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# Bridging the English Language Divide and Building Self-Confidence In Marginalized Communities: An Exploratory Study in Tamil Nadu, India

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BRIDGING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIVIDE AND BUILDING SELF-  
CONFIDENCE IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY  
IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Educational Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership

San José State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

Radha Aravamudhan

May 2019

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CONFIDENCE IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY  
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by

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## ABSTRACT

### BRIDGING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DIVIDE AND BUILDING SELF-CONFIDENCE IN MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY IN TAMIL NADU, INDIA

by Radha Aravamudhan

The purpose of this study was to critically evaluate the implementation of a community based English program in villages in Tamil Nadu, India and examine their model from the perceptions of students, parents, teachers, program tutors, trainers and administrators. The study using visual qualitative research methods describes the experiences of various stakeholders in the program. The data for the study was collected in video format through in-person interviews and site observations and edited to produce the documentary film “I Can!” Findings demonstrated that an asset based approach utilizing strengths in the community, culturally responsive teaching practices and a positive teacher student relationship based on empathy and care had a positive impact on student self-confidence, academic engagement and upward social mobility. The findings also indicated that the asset based approach enabled women tutors in the program to build self-confidence and social capital. Future research areas are described to extend the knowledge gained through this study to other marginalized populations across the world.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

The Indian society deeply entrenched in the caste system for years, has created an educational deficit for the marginalized populations such as Dalit and tribal students. Post-independence, many educational reforms were brought in with the hope of reducing inequities and achieving social justice on scale. There has been tremendous improvement in access to education in the past few decades. As per the most recent status of education report (ASER, 2018) more than 96% of the children across India are in schools. But caste identity continues to determine school access and contributes to academic performance (Rawal and Kingdon, 2010). The percentage of Dalit and tribal students pursuing higher education has been minimal and as several independent studies have shown many of the students also struggle academically (ASER, 2016; Chauhan, 2008). A critical determining factor for pursuing higher education in India is the proficiency in English language. Although schooling can be done in the native language, all higher educational institutions use English for instruction. Dalit and tribal students who predominantly attend the public schools lack English language skills and are placed at a disadvantage. Poverty, discrimination by teachers and lack of quality teaching further contribute to the lower educational attainment of the Dalit students in public schools. Dalit children are also dissuaded (if not prevented) from using common services within the schools (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008; Vasavi, 2003). With the rise in importance of English, the social divide between lower castes especially the Dalits and other upper caste students has further widened. The voices of these students and community need to be heard to understand the challenges faced by the students in the classroom and society, gain a better understanding

of the support and resources required for the students to be confident and academically engaged. As Ladson-Billings (2006) argues, it is critical for the society and educators in particular to understand the complexities of the issues in order to bring about equity in education. This research study is an attempt to get an in depth understanding of the issues and gather perspectives on how marginalized students can be supported better.

### **Importance of the English Language**

English has achieved the status of a true global language spoken by many people across the world. The language is internationally recognized in politics, academia, technology and industry. It serves as a link language among nations allowing global mobility for worldwide opportunities for education and employment. The importance of the English language cannot be overlooked in today's society since it is the language most commonly taught as a second or foreign language in many countries. With the language skills, comes a range of opportunities that benefit personal and professional growth (Graddol, 2010). In countries like India where English language has been present since the colonial times, it is also seen as a prestigious language spoken by the privileged classes. Graddol (2010) describes the role of English as the language symbolic of a better life. English as the primary language of higher education, business and professional classes, has established itself as a symbol of people's aspirations for quality education and a means to be recognized as members of the globalized society (Gibb, 2012; Pickering & Gunashekar, 2015, p.69; Yakkundimath, 2003).

## **Rise of the English Language in India**

Opening the doors of the Indian economy to the outside world in the 90s, was perceived to open up opportunities especially for people in middle classes (Kaur, 2017). Graddol (2010) points to an argument by Mukherjee that since the traditional elite, those from higher castes and middle class have moved into more specialized higher education and lucrative jobs, their positions have now opened up opportunities for English speaking lower-caste workers. And this has led to a significant increase in parental aspirations from across social classes for their children to be well versed in the language as a means of upward social mobility (Graddol, 2010).

## **The English Language Social Divide**

Scrase points out that the middle classes see proficiency in the English language as a “form of cultural capital that would secure their middle class status” (as cited in Mooij, 2008), have migrated to private English-medium schools. There is a strong belief that English will offer better employment opportunities and hence better lives. English is now seen as the new class marker. Many middle-class parents are investing their hard-earned money in private English-medium schooling for a better future, social and economic success. ASER study (Banerjee et al., 2016) findings indicate that between 2006 and 2014, private school enrollment increased steadily from 18.7% to 30.8%. Rural parents whose budget could be stretched to accommodate private school tuition for their children opted to send their children to private schools. Private English-medium schools rose exponentially with the fees ranging anywhere from a monthly fee of a few hundred rupees a month (\$2-\$12) to six figures. Ramani (2015) points out that the number of



children enrolled in English-medium schools from Grades 1 to 8 increased by 274% in the years 2003 and 2010. But the quality of education in rural private schools was found to be no better than those in the government schools A survey PROBE (1999) reports that:

English-medium instruction is a big selling point of private schools. ... But here again, there is a great deal of variation in the credibility of English instruction, with teachers themselves knowing little more than a few sentences in English in some unrecognised schools. Most parents, alas, cannot tell the difference (p.104).

**First generation learners.** The migration by parents to private schools has left the government schools to a large extent populated by first generation learners, often from very poor economic backgrounds and for whom education serves as the only hope to break generational poverty. Their entire learning depends on their school. But multiple factors in the Indian schooling system and society contribute to their low proficiency in language.

**Factors impacting English proficiency.** The first factor is the proficiency and attitudes of teachers. Teacher proficiency in English language varies across the types of schools with those from the government schools being the least proficient (National Council of Educational Research and Training , 2005), further limiting the skills taught in classrooms. A study on the English speaking skills of primary school teachers, carried out by British Council in 2009 on the directive of the Tamil Nadu government showed that they had very low proficiency in the language (Graddol, 2010). Second, the teachers in government schools focus on the “library language” skills of reading and writing, with little attention to spoken fluency and have an “exam-oriented” approach to both curriculum and classroom activities (Ramanathan, 2008; Vijayalakshmi & Babu, 2014).

Third, the children from these schools also have very limited or no exposure to the language. They are at a disadvantage compared to students in middle and upper class urban settings who live in English speaking families and are immersed in the language in their communities too. Pearson (2007) points out that exposure to the language at an early age helps proficiency in the language. Fourth, as Dyer et. al. (2004) elaborate, teachers often have a strong *deficit thinking* about the children and adults from lower castes and believe that the communities have lower intellect and lack skills. Their beliefs and attitudes are shaped by their own experiences and social backgrounds. Especially with English being regarded as the language spoken by the elites and upper castes, the strong *deficit thinking* further emphasizes the lack of ability among these communities. And that manifests itself as a lack confidence among students and adults in these communities to speak or read the language, inhibiting their ability to learn the language (Boonchum, 2009). The emphasis on learning to acquire information and score high on examinations coupled with the societal pressure to be skilled in English erodes student confidence.

### **The Study**

**Significance.** English language has gained importance globally in all professional fields and also serves as the global *lingua franca*. The growing popularity of English has led to students across the world learning the language in schools. The extensive use of English as a language in administration, public discourse, higher education, and the workforce has conferred the status of a prestigious language and is key to upward mobility in the Indian society. Millions of Indians in the villages who do not have the language skills are denied the opportunities in life they deserve. A news article cites

statistics from the 2014 report from the Centre for Research and Debates in Development Policy in India (Bhatia, 2017). The report found that those who were fluent in English earned 34% more than those who were not. The report also brought out some alarming statistics - only 4% of the population that speaks English is fluent in the language. Given that the language has emerged as a determinant of social status and income, the minority 4% of the population thus gain elitist status. The language has become a class marker internalizing oppression by introducing another layer of social hierarchy into a society already struggling to break through the caste and class divisions. Bridging the divide is no easy task because of the failures of India's educational system in government schools. A lack of exposure to the language, few opportunities to practice speaking skills and a lack of confidence among both the teachers and students all further add to the challenges.

**Purpose.** The ability to read and speak in English remains the biggest dividing factor between the rich and the poor in India. Children from rural marginalized communities lack English reading and speaking skills and that affects their self-confidence and self-esteem, limits their opportunities and prevents them from achieving their full potential. The main purpose of this exploratory case study is to use a video documentary film format to investigate the introduction, implementation and impact of a community based after-school English program namely Eureka Walk 'n Talk (EW'nT) in villages in Tamil Nadu, India.

***Eureka Walk 'n' Talk program.*** A non-profit organization Aid India ([www.aidindia.in](http://www.aidindia.in)) implements the EW'nT Program in two of their own rural schools (Eureka schools), in a few rural public schools where the school administration is willing

to support the implementation and in thousand villages as an after-school program. The program aims to improve children's confidence and competence in English. In the after-school program in each village, a locally appointed and trained tutor (usually a woman) conducts daily classes for children from grades 3-8. To encourage children to speak more and help them lose their inhibition, the EW'nT program is designed to build confidence of children with a lot of community participation. Children practice their English skills by interacting with their parents, elders and others in the community. The children are encouraged to 'teach' their parents and other elders in the village sentences and conversations they learned in their EW'nT class. This not only ensures regular practice but also builds their confidence. Weekly role-plays and events held in the community give them an opportunity to lose their fear of English and enjoy showcasing their skills. The entire community contributes to the children's learning. The program also encourages peer-learning where the teachers act as facilitators and the children support each other's learning. Every small step is celebrated to help children achieve greater success. The Eureka skill fest is an event held in each village to showcase what children have learned that academic quarter.

***Video documentary approach.*** The documentary film approach was chosen for this study to provide a visual perspective of the experiences as narrated by the stakeholders and also a visual of the program elements and its impact on the children, teachers and the community. The research findings through the video documentary have the potential for a large outreach via social media, internet, conferences and other forums, and can reach a wider and diverse audience (Friend & Militello, 2015). Using documentary film as a

research approach also provides a platform for sharing the voices of the participants (Friend & Caruthers, 2016; Friend & Militello, 2015).

**Implications of the study.** This study is important in light of the increasing demand for English language and the widening social divide caused by the language in India. The study, through the understanding of a community-based engagement model provides insights into approaches and supports that can be provided for student motivation and engagement to learn English. The research findings can be utilized to guide better practices and could be adopted by the school districts across the state and the country. The study provides a platform for voices of seldom heard students and community members to be heard, allowing for dialog and guiding better practices that can benefit them. The perspectives of the participants would hopefully guide teachers and educators to understand their impact on the students and trigger changes in their attitudes, beliefs and teaching approach especially for Dalit children. Since English as Second Language (ESL) teaching and learning are subjects of interest in the United States and across the world, the findings from the study can potentially be used to inform global practices.

### **Gaps in Existing Knowledge**

Many studies have added to the knowledge base of factors affecting English language proficiency and academic achievement of students in Indian rural public schools. There is also existing knowledge on the effects of teacher attitudes and behavior. There is minimal research in India that addresses marginalized student and parent perspectives on learning. The gaps in existing knowledge show a need for research that understand how these students can be supported in their learning in a way that leads to

their engagement in classroom and increases their self- confidence. Studies on successful models that build confidence in English language skills in the Indian contexts where teachers themselves lack confidence in the language are also minimal. This exploratory study is an attempt to close this gap in literature and inform practice. The study investigates the experiences of stakeholders in a community based program intervention that promotes competence and confidence in speaking English among rural marginalized populations.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions that guided the study are:

- How has the program impacted student self-confidence and social status?
- How do culturally responsive teaching practices affect self-confidence and student engagement in the classroom?
- How does the student relationship with caring tutors impact their academic engagement?
- How has the program helped women tutors navigate through social and cultural barriers?

### **Definition of Terms**

Dalit– A term used to refer to communities from the lowest social strata in the Hindu caste system.

EFL- English as Foreign Language refers to non-native speakers of English learning English as a language in a culture where English is not the native language.

Government schools – Public schools that are state-run.

District - Administrative division of an Indian state.

Tamil Nadu- One of the 29 states in India. The state is located in India's southern region.

Tamil – Language spoken by *Tamils*, the native inhabitants of Tamil Nadu.

### **Methods Used in the Study**

I conducted the qualitative study using documentary film as the research methodology. The data for the study was collected through interviews of students, parents, school teachers, program tutors, program implementers and community members. Interviewing the participants helped me understand the challenges faced by the students in the government school settings and their perspectives on the impact of the program on their lives. During my very first visit, the interviews helped me build ideas about the issues and challenges in schools and also gather perspectives on what the participants consider positive learning experiences. Building trust was a critical component of conducting this research. Having the confidence and support of well-respected community members helped me gain trust with the participants and the use of the local language further enabled building rapport with them. My study aimed to understand what the students perceived as interesting elements in the program that supported them to be confident, academically motivated and engaged. The study also uncovered the resources and strengths in the community that supported not just the students but also the young women tutors in the villages to break through the cultural and social barriers. Although I had a set of questions for the interviews, each personal interview helped me modify the interview questions in order to gain an in depth knowledge of the participant responses.

The study was conducted in eleven villages in Tamil Nadu, India namely Manjampadi, Sembakkam, Koovathur, Lakshmapuram, Mangapuram, Mathur, Serukkanur, Amrithapuram, Nehru Nagar, Periyar Nagar, Parameshwaramangalam and one semi-urban area Maduvankarai. The participants in this study were students enrolled in EW'nT program, parents, school teachers, community members, program tutors, trainers and leadership.

### **Summary**

The Indian caste system over the years has deprived marginalized communities of strong educational opportunities. Many educational reforms targeted at reducing inequities have been able to make improvements in access to education but not so much in school performance (Rawal and Kingdon, 2010). Dalit students struggle academically and the percentage of students pursuing higher education is very low (ASER, 2016; Chauhan, 2008). Poverty, discrimination by teachers and lack of quality teaching contribute to the lower educational attainment of the Dalit students in government schools. Proficiency in the English language has further put the students at a disadvantage since the government schools use the native language as a medium of instruction while higher education institutions use English for instruction. The rising importance of English for professional advancement has thus left many of the Dalit students behind. English language has become the new class marker and the social divide between Dalit and other upper caste students has further widened. It is important to understand the challenges faced by the students and communities and develop support and services for them to bring about equity in education (Ladson-Billings, 2006). This research study is an attempt



to get an in depth understanding of the issues and gather perspectives on how students from the lower castes and poor economic backgrounds can be supported better.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The purpose of this review is to explore literature related to the role of English language in social mobility and its impact on education of marginalized groups in India. The chapter will be divided into four sections. Section one will provide a review of all the existing literature on history related to English language learning in India and the current role of English language in the society and in education. The second section will examine the impact of English language in the types of schooling in India, the third section will focus on review of some of the challenges faced by English language learners in public schools and in its impact on the students, and the fourth section will examine a review of literature that is related to community cultural wealth and culturally responsive pedagogy to provide a framework for the study.

The review of the literature identified gaps that will be explored through the current study. Studies based on EFL teaching experiences and observations (Annamalai, 2005; Jana, 2009) and some aspects of English learning in India such as home learning environment and communicative competence (Kalia & Reese, 2009; Verma, 2008) exist, but there is a dearth of studies bringing out the major stakeholder voices of the students and parents which need to be heard for effective curriculum, instruction and learning outcomes. Studies on successful models that build confidence in English language skills in the Indian contexts, where teachers themselves lack confidence in the language, are also clearly missing. This exploratory study investigates the experiences of stakeholders in a community based program intervention that promotes competence and confidence in speaking English among rural Indian marginalized populations.

## **Historical Background**

English language was first introduced to India by the East India Company in 1600. At the beginning, the British tried to learn Indian languages to conduct trade with India and other countries but as they began to gain power, English language gained prominence. By the mid-1800s, the Indian elite and middle classes viewed the language as a necessity for upward social mobility and better jobs. Lord Macaulay from the East India Company used this as an opportunity to create a dominance of the British culture and to find trained Indians to fit the employment requirements (Vijayalakshmi & Babu, 2014).

The British, in a quest for creating a class of people that thought and acted like them, identified the higher caste Indians and used them as mediators who helped them with the administration (Annamalai, 2005). The linguistic divide perpetuated by the British during the colonial rule further widened the gap among the social classes. Schooling was also affected by the use of English. Although elementary schools were in the regional language, establishment of high schools and universities required the knowledge of English (Vijayalakshmi & Babu, 2014).

At the time of independence from the British in 1947, given the multi linguistic nature of the country, choosing an official national language proved to be very tricky. The choice of language in schools and educational institutions in multi-linguistic nations like India has been a constant struggle for policymakers. In 1950, the constitution declared English as the associate language, and gave Hindi language special status as national language, to be declared as official language after fifteen years in 1965. In an effort to provide facilities for teaching a minority language, the federal government in

consultation with the states also introduced the three language formula in schools in 1968 (Annamalai, 2005). The formula included:

- The regional language
- The official language or the associate official language
- A modern Indian or foreign language not covered under (1) and(2) and other than that used as medium of instruction.

This was strongly criticized by the southern states especially Tamil Nadu. Many of the eminent leaders from Tamil Nadu vociferously and vehemently opposed the use of Hindi in their state. Anti-Hindi riots in the state of Tamil Nadu led to the removal of Hindi and a modified version of the three-language formula was introduced. Hindi was removed from all schools and the two language formula of regional language and English was introduced. English was considered a neutral link language and hence retained in the Tamil Nadu curriculum (Kavitha, 2009).

**Caste and social inequity.** Historically, India has been a predominantly Hindu nation. The Hindu stratification system dominates the Indian society and is characterized by the classification of the society into castes based on an individual's birth. The social hierarchy has four castes and two groups that are lowest in the hierarchy, "Dalits and advisais (tribals) are left out even from this hierarchy" (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008, p. 246). The low status given to the Dalits has been attributed to their occupations that are considered menial by the upper castes. The upper caste Hindus avoid any kind of contact with the Dalits and exclude them from social activities as well (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008). The Indian constitution considers untouchability illegal but it is continued to be practiced

especially in rural India. Desai and Kulkarni (2008) based on their fieldwork describe how this exclusion leads to discrimination in many fields.

**Education and caste.** The Indian society is a complex mix of castes that mirrors the disparities across socio-economic and educational spheres. The government of India over the last few decades has been striving to reduce the disparities with education being a very important tool used to reduce the inequity. Introduction of free schooling, free meals and scholarships are some of the measures that have been established to support the lower most castes.

***Caste discrimination in schools.*** Inequalities in educational attainment across castes is significant (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008). Poverty, discrimination by teachers and student peers are some of the factors that contribute to educational attainment or lack thereof. In the rural context, Dalits are predominantly poor and landless laborers. Discrimination on Dalit children is carried out through a wide range of factors (Jeffrey, Jeffery, & Jeffery, 2004). The location of a school in a village, for example, sends out a clear message about who gets included in local institutions of formal education. Villages are generally structured on caste and community lines. Dalits are usually located in ‘colonies’ which are at some distance from the upper caste habitations called the ‘BC areas.’ Children from these communities have to walk a long distance to the schools which are usually located in the upper-caste regions of the village. This acts as a disincentive for communities which are oppressed socially in the village setting (Nambissan, 1996). Once in school, Dalit children often are made to sit separately from upper caste children and treated as polluting (a carryover from social relations outside of the school and

predominantly upper caste teachers' beliefs and classroom practices). Dalit children are dissuaded (if not prevented) from using common services within the schools (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008; Vasavi, 2003).

***Caste and educational opportunity.*** As part of the reforms, affirmative action in form of the reservation system that reserves seats for the most marginalized in higher education and government jobs was also instituted (Chauhan, 2008) with the hope of reducing inequities and achieving social justice initiatives. Following protests from other lower castes besides Dalits, the scope of affirmative action was increased to include them as well. The upper caste Hindus united in their dissent argued that the action benefitted the more economically stronger sections of the lower caste communities rather than the ones that have been historically discriminated against. On the other hand, Dalits have critiqued the action, indicating that the policies have been poorly implemented and have minimal effect (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008, p. 253). Increased access to schools has encouraged lower income Dalits to now develop high educational aspirations for their children and dream of a better and more economically stable future but they also share the educational expansion along with other economically disadvantaged upper castes (Desai & Kulkarni, 2008).

Researchers have found evidence that caste plays a very significant role, both in access to education and school performance (Rawal and Kingdon, 2010). Students from the lowermost castes especially from public schools struggle academically and the number of such students enrolling in colleges for higher education has declined over the years (Chauhan, 2008). A study by Bertrand, Hanna, and Mullainathan (2010) also

indicated that the lower caste students who benefit from the reservation system are the ones that are not from low-income families.

***Caste and gender discrimination.*** In the Indian patriarchal context, social norms emphasize submission of girls to male authority and acceptance of gender inequality. Schools reinforce these norms in many different ways. School textbooks depict women as inferior and in stereotypical roles (Manjrekar, 2003). Teachers in the schools reinforce gender and caste discrimination through their attitudes and behaviors (Manjrekar, 2003). For instance, in many rural Indian schools, Dalit girls are responsible for cleaning up the premises. Male teachers are also known to adopt an authoritarian style of teaching. These behaviors vary based on the background of the teachers and students and cannot be examined in isolation without looking at class and caste.

### **Demand for English Language in Education**

**Personal growth.** Today, English is considered one of the most important languages in India. The language, a legacy from the British colonial period has trickled through important parts of the Indian society, the government, legal and school systems. The language is used not for communicating outside the country, but has become an official mode of communication within and outside linguistically diverse states in India. English is the language of communication in many legal, financial, business and higher educational institutions. It is also seen as a tool of decolonization that can be used by disadvantaged communities to access global economy (Vaish, 2005). English proficiency is seen as a much needed requirement for upward social and economic mobility and the knowledge of the language affects both personal and professional advancement. Graddol

(2010) makes an interesting observation on the role of English language as a language of prestige and power. He describes the language to be an emergent powerful agent for change in India and a way out of poverty and oppression:

Throughout India, there is an extraordinary belief amongst all castes and classes, in both rural and urban areas, in the transformative power of English. English is seen not just as a useful skill, but as a symbol of a better life, a pathway out of poverty and oppression (p.124).

English in the Indian society has grown to symbolize a strong education, higher social status and intellect (Aggarwal, 1988). In the recent times, rural communities have begun to see English language skills as critical for success based on the middle class and upper caste values (Annamalai, 2005). English is no longer viewed as a symbol of oppression but a language that would offer means to break the shackles of poverty and a path to upward social mobility (Annamalai, 2005; Verma, 2008). English language is also seen now as a key to Dalit emancipation as “it not only allows upward social mobility but also an escape from the traditional caste encoding embedded in the regional languages” (Graddol, 2010, p.65).

**Professional growth.** The perception that an education in English schools is the gateway to social and professional success is very marked in the Indian society (Yakkundimath, 2003). The use of English is deeply embedded in higher education, business and professions. These white collar jobs that provide secure employment and benefits require proficiency in English language. This is corroborated by studies that have shown that the ability to read and speak English offers an advantageous position with regard to white-collar jobs or positions that are prestigious (Chakraborty & Bhakshi, 2016). Another study by Azam, Chin and Prakash (2013) provides evidence that the



hourly wages are at least 34% higher for proficient male English speakers and 22% higher for women who are fluent in English.

### **Impact of the English Language on Indian Education System**

“Different types of schooling opportunities are accessible to different sections of the population” (PROBE, 1999, p. 50). Schools that cater to Dalit children are much less well-resourced and well-managed compared to the schools catering to the privileged upper castes. The government, in order to improve access to schooling introduced neighborhood schools in each village. Rawal & Kingdon (2010) cite that schools end up being segregated by caste as the villages themselves are segregated along caste lines. The smaller sized schools unable to justify the investment in infrastructure and basic facilities, result in lower quality schools with fewer teachers reinforcing caste based divisions and affecting achievement.

English has been retained as the medium of instruction in tertiary education accompanying the phenomenon of globalization, and India emerging as an industrial economy (Annamalai, 2005). The last two decades has thus seen a growth in private schools both in the rural and urban areas that cater to parents seeking an education in English language for their children that allows them a smooth transition into higher education and better job prospects.

**Growth of private schools.** Though the language of instruction in schools was in the regional language, professional courses and tertiary education continued to be in English (Annamalai, 2005). Gibb (2012) cites several studies that show parental preference of English-medium schools over regional-medium schools anchored in the belief that the

language offers a gateway to social and professional success. Private English-medium schools saw an exponential rise in many parts of the country. Kalia & Reese (2009) elucidate that private schools catered to the growing middle class which recognized the need for English language skills for professional growth. The rural communities who modeled after the middle-class also saw English as a language that would help them break through generational poverty and oppression (Annamalai, 2005; Sujatha Rani, 2017). But the growth of private schools resulted in compounding the gender and class differences. Families who could make room in their budget to send their children to private schools, often send girls to the government schools and boys to better quality private schools where English is the medium of instruction (Vasavi, 2003).

**Public schools.** The state government of Tamil Nadu, in an effort to increase enrollment, has put forth many incentives based initiatives that provide all elementary school children with free textbooks, meals and uniforms. The past decade saw a steep increase in school enrollments with the state almost at 100% (ASER, 2017) but the quality in the schools has declined over the years leading to an increase in private school enrollment (Banerjee et al., 2016). The state government recognizing the need for English schools introduced English as a medium of instruction as one of the plausible solutions to strengthen the government school system. Despite the prioritization of English medium by the state governments, the exodus from the government schools could not be curbed as expected. Though English plays a pivotal role in the country's economy and people's professional advancement, state-run Indian schools lag in equipping their learners with the level of English proficiency required for higher education (Annamalai, 2005) or

employment. Lack of facilities, quality teachers (Grover & Singh, 2002) and teachers' inefficiency at communicating in English (Annamalai, 2005) are some factors that contribute to the inefficiency.

### **Challenges in Learning English as a Foreign Language**

Challenges encountered by students in acquiring English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is not a phenomenon confined just to India. Akeredolu-Ale (2007) cites poor learning conditions, teacher quality, and low socio-economic status of students as some of the reasons for low English proficiency among students. Similarly, implementation of English language policies in Namibian schools was also met with challenges. Teachers having been schooled in their native Bantu language were themselves not proficient or confident in the language, parents were uneducated to offer support, and thus children lacked exposure to the language. Education in the native tongue was considered inferior because of the second rate apartheid education received and English was considered a superior language of modernization and development (Ola-Busari, 2014). There are several other studies from across the globe where challenges in EFL are found to be similar (Cheng, 2004; Fareh, 2010; Goss, 1999). This section discusses some of the common challenges faced in teaching and learning English as a foreign language in the Indian public schools.

**Teacher quality in public schools.** An important and determining factor in English language acquisition in India is the presence of teachers who are non-native speakers of English, who themselves lack English proficiency (Christ & Makarani, 2009; Grover & Singh, 2002). National Council of Educational Research and Training (2005) reports that

proficiency in English language for government school teachers is the lowest compared other private schools. A qualitative study of state-run elementary schools in Tamil Nadu found that although teachers in the government schools could read and write in English, they lacked spoken English proficiency (Grover & Singh, 2002). Teachers who are themselves products of the flawed public education system lack exposure to the language and have very low confidence in their language abilities. Teachers' lack of confidence in speaking English prevents them from modelling or encouraging English speaking in classrooms. Their lack of proficiency in English also limits students' opportunity for learning by being unable to communicate with them in the language (Annamalai, 2005). Thus, even though teachers believe in building confidence in children, encouraging them to speak in English building familiarity with the language (Anderson & Narayanan, 2012), they are constrained by their own lack of confidence and skill levels (Pickering & Gunashekar, 2015, p.139).

**Teacher student relationships.** While government school reforms have increased access to schools to Dalit and tribal children, most teachers in these schools are from higher castes and class. Their beliefs and attitudes are shaped by their own experiences and social backgrounds. The teachers are insensitive to the needs of the lower caste children and verbally abuse them (Vasavi, 2003). Dalit children are seated separately in the classrooms and during lunch, they are made to perform menial tasks within the school and are labelled with caste-based names (Vasavi, 2003). The teachers and education officials use the 'rhetoric of poverty' and blame parents for the poor academic performance of children (Vasavi, 2003). They also consider children from these

communities to have lower intellect and lack learning skills. The strong deficit thinking and perception that English language is a language of prestige and power spoken by the elites and upper castes, leads students and communities to fear the language. The fear manifests itself as a lack of confidence among students and adults in these communities further inhibiting their ability to learn the language (Boonchum, 2009).

**Classroom practices.** Teachers in government schools focus on the “library language” skills of reading and writing, with little attention to spoken fluency and have an “exam-oriented” approach to both curriculum and classroom activities (Ramanathan, 2008). The teachers paraphrase text from the book, teach grammar and reinforce through practice drills (Sujatha Rani, 2017). As Sujatha Rani (2017) points out, the goal of teachers is to prepare students for the English assessments and exams and not to make them competent in the use of language. Students thus barely understand or speak more than a few words in English after several years of language study. Second, students lack the opportunities to practice communicating in English. As they grow up, they never encounter a non-judgmental and safe English speaking opportunity. This results in them believing that speaking English is very difficult and beyond their capabilities. This disadvantage affects them throughout their education and also limits their opportunities when they seek employment.

**Socio-economic status.** An important factor as indicated by many research studies is socio-economic status (SES) as a strong predictor of success in second-language learning (Skehan, 1986). Pearson (2007) also points out that language acquisition for second-language learners is dependent on the support from family and the community in terms of

reading resources, exposure to the language through background media like newspapers, television, movies etc. A study by British Council also found that students who were confident of their English speaking skills attributed it to social and cultural factors like watching English movies, listening to English music, communicating in English with others. Majority of children from the rural marginalized communities are first generation learners from low SES families. Their parents do not speak or understand English and their exposure through media to the English language is also minimal (Verma, 2008) adding to the challenges in acquiring the language skills.

### **Impact on Students in Public Schools**

Children and adults from the Dalit and other marginalized communities, while motivated to learn, fear the language since it is considered to be the language of the upper and middle class (Annamalai, 2005, p.26; Kavitha, 2009; Verma, 2008). This is corroborated by a study of 120 first year engineering students from low SES and Dalit families in Tamil Nadu that clearly showed that English was perceived to be a difficult language causing a lack of confidence among the students to learn the language (Kavitha, 2009).

The findings are also echoed in a study of Indian university students by Verma (2008) which indicated that that the classroom environment and teachers' attitudes toward English shaped the students' perceptions of the English language and influenced their attitudes toward the language.

**Self-confidence.** Language achievement is considered a function of both aptitude and motivation (Clement, Gardner, & Smythe, 1977). The study by Clement, Gardner and

Smythe (1977) provided evidence that self-confidence was strongly linked to lack of anxiety while speaking English and contributed more to the competence in second language when compared to integrated motive (Integrative motive as defined by Gardner (2007) is the genuine motivation and interest to learn a language). In India, given that the language is recognized as a source of social mobility and a better future, students are motivated to learn the language (Verma, 2008) but due to various factors described above lack confidence.

### **Community Strengths to Bridge the Language Divide**

Gay (2018) posits that culture influences our thinking and behavior and thus affects the way we teach and learn. Gay (2018) points to numerous studies that provide evidence that culture strongly influences teaching and learning and that utilizing the local culture and experiences facilitates students' academic success.

Jeffrey, Jeffery, & Jeffery (2005) elaborate that schooling and teacher attitudes and behavior can act to reinforce discrimination for children from marginalized and disempowered sections of society like the Dalits. Studies have shown that acknowledging the cultural wealth that communities possess, and utilizing it in teaching and learning is beneficial (Yosso, 2005). It is thus important to understand the strengths in the Dalit and other marginalized communities and utilize them to support students in their learning. This can lead to positive learning experiences and also increased academic engagement and achievement.

## **Community Cultural Wealth**

This study of the EW'nT community initiative will draw on Yosso's theory of community cultural wealth (CCW) that describes other forms of capital that should be valued within the society and in education. Yosso (2005) uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) in developing the framework for CCW. Although the framework is based on Latino and other minority communities in the United States, it is applicable to marginalized populations in India who have experienced oppression and subordination owing to their social status. Goodnight (2016) iterates that CRT is particularly helpful in bringing out the educational discrimination experienced by lower castes.

Yosso (2005) defines CRT in education as "a framework that challenges the ways race and racism impact educational structures, practices, and discourses. (p.74)" Yosso iterates that the five tenets of CRT identified by Solórzano & Villalpando (1998) must be used to inform educational practice and policy.

Yosso (2005) applies CRT tenets to the field of education to describe how deficit thinking blames students of color for their poor academic performance and emphasizes the importance of understanding the various forms of wealth in communities. CCW utilizes the knowledge present in communities as a focal point for education rather than using a deficit approach that blames the students for not succeeding. It recognizes and highlights many forms of capital that communities of color possess (Yosso, 2005).



She identifies six forms of capital that together form CCW as follows:

*Aspirational capital* - The ability to maintain hopes and dreams even in the face of perceived barriers. This can be seen in parent's aspirations for their children to dream of a future that seems beyond reach in their current circumstances.

*Linguistic capital* includes the skills both social and intellectual that people from the communities achieve through their communication experience and styles.

*Familial capital* is the commitment to the community that provides care, support and connections that minimize isolation.

*Social Capital* is the network of people and community resources that are instrumental in navigating through society's institutions.

*Navigational Capital* refers to the skills to manoeuvre through social institutions. It refers to the resilience developed to help individuals survive, learn and thrive through experiences.

*Resistant Capital* is grounded in the resistance to subordination experienced by these communities and maintaining attitudes that resist the status quo.

Educators through their understanding of the assets that students of diverse cultures bring in to the classrooms can completely transform schooling. CCW can effectively engage students in the classrooms using pedagogy that involves the use of culturally relevant curriculum and strong trusting teacher student relationships.

### **Culturally Responsive Pedagogy**

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) emphasizes creating learning environments that allow students to capitalize on their cultural knowledge and apply it to their learning

and academic success (Howard, 2012). The pedagogy values the rich cultural wealth that students bring to school and design teaching practices that utilize this wealth and nurture students' overall well-being (Howard, 2012). The pedagogy supports students in accepting their cultural identity, achieve academic success and critique social inequities (Ladison-Billings, 1995).

Gay (2018) recommends a pedagogy that teaches through personal and cultural strengths and prior accomplishments. Culturally responsive teaching recognizes the cultural heritages that affect students' attitude and approach to learning, incorporate multicultural resources and materials in all subjects, encourage students to acknowledge and feel pride in their own cultures. It acknowledges student strengths and builds on them rather than focusing on a deficit approach. The teaching practices recognize the need for collaborative learning that is reciprocal and interdependent (Gay, 2018).

Gay (2018) demonstrates the impact of culturally responsive teaching practices through an example of a bilingual Khmer program implemented for Cambodian English language learners in a school in California. The program used culturally relevant materials and instruction practices and had a significant impact on students' oral English proficiency tests. It also had other positive results such as students being proud of their cultural heritage, parents playing a more active role in their children's education.

Gay also asserts that culturally responsive practices are not confined to just instruction and curriculum. It informs teacher-student interaction, classroom and school climate, empowers students to be better human beings and successful learners, and is transformative and liberating (Gay, 2018). One of the main tenets of CRP is caring for

students. Caring for students is demonstrated in how teachers care for children “as students and as people,” in their attitudes, expectations and behaviors (Gay, 2018, p.99).

Scholars have defined two types of caring: *aesthetic caring* and *authentic caring*. Valenzuela (1999) in her book *Subtractive Schooling* based on an ethnographic study of Mexican American students in an inner-city school brings out the perspectives of the students on what they perceived caring to be. Valenzuela (1999) describes authentic caring as the sustained, trusting, respectful, reciprocal relationship between students and teachers that enables learning. Caring teachers focus on students’ strengths and potentialities, are involved in their student’s lives, have faith in their students’ capabilities and have high aspirations for them. Ladison-Billings (1995), in her study of successful teachers of African American students in an urban elementary school, also found that caring teachers listened to and respected their students, encouraged them to express themselves and were friendly to them in and outside of class. Gay (2018) asserts that caring teachers provide safe spaces where students feel recognized, respected and valued, they strongly believe in their students’ capabilities and facilitate their growth. This study focuses on the pedagogy and instruction used in the EW’nT community program and also the effects of caring relationships between the students and the tutors on student achievements and overall well-being.

## Summary

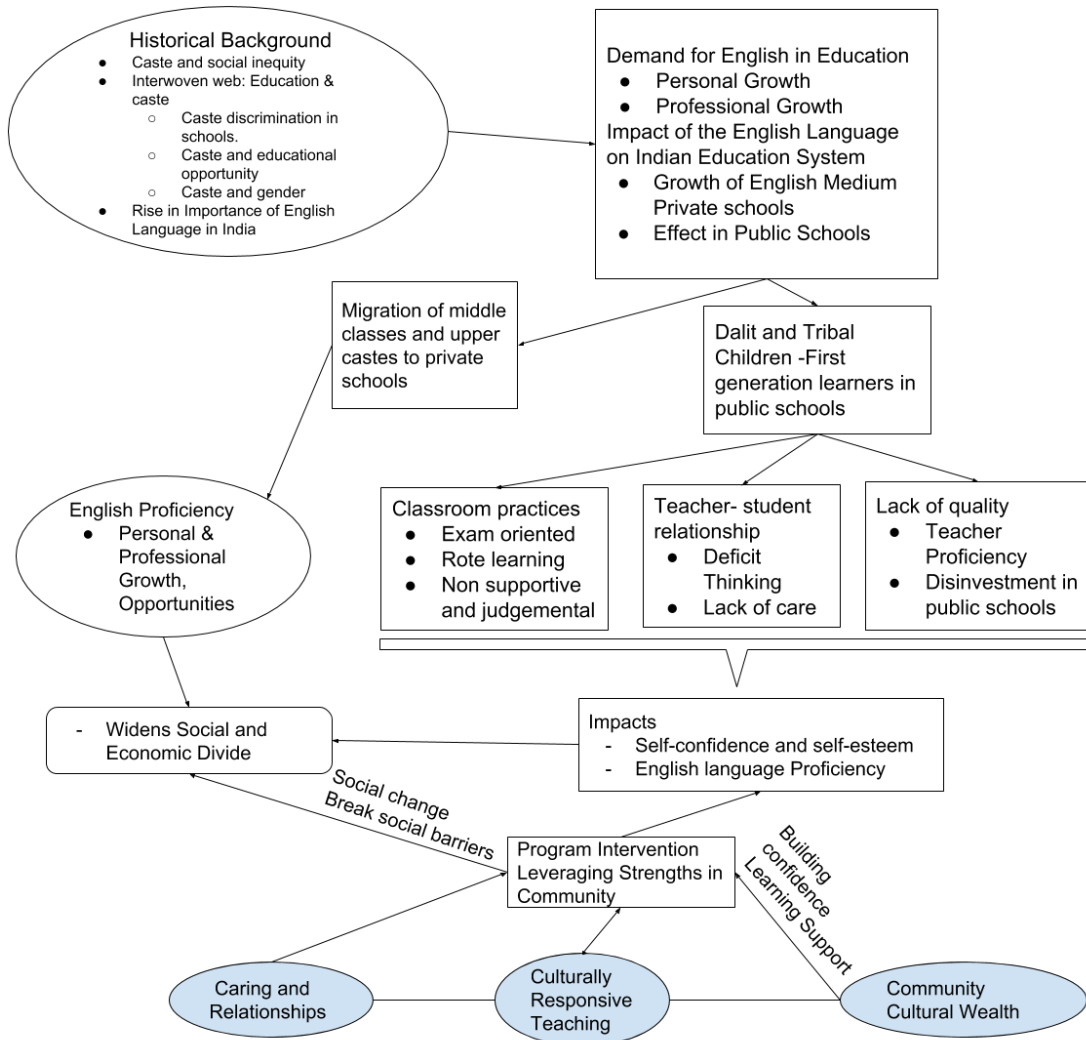


Figure 1. Literature review map.

The literature review highlighted the rising importance of the English language in India for both personal and professional growth. Studies also brought out ways in which caste discrimination in India has led to the exclusion of Dalit and other marginalized communities limiting their educational opportunities and widening the divide in the

society. The review also provided evidence on practices in the public school system that are detrimental to learning and impact the self-confidence of children from marginalized communities.

The review provided evidence that utilizing strengths in community and using a culturally responsive pedagogy has positive effects on children's learning. Teachers who provide authentic care build strong trusting relationships with their students. Such students are extremely motivated and engaged in their learning. This study captures the voices of marginalized students and their communities and describes their experiences with the use of culturally responsive teaching and authentic care by teachers in a community based English program.

### Chapter Three: Methods

The main purpose of this exploratory study is to use a video documentary film format to investigate the introduction, implementation and describe a community based English program namely EW'nT. The EW'nT program is designed to promote confidence and competence in English language skills among marginalized populations (Dalit and tribal) in the villages in Tamil Nadu, India. The research study focuses on identifying and describing experiences that students, program tutors and program field implementers have during the course of the program and how these experiences have shaped their self-confidence and social standing. The study, using a video documentary format, brought out the seldom heard voices of marginalized students, their parents and also the voices of the local field teams implementing the program.

The research questions in the voices of the participants that guided this study were:

- How has the program impacted student self-confidence and social status?
- How do culturally responsive teaching practices affect self-confidence and student engagement in the classroom?
- How does the student relationship with caring tutors impact their academic engagement?
- How has the program helped women tutors navigate through social and cultural barriers?

#### Case Selection

**Background.** As much as the English language unites educated Indians from different regions and cultural backgrounds and connects them with the rest of the world,

it excludes those who have not been part of the educational system that offers English education, especially the most marginalized Dalit and tribal children (Vulli, 2014). The rural government schools (where the medium of instruction is the regional language) to a large extent are populated by first generation learners, from Dalit and tribal communities who are from lower economic backgrounds (Nambissan, 2012; Vasavi, 2003). Multiple factors in the Indian schooling system and society contribute to their low proficiency in language. The caste hierarchy and social discrimination in these villages is still prevalent and the children from these communities are discriminated against by the upper caste teachers working in the public schools in which the students are enrolled in (Dyer et. al., 2004; Vasavi, 2003). The schools have an “exam-oriented” approach to both curriculum and classroom activities and also on the “library language” skills of reading and writing, with little attention to spoken fluency and comprehension (Ramanathan, 2008). Although there are many factors affecting second language learning, self-confidence and self-esteem are two affective factors considered critical to acquire the language skills (Zhu & Zhou, 2012).

The emphasis on learning to acquire information and score in examinations coupled with the societal pressure to be skilled in English erodes student confidence, affects their self-esteem and influences some aspects of satisfaction with self and society (Pak, Dion, & Dion, 1985). Students are insecure and feel inhibited while speaking a foreign language and are afraid of speaking with errors, and they feel shy and embarrassed to speak in public. Anxiety further adds to the fear and inhibition, preventing them from speaking (Melendez, Zavala, and Mendez , 2014). Leong & Ahmadi (2017), in their

review of a large body of research related to factors influencing learners' English speaking skill, also point out that learners with low self-esteem, higher anxiety, and low motivation have serious difficulties in learning the language. Strategies to improve students' self-confidence in speaking thus becomes important in EFL learning. Studies have shown that promoting confidence of students through encouragement and providing successful experiences can reduce anxiety (Dornyei, 2001).

I have observed that students and adults in villages in India lack the confidence to speak in English even though they have learned the language either at school or through spoken English tutorial centers. Their perception of their ability to learn the language further hinders their learning. I chose to look at the EW'nT program for my study since anecdotal evidence indicated that this community based initiative, in its first year of implementation, had shown significant success in building confidence and competence in the English language among the Dalit and tribal communities. I wanted to investigate more into the design and implementation of the program and the impact that it had on its stakeholders. Through the medium of a documentary film, my goal was to bring out the voices of seldom heard marginalized students, parents, tutors and other stakeholders and learn about their program experiences to understand effective practices for curriculum, instruction, teacher attitude and behavior.

**EW'nT program.** The EW'nT program chosen for the study is currently being implemented in villages in Tamil Nadu, India by a non-profit organization Aid India. The organization has a very strong focus on social justice and works diligently toward bringing visible social change in the Dalit and tribal communities. The program currently



serves approximately 25,000 children in grades 3-8: more than 65% of these students are from Dalit or tribal communities and the remaining from other lower castes. The program employs local village volunteers from the same community as tutors, the majority of whom are women. Many of the tutors are themselves college students or young adults who are committed to teaching and supporting students from their own community. The tutors are selected based on their interest to learn, commit to teaching children from their own community and not based on their educational qualifications.

EW'nT program emphasizes communicative competence that engages students in the functional use of the language for meaningful purposes. The emphasis is also more on the fluency rather than the accuracy of the language. The program motivates children and increases their self-confidence and belief in their own speaking abilities.

### **Stakeholder Insights**

During my first visit to the villages to conduct the research, I spoke with some of the program tutors, students and parents. The research questions evolved from my discussion and interviews with them. The students shared that having a tutor from their own community at the after-school learning center had slowly eroded their fear of the language and boosted their confidence to speak up in the classroom, seek help when needed and participate more actively in classroom activities. The students also expressed that they were able to relate more to the learning materials and activities in the program center when compared to their school textbooks. I also interviewed two young women tutors in the program. Both the tutors are college students and belong to the village where the program was being implemented. The tutors shared their own fear and lack of

confidence to speak in English and the impact the program had on their English speaking skills as well as their social standing within the community. One of the tutors shared that she always felt inferior and unwanted since she is a woman but being a tutor in the program had helped her gain confidence to speak in English in public thus raising her social status. She mentioned examples of how the community now viewed her through a different lens and respected her. The parents I interviewed expressed in detail the aspiration for their children and how English language played an important role in that. The parents and tutors also discussed the caste discrimination faced by them and their children within the village.

### **Documentary Film as a Research Methodology**

This study investigating the program and its impact uses documentary film as a visual qualitative research methodology. There are four reasons for my choice to produce a video documentary film for this research study. First, the documentary provided the participants with the opportunity to speak for themselves on camera sharing their experiences (Kemmitt, 2007). Dalit communities which are oppressed socially in the village setting can seldom voice their opinion and the video documentary provides a platform to have their voices heard. Second, documentaries can be utilized to bring to the forefront issues of social justice in education (Friend & Caruthers, 2016). The visual narrative of the program elements and stakeholder experiences provides opportunities to share new program practices and innovations in the preparation of educators and educational leaders (Friend & Militello, 2015). Third, the format was chosen to reach a wider, more diverse audience and for a larger outreach through social media, internet and

other forums (Friend & Militello, 2015). And finally, the documentary helped me as a researcher to use visual images as effective tools in a number of contexts within the research process. The visual images allowed for transparency of the research processes (Weber, 2008) and bring forth a visual narrative of “what happened rather than an imaginative interpretation of what might have happened” (Nichols, 2010, p.11).

**Documentary filming process.** The process of planning an investigation using documentary film as research incorporate traditional methods used in qualitative investigations to collect and analyze data (Friend & Caruthers, 2016). The documentary filming process involved all the essential elements of a qualitative investigation namely: 1) site selection – where to film, how to position the camera and microphone; 2) participant selection- who to film and obtaining consent using a consent form or media release form; 3) data collection - recording audio and video using equipment, designing protocols for interviews and observations during filming; 4) data analysis - reviewing and selecting video and audio clips during editing; 5) findings, discussion and recommendations-making meaning of the video clips and context by sequencing selected clips, adding other audio visual elements; and finally, 6) sharing results-disseminating the results through documentary film (Friend & Caruthers, 2016).

**Camera setup.** The filming of the interviews wherever possible was done outdoors in daylight for two reasons. First, because no external lighting was used to film and second to capture the local context on camera. Most of the video shots were taken with the camera pointed at the participant with the researcher filming from behind the camera. The camera was placed on a tripod in order to avoid unnecessary movement except in cases

where a larger area had to be spanned to show the local environment and context. The audio for the individual interviews were captured on a camera using a clip-on microphone. A shot gun microphone was used for observation of the classrooms, informal interactions and events.

***Framing the video shots.*** Manual focus on the camera was used to frame the shots. The shots were framed tight such that the interviewee's eyes were in the top one-third of the frame. Zooming in and out, variations in camera angles were used during classroom, event observations and community interactions to capture non-verbal expressions and emotions that helped convey the context as well as the real-life conditions.

***Participants in the documentary.*** The study was conducted in villages within 100 kilometers from the Tamil Nadu state's capital city Chennai. The study was carried out in three different settings: 1) after-school centers in villages, 2) Eureka school, an elementary school run by the organization Aid India and 3) public schools where the school administration is supportive of the organization's efforts and is implementing the program. Villages from three different districts (administrative division of an Indian state)--namely Kanchipuram, Thiruvallur and Vellore, and one semi-urban area in Chennai district-- were chosen for the study based on the demographics of the location and also the convenience of travel from the Chennai city center. The communities in the villages chosen for the study belong to economically disadvantaged lowest castes and are typical to the population served by the program.

***After-school centers.*** The participants for the study in the after-school centers in the villages were students enrolled in EW'nT program, parents, program tutors and trainers. I

invited all the field coordinators and master trainers and field trainers from the three districts in the program to participate in the study. Five of the program field coordinators who are each responsible for implementation of the program in twenty villages agreed to participate in the interviews. Six Eureka English field trainers who train the tutors in the villages and two master trainers who train these village trainers also agreed to be interviewed and were included as participants in the study.

As a first step in recruiting participants in the villages, I explained the purpose of the study and the documentary filming process to the tutors in the villages. In all of the villages, the local tutor described the study to the students and parents and requested them to participate in the interviews. Though many students came forward initially, once the interview process began, many of them felt shy and decided to drop out of the interview. In some villages, the students preferred to be interviewed in pairs. I interviewed students in village centers either individually or in pairs as was comfortable to the students. The tutors and the trainers in the program and parents of the children enrolled in the program who agreed to be interviewed were also chosen as participants. The interviews with the adults were conducted at the time and at a location convenient to them. The parents were interviewed at their work location or at their homes.

***Eureka school.*** The participants from Eureka school were three current students in grades 4 and 5 and a teacher. The principal of Eureka school arranged for an open session with students from grades 4 and 5 where I explained the purpose of my study and also the documentary filming process. Students were included as participants in the study after obtaining consent.

**Public school.** The principal of Eureka school suggested that interviewing recent graduates from Eureka school who are currently enrolled in the local middle school would also be useful in understanding experiences in the program and bring in a different perspective. The principal arranged a meeting with interim principal of the local government middle school. An Eureka school administrator accompanied me to the meeting where I explained the purpose of my study and the filming process to the interim principal and administrative staff in the school. The administrators permitted me to film a classroom in session and also to interview Eureka school alumni students within the school premises. I interviewed three Eureka alumni who are currently in Grade 6 in the government school. An observation of the English classroom in Grade 8 of the school was also filmed with permission from the administration and the English teacher.

The EW'nT program is also being conducted in some public schools where the teachers and school administration are supportive of implementing the new methodology. I interviewed an English teacher from one semi-urban school who consented to be included in the study. The administrator in that school gave an oral consent to filming the classroom and requested not to use any written permission forms. I also contacted the local public schools in two villages, many of whose students were enrolled in the Eureka after-school program. One of the principals consented to the interview and the other agreed to an observation session within the classroom. Both schools were elementary schools, one of which was based in a very tiny hamlet and had less than fifty students from grades 1-5. Two members from the organizational leadership and two Eureka program directors were also included as participants in the study to understand in-depth

the elements of the program design. Table 1 shows the sites for the documentary and Table 2 details the background information of the participants interviewed for the documentary.

Table 1

*Documentary Sites*

<b>Village</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Format</b>
Amrithapuram	Thiruvallur	Interview and observation
Koovathur	Kanchipuram	Interview and observation
Lakshmapuram	Thiruvallur	Interview and observation
Maduvankarai	Chennai	Interview and observation
Mangapuram	Thiruvallur	Interview
Manjampadi	Vellore	Interview and observation
Mathur	Thiruvallur	Event Observation
Nehru Nagar	Thiruvallur	Interview and observation
Parameshwaramangalam	Kanchipuram	Interview
Periyar Nagar	Thiruvallur	Interview and observation
Sembakkam	Kanchipuram	Interview and observation
Serukkanur	Thiruvallur	Interview and informal discussions
Aid India office	Chennai	Interview

Table 2

*Participant Background Information*

<b>Location</b>	<b>Participants</b>
Amrithapuram	Field coordinator (female), 1 field trainer(female)
Koovathur	6 students (4 female and 2 male), 1 teacher (female)
Lakshmapuram	1 student, 3 parents (2 females and 1 male)
Maduvankarai (Semi-urban area near Chennai city)	1 English teacher
Mangapuram	Tutor (Female), field coordinator(female)
Manjampadi	3 field trainers (1 female and 2 male), 1 parent (female), 1 field coordinator(male)
Nehru Nagar	Principal(Female)
Parameshwaramangalam	Tutor (Female), 2 students(1 female and 1 male), 1 field trainer(female)
Periyar Nagar	2 students (male), 2 field coordinator(female), 1 school administrator (female)
Sembakkam	Tutor(female), field trainer(female), field coordinator(male)
Serukkanur	Tutor(male)
Aid India office, Chennai	Joint Secretary(male), Program Head(female), Program Director(female),Director, training programs(male), 2 state trainers(1 female and 1 male)



The interviews were conducted in the language preferred by the participants. The majority of participants chose to speak in their native language Tamil. Some of the participants began the interview in English but decided to continue in Tamil. All the participants were informed that the interviews would be video recorded and edited into a documentary film. A written informed consent in English (Appendix D) where preferred or an oral informed consent in their native language Tamil upon their agreement to participate in the study (See Appendix B for script) was obtained. The parents' consent was also obtained and the contents of the consent form which included an explanation of the study was shared with the parents. All participants were informed that they did not have to answer all of the interview questions and were free to stop the interview at any time. The interviewees for the entire study ranged from ages of eight to fifty.

**Data collection.** This study explored the EW'nT program through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiples sources of information and provided a rich description of the perceptions of the students, parents, tutors and program implementers (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The primary sources of data collection were informal and unstructured interviews and observations of the program in session. Informal and unstructured interviews in the first visit enabled formulating questions for subsequent interviews and also provided in-depth understanding of the participant's perceptions and beliefs (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Building trust with the communities was a critical factor in the study. Since I had interacted with some of the village communities before, spoke their language and was introduced to the community by a well-respected and trusted community member (tutor

or the field coordinator), I was able to build a rapport with the participants. Speaking to each of the participants one-one also allowed for the participants' authentic voices to be heard.

Prior to the interviews, I had informal discussions with the participants on camera to help the participants feel comfortable and reduce anxiety if any about the filming. The interviews were recorded once the participants were comfortable with the camera and the microphone.

All of the interviews were video recorded and observations of meetings and events (trainings, village events) and observations of the interactions of the participants were also captured on film. Valuable contextual information was collected through video-taping informal discussions or interactions. A reflective journal was maintained that highlighted the issues that resonated with me and my own reflections and thoughts after every interview or observation session. Documents and images regarding the EW'nT program, archival and additional footage of the program were also included as sources of data in the documentary film.

### **Producing the Documentary Film**

The video clips were analyzed through the editing process of producing a documentary film. Adobe Premeire Pro, a video editing software was used to organize and edit the video clips. The data analysis and video-editing were done together and decisions on which clips to include was based on both my aesthetic sensibilities as well as the need to tell an authentic story (Petrarca & Hughes, 2014).

The first step in the analysis was to view all the raw video footage and make notes on what was seen in the clips to develop some tentative broad ideas about categories and relationships (Maxwell, 2013). The analysis of the footage (data) was done simultaneously with data collection and that helped me identify categories to explore further leading to checking fresh ideas with new participants in subsequent interviews. Reviewing the video footage and looking for themes from the beginning helped me in selecting the video footage and hone in on specific patterns and themes of interest. The footage were categorized deductively based on broad areas that the study was aiming to understand such as culturally responsive practices and tutor-student relationships and then inductively generated categories based on participants' actions and words.

Categories or *bins* based on the meaning that emerged from the video footage were created. Segments from the video footage that related to a particular category were extracted as clips and moved to the corresponding bins. The bins contained clips from interviews as well as observations. The clips were reviewed again and grouped together into a sub-sequence based on the interpretation and reflection of the meaning (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.206). The themes for the sub-sequence were determined based on the purpose of the study, through the lens of the theories informing the research and also keeping in mind the researcher's bias and positionality (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). Clips within a sub-sequence were further selected to create another sub-sequence of sub-themes. The series of short sub-sequences were then reviewed and the final clips to be included into the master sequence for the documentary were selected.



need to create an engaging, meaningful and informative film. The length of the film was also a concern since I wanted the film to keep the audience engaged while ensuring that the meaning emerging from the analysis was retained. I was very mindful of the selection process and engaged in self-checks and reflection throughout the process to ensure integrity of the data. The selection of clips was done with the assistance of my advisor Dr. Gliner. His extensive background in documentary film making and editing were very helpful in viewing the clips objectively and selecting them from the sub-sequences ensuring that each sub-theme was well represented.

The major themes identified were the role of English in the society, caste and equity, culturally responsive practices, community engagement, gender role and women empowerment. A master sequence of video clips representing the major themes was generated to produce a first cut of the film. B-roll footage was included in the video creation process to alternate with the interview footage (Friend & Militello, 2015). Additional footage was obtained wherever more visuals to explain the context was deemed as necessary.

Since most of the interviewees responded in Tamil and one of the intended audiences for the documentary are researchers in the United States, the content in each of the sub-clips was translated into English. The translated transcript of the interviews was audio recorded using voice overs. A decision to use voice overs for the documentary film instead of subtitles was made in consultation with Dr. Gliner. This was done to overcome the challenge of restriction of the length of lines that can be seen on the screen, estimated reading speed of the viewers, and to reduce distraction due to text. Subtitles were used

only on clips where I felt that the inflections in the original audio of the participant were important to understand the participant's emotions.

Riessman (2008) describes the importance of editorial decisions such as deleting certain speech repetitions and utterances like "um" or "ah", and representing certain dialects to prevent giving a wrong impression about the participants. I had to make similar decisions with two of the participant interviews. In the process of soliciting feedback on the initial sequence of clips for accuracy of content with the respondent, the interviewee requested for repetitions and stutters in her speech to be removed. The participant recorded her voice with the same content as the original interview which was then used as a voice over for her interview segments.

For the second participant who spoke in accented English, I decided to have a voice over to convey the participant's words so that the viewer can focus on the content rather than misinterpreting what was being said.

Coles & Knowles (2008) describe the presence of the researcher in an arts-informed research as a positive quality. I decided to appear in the documentary as a narrator to offer the audience a more rich and personal look into the research. The narration was used to bridge different sections in the documentary and also shared my own reflections and thoughts.

The last step in the editing process was to add background music, title cards and credits. The edited version of the documentary is my view of the themes that emerged out of the analysis of the data.

## **Challenges in Producing the Documentary**

My belief in the power of visuals to reach out to a large audience and bring about social change served as a strong driver to choose an alternate form of research for this study. But my lack of experience in visual arts and inexperience in using a video camera were some of the biggest challenges in producing the documentary. Learning how to use the camera and the microphone, techniques to frame shots and filming in real-time proved to be very challenging.

**Filming.** One the first day of my visit to the villages, I filmed two interviews in a small indoor space. I shared the small clips from my filming with Dr. Gliner who viewed them and sent me feedback on the framing of shots, focus, audio and lighting. I had framed the video too tight and my advisor's feedback was useful when I filmed the next day. We continued to collaborate and by the end of the first week of filming, there was a visible improvement in the quality of the video shots. Figures 3 and 4 show the framing of indoor shots on the day one and day four of filming (incorporating feedback from my advisor). Dr. Gliner drawing on his experiences in documentary film making was also very helpful in his suggestions regarding different types of B-Roll shots that would capture the context.



*Figure 3.* Video footage from very first interview with the tight framing of shots.



*Figure 4.* Video footage from day four of filming.

The outdoor filming sessions were particularly challenging since many of the people present wanted to be captured on camera and sometimes interfered with the filming process itself. While talking to women in particular, many times there was interference from men in the community who insisted on the women responding to the questions in a certain way and not allowing them to share their genuine experiences. Given the cultural background and the patriarchal power structure, it was quite challenging to film in such circumstances. I had to redo some of the interviews at a later time in order to capture the women's genuine voices in some of the villages.

**Editing.** A documentary film tends to be more intrusive as it captures moving real-time images and shares with the viewers more evidence than just static images (Petrarca & Hughes, 2014). This led to many hours of pondering over ethical decisions about the video clips to be used. I had over sixty hours of video footage from my filming and the biggest challenge was to not succumb to the temptation of including small segments from each of the clips. A constant check and reminder about the limitations of creating a



documentary film such as the length of the film and visual appeal had to be made on an ongoing basis.

Translating the interviews from Tamil to English also proved to be challenging. The process involved more than translating just the words--it had to capture the connotations, sense, mood and tone (Striphas, 2006).

### **Trustworthiness of the Study**

Multiple sources of data such as interviews and observations from multiple stakeholders was collected to enhance credibility of this study (Theoharis, 2007). This study provided a transparent disclosure of the data analysis and rationale for the decisions made through the video (Milner, 2007, p.396). The participants were able to review the video footage to ensure that their perceptions and responses had been captured correctly by the researcher. A reflective journal was used as an *audit trial* to build confidence in the way the study was conducted (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.252).

### **Limitations**

The study was limited to exploring the lived experiences of students, tutors and community members in eleven villages in Tamil Nadu, India. The documentary format of the study was a limitation to the selection of participants since the participants in the villages who opted to be captured on video camera could have been those who were empowered and courageous enough to be talking about the issues. Their interview responses might not have captured the perceptions of the community as a whole. Also as pointed out in a study by Carr (1995) many of the stakeholders in the program may have not participated because of a feeling of inadequacy due to their speech, appearance, social

status. Though participants responded to the interview questions in their native language, the experiences of some participants may be limited by their vocabulary and or their academic backgrounds. The findings from the study are also heavily dependent on the honesty of the participants' responses during the interviews.

### **Assumptions, Background, and Role of the Researcher in the Study**

My personal and professional background were also limitations for this study. Since I have no personal experience of attending government schools and also belong to an upper privileged caste, assumptions to the study were based purely on my observations of individuals in the government school setting and within my own family. I also have past experience working full-time with Aid India in the role of a Project Director, coordinating educational initiatives for the most marginalized students in rural Tamil Nadu, India. My prior role as a Project Director in the organization could also have had an effect on some of the participant responses and in my interpretations as well.

### **Positionality**

**Personal background.** I come from a privileged background in India, and was schooled in a private school where the medium of instruction was English, surrounded by English speaking family and had access to many learning resources. Nevertheless, at a personal level, English language learning is very important to me. My cousins and husband were schooled in rural government schools where the local language was the medium of instruction and were not exposed to the language until they began their higher education. I have heard stories of their experiences of isolation at college for lack of English skills, losing their self-confidence and the struggles that they had to go through to

be successful in their personal and professional lives. I have also witnessed the fear of the language and shame experienced by my mother-in-law and other older adults in the family while responding to others who speak to them in English. In my professional experience both here in the United States and in India, I have interacted with many capable co-workers who shy away from higher leadership positions only because of their lack of confidence in their English skills. These experiences piqued my interest to do more to help students who have similar experiences.

**Professional background.** I am also aware of the power imbalance between the participants and me owing to my privileged, upper caste background and prior professional background as a program director in the organization.

As someone who had earlier worked in the capacity of a Project Director in the organization that implements the EW'nT program being studied, I was very conscious from the start of the study to make it known that I am engaging with the participants in the capacity as an individual researcher and not as someone from the organization. And irrespective of me being upfront about my role, I do recognize that my prior role as the director may be seen as a potential bias. However, my prior role and familiarity with the participants such as the field coordinators and trainers allowed them to trust me and speak honestly about their personal experiences and emotions which might have otherwise been difficult to gather.

I chose to film in villages where the tutors were not familiar with my background. I consciously ensured that all the interviews were set up based on the participant's comfort in terms of time and space. I also met with them in presence of an influential and trusted

community member and explained the details about the study and the entire documentary filming process. I met with the participants informally to discuss the research project. Since the participants were from the lower caste communities, in order for them to feel safe to talk to someone from an upper caste privileged background, I had to gain their trust and build a personal rapport. The informal meetings mediated by the community members helped me build a rapport prior to filming them on camera for the interview. In India, it is normal practice for the higher castes to refuse to touch food or drinks offered by Dalits and other lower castes. I also gained the trust of the participants by accepting their invitation into their homes and sharing a meal with them.

I had one of my fellow colleagues review my methods and outline of interview questions in order to ensure that questions or approaches may not lead to biased data. Self-reflection, a reflexive approach through the use of a reflective journal that was also used as an audit trail and ongoing discussions on the rationale for data analysis with my advisor Dr. Gliner were also very useful in countering my biases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p.252).

**Prior experiences.** My previous experience in India conducting studies with marginalized populations, made me realize that it is very important to be reflexive, understand my own positionality and the perspective of the participants. During my first visit to the villages for this study, there were instances where the participants did not speak as openly in an one-one interview. This experience reiterated to me the importance of building relationships of dignity and care that would gain the trust of the community. As Martinez (2016) aptly puts it “My responsibility as a researcher is to humanize

research” (p. 60). I was very cognizant of my social and cultural positionality in conducting this research (Milner, 2007). Humanizing my research was the prime focus and the study design and research tools involved participants in *the work with them for them* (Martinez, 2016, p.70).

### **Consideration of Ethical Issues**

“It is both arrogant and shortsighted to assume that any research endeavor does not have ethical considerations” (Theoharis, 2007).

I strongly believe in Milner’s (2007) assertion that how research is conducted determines if it is ethical and humanistic. This research study incorporated strong ethical standards like consent from participants to being part of the research, not coercing them, and fully informing them about the research process and outcomes. The study also provided a transparent disclosure of the documentary filming process and rationale for decisions made for the inclusion or exclusion of clips.

The participants were informed that their participation in the interview was completely voluntary and that they were free to stop the interview at any time if they were uncomfortable with the questions. The details of the study were explained to the participants and an oral informed consent in Tamil was obtained upon their agreement to participate in the study. Observations in the classrooms in the schools and centers were done with prior permission of the classroom teacher and principal.

The study was explained to the student in an age and developmentally appropriate manner. Student’s affirmative agreement to participate in the research was obtained prior

to conducting the interviews. The assent was obtained verbally since the participants in the villages come from an oral rather than written tradition.

**Ethical standards for video production.** The filming of classroom sessions and interviews were used to acknowledge the funds of knowledge of the participants and engage them as creators to knowledge rather than just as video subjects (Friend & Militello, 2015).

A media release form was used to obtain permission from all participants to be shown in the documentary film. For participants below the age of 18, permission on the form was obtained from the parents or legal guardians of the children. The content of the form was explained to them orally in Tamil.

At the time of filming if the participants hesitated or expressed discomfort because of the camera, they were not included as participants though they might have had powerful stories or insights that would be valuable to the study.

Since my bias was a very important consideration that had to be taken care of, the edited video footage was shared with the participants. As the researcher responsible for both the analysis and interpretation of data, it was important to include voices of participants' in the video events as a way of validating interpretations (Leung and Hawkins, 2011). As the researcher, I was cognizant of the fact that the camera can be a distractor and constrained by blind spots (Leung & Hawkins, 2011). In the Indian context, my prior experience had shown that both children and adults alike enjoy being captured on camera and hence as a researcher I had to be cautious and responsible in determining how to video tape certain events or individuals without much interference.

The time and location of the interviews were decided based on the availability and preference of the participants. The participants were also shown the recording equipment to be used for the interviews. Many of the participants wanted to do a dry run speaking into the microphone and watching the video clips prior to being formally interviewed. This helped put the participants at ease and they appeared to feel more comfortable when the interview began. The participants were reminded of their rights to withdraw from the interview anytime or skip some questions if they were not comfortable with them.

While filming the program components that took place in the community, I checked with those present to ensure they were comfortable with the event or the interaction being filmed. In one of the community interaction components, the woman interacting with the children wanted to change into more presentable clothes and asked me to film after she changed.

I had to use different approaches for filming adults and children. Children were very excited to be filmed and enthusiastically agreed to be captured on camera but once the camera was switched on, they became very self-conscious. I tried a different approach where I switched on the camera and sat amidst the children and had informal discussions with them. The children became very involved in the conversations and appeared not to be conscious of camera presence anymore.

## **Summary**

Conducting the study with communities in the villages helped me understand the challenges faced by the communities in their everyday life and how the program had supported student self-efficacy and academic engagement. The study also allowed me to

understand the impact of the program on women tutors and the effects on the community.

The findings of the study would help guide better practices for effective curriculum, instruction and teacher attitude and behavior.



## **Chapter Four: Findings**

The documentary film “I Can!” depicts the findings from this research study. The film was produced using the video footage of study participants’ interviews, observations of the program elements and additional footage describing the context. The film can be accessed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/FzIOcS7Z3cw>

### **I Can - Documentary Film**

The film included interview footage of various stakeholders who shared their experiences regarding the impact the EW’nT program had on their lives and that of the students. The B-roll footage in the film provided the viewer with a glimpse into the lives of marginalized communities in rural India, activities in public school classrooms, community interactions and various elements of the program.

The documentary begins with an introduction to the problem narrated by the participants sharing their experiences. The researcher’s narration walks the viewers through a montage that sets the context for the research study and also gives the viewers a glimpse of rural Indian life and culture, a view into public school classrooms and describes the Eureka program in detail.

The film shows different program elements in action along with experiences shared by students and teachers regarding each of these program elements and the impact it has on their motivation and academic engagement. Each section begins with a short clip of the program element followed by clips of interviews with stakeholders interlaced with clips of the observations at the center. The B-Roll footage visually depicts the enthusiasm, motivation and engagement of the students in the activities.

The segment leads itself into the next section on the student-tutor relationship and its impact on student learning and self-confidence. The video footage in this section included interviews and observations of the interactions at the Eureka center and school. The description of the relationship was provided by students, tutors, trainers and other program implementers. The B-Roll footage also visually brings out the themes of care, empathy and a family like learning environment.

The final section of the film depicts the impact of the program on the women tutors and trainers in the program. The women participants share their experiences and describe how the program has impacted their social standing and self-confidence. The segment includes interviews from other male trainers and program implementers who describe the change that they see in the women tutors' social status.

The film concludes with some of the challenges faced in implementing the program and stories of impact from various program stakeholders.

### **Video Clips Not Included in the Film**

Not every participant who was interviewed was included in the final film. Some participant interviews were not directly related to the experience of marginalized communities and hence were excluded from the film. Only some clips from each sub-theme were included to manage the length of the film. Some interview clips where the participants (mostly students) were uncomfortable and discontinued the interviews were also not used.

One of the video clips of the observation sessions had to be also omitted owing to bad lighting. I also had filmed many local cultural events and performances but keeping in

mind the length of the film, I used only some of the clips to give the viewers a glimpse into the local culture and lifestyle. A video clip on students' interactions with a woman in the community also had to be omitted since there was considerable background noise and interference from men in her family who insisted on providing her responses to the questions asked by the students.

## **Chapter Five: Summary, Reflections and Recommendations**

This qualitative study reports on the design and implementation of the EW'nT program, description of successful practices used in the program, the impact of the program on students' self-confidence and academic engagement and also its impact on women tutors in the program. The study aims to be a resource for other educational institutions interested in either improving or revamping their English as a Second or Foreign Language teaching and learning curriculum. This chapter presents answers to research questions in this study, conclusions from the research and implications for future research and educational practice.

This research study through a documentary film explored how the EW'nT program addressed the challenges of EFL teaching and learning in rural India. The documentary film highlights the perspectives of various stakeholders. Their experiences underscore the important role English plays in their personal and professional lives and the challenges they faced in learning the language.

### **Summary of Findings and Conclusions**

The literature review pointed to many of the challenges faced by the Dalit students in the classroom and larger society. The quality of teaching in public schools, teacher student relationship, deficit thinking harbored by the public school teachers, lack of a safe learning environment and lack of resources lead to students being disengaged with their learning and losing their self-confidence (Annamalai, 2005; Dyer et. al., 2004; Grover & Singh, 2002; Vasavi, 2003). The film "I Can!" depicts these challenges faced by students through the voices of parents and other community members and a visual of the public

school classroom. The participants describe their aspirations and their desire for children to learn English for professional and personal advancement. Fear of the language, the shame of not being able to speak in English and the lack of respect due to the inability to speak are some common themes that emerged out the interviews.

The EW'nT program was designed with the primary purpose of breaking through the fear of the English language, providing students with a safe environment to learn and to increase confidence in their own abilities. The program challenges what Paulo Freire in the book "*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*" referred to as the banking model of education where literacy is taught without bringing in the learner's own experiences into the learning process. The program utilizes the "problem-posing education" that embraces a view of education where students and teachers are co-investigators who are in constant dialogue with each other (Freire, 2000). Freire emphasizes the need to tie the content of the materials to the learners' existential situation in order to create motivated learners.

**Research question 1.** How has the program impacted student self-confidence and social status?

Two themes that emerged from the interviews and observations were "I Can" attitude and recognition that had a positive influence on students' self-confidence and social status. According to multiple stakeholders, the program has increased confidence of the students not just in their English skills but also in other academic and non-academic areas. According to the teachers, though the students' English spoken and reading skills were not perfect, the *I can* attitude is very evident and they have gained confidence in their own abilities as can be seen in their interest in other subjects like Math, their

participation in class and voluntarily conversing in English with their peers and adults in the community. The teachers also shared that the students are enthusiastic about participating in events and competitions and in sharing their knowledge with adults in the school and community. The students describe the positive impact on their social standing. One of the students mentioned that the ability to speak confidently has made him more noticeable within the peer group. It has also helped expand his social circle to students from the neighboring private schools where the medium of instruction is English. The parents also shared that they are proud that their child is on par with private school children and the community also now recognizes at their own child's ability to converse in English.

**Research question 2.** How do culturally responsive teaching practices affect self-confidence and student engagement in the classroom?

The study explored many different components of the EW'nT program. Participants' responses highlighted non-intimidating, familiar and relatable content and collaborative learning as major themes. These themes identified elements of the program that were impactful in promoting self-confidence in students and improving their academic engagement.

The interview responses revealed that the students found that the use of content that is related to their culture and local context engaged them better. As many of the participants share, the familiarity of words used in the vocabulary lessons has made the language less intimidating. The existing knowledge of the content has encouraged them to break through the fear and increased self-confidence. The participants share that they can relate

to both the content and the teaching methods and the familiarity makes the learning environment non-intimidating and less alien. The students also shared that they can relate to the learning materials since the content was based on real-life context and also many of the photographs in the materials looked “similar” to them or were something that they could relate too.

The documentary film provides a view into the Eureka classrooms where children actively participate and are very engaged in all the classroom activities. Students can be seen raising their hands to answer questions in class, interacting with the tutor to understand content that they cannot comprehend and enthusiastic to teach and share their learning. The learning environment is depicted in stark contrast to the public school classrooms shown in the film.

The elements of the program that stood out were the use of songs, stories, role-plays and informal interaction with the community. As can be seen in the film and pointed out by Kristie (2018), role-plays, group discussions, story-telling and songs help improve students’ self confidence in speaking. The Eureka Program Head describes the importance of involving the tutors in the action songs as a means of encouraging and motivating students. The students can be seen enjoying singing with their tutors. The students also share that watching their teacher sing with them and do funny actions keeps them motivated. One of the program coordinators describes the tradition of street plays and songs conducted in common village spaces where the community gathers to interact with each other. He also mentions that the villagers have a story-telling tradition to pass down local knowledge, religious beliefs and values. He adds that temples conduct street

plays and have story telling sessions that use mythological stories to preach values and beliefs. He elaborates on how the program taps into these cultural elements to engage children in their learning. Acknowledging their existing knowledge and including culturally relevant practices in teaching motivates and engages the students and encourages students to feel pride in their own culture (Gay, 2018; Howard, 2012).

The students share that the role-plays are a source of motivation and pride. The impact of these culturally relevant formats is very evident in the expressions and actions of the students. The film depicts the role-plays being performed in the village's common area with many of the parents and community members present. And as can be seen in the film, the sense of pride among the parents and the community is very evident.

The documentary film also shows many children reciting stories confidently in English. The Eureka Program Head and tutors share that since the children are already familiar with the stories in their native language Tamil, and can relate to the content, they are more confident when asked to recite these familiar stories in English. The participants also shared that allowing code mixing while speaking boosted their self-confidence. This is also confirmed by a study by Nurhamidah (2018) that shows code mixing has been found to be effective in EFL since it allows the students to get over the fear of speaking owing to the lack of vocabulary. Wheeler (2006) also discusses the advantages of using code mixing as a culturally responsive practice in the classrooms.

One of the primary challenges for students to speak in English is the fear of making errors while speaking, feeling shy and intimidated by the audience (Melendez et al. , 2014). In the Walk 'n Talk component of the program where the children interact with



the community members in English, the collaborative nature of learning is very evident. The adults are eager to learn from the children and exhibit a sense of pride when the child teaches them sentences in English. The children on the other hand exhibit a sense of accomplishment. Their ability to teach an adult a language that is feared by many has a very positive impact on their self-confidence and esteem.

As can be seen in the documentary, students are very engaged and confident during these interactions. The film also shows every single child participating in the interactions and their confidence in engaging in conversations with strangers. Many of the participants shared that they enjoy this teaching aspect of the component. Their enthusiasm, sense of accomplishment and pride is very palpable in their conversations.

As multiple researchers have demonstrated, speaking a language requires frequently practicing it (Kavitha, 2009; Verma, 2008). The Walk 'n talk community interaction component provides the students with a welcoming, safe and non- judgmental space to do so.

A study in Indian schools by Singh and Sarkar (2015) points out that proximity of the teacher's residence to school and their attitude toward students have far more influence on student outcomes than their educational qualifications. The tutors and the teachers in Eureka after-school centers and Eureka schools are local volunteers recruited from the same community. Students in the film describe their fear of school teachers owing to teacher attitudes and verbal and non-verbal behavior in relation to their disengagement in the class. The film also provides the viewers with a visual of a public school classroom where students are passive listeners and also look disengaged and afraid of the teacher.

The participants shared that many of the public school teachers have an authoritative relationship with the students. The teachers expect students to listen to their lectures uninterrupted and are discouraged from asking questions. Gay (2018) describes the negative effects of such *passive–receptive* interaction in comparison with what she defines as *participatory-interactive* styles of communication. Such passive-receptive communication leaves many students disengaged and disinterested.

**Research question 3.** How does the student relationship with caring tutors impact their academic engagement?

The participants share that the Eureka tutors have a very informal relationship with the children and share a familial bond with them. The familial relationship supports student participation and engagement in the classroom and helps losing their fear of the English language motivating them to be confident in their English speaking abilities.

The classes are conducted in the tutor's houses or common spaces and allows for a more informal environment. Since the tutor opens up her personal space for the classes, the student develop a trusting relationship with the tutor. The class activities always take place in circles with the tutor in their midst thus destroying the hierarchy that they see in their schools. The tutors are active, engage in all the activities and hence children see them as friends or peers. This encourages children to open up and participate in all the activities. As can be seen in many of the interviews in the documentary, the students address the tutor as *Akka* or elder sister and share a familial bond with her. The participant tutors share that they pay individual attention to students who need help and treat them with care and talk to them affectionately. The students shared that the tutors

care for them and show their care and affection with their actions and words. Many of the students describe the tutor's tone to be very non-intimidating and affectionate. The students also believe that the tutor genuinely cares for them since she follows up with them on tasks, helps them whenever needed and is always patient with them. Similar to a study by Burciaga and Kohli (2018) on the strengths that teachers of color bring into classrooms, the Eureka tutors bring their own CCW into their classroom practices and engage the students and communities they serve.

A common theme that emerged was that the tutor and students shared a trusting familial bond based on empathy and care. The humanistic approach by the tutor motivates students to confide in their teachers, reduce the student-teacher social distance, lose their fear and inhibition in the classroom and gives them freedom to display their abilities. The film depicts an example of the mutual trust and empathy in the way the students at a Eureka after-school center help their tutor who is disabled. Several video shots in the film also show how tutors break the hierarchical power structure by transforming into a child and joining them in singing and dancing.

**Research question 4.** How has the program helped women tutors navigate through social and cultural barriers?

The majority of tutors are local village volunteers and they belong to the same lower caste community. Participants point out that these young women have taken up the role of tutors because they care of the children in their own community and though they are not confident of their English language skills, they are willing to learn along with the children.

The participants also discussed the impact of the program on the tutors. The common themes that emerged were recognition and self-confidence. The participants shared that the community components such as the walk ‘n talk and the public role-plays have exposed the capabilities of not just the students but the tutors too. The community begins to acknowledge and recognize the tutor’s skills and capabilities. She gains respect from all sections of the society including the public school teachers and administrators. The tutors share with pride that the school and district officers now respect them and also seek their inputs and perspectives. The tutors also attributed the change in their social status to the program. The tutors who are from the lowest caste in the community are now being acknowledged and invited to upper caste households within the community. The tutors shared that they see this as a big step up the social ladder. The tutors also proudly state that the students and adults in the community now even address them as “Madam” with respect, they are treated with as much respect as the public school teacher in the village. The respect and recognition from the community and school teachers has helped the tutors move up the social hierarchy irrespective of the caste they belong to.

The women tutors stated that despite multiple challenges of time, travelling in the evenings and countering family and societal pressures, they have found the confidence and courage to continue their work because of the affection from the students and the recognition they get from the community. The trainings and other public events have supported them in building their self-confidence and self-esteem. The tutors have gained the courage to interact with district officials and other elders in the village and more importantly their opinions are respected and valued by the officials as well as the

community. They see themselves as role-models for other girls and women within their own family and community.

The program has many in-built components to break several societal barriers and biases. The community interaction component breaks the power structure and narrows the social distance between the students and the teachers. It has also helped bridge caste divide in many communities through the mixed caste classrooms and by bringing together all castes for the community interactions and events. The program content design counters gender stereotypes and biases.

**Challenges in implementing the program.** The challenges in implementing the program were also discussed by the participants. Resistance from some of the local public school teachers, implementing in remote villages, challenges in sustaining the community component and designing content were some of the key challenges. The program head discusses the challenges they faced in implementing the walk and talk component in the community. After the initial few months the excitement of the component began to slowly decline and it had to be modified to effectively engage the community also in the learning process. Keeping in mind that learning is a collective and collaborative process, innovative methods for the adults also to be engaged and learn had to be introduced.

### **Reflections**

The film shows how a CRP based approach can lead to upward mobility as well as the navigational challenges and successes that come along with that, especially related to caste issues and deficit approaches. The study provided me a glimpse of how education and classrooms can be used as tools for social change. The program had many in-built

components that had an impressive impact on the community, empowering women, breaking caste barriers and power structures. The collective process of learning stood out to me and showed that educational achievement is a collective process of commitments. The role of local community teachers in implementing culturally responsive practices was also very evident from their strong bond with the students, dedication to their learning, and the strong stake that the tutors had in the community.

I was also moved by the aspirations that parents had for their children despite their day to day struggles and challenges. The program had fueled their aspirations and they now “dared to dream”. Another thing that I learned was the definition of the term “parental involvement.” The program showed me new ways of involving parents, including them as part of the learning process using formats they are familiar with can be very powerful. Observations of various traditional and occupational activities carried out in the villages also lead me to believe that these could be considered a new form of CCW- “traditional capital.” For instance, women in the villages are engaged in drawing geometric patterns using rice flour in front of their houses and temples as a form of a tradition signifying prosperity. These patterns have been passed down for generations and are constantly improvised. They are complex and involve many abstract designs and mathematical processes. The students, especially the girls, bring what they learn from home into the classroom and these can be considered as strengths that can be utilized in teaching. I also found the entire documentary filmmaking process to be a very powerful medium. Many of the participants felt very privileged that they were being filmed and

shared many personal stories with me. The participants were also very touched by the video footage and moved when the footage was shared with them.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The documentary brought out the perspectives of students and their families who are part of the program. These families do not represent all the experiences of the marginalized students. There are villages which are more remote than the ones shown in the documentary and it would be beneficial to hear their perspectives as well. It would be also beneficial to compare the perceptions of students and parents that were interviewed with the responses provided by those in rural private schools where medium of instruction is English and also urban slums where the probability of exposure to English language is higher due to presence of more English speakers in the cities. Increasing the sample size and expanding the project to include students and families living in urban slums and also students in remote tribal villages could explore these questions.

Further research in high schools and colleges is also recommended since the current study only focused on grade 4-8 students. The program was designed in response to equity concerns and further research to determine academic success of students through college is required. The program is still in its early phase of implementation, longitudinal studies of current cohort of students in the program would also be beneficial to determine the success of the program.

The program has recently been implemented in Malawi in Africa. Extending this study to also include participants in Malawi would be beneficial to determine if the program can be implemented successfully in other cultures. Since English as Second

Language is an area of interest across the world, the findings from the study could be applied to other countries and cultures as well.

### **Implications**

The study brought out the importance of a humanistic approach to education. The film showcases the need for inclusion of culturally responsive teaching practices, building on assets in the community to increase student self-confidence, academic engagement and motivation.

The program leverages the CCW that students bring into the classroom. Parents despite the challenges and struggles they face want their children to achieve and aspire for a better future. They are willing to stretch their resources financially and otherwise to provide their children with the necessary support to get a good education. The tutors also have high expectations from the children and fuel their aspirations. Students who are enrolled in the program have bilingual skills and bring with them into the classroom other skills like memorization, songs, story-telling, art, music which are part of their culture. The extended family including the Eureka tutor are involved in the learning process and help the children aspire and attain their educational goals. They support the children by attending all public events where children showcase their skills and motivating them, encourage them on house visits by engaging in English conversations with them and rewarding them with praises.

The program recognizes the strengths in CCW and utilizes many forms of capital that the communities possess (Yosso, 2005). The interviews with parents clearly bring out their aspirational capital where they dream of a future for their children that in the current



circumstances seem impractical. The Walk ‘n Talk component of the program emphasizes Linguistic capital through community interactions and collaborative learning. The commitment of local tutors, family and the community to be engaged in the learning process are forms of Familial capital that are utilized in the program. Women tutors and students through the program gain skills and learn to maneuver through many social institutions thus building on their Navigational Capital. The program through its many in-built elements build Resistant Capital that resist the status-quo such as social power structures, gender bias and discrimination. Social Capital is built by the community and in some villages the local schools through a network of resources that support the students in navigating through society’s institutions.

The study points to the need for educators to effectively engage students in classrooms using a culturally responsive pedagogy that involves the use of relevant curriculum and strong trusting teacher student relationships through their understanding of CCW.

The study also demonstrates that the program had moved beyond just English language learning. It was creating a social change at the grassroots level. The building of self-confidence and self-esteem in marginalized populations has been instrumental in breaking many social barriers. The change that began with education and in classrooms has percolated to the rest of the society.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A- Sample Interview Questions**

RQ1: How has the program impacted student self-confidence and social status ?

Please describe how the program has affected your ability to speak English.

Can you give some examples of how well you can speak to people in English?

How has the program affected your status within the community? Can you describe some instances?

How do you think the program has influenced your personality?

How do you feel about making mistakes while speaking in English in the Eureka class?

Do you feel the same way in school?

Can you describe a situation where you had to communicate with a person who did not know Tamil? How did you communicate?

How has the program influenced your aspirations?

How has the program influenced your interactions with peers and adults in school?

What new activities or events did you participate in for the first time because of the program?

How often do you speak in English outside the classroom? Who do you speak with?

RQ2: How do culturally responsive teaching practices affect self-confidence and student engagement in the classroom?

Do you have a favorite activity in class? Please explain why.

Please describe program components that make you feel excited and motivated about learning. Why do you like that particular component?

Please describe the activities in the program that has helped you gain confidence to speak in English and explain why.

Please describe how the program activities are different from the ones in your school and explain why.

Please describe what you like about the program materials.

Please describe how the community interaction component has supported your learning.

How do you feel while interacting with the elders in the community in English?

What do you like or dislike about the roleplays?

How do you think code mixing supports your ability to speak in English?

Please describe how the vocabulary that you learn in the Eureka class is different from the school textbook? Why?

Please describe how your interactions with peers, tutors and others in the Eureka class make you feel safe in class and encourage you to learn?

How are the learning materials in the Eureka program different from the textbooks in school?

Please describe what you like about the structure of the Eureka program.

RQ3: How does the student relationship with caring tutors impact their academic engagement?

What does a caring teacher mean to you?

Can you describe how the tutor or school teacher shows care for you?

What does your tutor do that makes you want to participate in class activities? How is it different from your experiences in the school?

How does the tutor influence your motivation to learn and being engaged in class?

What actions of the tutor makes you want to participate in all class activities?

Do you raise your hand to answer questions in class (school and Eureka center)? Why or Why not?

What do you do when you do not understand what is being taught in class?

How does the tutor respond when you ask questions in class? How about the teacher in school?

Can you describe the kind of relationship that you have with the tutor? Why do you say so?

How do you address your tutor? Why do you address her that way?

What do you share with your tutors?

Can you tell me when you felt that the teacher or tutor does not care for you? What made you feel that way? Can you describe an incident?

Do you feel appreciated in class? What does the tutor do to recognize your achievements?

Have you been treated differently at your school? What did the teacher or students do or say to make you feel that way? When was the most recent time this happened? Can you describe the incident? How did you feel after the incident? Did it affect your behavior in the classroom?

How regular is your attendance at the center? If you do not come to the center, does your tutor check in with you?

RQ4: How has the program helped women tutors navigate through social and cultural barriers?

Have you felt that as a Dalit woman, you have been treated differently from others in the community? If so, how?

Can you describe the incidents that made you feel this? What were the actions and words used?

Please describe how tutoring or being a trainer in the program has changed the way community looks at you. Why do you say that? Can you describe some incidents? How it is different from what it was before?

Please describe the change that you see in yourself because of the program.

What professional skills have you gained because of the program? How has that benefitted you?

How does having good English skills specifically impact girls and women?

How do you think the program has impacted your social status? Can you please give an example?

What are some of the challenges that you faced in your work? How did you overcome them?

What is your relationship with the local public school teachers? Why do you say so?

Why do you volunteer your time every evening to tutor children in the community?

What changes have you made in your personal life because of the program?

## **Appendix B- Informed Consent Oral Script in English**

### CONSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

#### TITLE OF STUDY

Bridging the English language divide and building self-confidence in marginalized communities: An Exploratory Study in Tamilnadu, India

#### NAME OF RESEARCHER

Name: Radha Aravamudhan

Title: Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D Leadership, San Jose State University

Email: radha.aravamudhan@sjsu.edu

Phone Number- +1 (408) 924 3748 +91 9789098962, Whatsapp: +1 (408) 859 4764

Dr. Robert Gliner – Faculty Advisor

Professor, Ed.D Leadership, San Jose State University

Email: robert.gliner@sjsu.edu

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

radha.aravamudhan@sjsu.edu; +91 9789098962, Whatsapp: +1 (408) 859 4764

#### RESEARCHER STATEMENT AND SIGNATURE

I certify that the research has been explained verbally to the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative. The purpose of the research as well as the

study procedures, risks, benefits, and mechanisms for maintaining confidentiality have been explained. The participant understands that participation is voluntary and has been given adequate time to learn about the study and ask questions. The participant has voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

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Name of Person Obtaining Consent    Signature of Person Obtaining Consent    Date

WITNESS/INTERPRETER STATEMENT AND SIGNATURE

I certify that:

- The information in the consent script as well as any additional information conveyed by the person obtaining consent was presented to the participant in a language preferred by and understandable to the participant. The participant's questions were interpreted and the responses were presented in a language preferred by and understandable to the participant.
- At the conclusion of the consent consultation, the participant was asked in a language preferred by and understandable to the participant if s/he understood the information and s/he responded affirmatively.

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Name of Witness/Interpreter	Signature of Witness/Interpreter	Date
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PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

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Name of Participant	Signature of Participant	Date
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## Appendix C- Informed Consent Oral Script in Tamil

### ஆராய்ச்சியில் பங்கேற்கக் ஒப்புதல்

#### ஆராய்ச்சியின் தலைப்பு

ஆங்கில மொழியால் ஏற்பட்ட பிரிவை குறைக்க மற்றும் ஒதுக்கப்பட்ட மக்களின் தன்னம்பிக்கை வளர்க்க: தமிழ்நாட்டில் ஆராய்வதற்கான ஒரு ஆய்வு.

#### ஆராய்ச்சியாளரின் பெயர்

பெயர்: ராதா ஆரவாமுதன்

முனைவர், எட்.ட லீடெர்ஷிப், சான் ஹோஸே ஸ்டேட் யூனிவர்திட்டி

மின்னஞ்சல் : radha.aravamudhan@sjsu.edu

தொலைபேசி : +91 9789098962

வாட்ஸாப்ப்: + 1 (408) 924 3748

ஆலோசகர்: முனைவர் ராபர்ட் கிளினர்

பேராசிரியர், எட்.ட லீடெர்ஷிப், சான் ஹோஸே ஸ்டேட் யூனிவர்திட்டி

மின்னஞ்சல்: robert.gliner@sjsu.edu

தொடர்பு தகவல்

radha.aravamudhan@sjsu.edu; +91 9789098962, வாட்ஸாப்ப்: +1 (408) 859 4764

#### ஆராய்ச்சியாளரின் அறிக்கை மற்றும் கையெழுத்து

இந்த ஆராய்ச்சி பங்கேற்பாளருக்கு அல்லது பங்கேற்பாளரின் சட்டப்பூர்வமாக அங்கீகாரம் பெற்ற பிரதிநிதிக்கு விளக்கப்பட்டது என்பதை நான் சான்றளிக்கிறேன். ஆராய்ச்சியின் நோக்கம் மற்றும் ஆய்வு நடைமுறைகள், அபாயங்கள், நன்மைகள் மற்றும் இரகசியத்தன்மை பராமரிப்பதற்கான வழிமுறைகள் ஆகியவை விளக்கப்பட்டுள்ளன. பங்கேற்பாளர் பங்கு தன்னார்வ பூர்வமானது என்பதை அறிவார் மற்றும்

ஆய்வு பற்றி அறியவும், கேள்விகளைக் கேட்கவும் போதுமான நேரம் கொடுக்கப்பட்டுள்ளது. பங்கேற்பாளர் இந்த ஆய்வில் தன்னார்வமாக உடன்பட்டுள்ளார்.

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ஒப்புதல் வாங்கும் நபரின் பெயர் ஒப்புதல் வாங்கும் நபரின் கையெழுத்து தேதி

**சாட்சி / மொழிபெயர்ப்பாளரின் அறிக்கை மற்றும் கையெழுத்து நான் உறுதியளிக்கிறேன் -**

- சம்மதம் கேட்கும் ஸ்கிரிப்டில் உள்ள தகவல்கள் மற்றும் சம்மதம் பெறும் நபரால் வழங்கப்பட்ட கூடுதல் தகவலும் ஆய்வில் பங்கேற்பவருக்கு புரிந்துகொள்ளக்கூடிய ஒரு மொழியில் வழங்கப்பட்டது. பங்கேற்பாளரின் கேள்விகள் புரிந்துகொள்ளப்பட்டன மற்றும் பங்கேற்பாளருக்கு விருப்பமான மொழியில் பதில்கள் வழங்கப்பட்டன.
- சம்மதமான ஆலோசனை முடிவில், பங்கேற்பாளருக்கு தெரிந்துயிருக்கும் மற்றும் புரிந்துகொள்ளக்கூடிய மொழியில் கொடுத்த தகவல் புரிந்ததா என்று கேட்கப்பட்டது மற்றும் பங்கேற்பாளர் புரிந்தது என்று பதிலளித்தார்.

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சாட்சி / மொழிபெயர்ப்பாளரின் பெயர்

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சாட்சி / மொழிபெயர்ப்பாளரின் கையெழுத்து

தேதி

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பங்கேற்பாளரின் பெயர் பங்கேற்பாளரின் கையெழுத்து

தேதி

## **Appendix D- Request For Your Participation In Research**

Title of the Study

Bridging the English Language Divide and Building Self- Confidence in Marginalized Communities: An Exploratory Study in Tamil Nadu, India

Name of the Researcher: Radha Aravamudhan

**Title:** Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D Leadership, San Jose State University

**Email:** radha.aravamudhan@sjsu.edu

**Phone Number-** +1 (408) 924 3748 +91 9789098962, Whatsapp: +1 (408) 859 4764

**Faculty Advisor:** Dr. Robert Gliner

Professor, Ed.D Leadership, San Jose State University

**Email:** robert.gliner@sjsu.edu

### **Purpose**

The main purpose of this study is to use a video documentary film format to investigate the introduction and implementation of the Eureka Walk 'n Talk program in schools and villages in Tamil Nadu, India. The study carried out as part of the researcher's doctoral dissertation would use a video documentary film to describe in depth how the program was interpreted and put into practice, what was learned and also bring out the perspective and experiences of different stakeholders. The documentary film approach chosen for this study will provide a visual perspective of not just the experiences as narrated by the stakeholders but also a visual of the program elements and

its impact on the children, teachers and the community. The research findings have the potential for a large outreach through social media, internet, conferences and other forums.

### **Procedures**

The primary data collection will be informal and unstructured interviews and observations of the program centers in session. If you consent to the interview, you will be interviewed one-one by me, the researcher. The interview will take place for about an hour at a mutually agreed time and place.

All of the interviews will be video recorded and observations of meetings and events (trainings, village events) and observations of the interactions of the participants will also be captured on film.

### **Potential Risks**

This research study involves the use of film and you will be sharing your feelings, opinions and emotions on film. You will also be sharing your home or work environment. There is a risk of loss of privacy both in terms of your living conditions as well as your thought processes.

### **Potential Benefits**

By participating in this study, you will be able to voice your perspectives paving way for dialog and guiding better practices that can benefit school districts across the state and the country.

### **Compensation**

There is no compensation for participation.

## **Confidentiality**

All the data collected in form of video clips will be stored in an external hard drive. All other materials collected as hard copy will be scanned and stored as images or pdf on the external hard drive. The data will be accessible only to the researcher and Dr. Robert Gliner. Identifying information will be collected and reported via the video camera. In the final edited version of the documentary, participants will be referred to only by their first names. However, other identifying information may be included in the documentary, such as the name of the village or school, the school district that students attend. The section of the documentary that includes the interviews of teachers and school administrators will include first name identification and generic title such as teacher, principal etc.

## **Participant Rights**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can refuse to participate in the entire study or any part of the study without any negative effect on your relations with San Jose State University. You also have the right to skip any question you do not wish to answer. You are free to stop the interview and leave the study at any time. This consent form is not a contract. It is a written explanation of what will happen during the study if you decide to participate.

If you want to be interviewed but do not want your face to be revealed then the interview will be filmed in a way that your identity will not be revealed (Either masking the face or filming at a camera angle that will not reveal your identity).

**Questions Or Problems**

For further information about the study, please contact Dr. Robert Gliner, Ed.D Leadership Program at robert.gliner@sjsu.edu

Complaints about the research may be presented to Dr. Arnold Danzig, Program Director Ed.D Leadership Program at Arnold.danzig@sjsu.edu

For questions about participants’ rights or if you feel you have been harmed in any way by your participation in this study, please contact Dr. Pamela Stacks, Associate Vice President of the Office of Research, San Jose State University, at 408-924-2479.

**Signatures**

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to be a part of the study, that the details of the study have been explained to you, that you have been given time to read this document, and that your questions have been answered. You will receive a copy of this consent form for your records.

You grant permission to the Researcher to use a digital video recorder to record the interviews.

Participant Signature

Participant’s Name (printed)	Participant’s Signature	Date

Parent Signature for minors

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name (printed)

Parent's Signature

Date

**Researcher Statement**

I certify that the participant has been given adequate time to learn about the study and ask questions. It is my opinion that the participant understands her/his rights and the purpose, risks, benefits, and procedures of the research and has voluntarily agreed to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent

Date

## Appendix E- Media Release Form

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**THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Office of the Chancellor • Communications Department**  
401 Golden Shore, 5th Floor, Long Beach, CA 90802-4210  
(562) 951-4670 / FAX (562) 951-4973



### Visual/Audio Image Release Form

I grant permission to California State University, its employees and agents, to take and use visual/audio images of me. Visual/audio images are any type of recording, including but not limited to photographs, digital images, drawings, renderings, voices, sounds, video recordings, audio clips or accompanying written descriptions. CSU will not materially alter the original images. I agree that CSU owns the images and all rights related to them. The images may be used in any manner or media without notifying me, such as university-sponsored web sites, publications, promotions, broadcasts, advertisements, posters and theater slides, as well as for non-university uses. I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished images or any printed or electronic matter that may be used with them, or to be compensated for them.

I release CSU and its employees and agents, including any firm authorized to publish and/or distribute a finished product containing the images, from any claims, damages or liability which I may ever have in connection with the taking of use of the images or printed material used with the images.

I am at least 18 years of age and competent to sign this release. I have read this release before signing, I understand its contents, meaning and impact, and I freely accept the terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone or E-mail address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of parent or guardian if under 18 years of age

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address (optional)

**Bridging the English Language Divide and Building Self-Confidence in Marginalized Communities: An Exploratory Study in Tamil Nadu, India**

**A documentary film produced for Ed.D. Doctoral Dissertation by  
Radha Aravamudhan**  
radha.aravamudhan@sjsu.edu  
Ed.D. Leadership Program  
San Jose State University  
One Washington Square SH 401  
San Jose, CA 95192-0064



## **Appendix F- Observation Protocol**

**The setting** of program delivery, i.e., where the observation took place and what the physical setting was like.

**The content of the intervention**, i.e., actual activities and messages that were delivered.

**Interactions** between implementation staff, project participants and community members.

**Behavior** of the student participants in class and that of the adults both in and outside the classroom.

**Capturing** emotions and non-verbal behavior in and outside the classroom.

**Be alert to** unanticipated events that might require refocusing on one or more evaluation questions.

## Appendix G- Organizational Letter of Support

### AID INDIA

Old No.45, New No.30, Pycrofts Road, 1st Street, Royapettah, Chennai - 600014.  
(Ph : 044-2860 2308, email: eurekachild@gmail.com)

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January .17. 2018

Radha Aravamudhan  
**Ed.D. Leadership Program**  
San Jose State University  
One Washington Square SH 401  
San Jose, CA 95192-0064


Dear Radha

I am pleased to write on behalf of Aid India in support of your exploratory study. We strongly support your study titled "Bridging the English language divide and building self-confidence in marginalized communities: An exploratory study in Tamilnadu, India."

Through this letter, we acknowledge that we will allow access to our learning centers, materials and program resources for your study.

We look forward to working with you in eliminating education disparities in our community and achieving equity.

Yours Sincerely

  
Dhamodharan Muniyan  
Joint Secretary  
Aid India  
Chennai, Tamilnadu, India

