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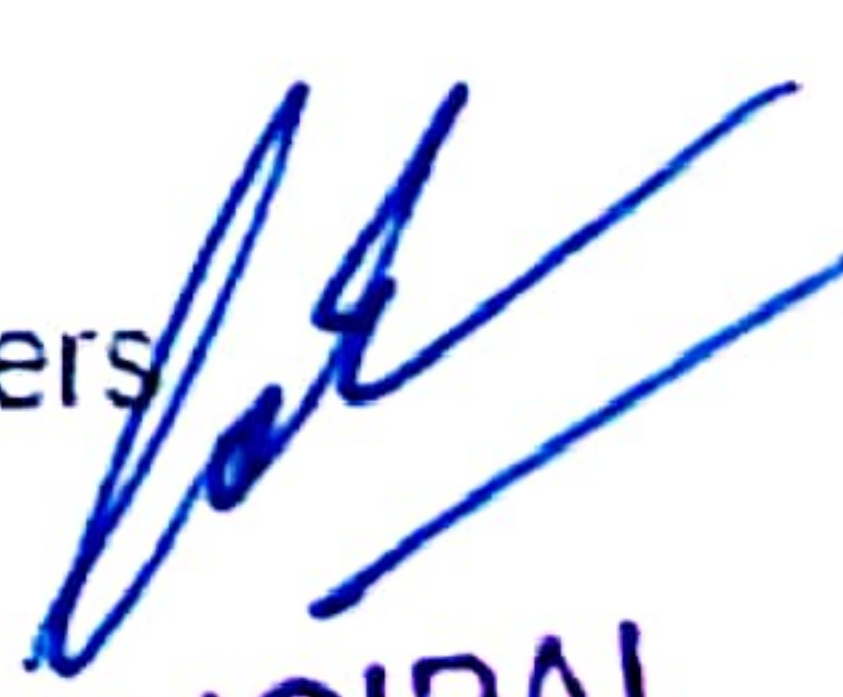
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ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

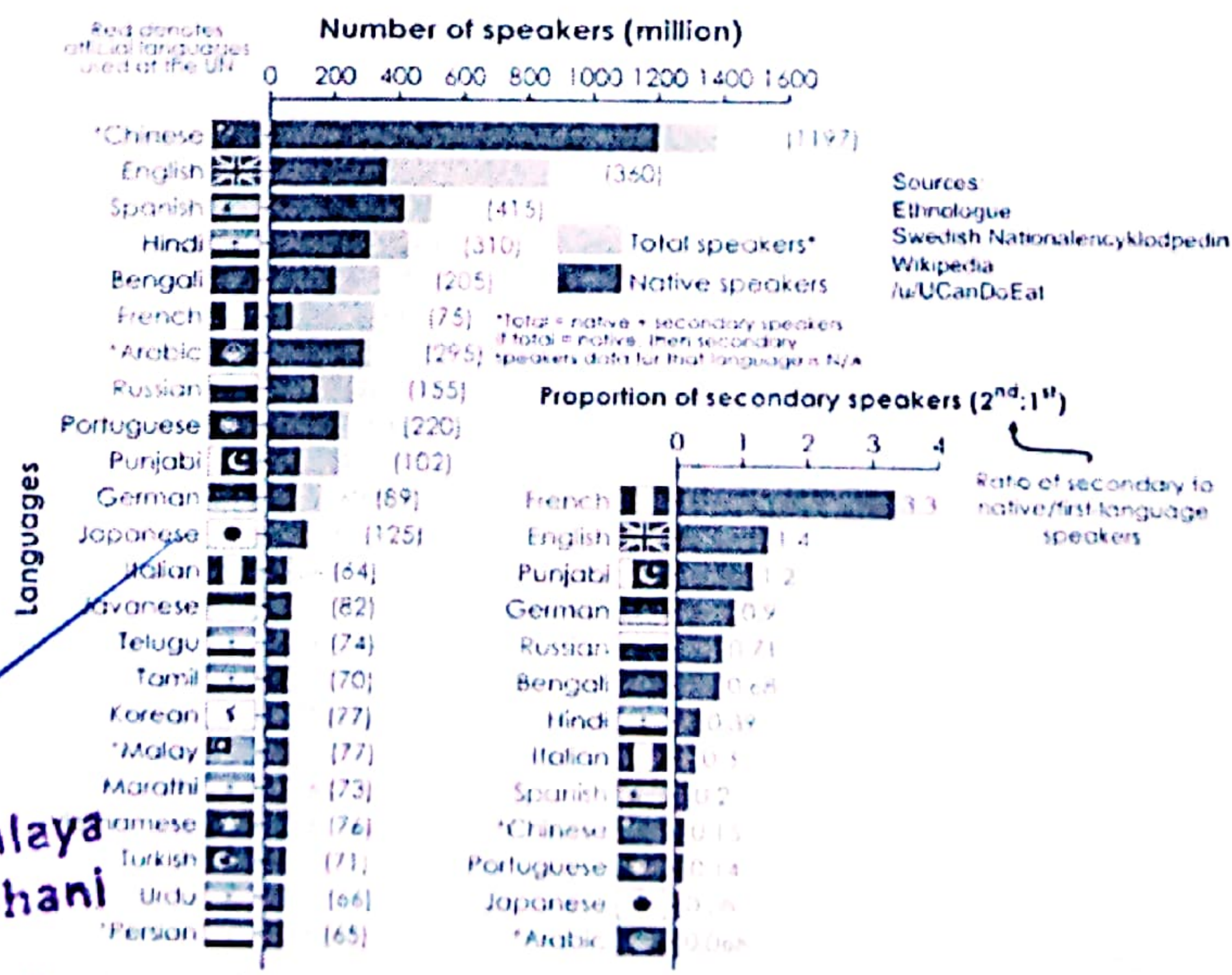
India is not mere a land confined to its geographical boundary but it is beyond a system of polity and citizenship. It has a unique mix of cultures, finely amalgamated and evolved as a nation with unity in diversity. It has a rich heritage of civilisations. These civilizations have had inclusive social practices and profound intellectual authority. India was once upon a time recognised as "Jagadguru" meaning teacher, preacher and guiding philosopher to whole world. Education was the core competency most of the people known. Such people were spread over the land. They were revered as "sadhak" meaning practitioners aiming at perfection in the art of living. Using various languages since the evolution of the civilisation, they had been sharing their knowledge in various faculties of Science, Arts and social faculties as well. Most dominant language used in such transfer of knowledge has been Sanskrit but due to frequent invasions the language came nearing extinction thus the dimensions of education. With advent of British rule over modern India, the English Language was introduced as a dominating language and attained irreversible position in the system. The fact remains that English language has secured a place in global communication which cannot change in times to come unless there is some unexpected turn. Hence current work focus on the importance of English language teaching in India at higher level of education.

Keywords: Higher Education, Communication Skill, English, global, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Education is described as a process in which people share their knowledge and attitude with others and others learn or acquire more than knowledge. It can be in form of values, beliefs, skills, behaviour or even habits. Trow, Martin (1973) stated importance of education in current era as, "Since World War II, developed and many developing countries have increased the participation of the age group who mostly studies higher education from the elite rate, of up to 15 per cent, to the mass rate of 16 to 50 percent"

It can be surely connected with communication where one's ideas, information, thoughts, opinions, are to be shared, exchanged or passed on. True that the communication can be supported by non-verbal techniques and methods but what matters most is use of language. A language mostly used will always be reachable to masses and hence there is immense importance of selecting such a language. By the virtue of being native language of UK which has dominated the world in the pre-industrial revolution era and subsequently of USA which has been hub of all modern developments worldwide, English enjoys the privilege of being second most popular language which is spoken by 865 million people all over the world, where 360 million are native English speakers.



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Source : Internet

IMAGE NUMBER ONE ENGLISH LANGUAGE USERS AT WORLDWIDE

These figures indicate that the language is used by more non-natives than natives in terms of number are. The proportion of secondary users is also significant as per the statistics being published in public domain as well. The above facts instigate a thought about relevance and importance of it's existence and usage, in the field of Education. It further prevails in a researchers mind to further drill to find out its importance in Indian context of higher education. Prima facie, it is observed that on one-hand masses in India are struggling to survive and on the other hand there is a significant class which thrives not only in life-style but also in knowledge and intellectual capacity. It could be correlated with the medium and language of communication and transactions for that matter.

EDUCATION SYSTEM IN INDIA:

Present Indian education system includes schools (controlled and funded by three levels: central, state and local which are both public and private schools, Colleges and Universities, which are governed by The University grants commission. Levels of education are Primary, Secondary and Tertiary, the last being considered as Higher Education. In some colloquial terms at some boards of education 11th and 12th standards known as Higher Secondary are regarded as Junior College, however, one may not even mistakenly also take it in higher education. In spite of being governed by various authorities and boards the primary and secondary education is yet to reach majority of the young population on India. The country is dressed with great geographic diversities and various cultures. Reach to such interiors is yet difficult attain. The education is imparted to pupil in the language local to the region though the CBSE is still trying hard to compensate the gap.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

English language was introduced in India in three phases.

- Phase One:** The first phase can be referred as missionary phase, where the efforts of the Christian missionaries who came to Indian subcontinent to purposefully persuade Indian native.
- Phase Two:** The second phase was of the reformist Indians who were keen on acquiring English studies. Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) was one of those who made efforts to persuade the officials of East India company for Western scientific education in part replacement of Sanskrit and Arabic.
- Phase Three:** The third and most important phase is that of bilingualism (B.Kachru 1983:7) It was in this phase when the implementation of Lord Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education (1835)" educational policies for instruction in English.

English attained the respect as language of prestige, and succeeded in completely replacing Persian and the other Indian languages. Since 1928 English has been regarded and used as the language of the elite, of the administration, and of journalism. English is still popular language in India and is an additional official language for government work along with Hindi. The language in it's originality was brought in by the British but as usual it has adopted many words from the subcontinent and continued to evolve still as a lingua-franca. It has taken a new form in India which is known as Hinglish or Indian English which is it's new identity in the region and also in the global context where Indians and Indian life-style has reached. The reason for adopting native Indian words is that the English culture may not find concepts like "Yoga" and "Ashram" etc. to mention as token.

There is a significant increase in number of English speaking people in India and over the years the trend has apparently increased. Although there is lot of awareness being created for functioning in local languages but the impact is not as per expectations. Overall the picture is indicative of growing popularity of the language and irreversible changes in the intellectual thought process.

OBJECTIVES OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN INDIA:

Teaching of any language generally aims at developing, in the learner, the required communication skills, which enables him or her to use such language skills in real life situations. Thus, it is necessary to impart enough practice to learners in listening, speaking, reading and writing- the four basic skills essential to acquire a language. This can be considered as the primary objective of Teaching English in India.

Keeping in view the multi-lingual situation of India a number of Commissions on Education and Study Groups constituted after gaining Independence from the British in 1947, have stressed the need for teaching English. The Radhakrishnan Commission (1948), first of its kind, felt the need to teach English to keep in touch with the living Stream of evergrowing knowledge. The Official Language Commission (1956) recommended that English should be taught as:

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"A language of comprehension rather than a listening language so as to develop in the student learning it a faculty of comprehending writing in the English language."

Kothari Commission (1964) emphasized the role of English as a library language. And according to Jain (1974), several imperatives have, since Independence, dictated why English should be taught and learnt in India- the status imperative, the commercial imperative, the cultural imperative and the academic imperative.

INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS

In the system of education at Free India schools, the formal introduction to languages was given a second seat as the authorities then gave more importance to skills and subjects more relevant to the contemporary need of manpower to industrialise the economy. However, in the beginning of the secondary education, at standard 6th at most of the SSC boards, the language is introduced. The main reason of the defeatist view about the language is that the teachers are not able to create an affinity for the language. The foiba then is carried over till the student approaches the college where mostly the medium of instructions is English.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND ENGLISH

For ease of understanding higher education in India can be viewed as in following light. The qualified higher secondary certificate holders are eligible for admission to courses of higher education. These entries are mostly subjected to screening through either specific or common entrance examinations. These examinations are conducted in predominantly in English and seldom in local languages. Basically, this practice is adopted as a toll to filter out candidates who are not academically fit for taking up or adapting themselves to standards of education intended. All the streams follow the same route as the material available for studies universally is in English language. It is most desirable for all the established institutions to have pupils comfortable with the language.

The research in all faculties is also subjected to English language only, specially in India where despite many attempts to keep Sanskrit alive, which has most of the ancient reference material and scriptures. Even if Sanskrit is referred as source of much rich knowledge, the use is limited to interpretation only. The research has to get exposure in academic pivots of the world. This again calls for English as the medium of communication.

The basic purpose of education is to make people capable of facing the situations in life effectively for benefit of the mankind. This purpose is only served if proper engagement for a suitable workforce is provided. The Human resources scene in the country is also looking at a job ready manpower. For this reason all corporates, business houses and also organisations of public sector or undertaking, are keen on finding candidates comfortable in English language. All the competitive examinations have a compulsory testing of candidates linguistic skills in English.

All the trainings of defence services at cadre of officers are in English. Even as on date, English is regarded as essential language of communication in the circle of defence officers.

CONCLUSION

Higher education should be able to not only build character in the students but it should also guide people to a much bright and rich way of living. In given circumstances the English language is mostly regarded and respected as authoritative and respectful. In light of the above facts and scenario, an undying need of education in English is strongly felt. It seems to be prominently prevailing in the present environment of education in India. In near future as well, there would be no replacement for the language in the scope of present study.

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