii) Suitable environment should be created in the class to help the learners feel comfortable with the language of English in order to build their confidence in the language.

viii) Provision should be made to ensure plentiful exposure to English for the learners in terms of teachers' use of English, reading materials of diverse kinds and any other exposure-assurance gadgets or activities.

ix) Teachers of English be professionally committed to their job, aware of the need for continuous updating of their professional competence.

x) Interest of the students could be drawn by use of animations and cartoons.

A department of English should be formed in every school with all the English teachers of the particular school grouped together so that the teachers can share their knowledge, experiences, skills etc. with their fellow and thereby enhance self-development and become effective practitioners in the field of English teaching. Support of the other teachers (those not teaching English) may also be enlisted in this regard who may also contribute towards creating a proper environment in the school for the teaching and learning of English.

Recommendations to the Education Department / Government: The Government should arrange for training in ELT to the practicing teachers of English at the secondary level at regular intervals.

i) A special recruitment policy should be formulated to select and appoint specially qualified and competent persons for the job of English teaching at

all levels of the school curriculum.

- ii) A special course meant for prospective English teachers with suitable course component should be designed to meet the curricular requirements of the secondary level ELT. Qualifying the course should be mandatory for all candidates to teach English and some special/ extra financial incentives/ perks should be given to competent candidates in this regard.
- iii) Supervision of the work of the English teachers should be done at regular intervals.
- iv) Provision should be made either to increase the teaching hours of English or to adopt the English-across-the-curriculum Policy with the provision of at least one more subject to be taught through English.
- v) Steps should be taken to improve the infrastructure facilities as well as the resource-status of the schools.
- vi) An extra component of spoken and communicative English built upon an essential service vocabulary and structures relating to the needs of the day-to-day life of the learners and their basic academic requirements should be designed and added to the core English course and taught accordingly.
- vii) The Higher Secondary syllabus which has recently been upgraded, follows the CBSE pattern which gives importance to the functionality of grammar and its practical usage. The students especially from vernacular schools

often find it difficult to grasp certain concepts or practically apply their knowledge. As such the State Board of Education, Assam may bring certain changes in English teaching. More emphasis should be laid on functional English rather than prescriptive grammar.

Recommendations to Schools and Colleges:

- i) Steps/ arrangements should be initiated to get the teachers of English trained up and professionally updated on a regular basis.
- ii) Care should be taken in selecting persons for the job of English teaching. Candidates with equal competence in both the writing and the speaking skills in English apart from requisite qualifications should be preferred.
- iii) Due commitment, dynamism and administrative acumen should be displayed towards ensuring a proper environment of teaching and learning of English by way of optimizing the infrastructural and resource status of the schools in collaboration with the government authority or any other funding authority or agency.
- iv) The teacher-student ratio should be appropriate so that the teacher can pay individual attention to the students.
- v) Alternative ways of teaching grammar such as Guessing Games

can be introduced which will encourage the students to involve actively in the teaching-learning process and also encourage them to use their own creative faculties. For example, in order to teach the students Simple Present Tense the teacher may ask the students to think of a boy/girl in the class and write a few sentences describing his/her habits or traits.