

# English: The Working Tongue of the Global Village

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## ABSTRACT

The English language came to India by the foreigners. Ancient time in India, English acts as a repository of wisdom and wit in the global village. English is of great importance in many places around the world. It would be an excellent candidate to be the world's lingua franca, or a global language. English is as a universal language allows cultures to share the arts, commerce, sciences and technology. It is official! English is an official language more 50 countries in the world, as well as the official and native language of four others. The English language is accepted by every nation of the world.

**Keywords: English, Language, Village, Global Communicative and India**

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## INTRODUCTION

Indian English is a mixture of English and the local Indian language intonation so that it does not sound like Standard English. If one takes a close look at the statistics of world languages one would find the Chinese (Mandarin and Putonghua) and English racing 'neck to neck' as the planet's two most spoken languages, breaking the barrier of one billion speakers each, at the turn of the New Millennium. The answer to the question - which is the world's most widely spoken language?

Therefore, varies according to the time of the day. When the sun is over the western Pacific, the most used language is Chinese. When the sun is over the Atlantic and China sleeps, English takes the lead.

In terms of geographical spread, English already occupies an undisputed position in the world, and a steady expansion in its learning and use around the globe has helped it taking 'an increasing lead over all other languages during the early part of the 21 century. "English villages are language education institutions which aim to create a language immersion environment for students of English in their own country. The concept is run as a commercial venture in Spain, Italy, Poland, and Hungary and is quasi-governmental in South Korea" ( 1)

While Chinese is used in China, Taiwan, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam, English is used in as many as 70 countries worldwide. Language experts predict that within a decade or two, it is reasonable to assume that there will be more speakers of English in Asia than in any other continent. Besides, India is an increasingly important source of literary activity in English. According to observers, Asia will play an important role in helping to ensure that English serves as a transnational auxiliary language against a multilingual background.

The legacy of English language has left an indelible imprint on the Indian psyche, our freedom struggle, our literature, education and the entire spectrum of science and technology. English has served as a window to the world. Freedom fighters like Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and others cultivated a world vision. A literary giant like Rabindranath Tagore and a scientific wizard like Dr. C.V. Raman could stand comparison with literary figures and scientists anywhere in the world.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, who epitomized Plato's theory of the philosopher-king, interpreted the essence of Hinduism to the Western world in a language intelligible to all. "The world has become a global village due to technology and networking, and businesses - tech driven or otherwise - thrive on the very foundation of good communication through an international



popular language. Let not the authorities miss the wood for the trees and deprive our students of holding their own ground on international platforms for simply the lack of global communication skills” ( 2)

On the dawn of Independence, while Hindi and other regional Indian languages received a great boost, we did not throw away English as just a foreign language, taking a pragmatic view. And that decision is now paying rich dividends as India is producing the largest skilled manpower in the world well familiar with the number one world language - English. It is this unique advantage that makes the IITs in India the top ones along with the star institutions in the US and the UK.

We have also produced top writers in English like Sarojini Naidu. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand, Khushwant Singh, Raja Rao, Ved Mehta, Kamala Markandeya, Vikram Seth, Arundhati Roy and several others. The top class newspapers and magazines in English, published from different cities, have produced an elite class that keeps itself abreast with the latest from the 24-hour English news channels.

India is also a top class publisher in English language titles. In most of the urban areas, English is taught right from the nursery class and is the medium of instruction in thousands of schools, colleges and universities across the country.

Moreover, use of English by most of engineers, doctors. MBAs and the vast scientific pool make our youth at ease, wherever they are employed.

Be they the employees of the call centres, software engineers, HR managers, PROs, journalists, media persons working for audio-visual media, anchors in TV channels, film actors, sportspersons, businessmen, mechanical or electrical or electronics engineers, Indians have an edge over others in any part of the world. Sensing the way the winds are blowing, many institutes have come up to train youngsters in spoken and written English in small cities and towns, where youngsters get no Opportunity to speak English even though they might be graduates or postgraduates.

In Karnataka, a bizarre controversy over the study of languages is on. Kannada protagonists want English to be taught from V standard, while other sections insist that the ‘global language’ be taught from III standard. There is yet another section which has been demanding the teaching of English right from the day one. The Dalits who have been supporting the pro-Kannada cause all these years have disassociated from the pro-Kannada movement and are now vociferously supporting the move to teach English right from the first standard. Most of the children and grandchildren of the Kannada protagonists now go to English medium schools. Tuned to the global trends, majority of the people want to swim with the tide.

The cosmopolitan city of Bangalore is looking for cops who know English. With police stations and control rooms logging on to computers, there is a great demand for ‘English’ constables, head constables, assistant sub-inspectors and sub-inspectors to handle computers and file FIRs. Many of the lower-rank personnel were selected several years ago. While they can read and understand English, they cannot draft letters and speak the language well. As a result, IPS officers have to spend a lot of time drafting letters and preparing memos. A large number of Bangalore’s residents are from outside Karnataka working in BPOs or the software industry. One senior officer has suggested that the organization should hold speaking and writing classes for the policemen.

In 1988, Walt Disney produced “Who Framed Roger Rabbit” a motion picture that combined animation and live action to such compelling effect that it won four Oscars and became a modern film classic. Fifteen years later, Bollywood produced “Bhagmati: The Queen of Fortunes” which was released recently. It is India’s first full-length animated feature film containing 7,50,000 frames drawn by hand, 95 minutes of animation and scenes of Bollywood stars - including Milind, Tabu and Hema Malini - singing and dancing with cartoon characters.

According to NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies), the Indian animation production services sector generated \$1.5 billion in revenue in the financial year 2006 alone. Principally, it became possible with the presence of an English-speaking workforce, high quality software engineers, good studios and low costs.

Foreign producers are involving Indian companies for full length feature films such as “The Legend of Buddha”, “Gulliver’s Travels” and “Tommy and Oscar”, The ‘feel good’ factor about India is fast catching on in the rest of the world. More tourists are travelling to India. With more Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) setting bases in India and more patients coming to India for world-class treatment in five star hospitals, communication is as easy in India as it is back home.

It is high time that the millions of schools across the country provided the best possible education in the English language. At present, except for some of the public schools in the metros and other big cities, the standard of English as taught in most of them-is below average. It has been found that even graduates and postgraduates are not fluent in English, let alone developing the best communicative English. Grammar is seldom taught and few can write correct sentences. This sort of affairs should be done away with. Recruitment boards are occasionally dreadfully shocked over the poor communication skills of the candidates. We need dedicated and well-trained teachers for teaching the students about all aspects of English language. This is a must for all schools, colleges and universities, if India is to provide the best manpower within the Country and outside.

China knows the edge India has over it by Virtue of its greater command of the English language. It has already started classes in English for its citizens. “English villages in South Korea provide a short-term immersion English experience in a live-in environment where only English is spoken. This is intended to promote English learning and to build students' Anglo-American cultural awareness. The first English village was opened in August 2004 in Ansan, Gyeonggi-do province.

Additional English villages have been opened in both Gyeonggi-do and Seoul. As of September 2012, there are 32 of such mini towns in suburban areas” (1)

In most of the villages and small towns reading habit has come down and even the educated families are satisfied with just reading the regional newspapers. Children should be asked to read English newspapers or magazines and listen to the telecast of English news. No language can be learnt overnight. Command of spoken and written English comes only through constant practice. All this does not mean that we have to ignore our mother tongue or any of our regional language.

“English villages employ a mixture of foreign native speakers of English and fluent English-speaking Korean staff. They are intended to help students face the particular challenges of speaking English in the Korean context. Many families seek to improve their children's English ability by sending them to expensive after-school programs and by sending them to study abroad in English-speaking countries. Study abroad results in a substantial amount of money leaving the country. The English villages are intended to reduce this loss, and make the immersion experience accessible to students from low-income families as well. However, many questions remain whether the English villages will be cost-effective. In fact, most have been privatized due to operating losses” (1)

### **CONCLUSION**

By promoting the English language - by making the students gain a good command of speaking and writing - we are enhancing the general knowledge of our children by helping them access the best books on any subject, technical and nontechnical, and the best programmes telecast every day. A student who has general knowledge at his fingertips and who can communicate his thoughts with perfect ease and clarity is an asset to any company or department.

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