

Teaching English at the Primary Level: An Appraisal of Select Schools in Srinagar

Dissertation

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Ajaz Ahmad Dar

Under the supervision of

Dr Tasleem Ahmad War



**Department of English
University of Kashmir, Srinagar
Year-2013**



**P.G. Department of English
University of Kashmir, Srinagar
Hazratbal, Srinagar – 190006.**

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation titled **Teaching English at the Primary Level: An Appraisal of Select Schools in Srinagar** submitted by **Ajaz Ahmad Dar** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy (**M Phil**) in **English**, is an independent and original piece of research work carried out under my supervision. This research work has not been submitted, in part or in full, to any University/Institute for any degree. The candidate has fulfilled all the statutory requirements for the submission of this dissertation.

Supervisor

Dr Tasleem Ahmad War

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Introduction

English today has truly gained a global status, serving as a *lingua-franca* at the pan-world level. It is no longer the property of the English alone, but new varieties of the language have emerged which have gained equal acceptance in the world. It has become a language of opportunities, offering a booming market for its fluent speakers and hence its demand and importance virtually all over the world. Countries across the world stress on the need to introduce English in their educational systems either as a second language (SL) or as a foreign language (FL) [hereafter referred to as SL or FL respectively] at an early or primary stage, so that a solid foundation is laid for fluent communication in this language, keeping in view its dominant and widespread use at national and

international forums. Teaching of English as SL is somewhat different from teaching it as FL. As FL, it has a limited role to play; but as SL, its function becomes very significant in both formal as well as informal situations in the context of a non-native setting. Consequently, three different uses of English in as many situations have come out referred to as EFL, ESL and ENL countries.

Even in India, English enjoys a very high status of a SL under the framework of *three-language formula* and also having been declared as an ‘Associate Official Language’ of the country, thus acting as a *link language*. It plays the most dominant role in the educational system of the country and is taught at all levels of education as a compulsory subject. Accordingly, it has been introduced from the pre-primary or K.G. classes either as a subject or as a medium of instruction by most of the States. Other States are all the time more planning to follow suit in this direction, because it indeed serves here as ‘the major window on the advanced knowledge’ of the world. Therefore, the main objective of teaching English in India is to develop the communicative/functional skill of our students in this language. There is a huge demand of people from all sections and regions for English and English-medium schools in view of its

importance in social, academic and other spheres. But despite all the enthusiasm for teaching and learning of English, there are many grey areas in the ELT programme with regard to the different pedagogical factors like syllabus, teaching materials, methodology, evaluation etc. at different levels, which render it unproductive. Therefore, for an immediate renewal of ELT, a lot still remains to be done to this end.

In our own State, Jammu and Kashmir, we also teach/learn English as a SL and in a major shift with regard to the language policy in education, English has been adopted as the medium of instruction right from the pre-primary level in both private as well as government schools, even though in the latter, it has been introduced only a decade ago in 2003 with a view to improve the ELT situation in the government-run schools. But the private schools continue to outperform the government schools even from the primary stage like elsewhere in India.

Teaching of a language as a SL or FL at the primary level is indeed fairly a demanding task as being a very crucial stage of development for children and also in view of their unique psychological and physiological make-up. So, as a rule, a very special treatment is needed while teaching children a new language or any

other subject for that matter. Now language acquisition/learning by young children has emerged as a full-fledged and specialized branch of study called *Paedolinguistics*. It is an inter-disciplinary field incorporating different disciplines such as psychology, sociology and linguistics into its domain of study, as all the three spheres contribute to the child's language development in one way or the other.

There are some general principles which must be kept in mind while teaching a foreign/second language to young children at this particular stage. Teaching children is absolutely different from teaching adults, as there are marked differences between the two age groups in all respects. As against L1, learning L2 presents an altogether different linguistic experience before the child, which in any case is not easy for him if proper support is not given. Thus, children need constant encouragement and a tolerant attitude from their teacher to reinforce them to learn in a congenial and caring atmosphere so as to build their confidence through repetition, practice and at the same time the emphasis should remain on inculcating the learners' interest in the overall learning process. The children must receive broad and rich exposure to a new language (L2) through a wide range of activities in order to develop their 'communicative

competence' or proficiency. Since children are less developed cognitively and emotionally, and considering their individual differences, even their emotional as well as individual needs must be taken care of while teaching them a new language.

Research in child psychology and development shows that children possess an 'innate ability' to learn more languages apart from L1. Some language experts (linguists/psychologists) even believe that children are better than adult in terms of language learning, though opinions vary on this subject. However, majority observe that in many aspects such as acquiring pronunciation etc., children have an edge over adults or adolescents in respect of learning a foreign language being 'active' learners by their very nature. As language acquisition of children runs parallel to their cognitive development, then, it is something natural for them to learn one or more languages with ease, as long as they are provided with a language-rich environment.

The language teaching/learning materials (syllabus) for the primary school children have necessarily to be suitable to their unique needs, limited abilities, and tastes. These materials must be easy and interesting and there should not be conscious teaching of complex grammatical rules. But variety of meaningful activities such as role-

playing, drawing, story-telling, games etc. which contain elements of fun, play and enjoyment in them, should form the contents of language syllabus for primary children.

The teaching methodology to be adopted for teaching children a SL/FL is also unavoidably altogether different from the one meant for older learners. The teacher may have to apply some resourceful and innovative techniques of teaching to suite the natural instincts and capacities of children. That is why the teacher at the primary level must be specially trained and highly skilled having a good knowledge not only of his subject but also of the child psychology. We cannot expect much quick results from children, as they may take their own time to process a new language. Therefore, the target language process should not be hastened while teaching it to children; instead, continuous assessment of their development in the language is needed.

Keeping in view the above mentioned needs and requirements of teaching and learning a SL or FL at the primary stage, we find much mismatch between the theory and the practice in our ELT related activities across India. Throughout the country, broadly two categories of schools operate under two different teaching/learning conditions, i.e., the Vernacular-medium and the English-medium

schools (government and private/missionary schools). Education, in general, and language education, in particular, of government schools differs greatly from that of the private schools in both content as well as methodology of teaching across India. As a result of this, there has emerged a huge gap between the results/grades obtained by students in the two school situations in English as in other subjects. The situation vis-à-vis ELT is somewhat comparatively better in private and missionary schools than in government-run schools. Likewise, in our State, private schools are undoubtedly better than government schools in their overall performance and particularly in imparting English instructions. This difference between the government and the private schools with regard to ELT activities is very much visible in and around the Capital city, Srinagar in our Kashmir region, where people prefer to send their children to the private rather than the government schools which is why there is comparatively lesser student population or Class-roll present in the latter than in the former. But in other districts, people do not get as many options of good private schools as in Srinagar. Even from the primary classes, the students of the private/missionary schools in Srinagar show relatively better proficiency in English, than the government-school students.

But it yet remains unexplored as to what really distinguishes the private schools from the neighboring government-run schools vis-à-vis the teaching of English at the primary stage. Hence, the present study is an attempt to bring out the different factors, which account for their varying results in English. The study aims at making a comparative performance analysis of select government and private schools of Srinagar city and thus clearly brings out the differences between the two. Some suggestions for improving ELT at this stage will also be offered. For this purpose, field-survey will be undertaken to get the first-hand inputs from the two types of schools. As such, the present study adopts an eclectic research methodology, employing both qualitative as well as quantitative methods and tools like questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations for data collection.

Apart from the present Introduction and a Conclusion, the study has been divided into three chapters.

Chapter I entitled, “Teaching of English as a Second/Foreign language” discusses the special position of English across the world as a major language of trans-national significance, serving as a *lingua franca*. Also, the difference between English as SL and FL is clearly

brought out. The chapter also briefly traces the development of English in India, including our State, from its position as a language of the elite to its present status as an ‘associate official language’ of the country, having deeply penetrated into all the major domains. The main focus of the chapter is on the teaching and learning operations of English as SL especially at the primary level in India including Jammu and Kashmir.

Chapter II titled, “Survey of English Language Teaching at the Primary Level with Special reference to Kashmir” tries to give a detailed appraisal of the general principles and requirements of teaching and learning of languages to children aged between three to eleven years at the primary level. Some theoretical principles pertaining to child language learning are also discussed. An attempt is also made to see the difference between teaching English at lower and higher levels. In addition, an overview of the different elements of the English curriculum at the primary level in Kashmir is also given therein.

Chapter III entitled, “Teaching of English in Government and Private Schools: A Comparative Analysis of the Data” presents a comparative analysis and elucidation of the data collected during the

survey conducted by the researcher in the different government and private schools of Srinagar City. It also explains the research methodology and the different research instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations, used in the present study. The major findings of the survey in the light of objective interpretation of the data are also highlighted.

The “Conclusion” while summing up the whole study, tries to bring out the drawbacks in the teaching/learning of English at the primary level, in general, and in the government schools of Srinagar city, in particular. The overall findings of the study are presented herein. Moreover, it points to the scope and future research possibilities of this work. An attempt is also made to put forward some suggestions for the improvement of ELT activities at the primary level in this part of the study.

Chapter I

Teaching of English as a Second Language (SL)/ Foreign Language (FL)

English indeed has come a long way ever since it began its journey as a mere vernacular restricted to a small region, but now has made its presence felt almost everywhere within and outside the globe. To quote Broughton et al: “From its position 400 years ago as a dialect little known beyond the southern counties of England, English has grown to its present status as the major world language” (1980:1). And although the sun set on the British Empire long ago, the growth of their language continues unabated to this day. According to some estimates, in addition to over 400 million native speakers, more than 750 million use English as a SL or FL. Its importance in the world has increased significantly because of its frequent use at different national and international fora.

To put Broughton et al in this regard:

Of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used. As a mother tongue, it ranks second only to Chinese, which is ... little used outside China. On the other hand, the 300 million native speakers of English are to be found in every continent, and an equally widely distributed body of second language speakers, who use English for their day-to-day needs, totals over 250 millions. Finally, if we add those

areas where decisions affecting life and welfare are made and announced in English, we cover one sixth of the world's population. (1980: 1)

Of course, the figures of both the native and the non-native speakers have grown considerably over the years and continue to grow with each passing day.

English has attained the status of a 'Global Language' as it is the most widely used and understood language in the present day world. Therefore, presently most of the countries across the world encourage the teaching and learning of English either as a SL or FL right from the primary level keeping in view its presence in multiple disciplines, so that a firm foundation is laid for fluent communication in this language. Even countries such as China, Russia, Japan etc., which did not previously consider the teaching and learning of English as important for their children, now stress on the need for its early introduction in their curriculums. At present more than 62 nations use it as their official language.

Today English performs multiple roles in a wide range of fields. Its function as a 'library language' with most of the knowledge being accessible through this language, is the most significant one. It has truly emerged as 'a window on the world knowledge'. It is the main language of science and technology, academia, international trade,

travel, aviation, sports, media, judiciary, diplomacy and so on. Thus, it has grown into a pre-eminent language of wider communication in the world. As Shankar observes, “The global spread of English over the last 40 years is remarkable. It is unprecedented in several ways: by the increasing number of users of the language; by its depth of penetration into societies; by its range of functions” (2004:197).

Before we proceed with the detailed discussion of teaching English as a second language or as a foreign language, it would be appropriate to describe the terms such as ‘First Language’ (L1), ‘Second Language’ (SL), ‘Foreign Language’ (FL).

First language (L1) is the native language or also known as the mother-tongue (MT) which a child learns from birth in his home and not in a formal setting. The child picks it up from the people around in the interactive environment during the so-called ‘critical period’. L1 is a natural language acquisition process.

Second Language (L2) is said to be any language which is learnt after the L1 or the mother-tongue has already been learnt. It stands for any language learned after having learnt the L1, regardless of whether it is second, third language. It refers to the acquisition of a

language in a classroom situation as well as in a more ‘natural exposure situation.’

FL, on the other hand, is a non- native language learned for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed material in the language. It is learnt in a formal situation as a subject, though it may not be used as a medium of instruction. Scaringi differentiates between SL and FL thus:

The idea of second language is only slightly different from that of foreign language, for it is less the quality of a speaker’s command than the status of the language within a given community that determines whether it is a second or a foreign language... a foreign language is a language learned in school and employed for communicating with people from another country. A second language in contrast, may well be one learned in school, too, but one used within the learner’s country for official purpose and reinforced by the power of the state and its institutions. (2007:15)

In a situation where English holds the status of a foreign language, it is copiously taught in schools and colleges, although its role in the national and social affairs remains minimal. On the other hand, in a second language situation, English is the language of administration, commerce, media, education etc. To quote Broughton et al:

In a second language situation English is the language of the mass media: newspapers, radio; television are largely English media. English is also the language of official institutions- of law courts, local and central government- and of education. It is also the language of large commercial and industrial organizations. (1980:6)

Albert H. Marchwardt states that when English is taught as a school subject or on an adult level for the sole purpose of providing the student a foreign language competence, then it is taught as a foreign language. But when it is used as a medium of instruction in schools and colleges and also as a 'link language' between speakers of varied linguistic groups as in India, it becomes a second language (qtd. in Vohra 2005, 169-170). In a second language situation, students may receive language input both from inside and outside their school environment; whereas, in a foreign language situation, they mainly receive the input from the school alone. English as a second language refers to a situation where this language is used extensively in different important sectors such as education, administration, business etc., but is not the first language for the people. English, as a foreign language, on the other hand, refers to a situation where it is taught as a school subject for international communication.

Likewise, when it comes to teaching and learning of English as a SL or as a FL in a non-native environment, it takes up two different roles, and where English as a SL enjoys a comparatively more dominant position in terms of its wider uses as compared to teaching of English as a FL as stated by the following definition:

Teaching English as a second language (TESL) refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English, usually offered in a region where English is the dominant language and English language immersion situations are apt to be plentiful. In contrast, teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) refers to teaching English to students whose first language is not English, usually in a region where English is not the dominant language and natural English language immersion situations are apt to be few. (Online)

As is evident, English language operates at many different levels, which reflects its wide-ranging importance in the world. It has particularly taken on an important function in the non-native environments, where its knowledge as an international language (IL) has become essential. English having attained the international character as a language is likewise used in three different contexts: as a first language, as a second language and as a foreign language. Kachru (1985:12-14) in his own characteristic manner has elaborated on the use of English in all the three above-mentioned situations. He

divided the world 'Englishes' into three broad concentric circles: "the inner circle", "the outer circle" (or extended circle) and "the expanding circle". The Inner circle consists of the native countries of English such as the UK, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. English is the first language in all these countries. In the Outer Circle, Kachru places the non-native countries of English, where English reached because of historical and political reasons. Such countries include India, Singapore, etc. English is taught as a second language in these countries. The Expanding Circle includes those countries, where English holds the status of an international language. English has become popular in these countries because of the importance the language has assumed across the world and not because of colonization. It is taught here as a foreign language (FL) and these countries include China, Saudi Arabia etc. Randolph Quirk properly sums up the present status and function of English in the world in the three different contexts as under:

Now English is in daily use among three or four hundred million people who were not brought up speaking it as their native language. Most of them live in countries requiring English for what we may broadly call 'external' purposes: contact with people in other countries. ...They are people for whom English remains a foreign language. ...We refer to these countries as EFL countries ... but there are many millions of people who

live in countries where English is equally not a native language but where it is in wide spread use for what we may broadly call ‘internal’ purpose as well: in administration, in broadcasting, in education. Such countries range in size from India ... to Singapore. The practice has grown up of referring to English in these circumstances as a ‘Second language’ and to the countries concerned as ESL countries. Finally, in contrast with these EFL and ESL countries, we can complete a terminological triad by marking off those countries such as the UK, the US etc ...where English is a native language: the ENL countries. (Quirk, 1985:1-2)

In fact, today the use of English is so wide spread across the world, labeling it as ESL, EFL, seems out of place. Larry Smith argues that we should stop calling the English we teach a foreign or second language or even ESOL and instead we should call it as “an international auxiliary English” (1983:5). Having mastery of English language in the context of a second language is greatly valued in the job market. Broughton et al (1980:6) rightly state, “Clearly, a good command of English in a second language situation is the passport to social and economic advancement.”

English holds a rare distinction among all the languages of the world of having the largest number of users spread across all continents and its knowledge makes a person ‘a true citizen of the world’. The number of English speakers continues to grow throughout the world at an ever-increasing pace. Interestingly, now there are more

second language speakers of English than the native speakers and in this growth of the language, the non-native speakers have played a very significant role. The language is no longer the property of the English alone. In fact, “English belongs to any country which uses it and may have as wide or as limited a use ... as is felt desirable” (Smith, 1983:1). Now instead of English, we have many ‘Englishes’ represented by different varieties of the language like Indian English, Australian English, African English and so forth and terms such as ‘Hinglish’, ‘Penglish’ etc., representing different varieties, have come into being. Broughton et al (1980:4) remark, “It is arguable that native speakers of English can no longer make stronger proprietary claims to the language which they now share with most of the developed [even developing] world.” The native speakers of this language seem to have become a minority as per the current statistics.

English being the most preferred foreign language in the present day the world, its demand has increased phenomenally especially in the wake of globalization, which, in turn, has given a boost to the teaching/learning of this language, as presently English seems to be the only language which is communicatively valuable in the global context. Apart from having the largest number of speakers,

English is also the widely written language in the world. It is primarily influential throughout the world, because of its educative importance, as also because the world's important knowledge has been and continues to be preserved in this language.

No other language in the world can claim to be as widespread or popular as English is, and this widespread popularity and prominence of the language can be attributed to many historical, political and economic factors such as the British Colonization project, who had introduced it as an official language or as a medium of instruction in their colonies, which gave a boost to its study at an early stage in many parts of the world. The British Empire collapsed, but English still remained vital, as it had already entered different other areas like science and technology, diplomacy, education and the like. The position of English has also been strengthened by the rise of the US as a major political, economic and military superpower. Now, "barriers of race, colour, and creed are no hindrance to the continuing spread of the use of English" (Broughton et al 1980: 7). Quirk observes in this respect:

For between 1600 and 1900, speakers, of English pushed themselves into every part of the globe (more recently to lunatic deserts far beyond the

globe), so that at this present time, English is more widely spread, and is the chief language of more countries than any other language is or ever has been. (1985:1)

ELT experts foresee the development of English into three different forms; or rather, they speak about a “Tri-English world”, in which the speakers of English will speak a “local dialect” at home; a “national variety” at work, school or university and some kind of an ‘international variety’ to talk to foreigners (Aslam 2008:60).

English has been enjoying the status of an ‘international language’ over the past many decades and its current position as a world standard language or *lingua franca* of the world seems to be firmly established. There does not seem to be any threat to its present pre-eminent status from any other language at the moment, although other European and non-European languages are also gaining strength and currency in view of the changing geo-political, economic conditions and power equations. As Shankar (2004:200) rightly asserts, “There is no reason to believe that any other language will appear within the next 50 years to replace English.”

English as a Second Language (SL) in India

The position of teaching English as a second or foreign language is dependent on the function, which it performs in a particular social set-up and the importance of English is hardly anywhere more significant than in the context of India, where it has become a true part and parcel of day-to-day life, enjoying the status of a SL, as it is used for both 'external' as well as 'internal' purposes. The development of English in India has really been extraordinary, evolving from its position as a foreign language to its present status as a SL. Now Indian users of English outnumber even the native speakers in England and elsewhere. Commenting on the unique position of English in India especially in terms of the huge number of users, David Crystal states:

In terms of number of English speakers, the Indian subcontinent ranks third in the world, after the USA and UK. This is largely due to the special position which the language has come to hold in India itself, where... 4 or 5 percent of the people now make regular use of English- approaching 40 million in 1996. (Crystal 1997:41)

English is closely associated with education all across the subcontinent. The teaching and learning of English forms the backbone of our educational institutions. From the very beginning, it has

occupied the minds of our educationists. Even the first Education Commission called the University Education Commission (1948) had stressed on the study of English to get access to the growing knowledge in the world. Speaking about the important, or rather, unavoidable role of English in the field of education in the Indian context, Meenakshi Raman rightly observes:

If we take cognizance of the pervasiveness of English in almost all fields of education, it will not be an exaggeration to say that education in India has virtually become synonymous with being proficient in this language. The importance and dominance of English cannot be discounted at any level of education starting from the lowest to the highest one. In fact, in the modern context, no education system in India can do without the English language. (2005: 130)

Though English language arrived here with the East India Company in the early 1600 century, it formally got introduced about two centuries back. The inauguration of English language education in India is mainly associated with Macauley's minutes of 1835 which replaced the indigenous system of education and later English became the official language and was implemented as the medium of instruction in secondary schools, colleges and universities during the British Raj, amidst the opposition from the detractors of the language. After independence, the Constitution of India adopted in 1950, had

envisaged Hindi as the only official language of the Union of India, and a period of 15 years was set aside for English to continue, after which English had to be replaced completely by Hindi. However, this decision of removing English was vehemently opposed by some southern States of the country. As a result, the Parliament had to enact the Official Languages Act 1963 amended in 1967, which declared English as the 'Associate Official Language' of the Union of India to be used for an 'indefinite period'. Therefore, instead of one, India has, as it were, two national languages for serving the administrative as well as non-administrative purposes of the country. This had serious implications for the teaching/learning of English in this country and consequently under the framework of *Three-language formula*, English came to hold the status of a second language in the education structure of India. Thus, it is mandatory for all students to learn English during their schooling period. Naturally, English is the second most widely used language after Hindi apart from being the most widely taught language at various stages of education. As a matter of fact, English has always dominated the teaching/learning programme in India. The National Policy on Education (1968) had emphasized on the teaching of English in these words:

Special emphasis needs to be laid on the study of English and other international languages. World knowledge is growing at a tremendous pace, especially in science and technology. India must not only keep up this growth, but also make her own significant contribution to it. For this purpose, study of English deserves to be specially strengthened. (qtd. in Elizabeth 2004: 26)

After independence, the language policy with regard to the medium of instruction and the introduction of English as a subject was changed across the country. Some of the States, in their nationalistic fervor, did away with English as a medium of instruction at the school level and also at higher levels of education. As Elizabeth states, “Before independence and immediately after independence, the medium of instruction in secondary and higher education was English. Gradually, shift in the medium of instruction at all levels was made from English to mother tongue or the regional language of the area” (Elizabeth 2004:27). They wanted their regional languages to be developed for the instructional purposes, but replacing English did not prove practical and useful for the States. Of late, therefore, there has been a shift in focus from the regional to the English medium of education. Now most of the States introduce English from the primary stage, in view of its wide importance which it has gained across the

world especially within the country's educational system. Elizabeth notes in this connection:

Recently some State Governments have announced the introduction of English from first standard. Some other state Governments are considering the issue of introducing English from first standard. Rather, it has become a serious problem with them. Discussions and debates are going on there. (Elizabeth 2004: 28)

Also, teaching of English as a subject is on the increase throughout the country. It is now introduced as a subject from the pre-primary level even in the government schools, where previously it was taught from 6th Class onwards. In his survey Omkar Koul also finds that, "Keeping in view the needs of the students, the so-called 'nationalist' feelings against English have faded away. Some states (Maharashtra, Punjab, J&K) have decided to introduce English as a subject in Government schools right from the primary classes" (2005: 55).

In the context of India, English is used in many other areas which include both formal as well as informal settings such as judiciary, science, business, broadcasting, media, travel and transport, information technology etc. Most of the seminars, conferences, competitive examinations etc. at the national level are conducted in English. Here its influence is, so to speak, all pervading and wide-

ranging. It has become the main instrument to access knowledge of all kinds and Kothari Commission had rightly recommended English as a *library language*. The use of English in India is so common that it has even penetrated into our personal lives. Within the socio-cultural context of the country, English enjoys the dignified status of being a ‘prestige-language’ or the ‘language of power’. There is a general agreement among people on the bright potential of English in the job market, as Aslam (1989:9) remarks, “Knowledge of English is considered as a successful passport for employment.” It has really become the ‘queen of all languages’ here, outclassing the regional languages. Although, the number of English speakers in the country is not so very high, those having mastery in the language are held in high esteem. Hence, its demand throughout the country.

One of the important functions of English at the pan-India level has been that of a *lingua franca*. India being a multi-linguistic, multi-cultural and a multi-ethnic country, needs a common *link language*; English has been playing this role fairly well over the past many decades and will continue to do so even in future. Here it does not seem to be an alien language; it is like one of the indigenous languages of India. The Supreme Court in its judgment in the Bombay

Education Society case has ruled as early as in 1954 that English was as much an Indian language as any other (qtd. in Koul 2005: 54-55). Raja Rao says to the same effect that, “as long as we are Indian - that is not nationalists but truly Indians of the Indian psyche - we have the English language with us and amongst us, and not as guest or friend, but as one of our own...” (cited in Kachru 1983: 2). So, it needs no further comments why English has become so very important in the Indian society.

Many farsighted leaders such as Moulana Azad, Pandith Nehru, among others had long back visualized the great potential of English as an international language and had therefore stressed on the need to maintain high standard of teaching and learning of English. `At present it is taught as a compulsory subject at different levels in our educational set up. As Vaseeker observes in this context: “The status of a language in the educational system is an important barometer of the importance it enjoys in the country concerned. English is taught as a compulsory subject in most of the schools and colleges in India...” (2005:18).

Although in many States English has already been implemented as the medium of instruction, it still finds an important place in

curriculum as an important subject where it is not used as the medium of education. As Koul confirms that the role of English in education in the country is very significant in both school and college education. There is a preference for the study of English as a subject and its use as a medium of instruction at different levels of education (2005: 53-54). As far as teaching/learning of technical subjects is concerned, English is the only medium of instruction right across the country. In such specialized institutions, it is taught as ESP. Mamta observes in this respect:

The number of students pursuing higher education and ... going for specialized, professional education in India is so vast that there is a constant need for ELT/ESP educationists and academics to keep pace with the developments in the fields of social sciences as well as science and technology. (Mamta, 2006: 208)

Considering the importance which English has assumed in a wide range of areas in this country, it becomes necessary that it is taught in the right and effective manner to ensure that our students develop the much-needed 'communicative competence' in this language, so that they could take up their future roles as useful and contributory members of the society.

The objectives of ELT in India, according to Prakash Rao are:

1. To give the students the much-needed communicative skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.
2. To teach the meanings of words and structures.
3. To increase the students' productive vocabulary.
4. To enable the students to refer to books on the areas of research.
5. To enable the students to understand the current affairs in the world. (1991:14)

As we can observe, the four skills must be developed by all means, besides the allied abilities. The ELT activities in this country, as a whole, aim at equipping our students with the functional and utilitarian aspects of English, so that they can communicate fluently as it has made its presence felt in a broad range of activities in and outside the country. However, in addition to the aforementioned aims, we have some literary aims as well, which direct our efforts in teaching/learning of English in India. In fact, the syllabi of English in India are mainly based on the English literature, written mostly by foreign authors, rather than the Indian writing in English, which is now equally 'authentic'. These foreign authors usually pose difficulties to the Indian students, in general, as they represent a different cultural experience. The students do not easily identify themselves with these authors, which is not a healthy sign for teaching/learning of English. According to Jaydeep Sarangi what is worse is that the teaching of English in India is still 'text-oriented' and this bookish knowledge of English does not prove helpful to the

learners. He adds that, “Only a few universities in India offer a full paper on language or applied linguistics even at the postgraduate level. Honours and postgraduate courses in English are full of literary stuff” (2005: 75). Moreover, English is taught in India with the general aim of giving learners access to higher and professional education.

There is a strong curiosity among the people of India to learn English, as they have realized its value in social as well as in academic circles. As a result, there is mushrooming of English medium schools and the language teaching institutes all across the country. The government schools have also felt the heat and are fast changing their medium into English. Parents themselves are eager to admit their children in good English medium schools, regardless of their economic condition. As Vaseker observes, “... in India more and more students are getting enrolled in English medium schools in preference to the vernacular medium schools.” Elizabeth observes in this regard:

...during the last two decades, a large number of English medium schools have cropped up. Keeping the ever-growing demand of the people for English mediums schools, more and more English medium schools are being established not only in cities but also in rural areas. Its effect on

Government schools has also been felt by all concerned.
(2004:27-28)

English is taught for seven years or more at school and generally six periods a week are allocated for teaching English at different levels of our education system across the country, i.e., on all the working days. The general technique which is followed for teaching English throughout the country is the lecture-mode of teaching. Generally, in our schools and colleges, the Grammar Translation and Bilingual Methods are utilized for teaching English, which emphasize only reading and writing skills. Speaking, in particular, is completely neglected in the English classroom. Some researchers point out that a large number of students have problems with reading and writing skills as well, which is really a cause of concern.

Most of the universities teach English as a compulsory subject at the undergraduate level, whereas other universities use English as the medium of instruction both at the undergraduate as well as postgraduate levels; as the people, in general, and the planners and policy-makers, in particular, have recognized the real worth of English in today's world. English still remains the most preferred

medium in the higher education sector in India, as in many other countries. Kachru reports that, “In India, English is the widely taught second language at practically all levels of education. All the Indian universities, graduate colleges and junior colleges have separate departments for teaching English” (Kachru 1983: 53).

One of the problems is that there is no uniformity in the introduction of English in the country. Different States introduce English at different levels - some States introduce it from nursery classes, some delay it up to Class 3rd, while others start it from Class 5th, as per their own needs. However, one thing which is common among all the States is that they consider English as something indispensable. As Kachru observes:

... in spite of the regional differences in the role of English in the school system, English is taught in every State as the main second language. The total number of years for the teaching of English and the stages at which a child may be exposed to bilingualism in English are not identical in all the states” (1983: 89).

Moreover, across India, we find broadly two different kinds of schools namely the English-medium and the vernacular-medium schools (government and private) which show varying results and

performance in terms of proficiency levels of their students in English. The privately-run schools are usually better in terms of teaching and learning of English than the government schools, because the former have English as the medium of instruction right from the earliest stage (K.G. classes) all across the country, which is not the case in the government schools. Besides, these private schools provide a comparatively far better teaching/learning environment to their students as against the government schools. This gulf between the results of these different categories of schools in English needs to be narrowed down.

There are many impediments as far as teaching/learning of English as a SL in India is concerned, which thwart our efforts. It goes without saying that the overall ELT situation in India is far from satisfactory. It is not taught/studied as a skill-subject but rather as any other content-subject in the curriculum but we know that, “A language isn’t just a ‘subject’ in the sense of package of knowledge. It is not just a set of information and insights. It is a fundamental part of being human” (Helliwell 1992:11). Further, despite the fact that English is taught at almost all levels of our education system, we seem to have badly failed in imparting quality instructions in English, which is the

reason why the students even after many years of learning English in their schools and colleges, do not develop functional proficiency in English. This is primarily because the spoken form of English does not receive much attention in our classrooms and the students do not get the right kind of exposure to English in and outside the classroom, which is so very crucial for learning any language. The aims of teaching English although given, are not achieved under the current practices of ELT in this country. As the teachers are not updated with the latest developments in the field of ELT, and the classrooms are mainly teacher-centric rather than student-centric, as is expected under the prevailing instructional system. Hence, teaching receives more importance than learning of the language. Both teachers and students have examination in mind when it comes to teaching and learning of English and securing a pass percentage is not a very difficult task for the students for which purpose, they resort to so called 'Guides' easily available in the market before the actual test starts. Hence, development in the communicative competence of students in terms of all the four skills of English is only meager. The teacher is usually faced with a heterogeneous group of learners in the classroom coming from different socio-economic backgrounds and

hence their proficiency levels also vary in English, which makes his work rather more difficult. The teachers themselves lack proper training in teaching English. Many experts of the language, on the whole, identify the following problems in the ELT programme in India: unspecified aims, unsuitable syllabus, mixed-ability group, faulty teaching methods, lack of teaching aids, lack of training, overcrowded classrooms, and faulty examination system. (Aslam 2003: 20-23, Elizabeth, 2004: 40-43). In this context, E. V. Gatenby's observation is very much relevant: "Why is it that in all countries where a foreign language is taught, a very large proportion of the pupils fail, after five or six years' of work, to become proficient? The main reasons are: (1) unsuitable classroom conditions, (2) unsatisfactory textbooks, (3) wrong methods and (4) untrained teachers..." (qtd. in Sharma 1989: 52).

If ELT in this country has to become effective, fruitful and result-oriented, then some drastic reforms need to be made in our syllabi, Methods, instructional materials and examination process at all the levels of our education system. What is really needed is to design such course content and methodology of teaching/testing English, which take into consideration the needs of our students and

help develop both ‘receptive and productive skills’ of the learners. The teachers need to be well trained, as teaching English as a second language demands a great skill of the teachers.

Thus, it becomes quite clear that despite all the problems which hamper the process of ELT, English as second language in India occupies a highly privileged position and its dominance in terms of its multi-dimensional roles, is very likely to continue even in future. As Omkar Koul fittingly remarks:

No matter how many attempts are made to arouse sentiments against the English language ... its importance in education cannot be ignored... English is accepted throughout the country as the only medium for the access to modern knowledge, and will continue to be so in the years to come. (Koul 2005:55)

Teaching of English in Jammu and Kashmir

The teaching of English in Kashmir region had been initiated by the Christian Missionaries in the late 19th century, who established here the first English medium schools. However, initially they were not received favorably by the majority of people in general, nor even did the government cooperate with them. Only a small section of the society admitted their children in these missionary schools. It took a long time for the local Kashmiris to accept these Missionaries and

their new and modern education, which was widely divergent from the indigenous educational system. After independence, the Government decided to introduce English as a medium of instruction at the university level in the year 1950; whereas, at the school stage, it was first introduced in 1973 but in 1974 there were agitations regarding the medium of instruction and English had to be replaced. Then in 1976 English was adopted from the secondary level as a subject, while Urdu continued to be the medium of instruction at the school level. Until very recently English was taught as a subject from Class 6th and was used as a medium of instruction from the Higher Secondary stage (11th-12th) in government schools (Aslam, 2003: 20). The private schools, on the other hand, followed the model of the missionary schools and introduced English as a medium of instruction right from the pre-primary level, which in fact, largely accounts for their good performance in English. However, in 2003, the Government decided to introduce English both as a subject as well as the medium of instruction from standard 1st/pre-primary stage even in the government-run schools. Thus, a major shift was made in the language policy in education and the Urdu medium was replaced by the English medium of instruction in the State, thereby conferring the

highest priority on English. So, at present, English is used as the medium of instruction at all levels of education. To quote War: “Presently English is taught in all the schools, be they government-run, private or missionary as well as colleges and the university” (2008:66). It is taught as a compulsory subject at both school and up to college levels. But at the undergraduate level, English is separated into General English and English Literature.

As already pointed out above, in a SL situation, English is used in mass media; it has an official status being profusely used in administration; is used as the language of trade and commerce and importantly, it is the language of education, used as a medium of instruction. Looking at the present position of English in Jammu and Kashmir, it is by and large used in all the areas as specified within the context of a SL. Besides, the teaching and learning scenario of English is very much in line with the other parts of the country with both its merits and demerits.

It is taught here as a SL and is introduced right from the Elementary stage as the medium of instruction in both private and the government schools, although the former comparatively perform better than the latter in terms of teaching English. Whereas students

from private schools do very well in English, both in spoken and written form; students from government schools lack competence in using English for the communicative purposes.

It really has come to hold a privileged status in our educational framework, because of its dominance in social, economic and professional spheres in the present day circumstances. Consequently, there is a huge network of private English medium schools which includes the missionary schools as well, spread all across the State, which indicates the fact, that people from all sections of the society, attach great value to quality English education. Moreover, a number of private English language teaching institutes have come up in the State as in other parts of the country, for English has become a sign of fashion in our society. Having realized the utilitarian worth of English, people prefer to send their wards to top private English medium schools, notwithstanding their difficult financial conditions. It has become the most preferred language in the Valley and the teaching and learning of English has become a must. As Aslam observes, “English medium schooling continues to be the most popular option even with those who cannot afford it and the

vernacular schools are not any popular with people who for one reason or the other would like to send their children there” (2008: 56).

Although different changes have been introduced in the present ELT programme with a view to raise the standards of teaching/learning of English, a lot still remains to be done in this direction, as the final attainment of our students in English is not very satisfactory. The situation is particularly bad at the school and college levels, while as the Universities have been able to maintain high standards in ELT.

As in the other parts of India, so also in the State, English enjoys the status of a ‘prestige-language’ in comparison to the other regional languages and those who speak English effectively and fluently, are respected in our society. War observes that English being associated with modernization, technology and “prestige”, Kashmiris, therefore, make a frequent use of English vocabulary items in their day-to-day speech (2008:67). In the State also, however, good competence in the language is greatly valued in the job market. However, it does not serve here as a *lingua franca* between the different linguistic groups; it is the official language of the State, Urdu, which serves in that capacity, connecting the three regions of

the State. Although Urdu is the official language of the State, yet most of the administrative work is conducted in English, thereby appropriately serving the role of the 'associate official language'. It serves as a means of communication between the Centre and the State. Omkar Koul (2005: 48) has summed up the official language policy of the State in these words:

The Jammu and Kashmir state government is very flexible in its official language policy. Urdu is the official language of the state and is used only in the lower levels of administration along with English. English is widely used in the mid and higher levels of administration. Neither Kashmiri nor Dogri, the languages spoken dominantly in the Kashmir valley and in Jammu area respectively have a place in the official language policy and are not used in administration. They have limited roles in education and mass media, too.

Kashmir being a hot tourist destination needs a means of communication which can facilitate interaction between the locals, businessmen and the tourists coming from different parts of India and the outside world; English of late has been and is currently serving that purpose quite suitably well. Consciously and unconsciously English has become part of our speech. The illiterate people as well make use of the English words in their daily communication, which of course, is happening at the cost of our mother tongue, as many

Kashmiri words are fast getting replaced by the English lexis, although this phenomenon may also enrich our own vocabulary. The potential of English as a SL in Jammu and Kashmir looks very bright, following the same trajectory as in the rest of India.

In all likelihood, English might be taught as a subject and incorporated as the medium of instruction from the pre-primary level right across India. Since, English is the most widely spoken, understood, read, and the most widely written language in the world, it is very well poised to become the ‘world language’, a distinction which it has achieved already to a considerable extent. As a result of which, more and more countries might introduce it at an early stage, i.e., primary level, either as SL or FL, as the need may be, considering the fact that, “...more teaching hours are [already] devoted to English in the classrooms of the world than to any other subject of the curriculum” (Broughton et al, 1980:11).

Chapter II

Survey of English Language Teaching at the Primary Level with Special Reference to Kashmir

Teaching of English or any other language for that matter to children in the age range of 3-11 years as a SL or FL at the primary/elementary level is not as simple as it might otherwise seem to be and is not the same as teaching it to adults who, call for an altogether different approach of teaching. As primary stage is of crucial and foundational significance in the educational career of children, a right beginning in teaching/learning the language goes a long way in determining how they will perform in their future years of study, considering the role of language as a medium of instruction. Faulty language teaching can leave a long-lasting impact on children's language-learning potential. Therefore, we need to implement a different methodology, taking into consideration the unique psychological and physiological make-up of young children. As Vale and Feunteun state, "the teaching approach is necessarily different. Many of the techniques and attitudes that are essential for the teacher of children seem to conflict with the general EFL methodology" (1995: 27). Their very nature determines that they cannot be taught by using the same teaching/learning material of any complex nature as

might be suitable for older learners even though children have a latent potential to learn more than one language. As a matter of fact, children are hardly willing to learn by the same content and style. But they possess a natural and a prolific gift of learning languages, which needs to be cultivated cautiously from the very beginning. As Broughton et al assert, “there can be no doubt that primary school children can and do learn English with remarkable *ease*, enthusiasm and *naturalness*” [italics mine] (1980:172). Research has even proved that children can learn a language irrespective of their level of intelligence. As Sharma rightly puts it that “a high degree of intelligence is not necessary for the mastery of a foreign tongue at an early age and that the essentials of language can be acquired in early life with a minimum of that obstruction caused by self-consciousness” (2002:54). Similarly Helliwell states in this context: “Young children do not come to the language classroom empty-handed. They bring with them an already well-established set of instincts, skills and characteristics, which help them to learn another language” (1992:3). She further says that children can use language creatively, that too, with limited language resources at their command (1992:4). The primary teacher can greatly utilize their intrinsic and innate skills such

as their creativity in using language while teaching a L2 in the classroom.

The basic aim of teaching English is to enable our children to develop the four skills of communication, viz, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, thereby to attain the ultimate objective of making the students effective communicators in the language. In other words, the development of the 'receptive' and 'productive' skills is the target. But expectations cannot be too high at this initial stage, because children at the primary level have not yet got much exposure, whether spoken or written, to the language, which is a very crucial factor in learning any language. Sufficient time should be provided to children to learn the new language. Vale and Feunteun state:

The long-term aim of teaching English [as a foreign language] is for the pupils to speak English confidently, correctly and fluently. However, it is neither reasonable nor desirable to have this expectation at the beginning of a language programme. Young learners may have ten or more years of language study ahead of them. (1995: 33)

However, since English is after all a foreign language, it is usually introduced through the skills of reading and writing at the primary level, to enable the students to decipher words in reading in order to understand the meaning within their vocabulary range. So far as the

instructions go, we begin by teaching the young children to recognize and pronounce the sounds of the English alphabet followed by practice in writing the letters of the alphabet, i.e., the mechanics of the language are taught first. But this approach to the teaching of a language does not follow the natural sequence, according to which oral or receptive skills come first at the initial stages of proficient language learning as advocated by many ELT experts. Citing Professor Anderson, Sharma writes that during the elementary school years, “The first two years should be used to train the ear and the vocal organs, [and during] the second and third years the aural-oral method is most successful...” (2002:54).

The teaching materials and methodology to be adopted for teaching English to children at the primary level have to be selected in accordance with their limited understanding and interests. We cannot teach them anything that is beyond their comprehension and mental level. Besides, we must also understand the fact that children take their own time to learn new things; they may even need some more time to learn. But “...silence does not mean that children are ignorant or not learning ... there is evidence that ... many children go through a silent period during which they are processing their language

environment” (Vale and Feunteun 1995: 32). They may not speak the language, yet they may well have a partial understanding of the language. We basically deal with the simple structures at this stage, as teaching of complex grammatical structures at this level is not suitable. Even children learning their first language acquire them in their teens. To put Helliwell:

In general terms, however, it is probably true to say that at primary school level, the children’s capacity for conscious learning of forms and grammatical patterns is still relatively undeveloped. In contrast, all children, whether they prefer to ‘sort things out’ or ‘muddle through’, bring with them an enormous instinct for indirect learning. (1992:6)

Instead, at this stage, a lot of rote learning and memorization takes place without going into the formal rules of the language, the focus being on the meaning not the form of the language; although the child should be made aware of the underlying form of the language in a subtle manner. But constant appreciation and encouragement are needed to reinforce the learning of the language besides providing feedback on their learning to help them gauge their progress in the new language.

Children, in general, share certain personality characteristics which distinguish them from adult learners. Therefore, the primary

teacher has to be so trained to have enough patience for dealing with young children in a friendly, congenial and happy atmosphere so as to sustain their interest in the learning activities. Children being emotionally sensitive, their emotional needs have also to be taken care of. It is, indeed, a responsible and a challenging job for the teacher. Commenting on the characteristic temperament of children Broughton et al point out:

... the same general psychological and methodological principles hold good for teachers of the youngest children wherever they are. For example, the limited span of attention ... in her 5-6 year olds learning English...is found in all young children. Consequently, English lessons must be short, though regular. Twenty to thirty minutes each day is ideal for children between 5 and 7, and a longer daily period, up to forty-five minutes for *older primary school children*. Equally, if not important, it is necessary to switch frequently from one activity to another ... ten minutes is the longest time for which many primary children can sustain an interest in an activity, and for infant and *kindergarten learners*, the period is even shorter.[italics mine] (1980:168-169)

As pointed out above, teaching young children at the primary level is really a challenging task and places special demands on the teacher. A special treatment has to be given when it comes to teaching English to young children, keeping in view their idiosyncratic needs and capabilities to retain knowledge. Their individual differences have to

be recognized and valued to ensure that all children avail themselves of the learning process. That is because children differ in their abilities and interests and aptitudes.

In order to understand the process of teaching and learning of English as a SL/FL at the primary level, an overview of the general principles of teaching languages to young learners is necessary in view of the fact that there are marked differences between teaching a foreign language to young children and adolescents/adults.

Some theories on child language learning have been put forth by Jean Piaget, Vygotsky and others which have established that there exists a link between the cognitive and the language development of children. From Piaget's theory of language learning, we see the child as an "active learner" and a "sense-maker", constructing his or her own knowledge from working with objects or ideas and keenly working out the rules of the language. Cameron quotes Piaget saying that, "the child actively tries to make sense of the world ... asks question ... wants to know ... also from a very early stage, the child has purposes and intentions: he wants to do" (2001:4). Likewise, Helliwell also speaks about the excellent ability of children to grasp meaning as under:

We know from experience that very young children are able to understand what is being said to them even before they understand the individual words ... Children come to primary school with this ability already highly developed. They continue to use it in all their school work. So when children encounter a new language in school, they can call on the same skill to help them interpret the new sounds, new words, and new structures (1992: 3-4).

According to Piaget's theory the world around the child is seen as offering opportunities for learning, in general, and for language learning, in particular. The child is seen as actively interacting with this world around him/her, and solving problems that he/she encounters, and it is by this problem-solving that learning occurs. However, there is one downside in his theory, i.e., it neglects the "social" dimension of the child's life, which holds a special place in Vygotsky's theory of learning, as he considers the other people around the child of crucial importance for his learning and overall development. Vygotsky holds that the "collaboration" of the child with other people is very important for his acquisition of the knowledge. Whereas, for Piaget the child is an active learner alone in a world of objects, for Vygotsky the child is an active learner in a world full of other people. (Cameron 2001:2-7). Many of the ideas in these theories on child's development, learning in general, have direct

implications for teaching a foreign/second language to young children.

Lynne Cameron has outlined the principles which have emerged as being the most important in the case of young children learning a foreign language based on the above theories. These are as follows: children actively try to 'make sense' and construct meaning for things in collaboration with the adult support system. They can only make sense in terms of their world knowledge, which is very limited and partial. Children should be provided with appropriate scope and opportunities for language growth and development. Children need skilled help for grasping the different aspects and shades of meaning of a foreign language for which purpose the teacher might have to resort to some novel and untraditional techniques of teaching. Language can grow as the child takes over control of language used initially with other children and adults. Children's foreign language learning depends on what they experience in the classroom activities. The broader and richer the language experience that is given to children, the more they are likely to learn (2001:19-20). Hence, children need a lot of practice in a new language to try out and experiment with it in varied contexts.

Two of the most influential theories and approaches regarding the processes involved in language acquisition and learning in general, which have been put forward by linguists/psychologists are the Behaviourist and the Cognitive/Mentalist views of learning. The theories are mainly concerned with the processes involved in learning L1, but these theories provide two important models of SLA (Second Language Acquisition). According to the behaviorists, language acquisition is considered as a form of behavior, or is viewed as a sort of habit-formation. The child learns/acquires his language by way of “imitation” or by imitating the speech patterns of the people around him or through his “response” to the “stimulus” provided by his immediate environment and strengthened by “reinforcement” given in the form of a reward or punishment as may be appropriate under circumstances (Ellis, 1985: 21). In other words, speech is one of the forms of behavior of the human being, which is developed like any other habit and can be observed directly. Therefore, the theory looks at the language acquisition as part of the overall learning process. Similarly L2 habits, too, can be established or acquired at the elementary level through ‘stimulus’ ‘imitation,’ and ‘repetition’ which can help the child to acquire new concepts without much effort.

The Cognitive view of language, on the other hand, posits an altogether different version of language acquisition/learning process, which contradicts the behaviourist concept. It emphasizes the ‘innate’ or inborn capacity of the child to acquire a language, which enables him to use the language creatively. In other words, it views language acquisition as a “mental construct” rather than as a form of “behavior”. Noam Chomsky called this innate ability of the child to process linguistic data “Language Acquisition Device” (LAD), which helps the child to form even some novel utterances. He refers to the knowledge of native speaker regarding language as “competence”, while he refers to the native speaker’s actual use of language as “performance”. This inborn capability of children human can be exploited in L2 classroom as well. Different Methods have been developed based on these two broad approaches to language learning.

The child learns his mother-tongue (L1) in natural conditions without receiving any formal training, in the company of his family members and others; as it becomes the very part of his existence. But in order to learn a second/foreign language, he has to make many conscious as well as unconscious efforts, because the new language presents an altogether different linguistic, cultural, and psychological

experience before the child. Many linguists believe that the experience of L1 can be helpful in learning L2 which they refer to as ‘positive transfer’ while others believe that L1 can interfere with learning L2 which is termed as ‘negative transfer’ (Ellis, 1986:22). These theories mainly related to L1 acquisition are greatly instrumental in teaching and learning of L2 because of various similarities in language learning processes.

Difference between Teaching English at Lower and Higher Levels (Elementary and Advanced)

To begin with, it is needless to say that young children are different from older learners or adults physically, psychologically and even intellectually and their development in all these aspects is yet to reach its maximum level as in the case of adults. However, there are some people who believe that children possess better learning abilities in terms of learning a second/foreign language than that of adults. Even some linguists and psychologists are of this opinion and support this view that children are comparatively better than adolescents/adults at learning a second/foreign language. To support their point of view, they cite many arguments such as the “biological

argument,” the “cognitive argument,” and the “affective argument” (Chun, 1980:183). Most of these theoretical assumptions claim that the younger learner is better than the older learner in one way or the other, although there is not any empirical evidence for the idea that with age there is a general decrease in second language ability. They argue that after puberty, the human brain loses its flexibility and plasticity which help it to adapt to different linguistic codes. To put Broughton et al:

Teachers of English in the foreign primary school have argued that their children are uninhibited, positively enjoy most of the ... language activities and are ready for situational (as opposed to intellectual) learning. Interference from the mother tongue has been shown to be less before the age of 10 and neuro-physical clinical investigations suggest that the speech learning centre of the brain is at its maximum capacity between the first and ninth year of life. (1980: 168)

Lenneberg (qtd. in Chun 1980:183-184; Khanna 2009: 51) who is one of the proponents of this idea suggests that lateralization (specialization of functions of different hemispheres of the brain) makes the brain functions become specialized in the early teens. He has proposed that there is a “critical period” (the theory in child development that says that there is a period during which language can be acquired with greater ease than at any other time. The period is

between two years and puberty) for effective language acquisition and after puberty, learning another language becomes difficult or “conscious and labored effort” though the capacity for learning another language is not lost completely. Since adults have a developed abstract thinking ability, that also hampers their language learning potential

It is also argued that adults do not possess the same intensity, attitude and motivation for learning the ‘target language’ (TL) as young learners have, which largely accounts for the low language acquisition potential of adults. On the contrary, young learners show enthusiasm towards the target language. As a matter of fact, learning new things as a whole makes them happy.

Khanna quoting Seliger suggests that there is much evidence to show that children acquire the phonological system of another language much better than adults do. Seliger, however, has offered the concept of “multiple critical periods”, suggesting that the language acquisition abilities are not lost all at once; there is rather a gradual loss of these abilities (2009:51).

Some researchers claim that normal human children are born with language capacity; there are certain areas of the human brain, which help in learning language and if this inborn potential of children is nurtured properly by giving adequate learning exposure, the children can learn any language whether L1 or L2 in an easy and effective manner, as their language and cognitive development takes place simultaneously.

However, there are many other researchers who do not subscribe to the idea of children being better language learners and have put forward their own explanations to prove that adults are comparatively better learners than children in terms of language acquisition. For example, Khanna quotes Cook who argues:

... if children and adults are compared who are learning a second language in exactly the same way...in the classroom, adults are better. The apparent superiority of adults in such controlled research may mean that the typical situations in which children find themselves are better suited to L2 learning than those adults encounter. Age itself is not so important as the different interactions that learners of different ages have with the situations and with other people. Adults start more quickly and then slow down. Though children start more slowly, they finish up at a higher level. (2009 : 51-52)

Research shows that older learners have an advantage over younger learners with certain aspects of second languages. It is argued that older learners can acquire new structures more speedily and easily because of their better-developed learning abilities. But, in some aspects such as pronunciation, children have an edge over adults. Thus, research has demonstrated that age in a second language situation is an important factor which determines how language takes place in a particular age group. However, there is no consensus on the view whether children or adults are in a better position to learn a second language. But the majority seem to believe that it is children who are better learners basing their opinion on the practical grounds that children if taught properly can be potentially better language learners in due course, as they get many years of learning practice, besides possessing an inborn ability for language learning. As Moon states:

In general, younger children (five to ten-year-olds) tend to be more enthusiastic and willing to talk in class than older children. As children reach puberty, they get more embarrassed about talking in front of others...This may be one reason why in natural situations, children often seem to do better than adults, i.e., their strong desire to communicate means that they immediately try to use the new language and so get more

practice. Adults usually want to study it formally in classrooms first. (Moon 2000: 9).

At the lower level the language syllabus must be chosen as per the unique needs, abilities and the cognitive development of the young learners and “children should be ... allowed to learn at their own pace, and language learning targets should not be forced upon them because of an external and non-flexible language syllabus” (Vale and Feunteun, 1995:33). While there is a marked difference in the course content meant for children and adults, given that they have different personalities but even among children, there are differences in their abilities, attitudes, etc. Hence, the teaching materials for children have also to be chosen keeping in view their individual differences.

The course content for children must necessarily be easy and simple, and is required to encourage collaboration and teamwork, as children have a natural tendency to work in groups. Broughton et al point out to this effect: “The readiness with which primary children form groups and participate in team activities is a quality which lends itself to the English lesson. ...group work gives children more chance to talk to each other...” (1980:170-171). The course should include activities that have some elements of fun and enjoyment such as, role-

playing, drawing, storytelling, games and so on. There must also be a variety of activities in the language curriculum, in view of the fact that young children cannot concentrate on the same learning activity for longer duration. Broughton et al (1980:171) outline the language content for the children between 5 and 11 in the primary classroom thus: “At the younger end of the primary spectrum, the most attractive items are those with potential rather than intrinsic interest. It is what the child can do with a thing, rather than what it is, which matters.” And as far as possible abstract concepts and structural items, which are beyond their mental capacities at this stage, should be reserved for advanced stages of learning. To quote Broughton et al again:

Indeed, the touchstone for successful activities in English is the harnessing of activities which are natural to the child’s maturational level, those which he pursues normally in his own language. The result of this is that English is being used instrumentally for an enjoyable end and gives a constant surrender value and the developing oral skill. No learner should be pressed to learn the aspects of the foreign language which are more advanced than his current level of command of his own language... (1980: 170)

And every effort should be made to incorporate such contents with which the children can easily identify. It should have some native and familiar subject to talk about, so that learning it becomes easy plus

interesting. As Vale and Feunteun state, "...content can be chosen from activities which are common throughout *the primary school years*. The content can, if necessary, be adapted to the country and culture of the children" [emphasis in the original] (1995:35). Children are by nature active, therefore, the language syllabus must be student-centric and involving physical activities as well as intellectual exercise, which can actively engage children in the language development process. Besides, children, in general, are keen to express themselves even though they have limited language. Therefore, "things to hold, drop, throw, carry, things to build with, to colour, to wear, to give and take, to hide and find are what matter when the child is growing..." (Broughton et al 1980:171). These different tasks carry inherent language learning opportunities and hence their significance in the language classroom. Moreover, the completion of a task gives children a sense of accomplishment, which can act as reinforcement to learn more. But it is essential that the activities we introduce in the classroom are meaningful.

On the other hand, at an advanced stage, we can fit in the course content that is slightly complex in nature, including the grammatical and structural exercises, considering the mature mental

abilities of adult learners. Hence, they can get consciously involved in the language learning activities. Also, the fact that the older learners have some previous language learning experience, justifies that they should be given such language input which is a step ahead of their previous knowledge (i+1). Besides, adults have a natural urge to know about the rules underlying the language. As Cameron observes:

Children are often more enthusiastic and lively as learners. They want to please the teacher rather than their peer group. They will have a go at an activity even when they don't quite understand why or how. However, they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. Children do not find it as easy to use language to talk about language; in other words, they do not have the same access as older learners to meta-language that teachers can use to explain about grammar or discourse. Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibition seems to help them get a more native-like accent. (2001:1)

They can even prefer to work individually, which is not the case with children, who must be highly motivated to work and that too under constant supervision and guidance of their teacher.

There is also some difference between the aims of teaching English at the lower and the higher levels, even though the basic aims remain the same i.e., the development of four skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. But there are some additional

objectives at the higher level, considering the supplementary needs of adult learners. Sharma quotes A K Sharma in this context who says that during the first four years of teaching English, our intention should be to develop the learners' ability:

(a) to understand very simple English spoken at normal speed within the vocabulary and structures laid down in the syllabus;

(b) to speak very simple English with an internationally comprehensible pronunciation and intonation, as far as the environment permits, within the vocabulary and structures laid down in the syllabus;

(c) to read aloud fluently within the vocabulary and structural range of the syllabus, to read similar material silently with reasonable speed and to show evidence of comprehension by answering questions either in English or in the mother-tongue;

(d) to build simple sentences and paragraphs within the range of the syllabus without having to provide the ideas themselves.(1989:48-49)

On the other hand, according to Sharma (himself) at the end of Intermediate course or even Degree course, a student should be able to:

i. understand a talk on a subject of general interest;

ii. (a) carry on a natural conversation with clarity of expression on a topic within his experience; (b) arrange, present, and explain his ideas intelligently on a topic selected by him;

iii. understand the main statements or ideas in a written passage and be able to reproduce them, in the order in which they are given, in a simple workman-like manner and

- iv. express himself in writing with relevance and accuracy on
 - (a) a subject of general interest within his experience;
 - (b) a topic chosen from a subject within curriculum which entails a vocabulary relating to that branch of knowledge. (1989:78-79)

As we can see, the aims of teaching English at the higher level seem to be relatively taller than at the lower stage, because expectations are also high at this stage. However, it all depends on to how well the language is taught. The aims are very much attainable, if it is taught properly by competent language teachers at both the levels of education.

In the lower grades, we are concerned with the students aged between three to eleven years, who are still immature in many respects even in their cognitive abilities and hence they really need a very special and a supportive treatment in the classroom. They must feel at home to make use of the new language in whatever way they can, regardless of the mistakes they might commit in its usage, so that they develop confidence in using the language fluently. Accuracy can be focused at a later stage. In case of children, language learning has to be integrated with their overall learning experience and it is not advisable to teach it in isolation. They should feel the real need to use the language. Therefore, a ‘cross-curricular approach’ is advised to be

adopted while teaching English to children. As Myers and Burnett state that “...children should be provided with opportunities to develop both home languages and English across the curriculum within meaningful, integrated and mainly play-based contexts” (2004:17).

Children are naturally fond of fun and therefore the language learning/teaching process must be converted into fun and a pleasurable activity for children. In fact, fun, enjoyments are major factors in the learning process during the primary school years. As Moon fittingly states:

If pupils enjoy the learning activities, they will be more involved and this may increase their desire to continue. This is very positive for language learning, because if children want to continue with an activity for some time, it will give them more exposure to language input and more chance to practice the language. They will also develop more positive attitudes towards English as they will associate it with something enjoyable and pleasing. (Moon 2000:7)

Accordingly, they need to be taught through games, role-playing, songs, stories, etc., so that the element of enjoyment can be brought in to keep them engrossed in the class work. Besides, children live in an imaginative world of their own and this natural tendency of the child can be utilized to his advantage in the language classroom by a highly

skilled teacher. To put Susan Helliwell: “Children delight in imagination and fantasy... In the primary school, children are very busy making sense of the world about them... In the language classroom this capacity for fantasy and imagination has a very constructive part to play” (1992:7). Moreover, we also know for sure that children love games of all kinds and this tendency of the young learners towards ‘play’ can be utilized in the language classroom. As Vale and Feunteun (1995:117) comment: “Play has a key role in the learning process for children. Play is a source of motivation, interest and enjoyment ... for children, inside and outside the classroom, playing is a source of language, and a context for language use...” Thus, the children learning English as a second language need an abundant and wide-ranging language input, as children receive in their native environments, for they learn a foreign language more ‘informally in a naturalistic environment.’

At the higher level, in contrast, while teaching English to adolescents and adults, we have the learners who are cognitively more developed and are in a position to pick up difficult and abstract ideas. To a large extent, they know why they are learning the language and are eager to develop their communication. Hence, comparatively, it is

much easier to teach them. While we teach English to children indirectly through games, stories and many other activities, it can be taught directly in the case of adults involving its grammar teaching and by building on their previous knowledge. They do not need so much support and supervision as is needed for young children.

As already pointed out, the methodology of teaching English as a second language to children is inevitably different from the one meant for teenagers and adults. For children alternative ways of teaching have to be adopted, which include the play-way techniques, suitable to their needs and likings. But while teaching English to older learners, different available methods and techniques can be resorted to, because they may be ready to learn by any method/s or strategies, which can help them learn the new language as quickly as they can for professional and other reasons. Also, because they have the ability to learn by different *modus operandi*.

The teachers teaching English to children have to be specially trained who need to have some additional preparation with regard to their field of teaching. Quoting Theodore Anderson, S. R. Sharma writes: "In addition to knowing the history, civilization and culture of the foreign country and being fond of children ... they must

understand the philosophy of the elementary school, be creative, enthusiastic and broadly educated” (2002:54). They have to get to the level of their young pupils by applying different teaching/learning strategies like demonstration and bodily gestures, facial expressions, actions etc. to make the class an interesting and enjoyable place. They not only need to know the subject well but also to understand the unique nature and needs of young learners which will enable them to manage the class effectively and maintain discipline. As Helliwell rightly puts it:

Working with young learners in the primary classroom can be both a rewarding and a demanding experience. To make the most of that experience for both learners and teachers, we need to be very clear what it is we are trying to do. We must try to identify what learning language in school demands from young children and what it can offer them. We should also acknowledge what the implications of those demands and needs are for the teachers. (1992: 2)

They need to create a congenial and secure learning environment, rather than a competitive one, so that children feel free to participate and express themselves without feeling self-conscious or shy in any way. Teaching children English or any other non-native language is indeed difficult and a challenging task for the teacher. On the contrary, the teachers of older learners can take certain things for

granted while teaching. They do not have to make too many efforts to keep the attention of the students' riveted in their lessons. However, they must bring themselves up to date on the latest trends in language teaching to meet the multiple needs of adult language learners. To quote Vale and Feunteun in this context:

Teachers who have extensive previous experience working with adults or teenagers may lack the years of training, both practical and theoretical, that *the primary teacher* will have gained through formal study and classroom practice. Those who are working with *younger learners* for the first time need much support and guidance with respect to managing children. There is a fear of losing control... Certainly, many of the techniques and attitudes associated with traditional EFL methodology for *adults and young adults* may not be relevant to misbehavior on the part of the younger learner- or to the motivation of bored children. Managing children requires the teacher to look at the learning needs of children, and to make sure that these needs are put first. [italics mine] (1995: 99)

As compared to adults, we cannot expect much quick results from children as far as learning English is concerned, because they take their own time to process a new language. Therefore, while teaching children a foreign language, the process of teaching/learning cannot be hastened; instead, continuous assessment of their development in the language is needed. Hence, two different approaches/styles for teaching young children and adults.

An Overview of ELT at the Primary Level in Kashmir

In the year 2003, the Government changed its policy with regard to the teaching of English and introduced it as a medium of instruction at the primary level from Class 1st (pre-primary) even in the government-run schools in order to improve the standards of ELT in the schools. But how far have we really been able to do so, is a debatable issue and which needs a serious thought. So, at present English is used as the medium of instruction from the pre-primary level in the private as well as government schools and it holds the status of a compulsory subject in the curriculum. Since the teaching and learning of a language depends on a number of pedagogical and other factors such as aims and objectives of the language course, instructional materials, teaching methodology, the type of teachers, and examination format etc. Therefore, to analyze the state of affairs of teaching English at the primary level in Kashmir, all these teaching components call for a detailed scrutiny.

As far as the aims of teaching English at the primary level in Kashmir are concerned, the general aims are the same, i.e., the development of the four skills viz, listening, speaking, reading, and

writing, as specified in the *Syllabi-cum-unitization Design* issued by the State Institute of Education, Srinagar, Kashmir, 2010-11. Besides, the development of vocabulary and pronunciation is also aimed at. The aims are very much in line with the objectives set for any course in English, as experts also emphasize on the integration of the four skills of communication. Nevertheless, only two skills -reading and writing - receive much emphasis in our teaching scheme of things, and the other two skills are less stressed like elsewhere in India. As a result, the spoken part of communication is hardly developed among our students at the primary level, who fail to produce even simple sentences. However, exceptional students are found in top private and missionary schools, where students get a comparatively better exposure to the spoken form of English.

As regards the teaching materials (language syllabus), the whole series of English course books for government schools from 1st primary to Class 10th has been titled as *Tulip Series*. The contents have been revised in the light of the guidelines provided by the National Curriculum Framework 2005. The texts in the series claim to be based on the communicative approach to language teaching, thereby ensuring that the lessons are learner-centered rather than

teacher-centered. The text book series has been prepared in consultation with the language experts and the practicing teachers and gives clear guidelines to the teachers as to how these texts are to be taught. The syllabus gives 'Key Learning Goals' to the teachers. Though the instructions provided in the syllabus and the course books are a great help to the language teacher, but they should not be followed so slavishly as to sacrifice his own creativity and resourcefulness. The contents are very much as per the needs of the young children, presented in a playful manner, although some teachers do not seem to be satisfied with the overall language syllabus. But in spite of these instructions, it has been observed that most of the teachers, particularly, in the government schools, teach English in the traditional ways, complaining that the students are not able to follow them if they switch over to the Direct or any other modern Method. Translation is the main technique used to make things easier for children. Consequently, the Translation and the Bilingual Methods are mostly used in the government schools. On the other hand, the situation is a little bit different in the private schools, where the course books, too, are not the same. They choose any text from the market as per their liking and which suits them the best, as

the government does not advise them in this respect. Many of these private schools use the series titled, *New! Learning to Communicate*, by Oxford University Press. In addition to this series, they have a separate book on English grammar for all the elementary classes starting from class 1st. The private schools make a good use of the Bilingual and the Direct Methods of teaching, which gives their students more exposure to English from the early stage and they start thinking in English quite early. Generally the prescribed textbooks are the main teaching aids available to the teachers, which they strictly follow to complete all units within the stipulated time so as to prepare students for their exams.

The classrooms, in general, are dominated by the teachers in both the types of schools and the students' role remains passive. But we know that, "...children learn best when they are involved, and when their work is valued. They learn best when they are the owners of their work-when they have the opportunity to experience and experiment for themselves" (Vale and Feunteun1995:28). Consequently, the overall poor results in English (ELT) in our schools do not come as a surprise.

The teachers at the primary level teaching General English are the general-line teachers with good qualifications in different subjects; although some of them are only graduates or even less qualified with 10+2 degrees present in both the private and the government schools. Hence, we have a mixed group of teachers with varying degrees of abilities, who teach English to children at the primary stage of education and the students they get to teach, in turn, are also a mixed-ability or heterogeneous group. Some of them being first generation learners, coming from diverse social and economic backgrounds. Thus, making the task for the teacher even more difficult. Until very recently, teachers here were appointed even with low qualifications, but after the saturation that has been witnessed over the years in the education sector/department, entry into the profession has become rather difficult. Now the criteria for selection of teachers have been raised and instead of graduation, professional degrees such as B.Ed and M.Ed have become necessary; although, in the rural areas the past trend of appointing the low-qualified teachers still continues where different Centre and State sponsored educational programs such as SSA (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan), ReT (Rehber -e- Taleem) are in place.

That may be the cause of rural students being mostly less proficient in English than their urban counterparts.

Despite all this, teaching English to young children at the elementary level could be made effective, if all these varying qualified teachers are given proper training and orientation in teaching English to children. Also, if year on year refresher and orientation courses are conducted, especially for English, the ELT situation would be quite different. Although, SIE (State Institute of Education) does conduct some training programs for English especially through the concerned agencies like DIET and RMSA. The teachers, however, are not satisfied with these inadequate initiatives from the government, as these training programs at the elementary stage do not take place on a regular and systematic basis. The duration of these training sessions is usually ten to fifteen days at most, which in any case is not sufficient. Much of what is taught in these orientation courses is not applied in the classroom, because of the existing problems in the system at the primary level.

The primary teachers, in general, seem to be ill-prepared to teach English to children as per the communicative approach of teaching, which is why the students are hardly able to develop their

communication skills even by the end of the secondary stage. They seem to show a lack of understanding of the real objectives of teaching English as a skill subject.

The assessment or evaluation process in English at the primary level, is the same as at other levels of our education system. It hardly serves the purpose for which testing is actually meant, that is, to give the accurate information about the child's progress in English or to know how much language learning has taken place and how much still needs to be achieved. As Vale and Feunteun (1995:227) define: "A global view of achievement of the teaching and learning process over a period of time, e.g. analysis of the success or failure of a teaching approach, course book, pupil response, motivation, etc." Some positive changes have already been introduced in the evaluation process of government schools. Guidelines or instructions are given in the syllabus copy with regard to the pattern of the examination, though not in a detailed way. Unit wise tests (Test pattern: U-I, U-II = T1: U-III = T-II) are conducted to prepare children for the final examination at the end of the academic year to assess the overall progress in the subject. Since English is by and large taught from the examination point of view; as a consequence, there remains a constant

pressure on the teacher to cover the prescribed syllabus within the stipulated time frame, which of course is not a healthy sign for our primary school children. The reality is that the tests and the annual examinations are never the true test of the children's learning abilities. To quote Vale and Feunteun: "...learning may be taking place, even though at any moment during a course children may be unable to repeat a complete sentence or pass a formal test" (1995:75). Students usually cram up or learn by rote for these unit tests and for the final examination, so that the real performance of the students in the language is not assessed.

The overall position of ELT at the primary level in Kashmir does not seem to be very heartening; more so in the government schools. As a result, the tall objectives of teaching English are not accomplished. In spite of teaching English for five to ten years, we fail to develop the much-needed communication skill of our students in English, which puts a huge question mark on the efficacy of English language teaching program in our schools in general. Only a small section of the schools in the private sector, which includes the Missionary and the top private schools of repute, have set high standards of English language teaching and learning. But why is this

so, when our government schools and the teachers there enjoy many benefits from Government as compared to the private schools? Answers need to be found in this regard. However, there is the other side of the coin, which presents the state of English at the primary level in a favorable light. We may not be able to develop all the four skills at this stage, and it may also take us many years to develop the communication in the language; yet we cannot call the teaching and learning program of English in our primary school a complete disappointment. At least the other basic skills - reading, listening and to some extent writing - are developed to a large measure, which can expose the students to rich English language resources of all kinds, that can help them to learn the language, provided they are given the right guidance by their teacher. Why there are differences between the government and the private schools in terms of teaching/learning of English; why government-school students fail to compete with their private-school counterparts – questions like these will be taken up for discussion in the following chapter.

Chapter III

Teaching of English in Government and Private Schools:

A Comparative Analysis of the Data

The Present study

The present study primarily focuses on different pedagogical factors involved in the teaching/learning of English at the primary level in the government and private schools of Srinagar city, although some socio-economic aspects have also been considered. In Srinagar, there is a huge chain of private and government-run schools, which vary in their performance in English. Students from the private schools usually demonstrate better linguistic competence in English as against the government-school students. It is, therefore, necessary to find out why there is such a huge gap between the different types of schools and also to study the different factors such as syllabus, teaching methodology, evaluation process etc. that contribute to their relative performance in English. For this purpose, a random sampling of schools has been made for data collection. The performance of teachers as well as students from the government and the private schools of Srinagar city has been examined to have a clear view of

where exactly the differences between the two kinds of schools lie with regard to the teaching/learning of English.

The Methodology /Research Tools used

The present study being empirical in nature adopts an eclectic methodology, following both quantitative as well as qualitative methods for the collection of the required data. The three methods or research instruments which have been applied in the present study are as follows:

(i) Questionnaires (ii) Interviews/Oral tests (iii) Classroom Observations. Moreover, for convenience and accuracy of data collection, the research scholar has also obtained audio as well as video recordings apart from the photographs from the sample schools to understand, analyze and interpret the teaching/learning situation objectively.

The Research Modus Operandi

The study employed two separate questionnaires (See Appendix) one for the teachers and the other one for the students to get statistical figures in terms of percentage. A total of 280

questionnaires were prepared and circulated among the students and the teachers in the two school situations. Of the total 280 questionnaires, 224 were administered to the students, and the rest of the 56 questionnaires to the teachers. In each school, 28 students from Class 5th were given the questionnaires for their response. The selection of the 5th standard was deliberately made in view of the students' maturity level and better comprehension, so that the interaction would become easy. Besides, 7 teachers in each school were chosen as the respondents. However, only 240 questionnaires in total were considered for analysis, 200 from the students and 40 from the teachers, as was actually planned. The extra questionnaires were only kept in reserve. The language of the questionnaires was of course English, but the scholar himself translated the students' questionnaire (verbally) to the young students into Urdu and rarely into Kashmiri to make sure that all the students could understand and respond correctly.

The Interviews (mainly informal) were conducted with the teachers, students and the principals of the sample schools in order to obtain some supplementary information, which was not covered by the questionnaires. The interviews were usually carried out during the

free time, so that class work did not get affected. Moreover, Oral Tests were conducted by asking some general questions about English language in order to know about the level of proficiency of the students from both the types of schools.

The researcher also employed the Classroom-Observation technique to examine, in person, the classroom activities in the two different kinds of schools, so that the comparative analysis would become easy. At least, two classes from each school were chosen for classroom observations with the intention to have a comprehensive understanding of the teaching process. The main purpose of the observations was to crosscheck the responses/information received through the other two research instruments, i.e., questionnaires and interviews.

The sample of the Study

The present sample consisted of eight schools in all, four each from the government and the private schools; whereas, the student sample comprised a total of 200 students (both male and female), which included 25 students from each school. The teachers in the sample consisted of 40 teachers, which included 5 teachers from each

school and only those teachers were selected who taught the primary classes.

The Survey Work

The field work was carried out in the eight different sample schools of Srinagar city, which included four each from the government and the private schools. We also wanted to include DPS, and the Missionary schools into our sample; but unfortunately, the authorities of the schools did not permit us to carry out the survey in their schools. Therefore, the present sample schools are as follows:

Government Schools

1. Government High School, Bemina
2. Government Middle School, Khanyar
3. Government Girls High School, Hazratbal
4. Government Boys High School, Sonwar

Private Schools

1. R. P. School (Girls' Wing), Naseem Bagh
2. Bluebells, High school, Sonwar
3. New Era Public School, Rajbagh

4. Iqra Public School, Bemina

The Comparative Analysis/Elucidation of the Data

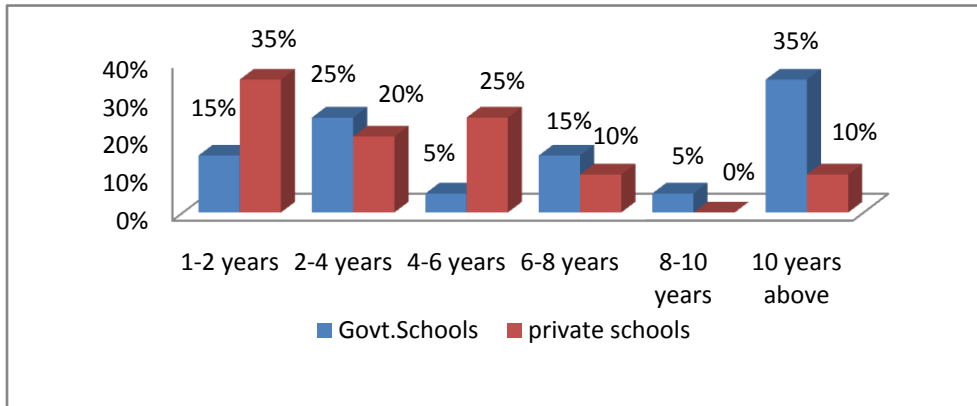
In the present chapter the scholar attempts to make a comparative analysis of the data, both qualitative as well as quantitative, which were obtained during the field work. First, the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire is presented followed by that of the students' questionnaire. The analysis and the interpretation of the data also incorporate the observations notes recorded during the interviews and classroom observations.

Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire has been divided into two parts (Part-I and Part-II). Part-I of the questionnaire is meant for seeking the background information of the teachers pertaining to their educational qualifications, training, subject and teaching experience etc. Part-II mainly contains questions related to the different components of English course and classroom procedures, including questions on aims of English, syllabus, teaching methodology used, facilities, problems faced, and examination process etc. The questionnaire along with its analysis is presented as follows:

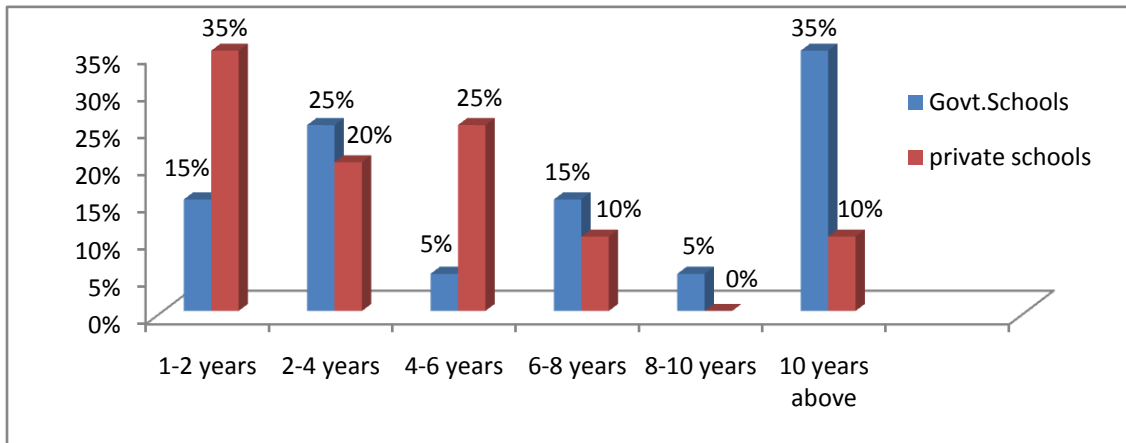
Part-I

i. Academic qualifications of teachers:



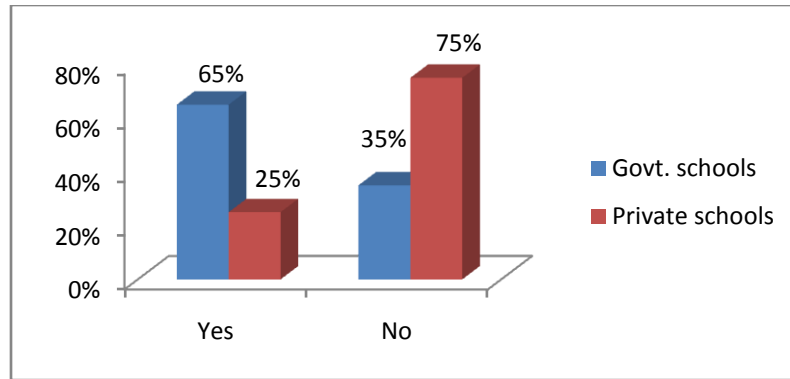
From the above chart, we can easily infer that the government-school teachers' academic qualifications are much higher than those of the private-school teachers. Majority of the former are postgraduates and have also acquired B.Ed; whereas, most of the latter are young graduates and also a good number of them having obtained post-graduation. Interestingly, a few of the teachers from the government schools have also done M.Ed., while none of the teachers from the other category possess this professional degree.

ii. Teaching experience



Even in teaching experience, the government teachers are much ahead of the private-school teachers. The teachers in the private schools are usually the young graduates, who have not yet got government jobs and many of them are still pursuing their studies. Therefore, they do not have as much teaching experience as that of their counterparts. But it is really ironical to note that we comparatively get much better results from the private schools than from the government schools.

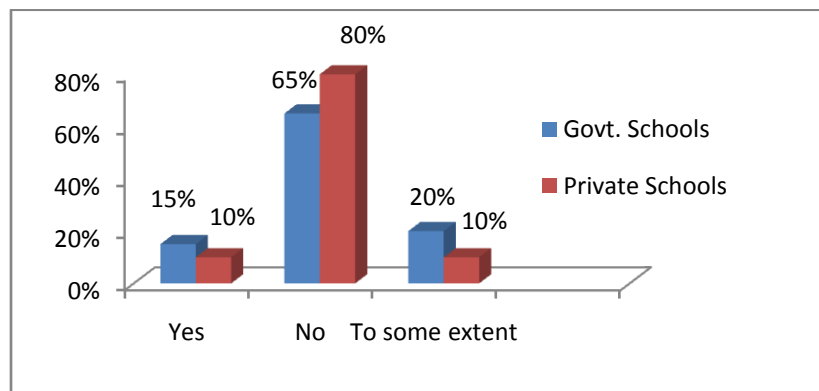
iii. Training in language teaching:



Looking at the statistics in the above chart, we get to know that compared to the private-school teachers, the government teachers have received a good deal of training of general nature and even in language-teaching. But one fails to understand why these teachers do not implement that training in the classroom, which is evident from their poor results.

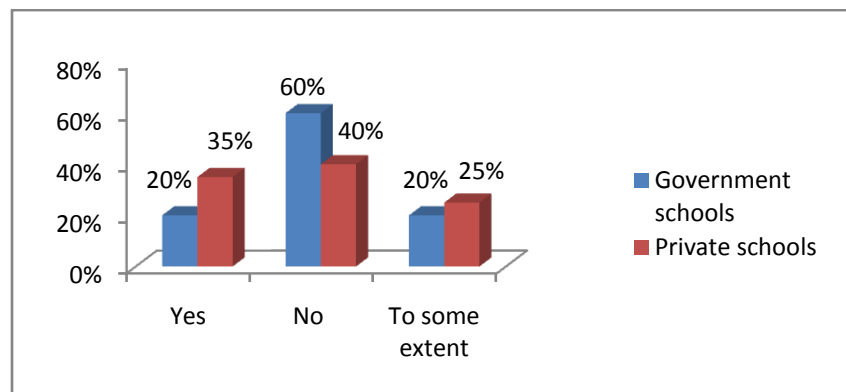
Part-II

Q.1. Does the syllabus specify the aims and objectives of the primary level English course to guide your work in the classroom?



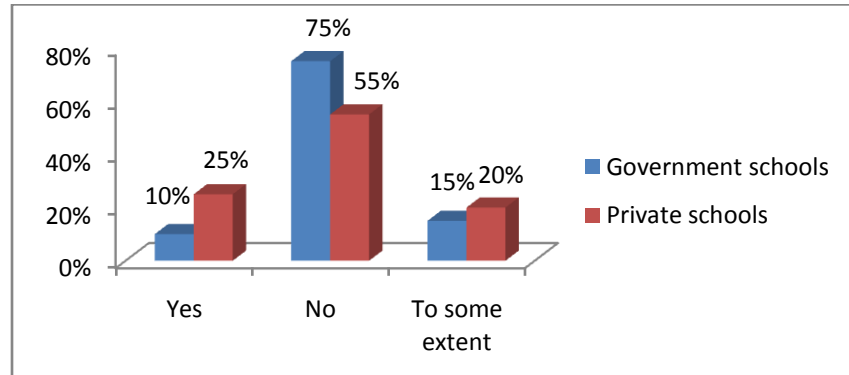
Majority of the teachers both government and private (65% and 80%) respectively, have expressed the view that the syllabus does not list the aims properly to guide them in their classroom. Yet we can discern the difference of opinion among the two categories of teachers. It is a clear case of dissatisfaction of the teachers with the syllabus, which does not contain proper instructions for them, whose job is really demanding.

Q.2. Do you think that the syllabus for General English at the primary level is interesting and as per the needs of young children?



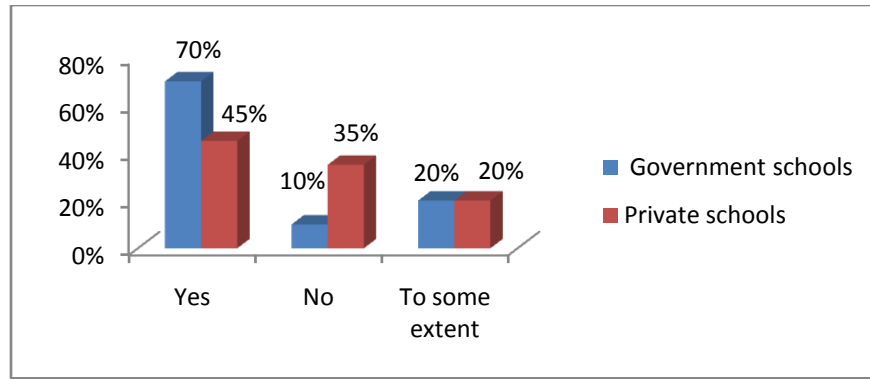
As we can see, majority (60%) of the government school teachers hold the view that the prescribed syllabus is not interesting and relevant to the needs of children; whereas, most of the teachers from the private schools agree that the syllabus is relevant and interesting.

Q.3. Does the syllabus help to teach all the four skills (LSRW) of the language?



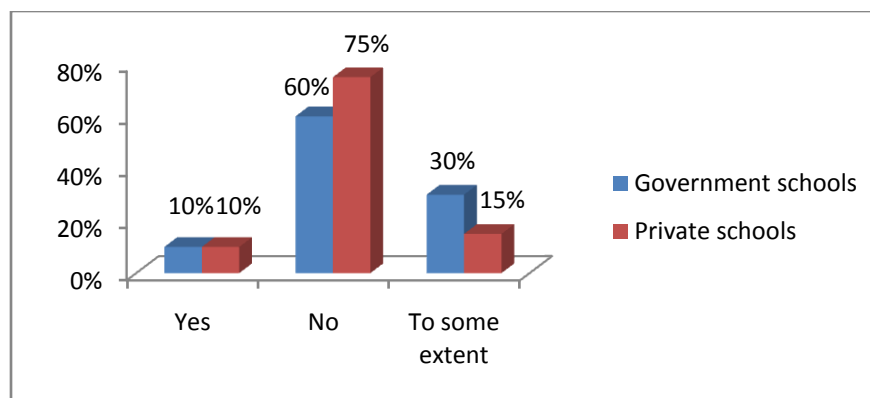
The analysis of the responses reveals that the greater part of the respondents (75%) from the government schools admit that the syllabus does not help develop all the four skills, while most of the teachers in the private schools have expressed a positive view in this regard. Even during our interview with the teachers, we were informed that mostly two skills - reading and writing - are developed and the other two skills remain largely under-developed.

Q.4. Do you think that the teacher is restricted by the prescribed syllabus and the limitations of time in using his/her own techniques in the classroom?



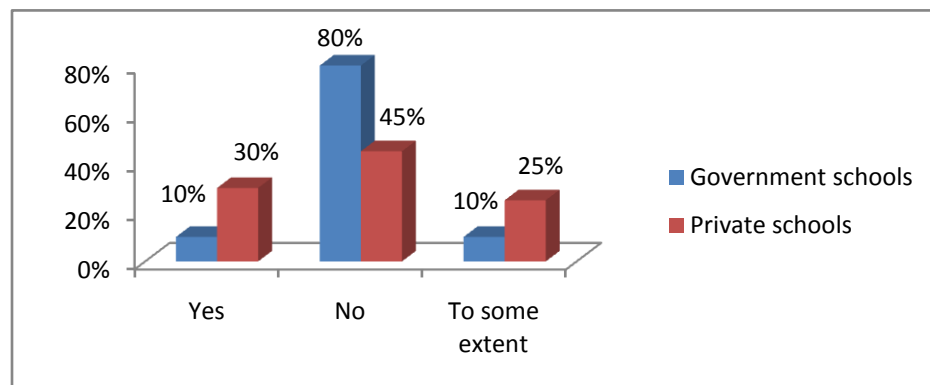
The response to this question from both kinds of schools brings to light that there is not much difference of opinion among the teachers. Teachers, in general, believe that the prescribed syllabus kills their resourcefulness. Moreover, the limited time they get to teach English, really hampers their efforts to nurture the communication skill of the children. They constantly remain under pressure to complete the prescribed syllabus.

Q.5. Does the syllabus give clear guidelines to the teacher as to how the teaching materials should be taught?



Here again, it is amply clear that the syllabus does not give any clear guidelines to the teachers of both the types of schools with regard to the mode/technique etc., to be adopted for teaching English to children. In this respect, the private school teachers seem to be more dissatisfied than the government teachers, as 75% of them answered 'No' compared to 60% of the government teachers and only 10% each answered 'Yes'.

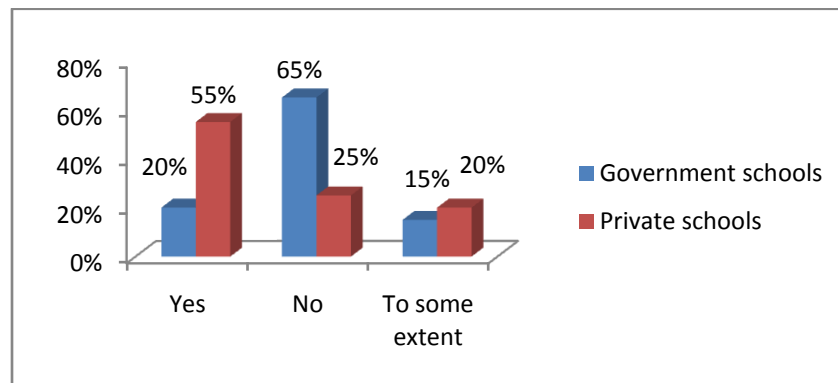
Q.6. Do you get sufficient teaching aids for teaching English to children?



In the government schools, a vast majority (80%) of the teachers has responded that they do not get sufficient teaching aids to make their teaching interesting and meaningful; although the researcher came to know from the teachers themselves that they receive 500 rupees each year as TLM for the purpose of teaching aids. On the other hand, only about half of the private teachers (45%) have

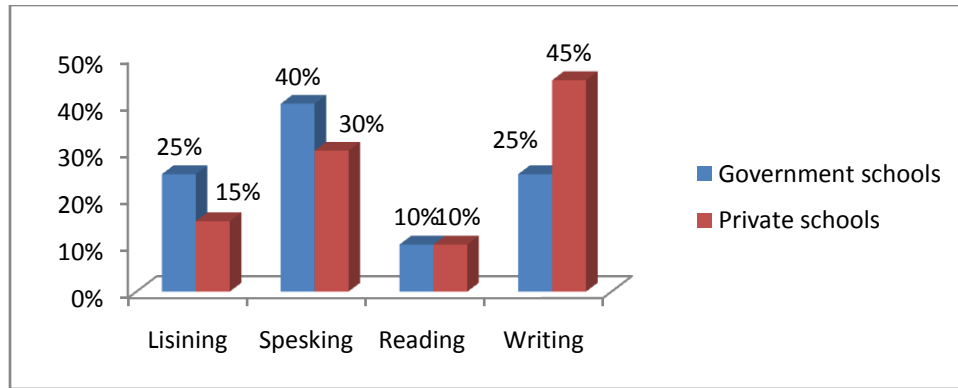
responded in the negative. This is a major factor which creates difference between the two learning patterns/ situations.

Q.7. Does the material prescribed in the syllabus really help the students to develop their communication skill in English?



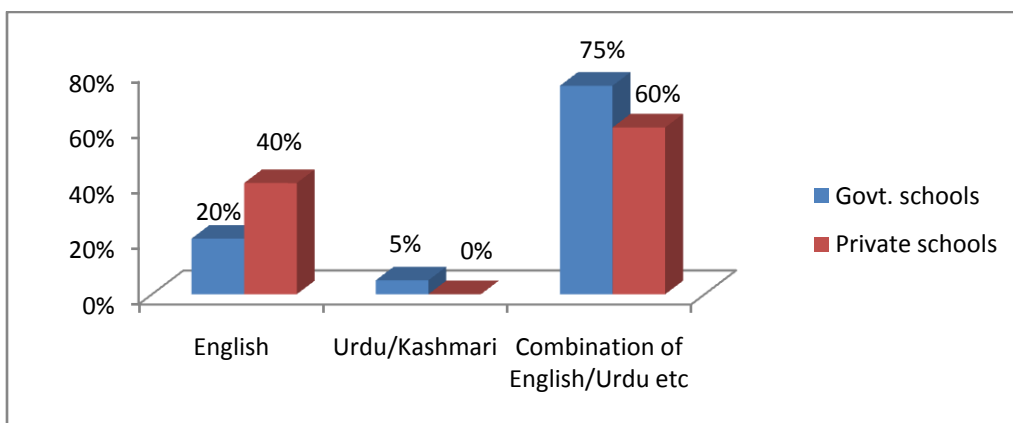
As we can see from the percentage break up, majority of the government-school teachers have presented a negative view; whereas, more than half of the private teachers have given an optimistic response pertaining to the role of syllabus in developing the communication skill of the primary students.

Q.8. Which one of the four communication skills (LSRW) do you find the most difficult to teach?



The analysis indicates that a good number of the government teachers consider speaking the most difficult skill, followed by listening, writing and lastly the reading skill. The private-school teachers, in contrast, consider writing as the most difficult skill, followed by speaking, listening and reading skills.

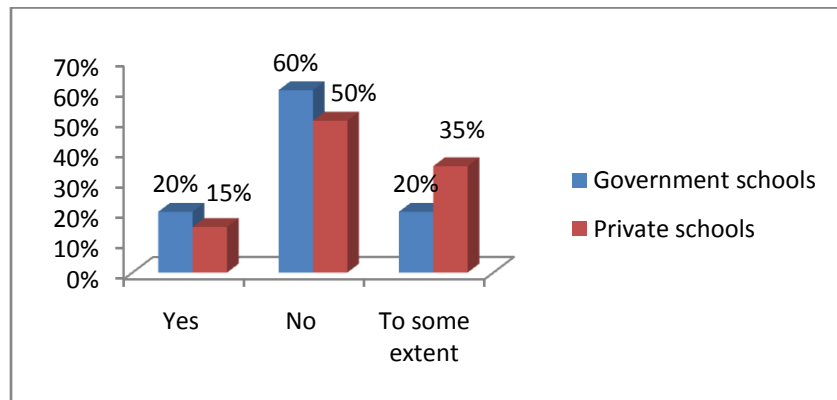
Q.9. Which language do you use the most while teaching English?



A clear majority of both the government and the private teachers (75% and 60%) respectively use mostly a combination of

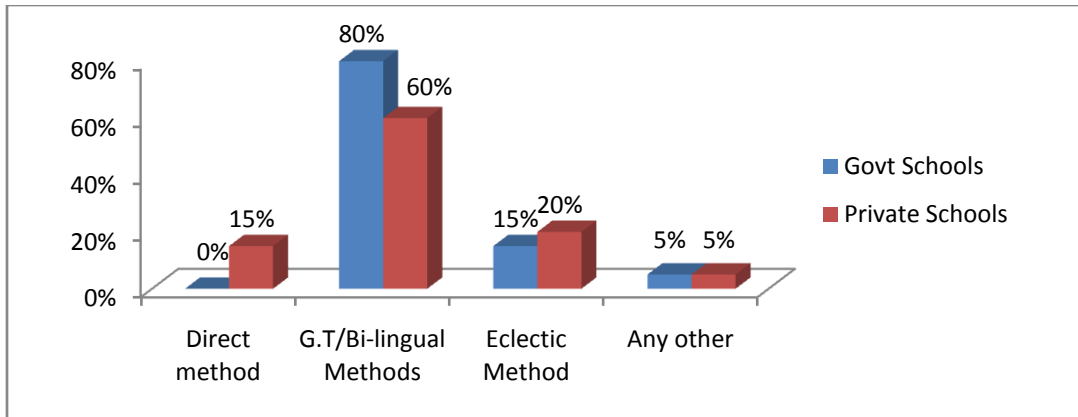
English, Urdu etc. while teaching English; whereas, only 20% and 40% teachers use English most of the time in that order. That still means that the private teachers make a more frequent use of English as against the government teachers.

Q.10. Do you, as a teacher of English, face any difficulties in teaching English to young children?



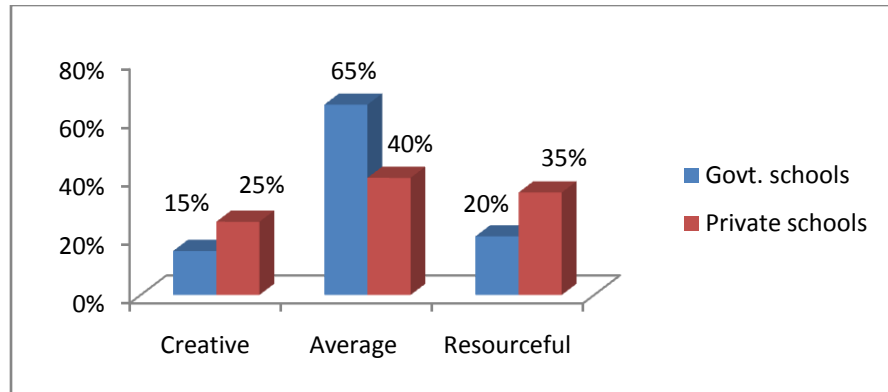
It is obvious that the teachers in both the categories of schools face some difficulties in teaching English to children, even though percentage-wise, it is the government teachers who face these problems the most in one way or the other, because of the understandable reasons.

Q.11. Which of the Methods do you use for teaching English?



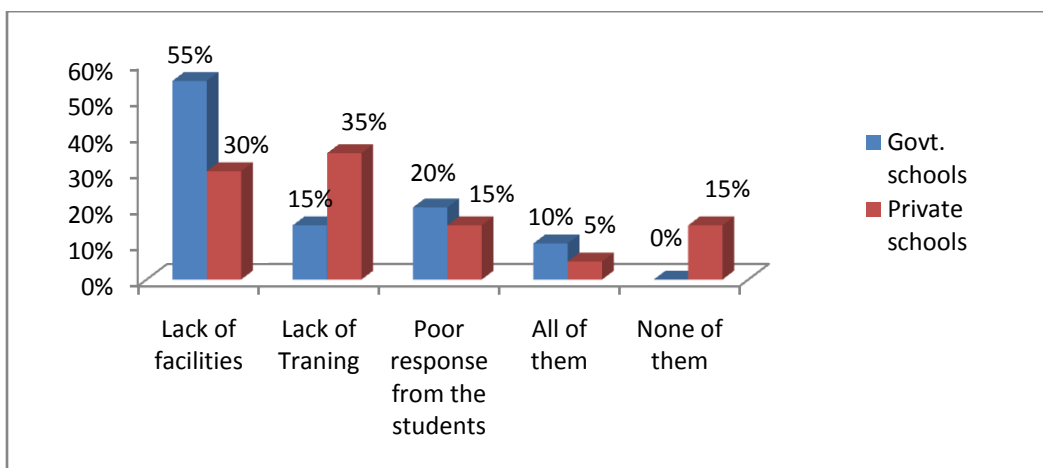
A large majority (80%) of the respondents from the government schools have responded that they follow the traditional Translation or Bi-Lingual Methods, while 15% teachers follow Eclectic approach and the rest follow some other method or technique. But as it can be noticed, not even one per cent of these teachers resort to Direct method. In contrast, a sizeable number (65%) of the private teachers, too, follow the Translation or Bi-lingual Methods. But it is really heartening to see that as against 0% of the government teachers, 15% private-school teachers follow the Direct Method, while 20% use Eclectic method.

Q.12. How would you label your performance in the English class?



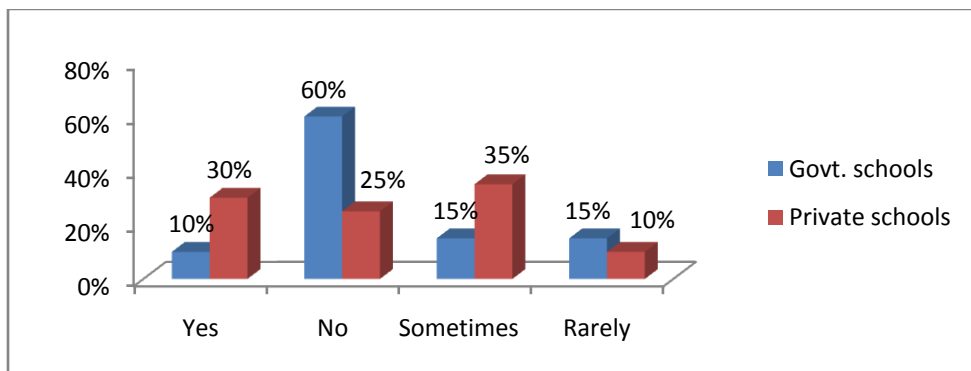
As the above chart shows, majority (65%) of the government-school respondents term their performance as average, (20%) as resourceful and only (15%) as creative. Conversely, the situation in the private schools seems to be a little better, as only less than 50% teachers label their English class as average, while a good number of them label their performance as creative and resourceful.

Q.13. Which of the following shortcomings do you face as a primary teacher of English?



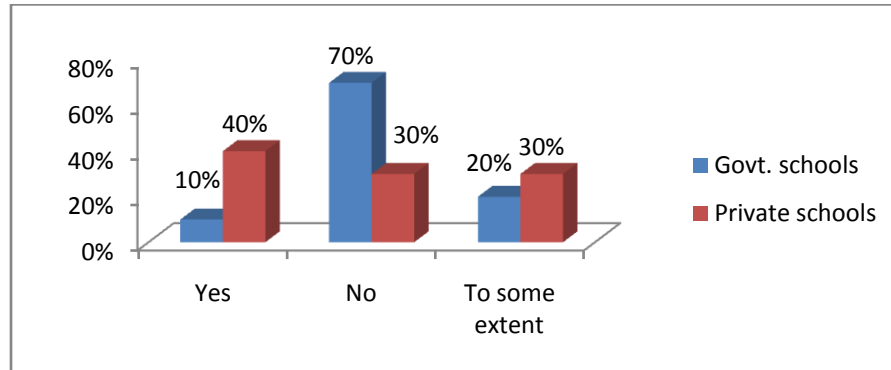
More than 50% government-school teachers blame lack of facilities for their poor results in English; 20% blame the poor feedback from the students; 15% admit that their lack of training comes in their way of teaching English effectively; whereas, 10% agree that they face all of these problems. On the other hand, the private-school teachers, too, are faced with many of these problems; nevertheless, they have relatively lesser problems than the former, with the exception of their lack of training.

Q.14. Do your students use English while inside/outside the classroom?



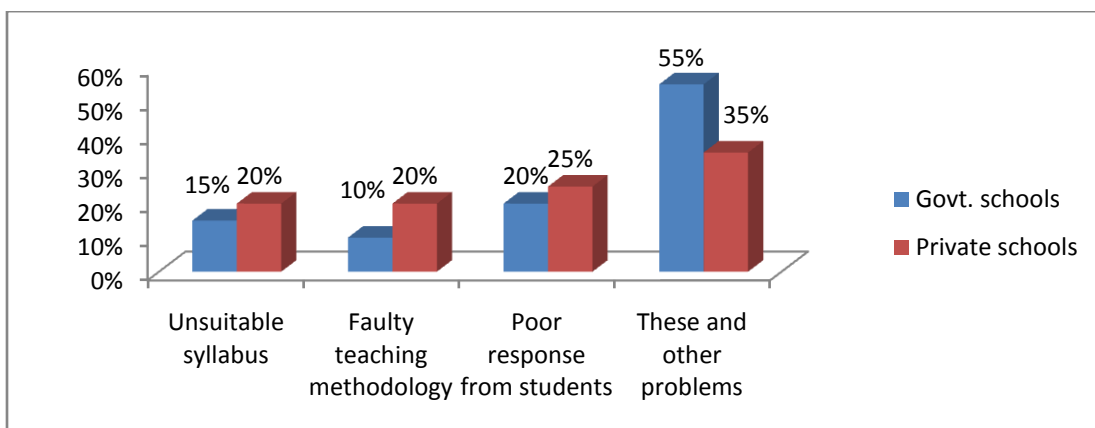
The calculation of the responses evidently highlights that the private-school students use English more frequently than the government-schools students while inside or outside the classroom.

Q.15. Do you think that your students are able to express their ideas in simple or broken English?



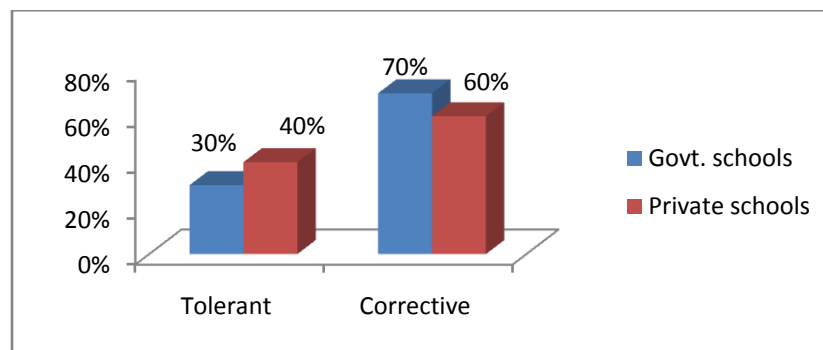
Again we get a comparatively higher percentage (55%) of the private-school students, who are able to express themselves at least in broken English compared to the students in the other category of schools, where we have got merely 10% students as being able to express themselves from the teachers' point of view.

Q.16. Which of the following problems make ELT programme ineffective at the primary level?



As we can gather from the responses of the teachers, both government as well as private, they have to confront many problems during the course of teaching English, which according to them are mainly responsible for their ineffective instructions in English. But comparatively the private-school teachers do not have to face as many problems as the government-school teachers have to.

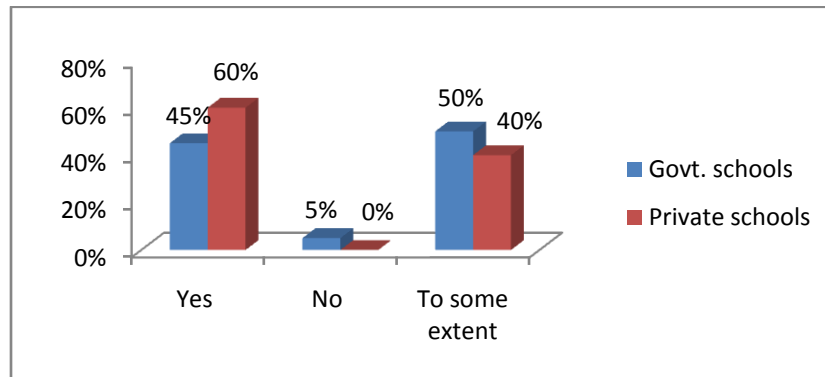
Q.17. What is your reaction to the errors committed by young children?



In answer to the given question, we received almost the same percentage of responses from the two school situations. The teachers, on the whole, try to correct the errors committed by the students, as they believe that the errors committed, if not rectified at this early stage, might be difficult to unlearn at a later stage. But according to some language experts this is not a healthy trend of teaching a language to children. They should be given liberty to use language

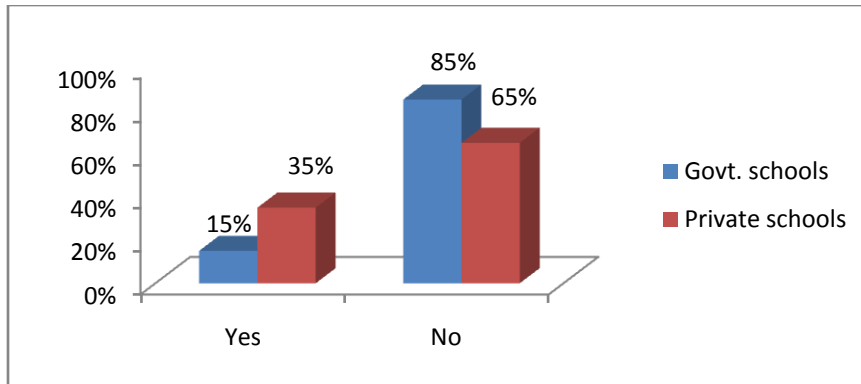
freely without hesitation. Experts rather view errors as signs of active learning.

Q.18. Has your method and the material used, helped your pupils to improve their communication skill in English in any way?



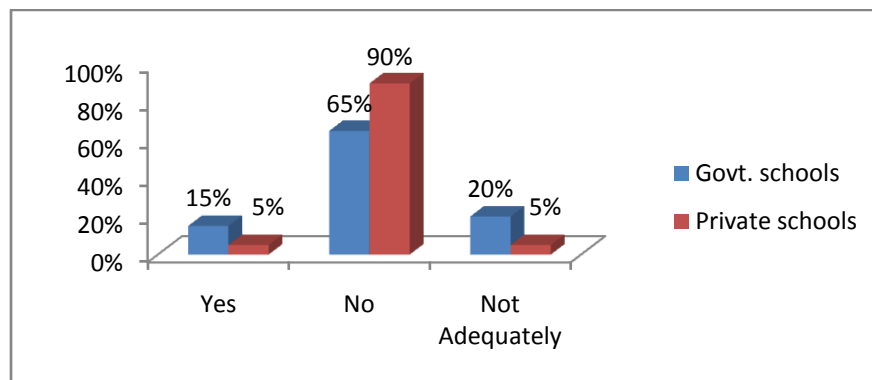
As is evident from the statistical figures above that though the methods and the materials utilized by the teachers render some service to the students in terms of the development of proficiency in English; yet the teachers themselves admit the fact that a lot still remains to be done in order to help the students build their communication skill in English. The teachers and the language planners have to put their heads together to improve the situation.

Q.19. Would you like to continue with the present Method/s of teaching English that you have been using so far?



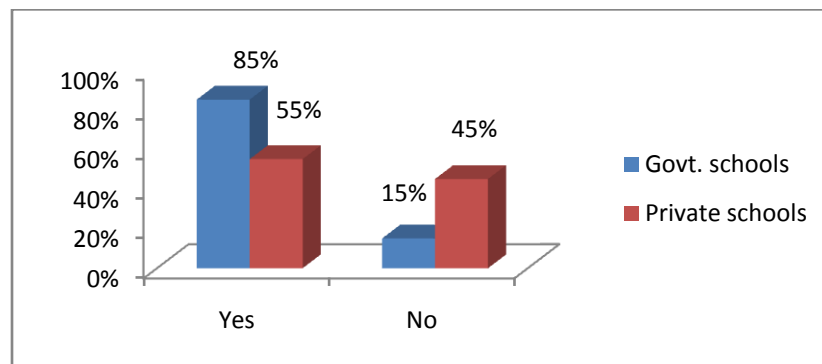
The percentage chart indicates that majority of the teachers in the two groups are in favour of discontinuing the present Methods of teaching English. They themselves are not satisfied with the methods and the techniques which they adopt for teaching the language. The change of the methodology seems to be the need of the hour.

Q.20. Do you get any in-service training for teaching English to children?



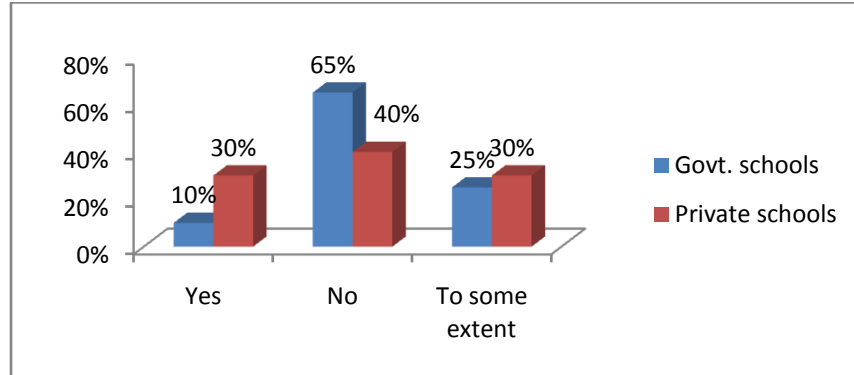
The responses from the teachers, particularly the private teachers, suggest that the teachers receive negligible in-service training for teaching English. Only a small percentage (15%) of the government-school teachers has responded that some in-service training is provided to them.

Q.21. Do you feel the need for teacher-training/refresher courses or workshops for the teachers of English at the primary level?



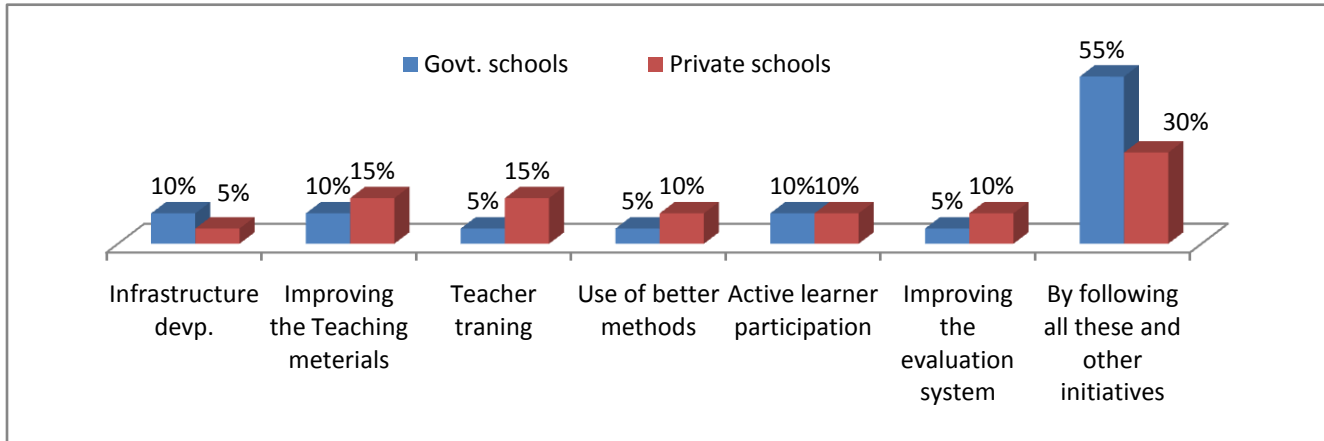
Undoubtedly, the vast majority of the teachers are very much desirous of the workshops, orientation and refresher courses in English on a regular basis, at least twice a year. 85% and 55% teachers respectively from the government and the private schools have answered in the affirmative that they need training/orientation in English teaching.

Q.22. Are you satisfied with the present system of examination/evaluation at the primary level?



We can visibly discern the difference in the responses of the two groups of the teachers, yet the majority of teachers from both the types of schools; wish to see a change in the present system of examination at the primary level. The private teachers, however, seem to be somewhat more satisfied than the government teachers with the present evaluation pattern.

Q.23. How, in your opinion, can we really improve the teaching and learning of English at the primary level?



The opinions of both the categories of teachers, indicate that many initiatives are required to be taken for raising the standards of teaching and learning of English at the Elementary stage, as suggested in the above chart, though the difference of opinion is very much visible among the teachers in the two groups of schools.

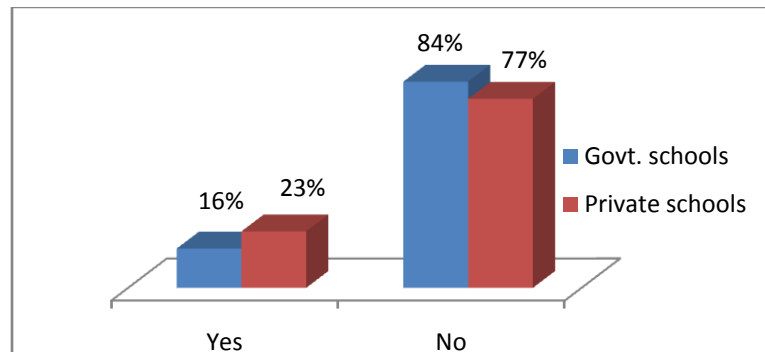
After a thorough analysis of the teachers' questionnaire which contained a total of 26 items/questions (3 in Part-I, 23 in Part-II), we shall now present a detailed examination of the students' responses received through the questionnaire comprising a total of 14 items in order to get the respondents' views regarding their experiences of learning English in and outside the classroom.

Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire, too, has been divided into two parts. Part-I elicits the personal information from the students and Part-II includes questions on educational background and a range of other aspects of their English class such as methodology, needs, their approach of learning and the various problems faced by them in the process.

Part-II

Q.1. Do you learn English outside your school?



The analysis of the students' responses reveals that only a small percentage of students from the government and the private schools (16% and 23% respectively) learn English outside their schools. Majority of them learn it in the schools alone.

Q.2. Educational qualifications of your parents:

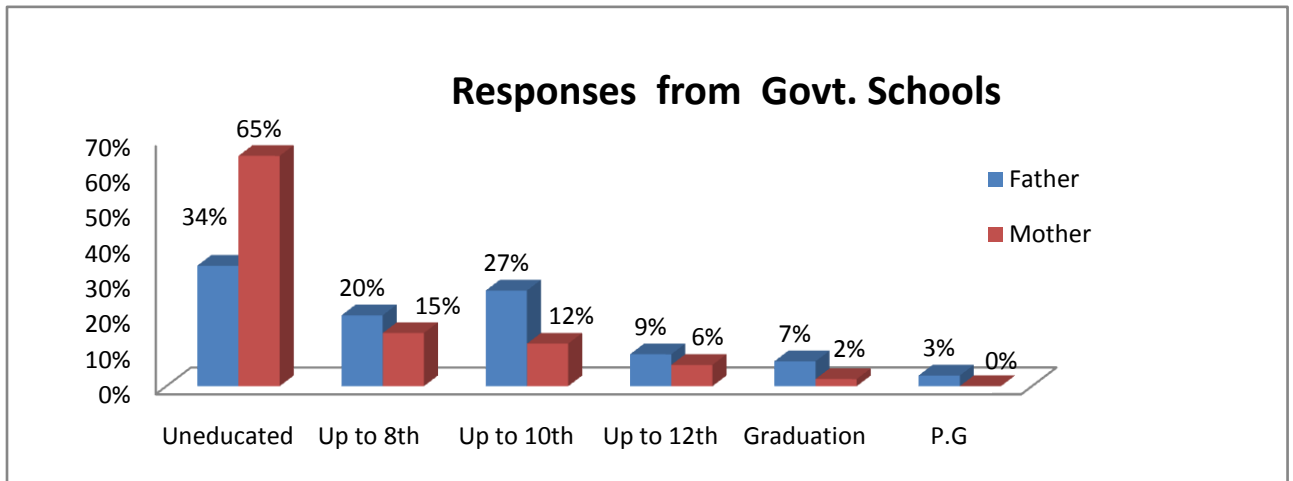


Figure-(a)

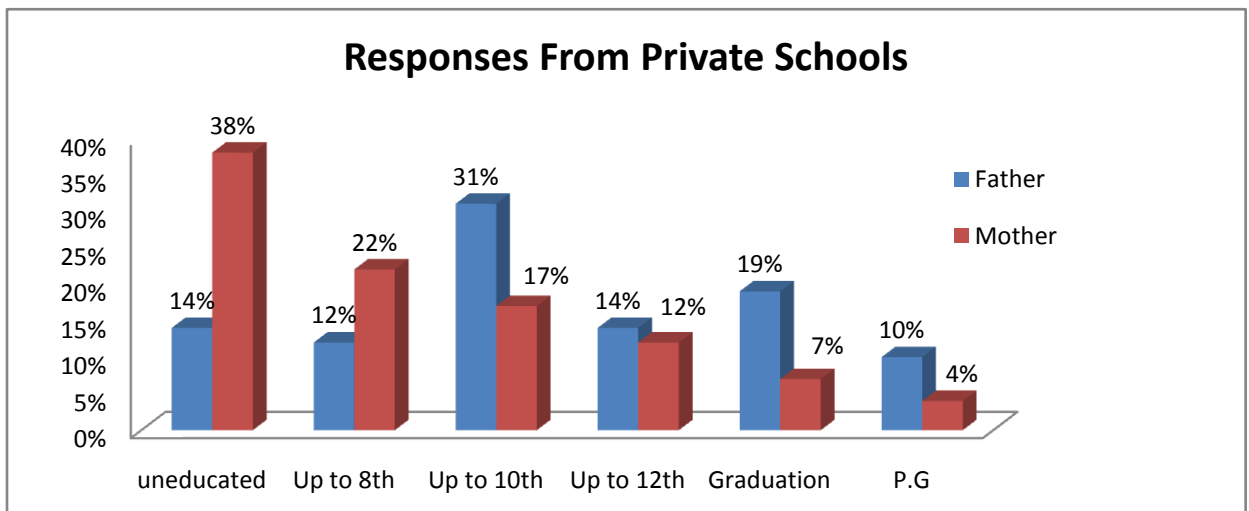
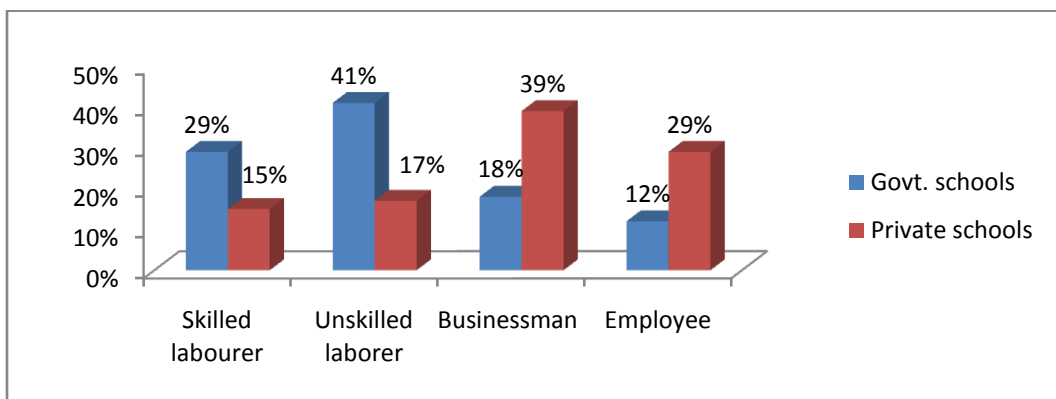


Figure-(b)

The percentage figures above clearly show that the educational background of the private-school students is comparatively much better than that of the government-school students. Most of the

parents of the latter group are either uneducated or have received education only up to secondary or higher secondary levels. Only a few of the parents in this group have received higher education. Hence, students of private schools get some guidance at home in their studies.

Q. 3. Occupation of your father/guardian:



We asked the above question mainly to know about the socio-economic condition of the students and it was observed that the students studying in the government schools largely come from humbler family backgrounds, in comparison to the students of the private schools; as can be seen from the figures.

Q.4. You speak English to:

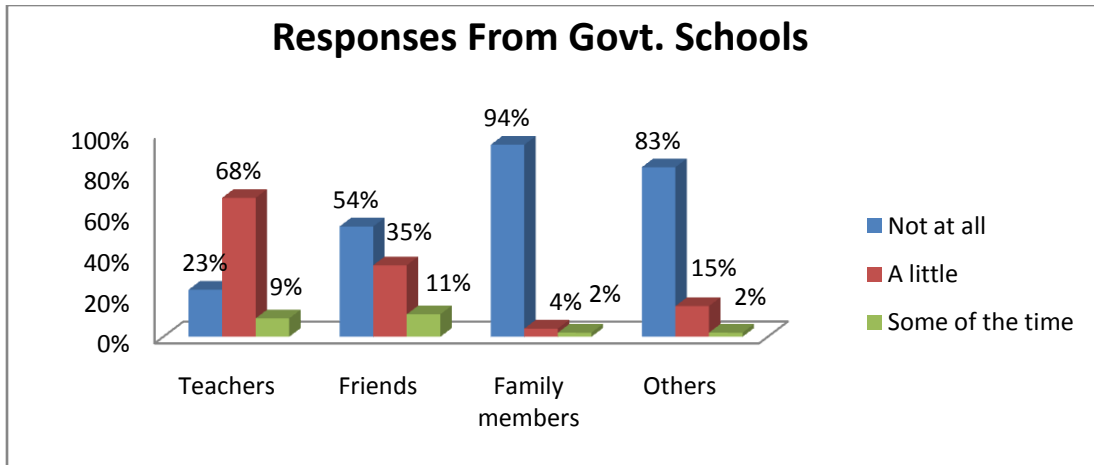


Figure-(a)

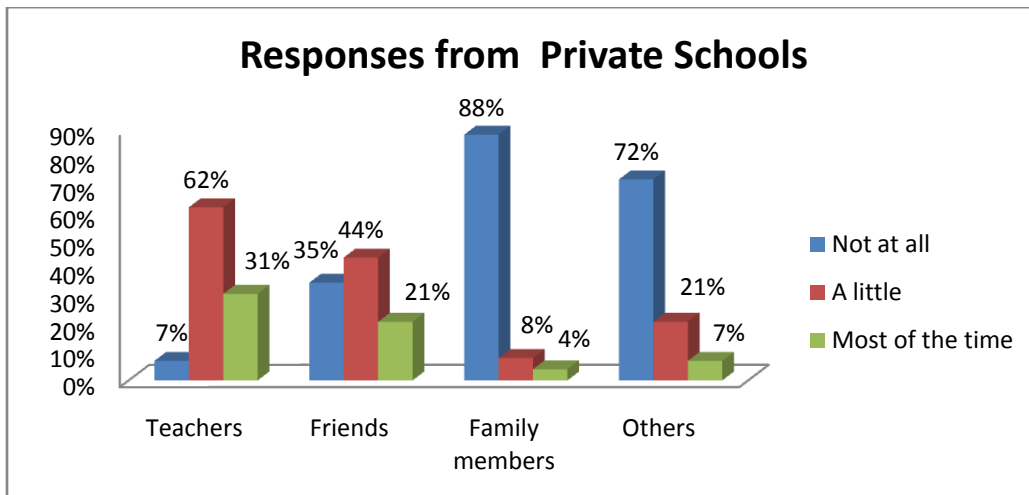


Figure-(b)

The analysis of the responses from the two groups of the students highlights that the situation with regard to the use of English in the private schools is relatively better as compared to the government schools. We obtained the higher percentage from the former than the latter group of schools, which means that the students

of the private schools make a more frequent use of English in their communication than the students of the government schools.

Q.5. Do you listen to, speak, write and read English?

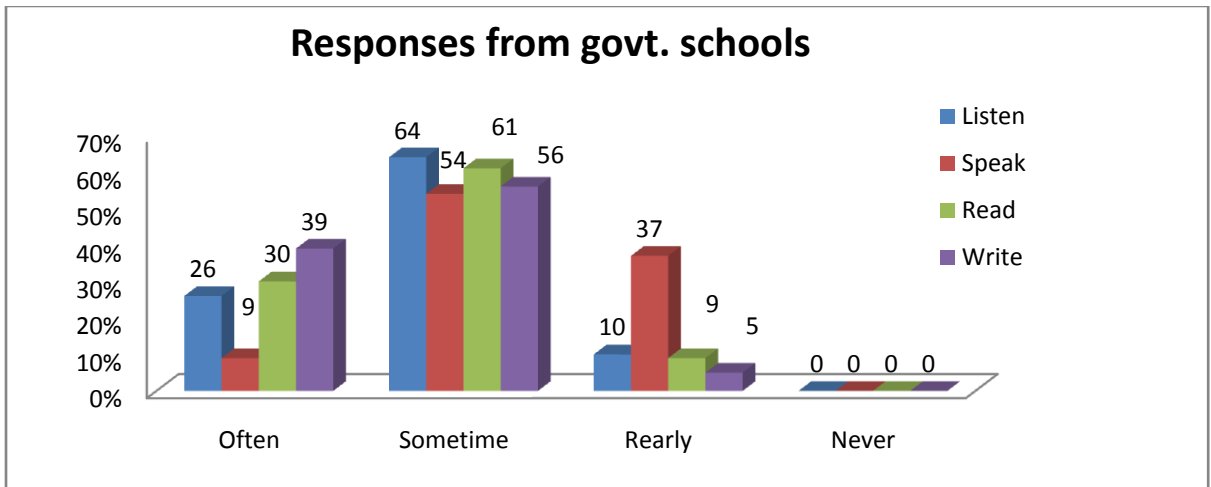


Figure (a)

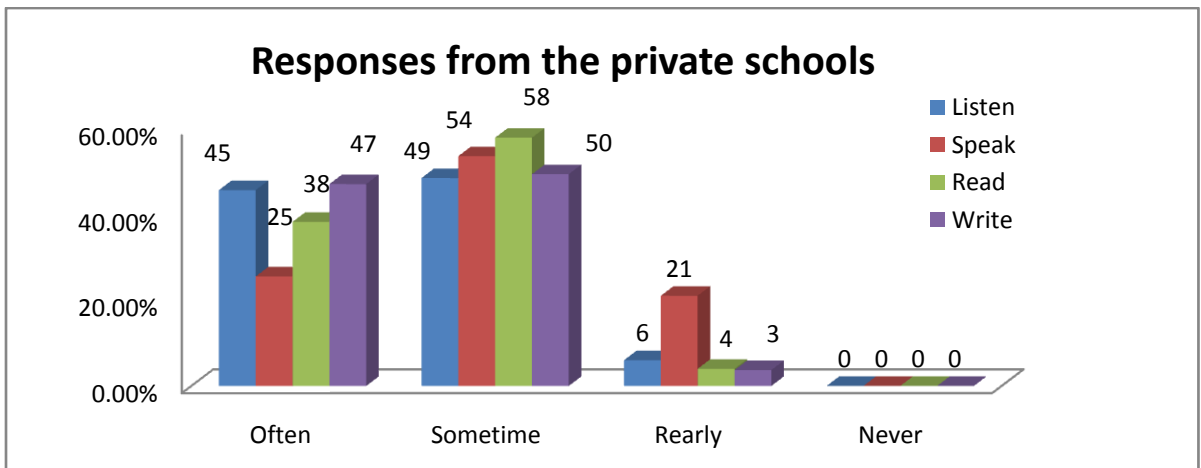
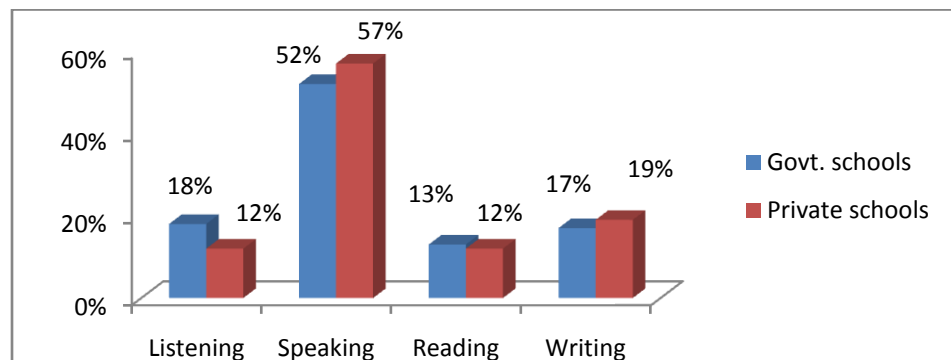


Figure (b)

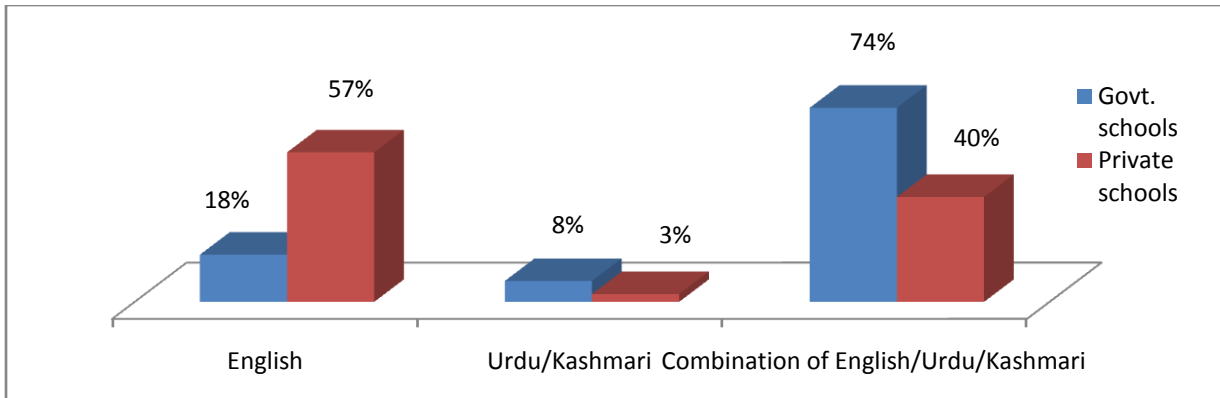
As is evident from the percentage break up between the two groups of schools, the private-school students again score higher than the government-school students in terms of listening, speaking, and writing, reading English.

Q.6. Which one of the four skills of communication in English do you like the most?



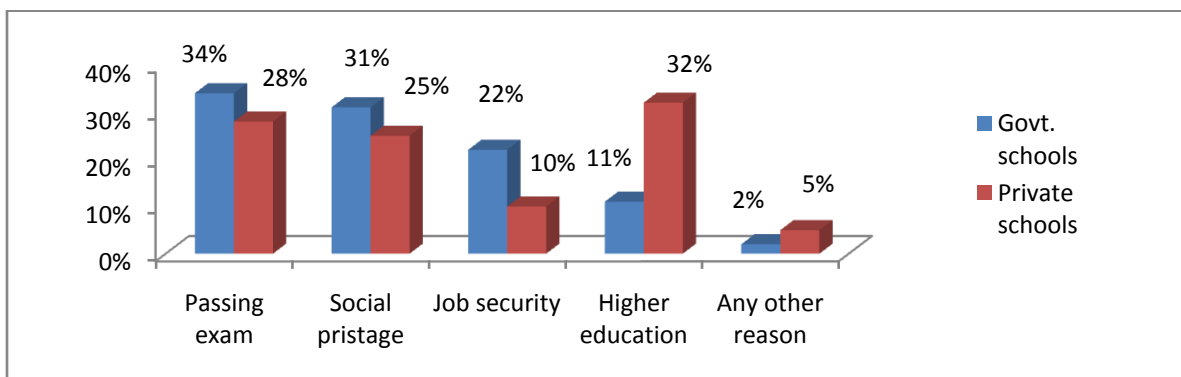
In response to the above question, we learnt that the majority of the respondents from both the groups, like speaking skill the most. Interestingly, we received almost the same percentage from the government as well as the private schools.

Q.7. Your teacher teaches you English using mostly:



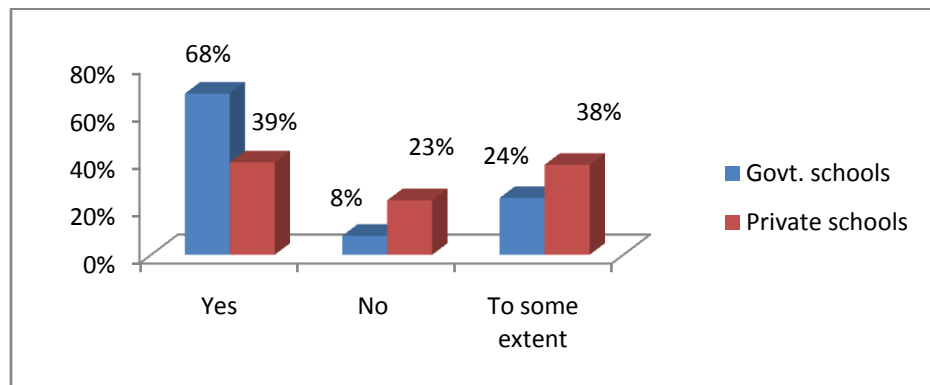
The chart shows us that in both the categories of schools, they use mostly the combination of English and Urdu especially in the government schools while teaching English. But it was observed that the private schools, in contrast to the government schools, make a more frequent use of English in teaching English. During the classroom observations also, the researcher found the same trend of teaching English was in place in the schools, which confirms the responses of the teachers. Kashmiri is rarely used.

Q.8. For what purpose do you want to learn English?



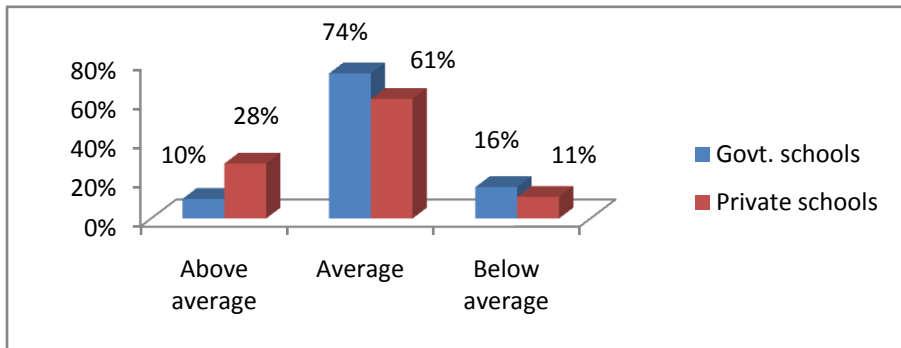
We received a mixed response from both the groups of the respondents. They learn English, or rather, they want to learn English for varied purposes; but, most of them learn it because they have to pass their exams and also because of its social prestige.

Q.9. Do you face difficulties in learning English?



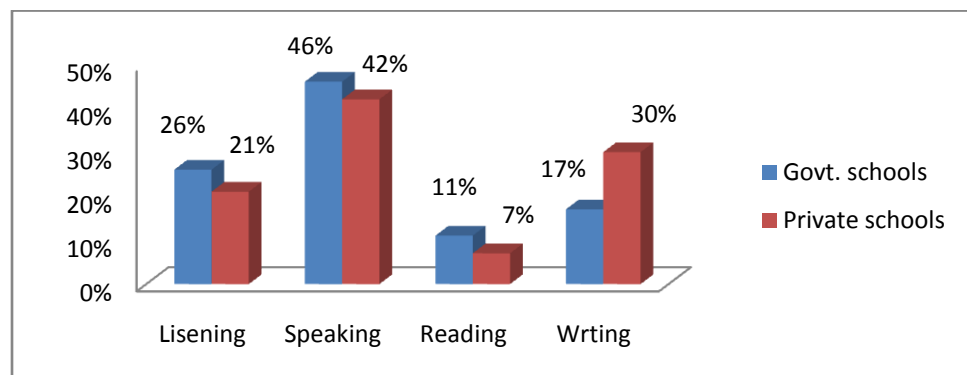
Majority of the respondents taken together, do admit that they face many difficulties in learning English, although the private school-students face comparatively lesser difficulties as against the government-school students.

Q.10. What is the level of your proficiency in English?



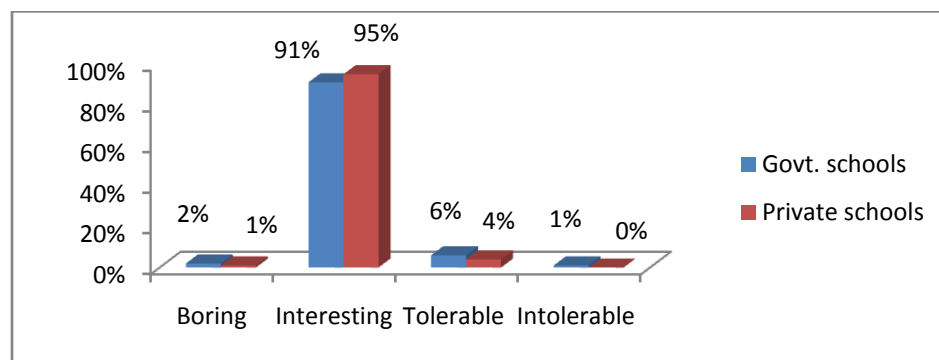
The percentage makes it amply clear that majority of the students from both the types of schools are ‘average’ as far as their proficiency level in English is concerned. However, from the private institutions, we received rather more encouraging responses. The first-hand interaction with the respondents, wherein the scholar asked some questions about different aspects of English language also revealed that the private-school students exhibit comparatively better performance in English than the other group of students.

Q.11. Which skill do you need to improve the most?



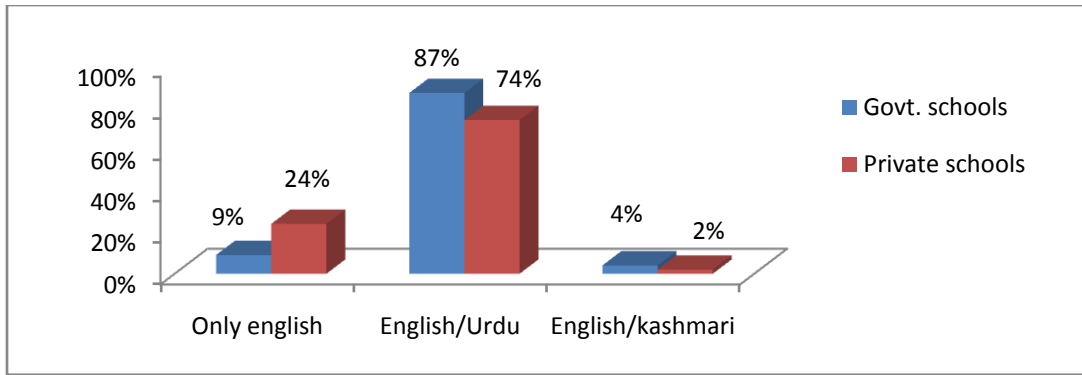
A sizeable number of students from both the groups agreed that they need to improve speaking skill the most. Next, the students belonging to the government schools need to improve the listening skill, followed by writing and reading skills; whereas, the students from the private schools want to improve their writing skill, followed by listening and reading skills.

Q.12. How do you feel about your General English class?



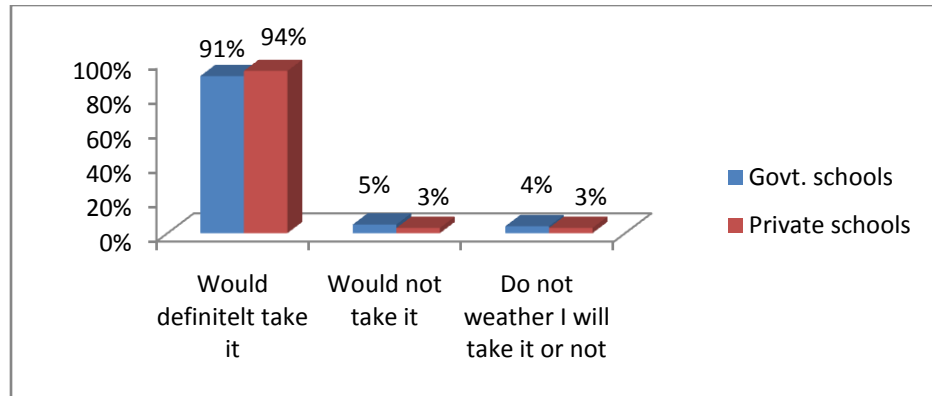
The response from the two groups of the learners amply indicates that they have a great liking for English, as the percentage chart conspicuously shows and only a negligible percentage of the students think otherwise.

Q.13. What medium would you like to have during your English class?



Obviously, majority of the students from the two school situations would like to have a mixture of English and Urdu in their English class, rather than English alone. Only 9% and 24% respectively from the government and the private schools would like to have only English as the medium of instruction. But teaching a new language in the target language itself helps in the learning process by “increasing the amount of exposure the children get to the language, while still remaining within the fairly predictable and narrowly focused limits of classroom talk”.(Helliwell 1992:15)

Q.14. If you are given the choice to study or not to study English, what would you like to do?



More than 90% of all the respondents would definitely like to study English, while only a marginal proportion of the students would not either take it or are not sure whether to take it or not.

Major Findings/Conclusions of the Survey

- The government-school teachers have an edge over the private-school teachers in many respects such as their qualification, training and teaching experience. But ironically the results of the latter are more encouraging than the former.
- Both the categories of teachers are largely dissatisfied with the prescribed syllabus of English at the primary level, because of its many drawbacks, even though the private-school teachers are not as much discontented as the government-school teachers are.
- The available infrastructure of the private schools is much better than that of the government schools. As far as teaching/learning

aids are concerned, the latter lack these facilities, while the private-school situation with regard to the facilities is more or less better.

- The competence of the private-school students by and large in the four skills of English (LSRW) is relatively better than that of the government-school students, because the former make a more frequent use of English than the latter while inside or outside the classroom.

- In government schools, English is taught through G.T/ Translation or Bilingual Methods, while in private schools it is taught through Bilingual and Direct Methods. The Eclectic approach is also followed in both the school situations.

- Teachers as well as students of both the types of schools admit that they face problems and difficulties in teaching and learning English, which may be due to lack of facilities, training, and exposure etc.

- Both the types of teachers want regular refresher courses and workshops to be organized for the teachers of English at the primary level.

- According to the figures, the performance of the teachers as also of the students from both the categories of schools in teaching and

learning of English is average. But in our analysis, the teaching/learning scenario is relatively better in the private schools.

- Social backgrounds of the students are also very different; while government-school students belong to lower income section/class of society, the private-school students come from a relatively higher income group. Some students from the government schools even belong to other backward States whose parents work here as laborers.

- Their educational backgrounds also vary considerably. The private-school students come from comparatively better educated families than the government school students. The latter are usually the first generation learners.

- Not many students get to learn English outside the schools, be they the students of government schools or private schools. For majority of the students, their schools are the only place, where they learn or are taught the language.

- Almost all the students are highly motivated to learn English as they seem to realize its rich potential in our society and hence wish to become fluent speakers in the language.

- A clear majority of the teachers from both the categories of schools are not satisfied with the existing examination scheme and therefore look forward to some positive reforms.

Thus, taken as a whole, the comparative analysis and the interpretation of both the quantitative as well as the qualitative data reveal, that the teaching/learning situation vis-à-vis ELT at the primary level, is relatively better in the private schools than in the government-run schools.

Conclusion

The study clearly revealed that English is the most widely spoken as well as written language in the present day world having truly emerged as an ‘International Language’. As a result of this widespread use and expansion of the language across a wide range of fields throughout the world, it has been adopted by many non-native countries either as a SL or a FL right from their primary classes.

The study also brought to light the highly privileged position of English right across India as a SL or as an ‘associate official language’ of the country. It particularly highlighted its predominant role in the education sector of India.

The thesis pointed out in detail that an altogether different approach of teaching and learning a foreign/second language is

needed for primary children aged between 3-11 years, because of their unique needs, abilities, interests and aptitudes. Furthermore, the study showed that there are huge differences between young children and adolescents/adults as language learners, since evidently the two are worlds apart from one another in almost all aspects. The study clearly indicated that all the components of English curriculum/course, i.e., aims, syllabus/teaching materials, teaching methods and testing techniques, are different for the two different categories of language learners in view of the varied personality characteristics of children and adolescents/adults.

The study also brought out that in spite of the late arrival of English in the State of J&K especially in the Valley (Kashmir), it has assumed great importance in several fields such as academics, administration and the like; a trend which is very much similar all across the Indian sub-continent. The study revealed that compared to other districts of the Valley, in Srinagar there is a huge network of private including Missionary schools, which have become more popular than the government schools among the local population, because of their comparatively better overall performance especially in English. The present study through a detailed analysis identified

some problems and difficulties in the ELT programme of the government schools, at the primary level which are responsible for their poor performance in English.

Thus, the overall findings which emerged from the comparative analysis of the data are as follows:

i) The infrastructure, which includes the buildings, furniture, other teaching equipment and aids etc., of the private schools is far better than that of the government schools, which itself creates a congenial learning setting for the students of the private schools.

ii) There seems to be lack of understanding of the aims of teaching/learning English on the part of teachers, because the way it is taught like any other subject, does not serve the actual purpose of developing the communicative skill of the students. But the overall strict teaching/learning environment in the private schools, makes ELT activities more effective and result-oriented. Hence, the four skills of the private-school students are more developed than those of the government-school students.

iii) The students of private schools enjoy a rare advantage over their counterparts of the government schools in the form of more

learning years in their pre-primary (Nursery) classes, an educational system which is not strictly in place in the government schools. The Nursery classes in the latter are completely disordered.

iv) The teachers of government schools do not assign homework regularly, nor do they check or give feedback to the students with regard to their progress in English. In contrast, the teachers of private schools are hard-taskmasters in this regard, because their own survival depends on their good results in all subjects including English.

v) Although comparatively the teachers of the government schools are more qualified and experienced than their private counterparts; yet they lack special training concerning teaching English to children in the primary classroom. Obviously, the private teachers also lack such training; but surprisingly the teachers from the latter group show much better results in English than the former.

vi) The students of government schools are themselves largely responsible for their poor performance in English, because they do not respond positively to their teachers' instructions. They do not follow

their homework as strictly and regularly as the students of private schools.

vii) The syllabus of English in the primary schools (both government and private) has many shortcomings. It does not contain proper instructions for the teachers; is not interesting and suitable enough as per the needs and demands of the teachers.

viii) There is a complete lack of cooperation between the teachers and the parents in the government schools. The parents of government-school students show less interest in the education of their children, while the parents of the private-school students show more seriousness, or rather, they are made to show their seriousness by the school authorities by way of parent-teacher meetings, which hardly take place in the government schools.

ix) The private-school students come from a much better educational (even social) background compared to the government-school students. The latter generally belong to the underprivileged section of the society and are usually the first generation learners. Undoubtedly, the social and educational backgrounds have serious implications for their education.

x) The Teaching Methods used in the private schools are comparatively much better and more advanced, as they do apply the Direct Method to a large extent in comparison with the government schools; where only the Translation/Bilingual Methods are used, besides following an Eclectic approach. The former, too, apply Bilingual Method apart from the Eclectic Approach. However, the classrooms, in general, are dominated by the teachers, who follow mainly the lecture-mode of teaching. (It is important to mention here that the leading private schools which include the Missionary schools, use Direct Method the most, as reported by their former students).

xi) The examination/evaluation system, although very much similar in the two kinds of schools, yet their results/achievements differ considerably. The private schools have necessarily to show good results/report cards of their students, as they are usually answerable to the parents. This is not true of the government schools. However, the present evaluation system on the whole is faulty in both the school-situations, as at the other levels of education, because it only tests the reading and writing skills and hence encourages rote learning,

xii) There is Lack of strictness, organization and management in the government schools in terms of teaching/learning processes as against the private schools.

xiii) The government schools are not monitored properly, because of the lack of inspection from the Government. The private schools, on the other hand, work under constant scanner.

Thus, the study demonstrated that there are multiple reasons both pedagogical as well as socio-economic, which are responsible for the differences between the performance of the government and the private schools in teaching English at the primary level in Kashmir, in general, and in Srinagar, in particular. The private schools provide comparatively a better and language-rich environment (exposure) to their students compared to the government schools. As a result, the students from the former manifest better linguistic/communicative competence in English than from the latter, although exceptional cases are found in the government schools as well. However, it must be pointed out that these private schools, too, have their own problems even though relatively of lesser degree. These privately-run schools have yet to do a lot to get to the level of the top Missionary schools.

Therefore, to improve the present teaching/learning scenario of English at the primary level, in general, and in the government schools, in particular, a number of reformative measures need to be taken. The following steps could be considered to this end:

i) First and foremost, it is the government, especially the concerned School Education Department, which has to play a very proactive role for raising the standard of ELT at the primary level in the State. The government must take some positive measures at the planning and implementation levels.

ii) The physical infrastructure of the schools is in desperate need of improvement. Besides, the teaching/learning equipment such as the audio/video aids, varied and interesting text types like story books etc. need to be made available in the schools.

iii) Before initiating the course of English, the ultimate aim and objective of teaching/learning English must be fully understood by teachers as well as students. It is to be treated as a skill to be developed among the students, and then only can the aim be achieved.

iv) Though there is a palpable need to upgrade the teaching materials regularly, the existing materials also need to be exploited

fully. It seems that if the instructions in the prescribed textbooks are followed properly, a healthy learning environment could easily be created, especially, if the teachers apply their full potential and ingenuity.

v) The number of years for the teaching and learning of English need to be increased by the introduction of the pre-primary/Nursery system in our government schools in a systematic way, as more time or exposure are the major determining factors for learning a language.

vi) There is a pressing need to organize orientation/refresher courses for the primary teachers, as they need to be specially trained personnel, to be able to deal with the young children effectively.

vii) Education being a tri-polar process, involving the teacher, the student and the parents, needs the active participation of all the three stakeholders. The teachers alone cannot easily achieve the goals. Therefore, the parent-teacher meetings should form an integral component of the curriculum.

viii) The traditional Methods of teaching English, which are currently being used, need to be replaced by the latest Methods and techniques like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Total

Physical Response (TPR) and Communicative Language Learning (CLL), if we really wish to bring about a change in our existing ELT scenario at the primary level.

ix) The present examination/evaluation system, which tests only the reading and writing skills, and encourages rote learning, calls for a complete overhaul, so that it becomes the real test of the abilities in the language. Continuous assessment (formative) and correction-work must form an integral part of the instructional/evaluation systems.

x) The schools need to be made accountable to the concerned department through regular inspections and English language teachers must also be made somewhat answerable for their poor results in English.

The title of the thesis itself is indicative of the fact that the present study is very much limited in its scope. It deals with the teaching/learning of English (ELT) at the primary level only and that, too, within the confines of Srinagar city. Furthermore, the purposive nature of the sample schools and the select students in the sample, restrict the prospect of generalizing the results and findings of the

present study to the government and private schools of the entire State or Kashmir region, in particular; although the difference between the two types of schools exists across India. Hence, there is ample scope to carry out comparative performance appraisal studies on a larger scale at Secondary or Higher Secondary levels, involving different districts, in order to get a clear picture of ELT in the two categories of schools. Comparison between the performance of urban and rural schools in English could also be taken up. The present study is only a modest effort in that direction, which can serve as a launching pad for the prospective researchers to explore the hitherto untapped field.

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Appendix

4. Do you think that the teacher is restricted by the prescribed syllabus and the limitations of time in using his/her own techniques in the classroom?

Yes

No

To some extent

5. Does the syllabus give clear guidelines to the teacher about how the materials should be taught?

Yes

No

To some extent

6. Do you get sufficient teaching aids available for teaching English to children?

Yes

No

To some extent

7. Does the material prescribed in the syllabus really help students to develop their communication skill in English?

Yes

No

To some extent

8. Which one of the four following communication skills (LSRW) do you find the most difficult to teach?

a) Listening b) Speaking c) Reading d) Writing

9. Which language do you use the most while teaching English?
a) English b) Urdu/Kashmiri d) Combination of English/ Urdu etc.

10. Do you, as a teacher of English, face any difficulties in teaching English to young children?

a) Yes

b) No

c) To some extent

11. Which of the Methods do you use for teaching English?

a) Direct Method b) Bilingual/G .T Method c) CLT

d) Eclectic Method e) Any other

Yes

No

20. Do you get any in-service training for teaching English to children?

Yes

No

Not adequately

21. Do you feel the need for teacher-training/ refresher courses or workshops for the teachers of English at the primary level?

Yes

No

22. Are you satisfied with the present system of examination/evaluation at the primary level?

Yes

No

To some extent

23. How, in your opinion, can we really improve the teaching and learning of English at the primary level?

By:- a) Infrastructure development b) Improving teaching materials c) Teacher training d) Use of better Methods e) Active learner participation f) Improving the evaluation sys. g) By following all these and other initiatives

Students' Questionnaire

Part-I

- i. Name:.....
- ii. Address:.....
- iii. Present place of Study:.....
- iv. Age:.....
- v. Class:.....
- vi. Gender:.....
- vii. Name of the School:.....
- viii. Contact No:
- ix. Your School:.....

Govt. School	Private School	Missionary School
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- x. Your favourite Subject in school
- xi. Occupation of Mother:

Part-II

1. Do you learn English outside your school?

Yes No

2. Educational Qualifications of your parents:

	Uneducated	Up to 8 th	Up to 10 th	Up to 12 th	Gradation	P.G etc.
Father						
Mother						

3. Occupation of Father/Guardian:

	Skilled labourer	Unskilled labourer	Businessman	employee
Father/Guardian				

4. You speak English to:

	Not at all	A little	Most of the Time
Teachers			
Friends			
Family Members			
Others			

5. Do you listen to, speak, write and read English?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Listen				
Speak				
Write				
Read				

6. Which one of the four skills do you like the most?

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| a) Listening | c) Speaking |
| b) Reading | d) Writing |

7. Your teacher teaches you English using mostly?

English	Urdu/Kashmiri	Combination of English/Urdu/Kashmiri
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8. For what purpose do you want to learn English?

- e) Passing Exams b) Social Prestige c) Job Security
d) Higher Education e) For any other reasons

9. Do you face difficulties in learning English?

- Yes No To some extent

10. What is the level of your proficiency in English Language?

Above Average	Average	Below Average
---------------	---------	---------------

11. Which skill do you need to improve the most?

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
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12. How do you feel about your General English class, is it?

Boring	Interesting	Tolerable	Intolerable
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13. What medium would you like to have during your English class?

- a) Only English
b) English/Urdu
c) English/Urdu & Kashmiri

14. If you are given the choice to study or not to study English, what would you like to do?

- a) Would definitely take it
b) Would not take it
c) Do not know whether I would take it or not