

A Critical Study of English Language Curriculum for Vocational Courses at Higher Secondary Stage

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Introduction:

The Minimum Competency Vocational Courses were introduced at +2 stage of education in Maharashtra in 1990 by a scheme of Central Government. The scheme was introduced with the aims to provide vocationally skilled manpower, to promote self-employment and to restrict the flow to 'degree' education.

According to the revised curriculum of the vocational stream, it is divided into six categories: the Trade and Commerce Group, the Agriculture Group, the Engineering and Technology Group, Paramedical Group, Fishery Group and Food and Technology Group. The researcher who has been teaching English at higher secondary stage since long felt that the issue of curriculum design was an important issue and could be handled with appropriate strategy.

The National Curriculum Framework 2000 and 2005 have also stressed the need to look into the problem of curriculum design according to the needs of the students. The investigation started with a felt need to have separate curriculum of English for vocational courses. English being a compulsory language at higher secondary stage, it is an important subject. The nature of English language curriculum which is common to all the streams makes it necessary to give a serious thought to the goals, the aims and objectives, the coursebooks, the teaching methodology and evaluation.

Objectives

The researcher had set the following objectives for the study: u To take review of the newly introduced curriculum of English at Higher Secondary Stage in Maharashtra State. u To critically examine the newly introduced curriculum of English in terms of the needs of vocational courses at Higher Secondary Stage. u To suggest a new curriculum of English for Minimum Competency Vocational Courses at Higher Secondary Stage.

The Method and Tools of Research

George J Mouly says that no category of educational research is more widely used than the type known variously as the survey method. In the present research the researcher has used the normative survey method. The researcher selected Questionnaire and Opinionnaire as tools for data collection. These are

very effective and convenient tools of data collection. They suited the purpose of the researcher as he wanted reactions and suggestions from the teacher community which faces practical problems.

The researcher vigorously collected the facts and opinions of the teachers who are first hand source of information as they realize the problem in a better way than others. Opinions of the experts who are syllabus developers and coursebook writers were also gathered to give a concrete shape to the work.

As the population of English teachers teaching in Minimum Competency Vocational Courses in Akola and Washim districts was limited. The researcher decided upon to include all of them in the present study. Hence all the 40 English language teachers were included to obtain data through questionnaire. Opinionnaire was given to 10 experts from all over the state. The experts were members of the Board of Studies, resource persons and teacher trainers.

Conclusions drawn About the Syllabus

- The revised syllabus of English language at Higher Secondary Stage does not completely fulfill the objectives of teaching English for Vocational Stream.
- The needs of learning English language of the students joining Minimum Competency Vocational Courses are different from those of academic courses.
- The objectives of teaching English to vocational stream should be different from the same for academic streams.
- The revised syllabus of English at Higher Secondary Stage does not cater to the needs of Minimum Competency Vocational Courses students.

About the Needs

- The revised syllabus does not cater to the vocational needs of these students.
- The revised syllabus does not satisfactorily endeavours to meet the functional needs of these students.
- The revised syllabus does not provide opportunities to meet the linguistic needs of these students.

About the Coursebooks

- The new coursebooks of English fail to develop the oral communication skills needed by Minimum Competency Vocational Courses students.

- The new coursebooks do not develop written communication skills needed by these students.
 - The new coursebooks do not develop self-learning abilities.
 - The vocational stream needs a separate syllabus with specific objectives of communication skills.
 - The vocational stream should have different coursebooks from the other streams.
- About the Evaluation**
- The introduction of Oral Test at HSC Examination is a welcome decision.
- The vocational students should have Practical/ Internal Work in addition to the Oral Test.
 - The results of English at HSC Exam have been improved because of the newly introduced scheme of examination.
 - The Question Paper Format of English needs to be revised for Vocational Courses.
- About Teachers' workload**
- The workload of the English language teachers need to be increased.
- About Teacher Training**
- The English language teachers need training in teaching of English.

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