

A Study on the Problems in Communication Skills Faced by the Teachers in the Secondary Schools of Namsai District in Arunachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Education always stands at the vanguard of progress in any society; however, the strength of an educational system largely depends upon the quality of the teachers. Teaching is sharing of knowledge, ideas, information, and skills. Students' performance depends on the teacher's ability to communicate effectively. An effective teacher is a good communicator. To impart in-depth knowledge and understanding to the students, the role of effective communication is central and indispensable to the teaching-learning process. Arunachal Pradesh, lying on the extreme North-Eastern part of the country, remains untouched by modern progress in the field of education. The study investigates the problems in communication skills, faced by the secondary school teachers of Namsai District, in Arunachal Pradesh, keeping in mind that, effective teaching requires not only the knowledge of the content but also the delivery skills and the ability to use the varieties of instructional tools to enhance motivation and learning of the students. The investigation found, lack of opportunities for training in communications skills, lack of knowledge and skill in the use of variety and modern instructional tools, lack of availability of instructional tools, lack of proper and well – equipped classrooms as major problems and challenges.

Key Words: Arunachal Pradesh, Communication skills, Communicative competence, Namsai District, Teacher, Teacher empowerment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is key to the development and progress of society and people. It is the process of gaining knowledge, values, skills, beliefs, and moral habits. A proper and good education is important for everyone as it provides stability, security, equality, self-dependency, economic growth, and development. It helps in the creation of a better society because an educated person is more likely

to develop better moral and ethical values. In this, the great role of teachers at all levels and spheres cannot be denied.

Arunachal Pradesh, "Land of the Rising Sun," as it is popularly known, lies in the extreme North-Eastern part of the country. Despite being the largest of the North-Eastern states, the literacy rate of Arunachal Pradesh in the early part of the 21st

century was 65.38 as per the 2011 census [1], while that of Namsai District, recognized as the homeland of the *Khampti*[2], one of the major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh was only 54.24%. This reality is not because of the lack of well-thought-out policies, plans, educational institutions, and infrastructures, but the lack of committed, well-trained, communicatively competent, and skilled teaching faculty. Only quality teachers will bring quality education. Education happens through proper communication. Problems in education, most of the time, are problems in communication. Failure in communication in the teaching-learning process is a failure in education. This article investigates the problems faced by secondary school teachers, focusing on their communications skills in the teaching-learning process.

2. ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN TEACHING-LEARNING

In an educational context, teachers hold a prominent place, and effective teaching is one of the key propellers for student and school improvement. However, the most important aspect of the educational process is the students and what they learn ([3]. In this context, only the effective communication skills of the teacher or educator can enhance the teaching-learning process. A good teacher, thus, understands the teaching process in depth. According to [4] communication is the transmission of messages in their completeness. In common understanding, it is sharing of information, knowledge, and ideas. Muste, points out that effective communication is based on the ability to express, ideas, views clearly and succinctly, with utmost confidence and clarity, always adapting the content and style to the recipients[5] clearly stating that perfect and complete communication happens only when a

complete message is sent and fully received and understood by an audience.

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION AND TEACHING

Communication and education are closely related because teaching is all about communication and the best educators or teachers are normally excellent communicators. Problems in education or teaching, most of the time, are the problems of communication. Good communication skills are, therefore, a prerequisite for those in the teaching profession. To impart in-depth knowledge and understanding to the students, the role of effective communication is central and indispensable in the teaching-learning process in achieving the aims and objectives of education in the lives of the students [6].

Teaching is sharing of knowledge and information and teacher effectiveness is focused on teacher behaviours and classroom processes that promote better student outcomes [7]. Teaching requires a lot of passion for communicating effectively and understanding the individual needs of the students [8]. Education, hence, is a process requiring the full participation of teachers and students for the best results. Duță, states that communicating effectively is an art, physical discomfort, disinterest due to the lack of teaching materials, excessive verbalism and anxiety, etc., can act as barriers to effective communication[9].

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Fahainis Mohd. Yusofa, made a study on the communication skills used by ESL secondary teachers. The collection of data from 18 class hours was through video recordings. The findings support better quality teacher communication, classroom

communication, communicative activities, and teacher-student interaction[10].

Sadiku, focused on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, graded according to the learning abilities. Teaching is based on the methods of communication, task-based, functional, and real-life situations, and these methods are realized through various strategies and techniques, according to the various language skills. The teacher, as a facilitator of teaching-learning, should find efficient ways to organize communication and learning activities, as learning is collaborative, in which the teacher plays the role of a guide, mentor, supervisor. The teacher helps the students to use modern techniques and tools for learning in the classroom and outside the classroom[11].

Pal et al., analyzed the opinion of the secondary school teachers regarding barriers in classroom communication. The majority believed barriers were faced due to the elements like communication process, classroom environment, the curriculum, and students and not the source of communication or the teacher[12].

Muste, points out that effective communication in an educational context is based upon the ability to express ideas, views, with confidence, clarity, and precisely, always adapting the content and style to the class. Communication processes involve both verbal and non-verbal as well as para verbal components. The impact is judged by the quality and depth of interaction. Good interaction between teachers and students can positively contribute to effective communication in the classroom, or else it can also create problems[5].

Ahmad, found that communication is a skill that involves a systematic and continuous process of

speaking, listening, and understanding. Skills like speaking, listening, and understanding verbal and nonverbal languages are acquired through observation and modelling our behaviour on what we see and perceive. However other communication skills are directly taught through education, practice, and evaluation[14].

Rawat, states that communication plays a vital role in the transfer of knowledge and skill. Focusing on verbal communication he points out that the success of the teaching-learning process depends on the teacher's knowledge and ability to create a friendly environment to facilitate sharing of ideas, opinions, feelings between students and teachers[15].

Khambayat, states that proficiency in communication skills can make an individual more versatile and competitive in the workplace, because communication means the transfer of messages, thoughts, feelings, thinking, imagination and ideas. Every student needs effective and impressive communication skills. In this, teachers play a significant role in enhancing communication skills among students, through innovative methods and strategies, quality instructional resources, thus preparing them to face future challenges. The author discusses core elements of communication skills like listening, speaking, reading, and writing[16].

Fatemeh Bambaeroo, conducted a study on the relationship between quality of teaching and the teachers' non-verbal communication and found that there exists a strong relationship between the quality of teaching and the use of non-verbal communication, and the students' academic progress and the teacher's usage of verbal and non-verbal communication[17].

Diloyan, made a study on teacher-student communication and its effects on students' level of enthusiasm to learn. The qualitative data collected through class observations and interviews with teachers and the principal revealed that the level of teacher-student communication and relationships have a great impact on the students' level of enthusiasm in the classroom. Results also showed that students feel insecure communicating with the teachers outside the school, where they need support and psychological help[18].

Fashiku, states the centrality and indispensability of effective communication skills, in the classroom teaching and learning process, in the attainment of educational aims and objectives in the school. The author discusses the concept of teaching and learning, factors affecting a child's growth, the concept of communication and communication process, forms of communication, and the barriers to effective communication. The study suggests reducing the impediments and barriers in classroom communication to ensure the attainment of teaching-learning goals[19].

Wahyuni, points out that honing both verbal and non-verbal communication forms, in transferring knowledge, skills and attitudes can improve the quality of learning and the academic as well as non-academic performances of the students[20].

Wordu et al., discuss strategies for enhancing Teacher-Learner communication and effective lesson delivery, through verbal and non-verbal, roles, strategies, the classroom, types, and features. Conclusions arrived at showed the need to adapt the applications of ICTS apparatus in the effective delivery of lessons in the classroom of the 21st century. Recommendations were made on the need

to run a synergy between the teachers/students on better ways of acquiring good communication skills for effective teaching to sustain feedback[21].

Sutiyatno & Magelang, aimed at finding the effects of verbal and non-verbal communications on students' English achievement. A quantitative method was used. Data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using regression. The result showed that both verbal and non-verbal communication gives a positive effect on students' English achievement, showing the importance of both forms of communication in the teaching and learning process[22].

Sakure, states that good communication skills are a prerequisite for those in the teaching profession. When messages are carefully planned and skilfully delivered, can motivate the students to take an active part in classroom discussions, share ideas, create and collaborate with others. To impart in-depth knowledge and understanding to the students, the role of effective communication is central and indispensable in the teaching-learning process that the teacher requires effective communication skills in conveying the aims and objectives of education to the students[6]

5. OBJECTIVES

- a. To investigate the problems faced by the teachers regarding communication skills.
- b. To study the facilities provided for the teachers for training in communication skills.
- c. To create awareness of the existing problems and suggest recommendations to remedy the situation.

6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a. What are the problems faced by the teachers in the teaching-learning process?

b. Are sufficient tools available to meet the requirements of effective teaching?

c. What are the factors affecting the communication skills of the teachers?

7. METHODOLOGY

The survey was done among the teachers by the researcher to investigate the problems in communication skills in the secondary school teachers. The methodology used for the research is the Descriptive method and the data collection is through a questionnaire. It is quantitative. The questionnaire containing 20 questions was made and circulated using Google forms. Questions are both closed-ended and open-ended to get a wider range of answers with which problem analysis can be done. The responses were collected and arranged. From the collected data we can analyze the communications skills of the teachers. The study gives an overview of the existing problems and challenges in teacher effectiveness in the district and suggests recommendations to improve the prevailing situation.

8. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Teaching is the noblest of all professions in the world, which teaches all other professions. However, unless the teaching faculty is endowed with knowledge of principles of education, content of the subject matter, competent, well skilled in the art of teaching, the goal of education will not be achieved. Teaching is communication and unless a teacher knows the principles and techniques of communication, he or she will not be able to do justice to the teaching-learning process.

Carefully planned and skilfully delivered messages can motivate students to take active part in the classroom discussions, share ideas, and collaborate with others. Thus, to impart in-depth knowledge

and understanding to the students, the role of effective communication is central and indispensable in the teaching-learning process that the teacher requires effective communication skills in conveying the aims and objectives of education to the students. Of the 42 respondents, 96.2% desired to get more opportunities for training in communication skills as shown in Fig.6 and 100% approve of improving communication skills for better teaching-learning as shown in Fig. 13. Connected to this 97.6% of them agree that students appreciate teachers who communicate well as seen from Fig.7.

Would you like to get more opportunities for training in communication skills?

42 responses

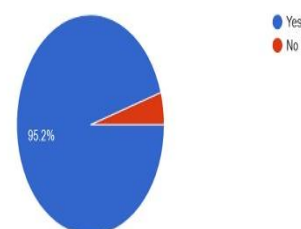


Figure 6: Opportunities for communication skills

Would you like to improve your communication skills for better teaching-learning?

42 responses

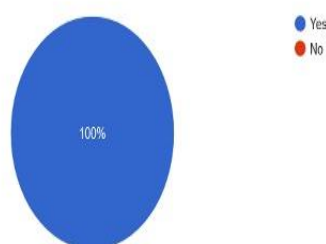


Figure 13: Effectiveness of communication skills in teaching-learning

Do students appreciate a teacher who communicates well?

42 responses



Figure 7: Students' appreciation of teachers' communication skills

Effective delivery of lessons in the classroom of the 21st century, the ability to adopt and adapt the applications of modern instructional resources of ICT apparatus is a necessity, to create synergy between the teacher and students both for delivery as well as feedback. Thus, ability to communicate also means the ability to use a variety of resources and communication techniques and methods. The majority of the respondents said that the blackboard was the usual method used by them in their teaching as shown in Fig.1. The use of instructional tools can always enhance the teaching-learning process and 100% of the respondents were positive in their opinion as seen in Fig.2 and 88.1% of the respondents expressed that they would like to be trained in the instructional resources (Fig.3) as well as classroom management opined by 66.7% as shown in Fig. 4.

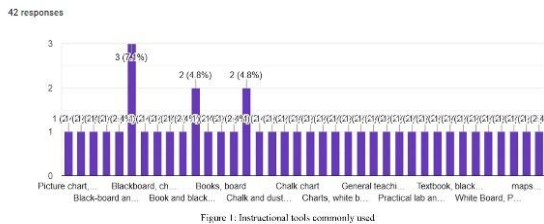


Figure 1: Instructional tools commonly used

Figure 3: Desire to be trained in the use of instructional tools

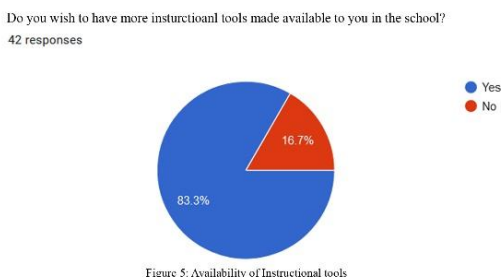
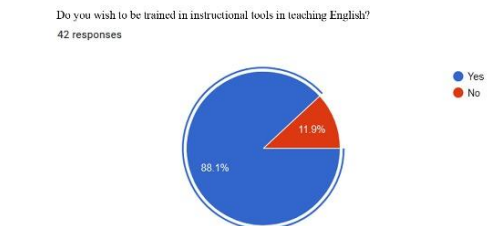


Figure 5: Availability of Instructional tools

Availability of instructional tools and resources is as important and necessary as knowledge of the content. Tools and techniques enhance the teaching-learning process as well as motivate and enthuse the learners. All the respondents (100%), as shown in Fig.10, opine that students are interested in class when instructional tools are used.



Figure 2: Teaching effectiveness with tools



Figure 4: Desire to be trained in classroom management

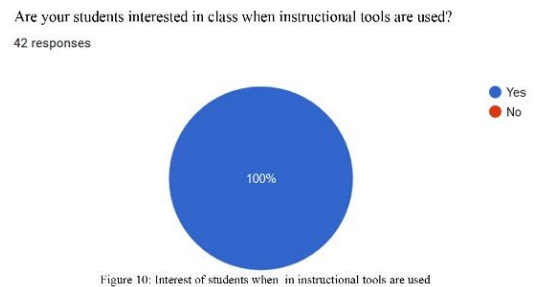


Figure 10: Interest of students when in instructional tools are used

In this context, 81.3% (Fig.5), of the respondents wished to have more instructional tools be available to them to make learning more interesting and enriching because 78.6% of them felt that instructional tools are not time-consuming as some think, as shown in Fig. 8. Though the use of instructional tools is interesting, and not time-consuming, however, the pressure of covering vast syllabus brings a big challenge. 61.9% of the respondents said that vast syllabus impacted their use of instructional tools as shown in Fig.9.

Are the instructional tools more time-consuming?
42 responses

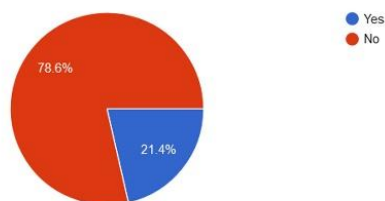


Figure 8: Time consumption in the use of instructional tools

The environment is an important factor in education and promoting a good and conducive environment at all levels is of utmost importance, particularly for appropriate teaching-learning process, growth and development. Ensuring a proper classroom environment, with good and proper facilities, tools, equipment, resources, etc. will enhance the teaching-learning process. 90.5% said that they needed a better classroom environment to use the instructional tools as shown in Fig.12.

Does the vast syllabus prevent you from using instructional tools?
42 responses

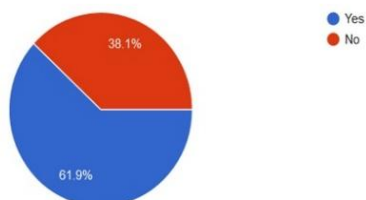


Figure 9: Impact of syllabus on the use of instructional tools

Teaching is communication and proficiency in communication skills can make an individual more versatile and competitive in the workplace, since effective communication in an educational context is based on the ability to express ideas, views, with confidence, clarity, and precisely, always adapting the content and style to the learners. To be a good teacher, one needs to be a good communicator to reduce impediments and barriers in the classroom and attainment of teaching-learning goals. Effective communication skills, therefore, enhance student understanding and learning. The majority of the

respondents, 97.6%, felt the need to improve their communication skills to enhance students' understanding as seen from Fig. 15, as it the key factor in raising the students' level of understanding.

Do you need a better classroom environment to use instructional tools?
42 responses

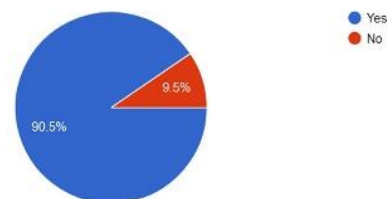


Figure 12: Classroom environment and instructional tools

Would you like to enhance students' understanding through your improved communication skills?
42 responses



Figure 15: Students' level of understanding.

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers play a vital role in forming young minds and hearts through their intervention in all educational contexts. They are architects and builders of the society of the present as well as the future. Their contribution or non-contribution, their impact or non-impact, their commission or omission, goes a long way in the building up of or destruction of society. Good, efficient, and effective teachers are the backbone of a good and value-laden society. Good teachers are good and effective communicators and good communication is the foundation of good teaching. In the survey conducted on the problems in communication skills faced by the teachers in the secondary schools of

Namsai District, the following points require attention and consideration.

1. Provide opportunities for ongoing in-service training in communication competence and classroom management skills.
2. Encourage training in effective use of both the traditional and modern methods and techniques in teaching and learning.
3. Ensure proficiency in communications skills to make teachers more versatile and competitive in the workplace through training in innovative methods, strategies, quality instructional resources.
4. Provide training in the applications of modern instructional resources of ICT apparatus both for delivery as well as feedback.
5. Promote proper learning environment in the educational institutions, through suitable and well-equipped classrooms to bring about quality in teaching-learning process.
6. Ensure training in communication competence, quality teaching and instructional resource management of all teachers at all levels.
7. Prepare curriculum-based resources and materials to improve and bring quality in teaching-learning process and make learning more participative, collaborative, interactive and interesting.

The suggestions and recommendations above, are the outcome of the analysis of the data collected with the view to rectifying the policies and systems, to have the desired results. Only an enlightened mind can inspire others because the key to success in the future is education.

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