

Blended Learning: A Positive Outlook for the Development in Educational Framework of the Most Literate State

Anju Aravind M, Prof (Dr.) P K Aruna

Research Scholar Department of Education University of Calicut
Professor and Head Department of Education University of Calicut
Corresponding Author: Anju Aravind M

ABSTRACT: Kerala, God's own country is the helm of the Indian Education system by being the most literate state for a long time since independence. However, a small and relatively new state like Mizoram's progress to displace Kerala from being the highest literate state should be treated as a distress alarm to the so called Kerala's education policy makers. In fact, our article is a reality check on the present education system prevailing in Kerala and a wakeup call to those pseudo-educationalists who still chose to live in the reminiscence of the past glorious days. There is a need to overhaul our present educational frame work in order to still top the charts. We need to stress upon the skill developments of the next generation so as to ensure that the financial stability, we enjoy as a state with the skilled labour requirement in the middle east is met. So there is need to evade the old school thoughts to replace with the new stabilised ideas like Blended learning. This article entails a study conducted on class IXth of DBHSS Tanur to evaluate the possibilities and advantages Blended learning can offer to overhaul the Kerala education system.

Key words: Blended learning, Control group, Educational system, English language anxiety, Experimental group

Date of Submission: 13-02-2019

Date of acceptance: 28-02-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Kerala, god's own country which boast upon the highest literacy rate, free & universal primary education and low dropout rate of students even through it is in 16th position as far as comparison of per capita income of other states are concerned. These achievements are obviously commendable, but is this accomplishment really belong to the past? These laurels today are used as a covering up by the successive governments to mask certain deficiencies pertaining to the Kerala educational structure. For a successful state, economic growth is directly proportional with the educational and social development. But slow rate of economic growth of Kerala is no longer a secret. So how can we justify the 100% literacy rate of Kerala? Does literacy have any relationship with the educational system in the state? By going through these details, we really doubt. Kerala education once played a major role in attaining this pinnacle success of 100% literacy. But now, we still remain in the glory of the past. We need to be abreast with the latest developments in the field of education in order attain our lost glory. For accepting these changes, it is mandatory to know what our educational structure is all about.

1. **Kerala Educational System:** - Our educational system refers back to Vedic age where our traditional educational was based on "Sravana", "Manana" and "Nidhyasana" which implies listening, analysing and applying in life respectively. However, the present educational framework dates back to pre-British, British and post British period where we had a significant change from the caste based education.

1.1 **Pre-British Period:** - During the pre-British period which ended in the year 1793, education was limited to the owners of land, i.e. Nairs and Brahmins. During this period, education was based on caste and religion.

1.2 **British Period:** - During the British period, present Kerala was based on three regions, i.e. Travancore and Cochin, two princely states to the south and Malabar to the north which was a part of Madras Presidency since 1800. There wave only a few education institutions all over the state. The beginning of modern educational trace back to 1817 based on a royal rescript by Queen Gauri Parvathi Bayi under the advice of Resident Colonel Munro. It orders that the state should bear the cost of the education of all of its subjects in order to eradicate education backwardness. This was the start of free education. However, the major change occurred in the year 1832 which paved the way for English medium of education. While discussing about the

modern educational in Kerala, one should not forget the role of Dewan T Madhava Rao (1862-1874). He was instrumental schools in the allotment of Rs 2000/- per year for the establishment of vernacular Schools in every district. He also encouraged private agencies to start school through grant in aid at his time (Aiya 1906). This is similar to the policy of aided school which is presently followed in the state. As far as female education is concerned, government started its first girl school at Karamana in Trivandrum in the year 1859. It was in 1865, Government started to look into the education of backward caste when they started to give grant to school for backward communication and even opened 15 schools in 1895-96 alone (Aiya 1906). In the year 1904, the government declared free universal primary educational as the responsibility of the state. In 1910, government appointed a dieter of public instruction for the first time for the coordination of the educational activities in the state (Velu Pillai, 1940).

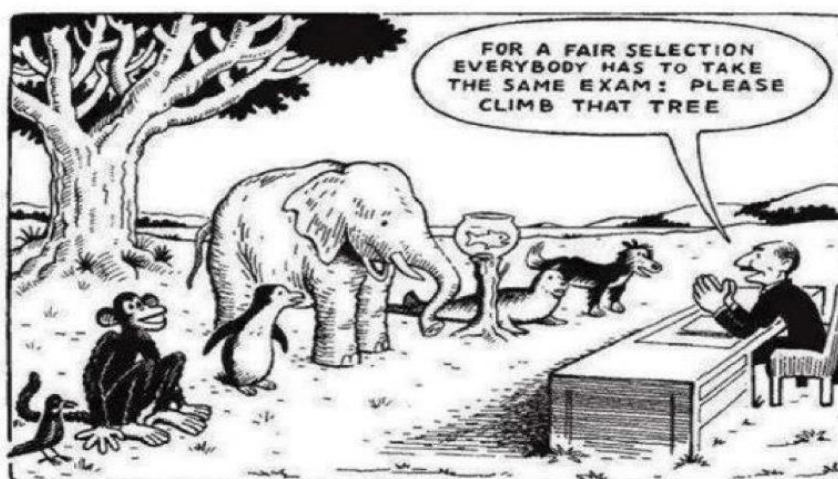
1.3 **Post British Period:** - Out of the three regions, Malabar was considered backward both educationally and economically post-independence. So, the main area of interest of the Government of Kerala was the upliftment of Malabar area. Major reforms in education had happened in the Kerala educational framework post-independence. One of it is in 1960-70, where entire school education in Kerala was made free. Some of the other reforms which transformed Kerala's literacy rate from 47.18 percent in 1951 to 93.98 percent in 2011 were the private secondary school feeding programme, Sarva Shikshya Abhiyan (SSA), in 2001 etc. The gradual rise of literacy rate of Kerala can be credited to the reforms which happened in the due course of time starting from pre-British period to till date. This is clearly evident from the table below in Table 1.

Table 1: Details of the literacy rate of Kerala from 1951-2011

| Year | Male | Female | Total |
|------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1951 | 58.35 | 36.43 | 47.18 |
| 1961 | 64.89 | 45.56 | 55.08 |
| 1971 | 77.13 | 62.53 | 69.75 |
| 1981 | 84.56 | 62.53 | 78.85 |
| 1991 | 93.62 | 86.17 | 89.81 |
| 2001 | 94.20 | 87.86 | 90.92 |
| 2011 | 96.02 | 91.98 | 93.98 |

(Census of India-2011)

1.4 **Present state of education in Kerala:** - The best way to elucidate the present educational framework prevailing in Kerala is depicted below by the picture drawn by R.K Laxman which do not require any further explanation.



Our Education System

The educational sector has become a source of income rather than a service to nation building. The rise in number of schools did not quite add success to the development of education as a whole. It ultimately gave emphasis on quantity rather than quality of students. Presently the majority of the schools in Kerala are private schools and now education had become a costly affair. The interest of government is also in a decline as it is

clearly evident from the reduced expenditure on education in addition to the decline in the number of government/aided schools. Moreover, lack of qualified teachers is the curse of the Kerala education system. I know this is a very rash statement to make. But there is no other excuse why the students in government/aided schools are on a decline and also why the pass percentage is very low and also the enrolment of students into private schools are on the rise. Lack of proper infrastructure is not the sole entity responsible for this fiasco. In addition to these factors, I personally feel there should be a well-defined curriculum which should be focusing on developing the curiosity, creativity and experimentation skills of the students rather than just memorising the entire syllabus. The teachers should aim developing the skills of the students rather than enforcing them with the stress of obtaining good grades/mark. The teachers should relinquish the old school teaching skills and embrace concentration on the development of individual skills of the students at first, in order to obtain a collective aim.

In order to improve upon the educational system, i.e. by entrusting up on the skill sets in the students, a breakthrough is required in the present state. Such a breakthrough in the educational field is possible by the introduction of Blended learning in teaching curriculum. The predominant method of teaching in primary and high schools in Kerala is the traditional lecture based method which limits the interaction and opportunities for students for learning the skills. Blended learning can be defined as a combination of traditional face-to-face learning and online activities. By blended learning, learners are empowered by online activities and the teaches can use face-to-face lessons to address the queries of the students. Blended learning and its use in the modern education system had been emphasised by many authors in their article/books. However, the objective of our article is to stress upon the benefits of Blended learning in the Kerala education system by conducting a comparative study on the English language anxiety in class IXth students of a government school.

II. OBJECTIVES OF PAPER

This paper attempts to study the impact of blended learning on the English language anxiety of standard IXth students of government schools in Kerala. The objective of choosing English language as the subject is because that English language is a foreign language for us and to calculate the effect of a proper teaching technique like Blended learning on the skill development among students. **1. Objectives**

- 1.1 To identify the level of English language anxiety of standard IXth students.
- 1.2 To compare the existing level of English language anxiety of standard IXth students.
- 1.3 To compare the effectiveness of Blended Learning Approach and Existing method of teaching in reducing English language anxiety of standard IXth students.

2. Hypothesis

- 2.1 There exists no significant difference in the existing level of English language anxiety of standard IXth students.
- 2.2 There is no significant difference in the mean pre-test scores of English Language Anxieties between experimental and control group
- 2.3 There is no significant difference in the mean post-test scores of English Language Anxiety between experimental and control group.

3. Sample selected for the study

The investigator selected 40 standard IXth students from DGHSS, Tanur, Malappuram district by applying simple random sampling technique.

III. METHODOLOGY

Before coming to the methodology on the conduct of the research parse, we need to know the term English language anxiety. English language anxiety is a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviour related to class room language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning arising process ((HORWITZ,, HORWITZ, & COPE, 1986). English language anxiety means the fear of apprehension associated with the learning of English language.

For calculating the effectiveness of blended learning programme on English language anxiety, two methods of instructions were considered. The traditional face to face mode and the blended learning mode. For this experiment, the class IXth students of DBHSS, Tanur were selected. Details of the sample selected for the treatment is a given below in Table 3.

Table 2:

| Details of the sample selected for the treatment | | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Group | Name of School | Boys | Girls | Total |
| Experiment Group | DBHSS, Tanur | 12 | 08 | 20 |
| Control Group | DBHSS, Tanur | 11 | 09 | 20 |
| Total | | 23 | 17 | 40 |

Since it is an experimental study, the sample selected was small in order to avoid difficulty in conducting the experiment. Thereafter 20 Students (11 boys, 09 girls) were randomly selected and assigned as control group and another set of 20 students (12 boys, 08 girls) as experiment group. Thereafter, separate teaching curriculum for two months was prepared for both the groups. Traditional face-to-face teaching for the control group and blended learning teaching for the experiment group.

IV. TOOLS USED FOR THE STUDY

1. Scale of English language anxiety (Aruna & Anju, 2016).

To analyse the English language anxiety of secondary school students of IX standard, I adopted the English language anxiety scale prepared and standardized by self and Aruna in the year 2016. The English language anxiety scale is a 5-point Likert scale. It has 40 items in total. The questions were prepared which measure all four components, namely, fear of communication, fear of negative evaluation, anxiety towards test and usage of foreign language.

The questionnaire was given to students before the start of the experiment and their opinion was taken in the response sheet. Both positive and negative statements were employed in this scale. For positive statement, scores of 5,4,3,2 and 1 were given for Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (DA) and Strongly Disagree (SDA) respectively. For negative statements, reverse scoring procedure was adopted. To ensure validity, equal weightage was given to all the four components of English language anxiety i.e. listening, reading, speaking and writing skills while constructing the tool. Thus, content validity was ensured for validating the scale. Thereafter, classes were conducted for the experimental group and control group as per the curriculum explained before. Then the same questionnaire was given to them after two months of class to check their English language anxiety scores.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULT

The statistical constants of Mean, Median, Standard deviation, Standardised skewness and kurtosis were calculated from the data obtained from the study undertaken for calculating the English language anxiety of class IX students as indices of normality of data. These indices are obtained by dividing the values of skewness and kurtosis by their respective standard errors. These calculated statistical constants are given in table 3.

Table 3:

The statistical constants of English language anxiety standard IXth students

| Group | N | Mean | Median | Std. Error of | Skewness | Std. Error | Kurtosis | Std. | | |
|--------------------|----|-----------|----------|---------------|----------|------------|----------|-------|------|------|
| | | Deviation | of | Error of | | | | | | |
| | | Skewness | Kurtosis | | | | | | | |
| Experimental Group | | | 20 | 109.2 | 109.5 | 19.08 | -0.27 | 0.51 | 0.53 | 0.99 |
| Control Group | 20 | | 108.65 | 113.5 | 24.69 | -0.58 | 0.51 | -0.61 | 0.99 | |

As you can see from the table above, it shows that for all the groups the calculated value of Mean and Median are clustered around the nearer scores. So, we assume that the group was almost normal. The 't' value of the pre-test scores of English language anxiety for both experimental and control group has to be calculated for confirming that there is no significant difference in terms of English language anxiety before the conduct of the experiment. The result for the same is given vide table 4.

Table 4

Result of Test of significance of difference in Mean Pre-test Scores of English Language Anxiety between experimental and control groups

| Variable | Experimental Group | | Control Group | | 't' test | Level | of | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------|-------|------|----------------|
| | Value | Significance | SD ₁ | N ₂ | | | | M ₂ |
| English Language Anxiety | 20 | 109.200 | 19.0 | 20 | 108.650 | 24.6 | .079 | N. S |
| 0 | 8044 | 0 | 945 | | | | | |
| | | | | 0 | | | | |

It can be seen from the table that the obtained 't' value is found to be not significant even at 0.05 level. So, it can be noted that there is no significant difference in the Mean Pre-test Scores of English Language Anxiety

between experimental and control groups. This indicate that both the experimental and control groups are almost similar and equivalent with regard to pre-test scores.

Now the result of the 't' value of the post-test scores of English language anxiety of both groups are to be calculated to find out the significance of difference. The result for the same is given below in table 5.

Table 5

Results of the test of significance of difference in the mean post-test scores of English Language Anxieties between experimental and control group

| Variable | Experimental Group | | Control Group | | 't' | | Level of | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------|------|
| | value | Significance | SD ₁ | N ₂ | M ₂ | SD ₂ | | |
| English Language Anxiety | 20 | 68.50 | 20.24 | 20 | 93.60 | 22.62 | 3.698 | 0.01 |

It can be seen from the table that the obtained 't' value is found to be highly significant even at 0.01 level. So, it can be noted that there is significant difference in the Mean Post-test Scores of English Language Anxiety between Experimental and Control groups. In the comparison between the post test scores of both groups, which have shown significant value, the lower mean scores are seen associated with the experimental group. This indicate the superiority of the experimental group over the control group in the case of English language anxiety.

VI. CONCLUSION

The major objective of this study was to find out the effectiveness of Blended Learning Approach over the existing method of teaching, i.e., Constructivist method on reducing the English language anxiety of standard IXth students. The present study has revealed the superiority of Blended Learning Approach over existing method of teaching. Now, we first need to accept the very fact that Blended learning have a direct link towards developing student's skill compared to the old school teachings. Mizoram is fast approaching towards the highest literate state status and in no time, it will surpass Kerala unless we carry out such reforms as referred above. The quote, "the longer you live in the past, the less future you have to enjoy" supplements our claim.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- [1]. Pillai, T. (1940). *The Travancore State Manual* (Vol. IV). Trivandrum: Government of Travancore.
- [2]. Aiya, V. (1906). *The Travancore State manual, I&II*. Trivandrum: Travancore Government Press.
- [3]. HORWITZ., E., HORWITZ, M., & COPE, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*.
- [4]. INDIA, G. O. (2011). *CENSUS OF INDIA 2011*. NEW DELHI: GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

Anju Aravind M. " " Blended Learning: A Positive Outlook for the Development in Educational Framework of the Most Literate State". " IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). vol. 24 no. 02, 2019, pp. 01-05.