

## **Importance of Communication and the Physically Challenged**

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### **Introduction**

More than sixty percent of the population of the world today is multilingual. From a contemporary and a historical perspective, bilingualism or multilingualism is the norm, rather than the exception. Foreign language learning has often been an important practical concern throughout history. Today, English is the most widely studied foreign language, the world over, since it has become the world's language in all spheres.

The importance of English language as universal language is evident at present. It is clear that English language has become more dominant around the world. In some countries it is used as the mother tongue and, in other countries people learn it as second language in their schools and colleges. This has made English widespread. In addition, a few reasons which contributed to the prevalence of English are:

1. Its use as the international link language,
2. Its relevance as the mark of sophistication,
3. Its importance as the language of science and technology.

In addition, there is no doubt that, English is a language of communication among the people with diverse cultures. Users of computer, internet and e-mail utilize English in their transaction. People who know English can deal with the internet, which is regarded as information and communication revolution.

In addition to this, one of the causes that contributed to the spread of English is that, it is the language of the modern era, where the people exploit it in various fields such as, economy,

e-commerce, medicine, aviation, etc.. In addition, English is the language which is used in tourism and travel.

These are the reasons, which require people to learn English. One of the main reasons why English is dominant in the present time is that it can be used in any field on any occasion. Likewise, English is an important requirement for most of the jobs. It is quite clear that English has become a necessity today. We need it in all walks of life. Now-a-days with the availability of many sources, such as the Internet, books and educational institutes which are spread around the world has made learning of English an easier task.

There has been a paradigm shift in the learning of English after the recent revolutions in communication technology. Learning language for mere appreciation and developing literary skills can no more be the present objective. Policy makers have realized the practical advantage of communicating in English and hence the stress is on the interpersonal and the mass communication roles of the language.

Gandhi was of the opinion that English education had emasculated the English educated Indians and had put a severe strain on them for becoming mere imitators. After Independence the place of English in India became a problem. The constitution of India (1950) accepted to have English as the official language for a period of 15 years. Later, it was realized that Hindi could not replace English as the South-Indians agitated against the issue of making Hindi as the official language. Due to this in 1963, the Parliament passed a bill declaring English as the Associate Official Language of India for an indefinite period.

There are arguments for and against the teaching of English in India. Sharma rightly pointed out that our present problem may be summed up as follows: having got rid of the English of whom we had little use, we have not been equally successful in driving out their language, because as things stand, we can neither really live with it nor, indeed do without it. National self-respect demands that we dethrone it from its eminent place in our country but its extraordinary utility has made it so indispensable to us, that we are prevented from banishing it (1993:2).

Consequently, there is a need for strengthening the communicative aspect of language teaching and learning. High calibre educationists have pointed out repeatedly the problems encountered by the teachers and learners. The result is that the learners cannot express their ideas or thoughts in an ordinary situation or in public places like banks, railway stations, and bus-stations or in social gatherings.

### **At this juncture, it should be noted that**

1. The students of Technical Courses have the privilege to improve their communicative ability by the carefully designed syllabus which is divided keeping in mind the basic language skills: **Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW)**. Learning components included under these heads develop the required language skills.
2. The syllabus for Technical Courses is designed specifically to meet learner needs and the stress is mainly on imparting 'Technical English'.
3. The components included in the syllabus help the learners in developing their written and oral skills.
4. In addition to the usual English paper, there is a separate paper included in the curriculum (Title: **GE-1352: Communication Skills and Seminar**), which instructs the students in employability skills.
5. In the language laboratory classes, basic and communicative grammar items are practised by the students. This makes make them familiar with not only conversational skills but also the conventions of oral communication.

Likewise, students of Arts and Science colleges enjoy the benefit of Language laboratory to improve their communicative ability. In the era of globalization, communication plays a vital role in the smooth functioning of any organization; hence the need to impart Communication Skills to Differently Abled Students means much assuming greater importance to augment their employability Skills.

### **The Plight of Differently Abled Persons**

The contribution to and by Differently Abled Persons is very minimum in all spheres. Citting their condition they are side-lined in all walks of life and getting employed for those with physical challenges is a herculean task. There is handful of trainers alone on hand to train the physically challenged. Actually, they need to be incorporated into the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) evolution. Improving Differently Abled persons' access to ICT help them be empowered, bringing them more opportunities for jobs and a better life.

While the above situation is prevailing in general; in educational sector the attention paid towards skills development of the Differently Abled is another setback. There is a vast gap between educational systems and industry requirements. Assessment and evaluation does not test the high order thinking of synthesis, analysis, and effective communication of an individual. Even if so, the privileged are, again, the normal students and not the Differently Abled.

This gap must be bridged by offering adequate exposure and access of modern technology, particularly the ICT, to the Differently Abled.

### **Solutions**

At present there is no exclusive Language Laboratory to give the Differently Abled a free hand to access the modern tools of language learning neither there is/are training centre(s) to impart Communication and Soft Skills.

The Differently Abled students rely merely on the exposure received at college days. An exclusive Communication and Soft Skills Lab would equip and train the Differently Abled Persons in:

1. Enhancing self-efficacy or the expectation or belief that one can successfully accomplish tasks, behaviours, and goals.
2. Monitoring the clients' progress as they work toward goals.
3. Identifying obstacles, barriers, challenges, or unrealistic expectations hindering goal accomplishment.
4. Monitoring the relationship between the practitioner and client, and monitoring their own reactions and emotions.

Notwithstanding creating awareness among the Differently Abled Persons, this communication and Soft Skills Lab would be a significant milestone to make them reach their goals and present them in the job market as qualified personnel along with normal people.

### **Conclusion**

All should envision that it is important to take a step back and take cognizance of the bigger picture and understand the social needs of Differently Abled. The latest development in the technological front would grant the Differently Abled Persons a global recognition to compete in the job market.

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2. **Richards, J.C. and Rodgers, T.S.** *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press. 2002.
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#### **Online Resources**

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  2. <http://www.isb.edu/Media/BusinessTechnologyClub.Shtml>
  3. <http://www.tata.com/article.aspx?artid=yhfbFqV3DIc=>
  4. <http://www.sparktherise.com/projectdetails.php?pId=7318>
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