

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ESL CURRICULUM POLICY AND ITS  
IMPACT ON PRACTICE IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
OF MADURAI DISTRICT, INDIA**

**LATHA D/O RAVINDRAN**

**UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA**

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OF MADURAI DISTRICT, INDIA**

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ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION**

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PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF MADURAI DISTRICT, INDIA**

Field of Study: TESL (Teaching English as Second Language)

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## **SYNOPSIS**

This study is driven by the need to examine the implementation of ESL curriculum policy and its implications for practice. Implementation of the ESL policy is an evolutionary process which is not always linear or predictable. As policy is transformed and adapted to conditions of the implementing unit, effective implementation may have different meanings in different settings. Gaps between policy planning and implementation often exist, despite careful planning of the educational policy.

Drawing on a qualitative design, various approaches such as interviews with the key stakeholders, interviews with students, document analysis, field notes and classroom observations helped the researcher to understand the salient features of the policy and its impact on instructional practices. Research question one on policy changes deals with major stakeholders' views on policy changes and the key concepts adopted by the government in implementing the policy. The second research question is related to the planning and the teaching of the curriculum, understanding of the curriculum and responses to policy changes. Research question three examines how the context of the school affects curriculum implementation.

Results of this study have implications for language studies in India as well as in other contexts where language teaching is concerned. Gaps were identified between what is envisioned and what happened in reality and teachers operated under different paradigms and did not totally agree with the policy. The teachers saw their roles differently and adapted parts of the policy. Teachers being passive implementers, a mismatch of intention and execution in policy was identified. Factors that affected implementation mostly related to the context of the school, culture, resource materials, teaching experience, pedagogy, professional development and goals of the policy.

# **IMPLEMENTASI POLISI KURIKULUM PEMBELAJARAN BAHASA INGGERIS DAN KESANNYA TERHADAP AMALAN PENGAJARAN DI BEBERAPA SEKOLAH RENDAH DAERAH MADURAI, INDIA**

## **SINOPSIS**

Kajian ini dijalankan kerana terdapatnya keperluan dalam meneliti implementasi polisi kurikulum pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris dan kesannya terhadap pengajaran. Polisi yang di implementasikan adalah proses evolusi yang tidak selalunya mendatar atau boleh dijangka. Implementasi yang berkesan mungkin akan mempunyai pelbagai makna di tempat yang berbeza. Ini adalah kerana polisi ini diubah suai dan diadaptasikan kepada situasi yang memerlukan. Jurang di antara perancangan polisi dan implementasi sering wujud walaupun terdapat perancangan yang terperinci dalam polisi pendidikan.

Dengan menggunakan reka bentuk kualitatif, pelbagai pendekatan seperti menemuduga pihak yang berkepentingan dan juga pelajar dilaksanakan. Selain itu, analisis dokumen, nota yang dicatatkan sebelum, semasa dan selepas penyelidikan serta pemerhatian di dalam kelas amat membantu penyelidik dalam memahami ciri polisi yang penting dan kesannya kepada amalan pengajaran. Soalan penyelidikan pertama merujuk kepada perubahan polisi dan menumpukan kepada pandangan pihak yang berkepentingan dan konsep utama yang diadaptasikan oleh kerajaan dalam mengimplementasikan polisi tersebut. Soalan kedua adalah berkaitan dengan perancangan dan pengajaran, pemahaman tentang kurikulum dan respon kepada perubahan polisi tersebut. Soalan penyelidikan yang ketiga adalah untuk mengetahui bagaimana konteks sekolah mempengaruhi implementasi kurikulum.

Dapatan kajian ini mempunyai implikasi terhadap pembelajaran Bahasa Inggeris di India dan juga dalam konteks lain di mana terdapatnya pengajaran Bahasa Inggeris dijalankan. Jurang didapati di antara apa yang dirancang dan realiti sebenarnya. Selain itu, tenaga pengajar yang beroperasi di bawah paradigma yang berbeza tidak begitu bersetuju dengan polisi yang sedia ada. Mereka melihat peranan mereka berbeza dan oleh itu mengadaptasi

polisi yang ada. Juga didapati ketidakselarasan antara niat dan pelaksanaan polisi. Faktor yang mempengaruhi implementasi adalah yang berkaitan dengan konteks sekolah, budaya, bahan pengajaran, pengalaman mengajar, pedagogi, perkembangan profesional dan matlamat polisi tersebut. Kajian ini mempunyai implikasi penting terhadap polisi dan amalan.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Overview**

This study concerns the implementation of ESL curriculum policy with special reference to the selected primary schools of India. Elmore (1992) defines “Curriculum Policy” as the formal body of law and regulation that pertains to what should be taught in schools. This study explores how the official ESL policy is implemented in classrooms in the primary schools of India and the educational problems the curriculum policies were attempting to address. The primary aim is to study the policy changes that have taken place in India and the issues that arise in implementing the ESL policy in practice.

Irrespective of their individual objectives for curriculum policy all countries need to ensure that children in primary schools meet sufficient levels of achievement to promote their prospects for development and poverty alleviation. This study is of special interest as it seeks to explore how the ESL curriculum is put into practice in the schools of India and the factors that impinge on curriculum implementation. In order to understand this phenomenon it is imperative to understand the principles on which the practice is based. The study conducted in Glasgow titled Partners in Learning (1994) posits that implementing the curriculum in practice will invariably involve the process of learning, the context in which the learning takes place as well as the teachers who are responsible in implementing the curriculum. Hence the study will attempt to illuminate the facilitating and the inhibiting factors that unfold in the process of the implementation of ESL policies in the classrooms.

The specific policy change related to the adoption of the ABL (ESL) curriculum which replaced the earlier use of text book is the place of Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) in an intergraded class system. The change was intended to promote academic achievement and enable students from disadvantaged schools to gain proficiency in

English. The new approach focused on the communicative aspect as opposed to the earlier grammar translation method. The rationale of such an approach was to give equal educational opportunities to students from rural schools and also to cater to the growing demands of English as it gained importance in all sectors. However such a change also entailed major changes in the ESL curriculum and teaching and planning of the curriculum. Many of the schools were not prepared to handle these changes. There is no explicit statement in the Indian constitution regarding the languages to be taught. This is viewed as omission by the constitution to avoid linguistic complexity faced by the nation (Mallikarjun 2002).

Historical, racial, political, religious, geographical, economic, and various other factors constantly influence the growth of a nation. Crossley and Watson (2003) recognized the vital importance of language with researchers working in such multicultural contexts and they emphasized the need for the researcher to understand the implications of these issues in the event of any complications arising due to the aspects of the language. The authors contend that the majority of the world's nations are multilingual and multi-ethnic. Thus they assert that the researcher being fluent to certain extent in the language of the country in which the study is conducted is an added advantage. The authors highlight the issues of being sensitive to culture and context as an important criteria in the field of comparative and international education. In this study the educational problems the policies were attempting to respond to will be explored in the Indian context. According to Khaparde (2002) comparative studies of classroom practices are significant as they contribute to an understanding of classroom issues confronted by the primary school teachers. He affirms that since both Malaysia and India are grappling with the issues of medium of instruction, undertaking research on socially relevant problems have implications for policy and practice.

Khaparde (2002) pointed out that policy research involves both theoretical and empirical analysis of the policy. While the theoretical research may include analyzing the

policy based on a conceptual framework, critique, and social problem the empirical evidence on the other hand may be collected through surveys, field studies/ experiments, and case studies. The author proffers that the size of the country, the variations in educational contexts and the size of investment in education has contributed to the low incidence of research based on policy formulation. Since the medium of instruction is a socially relevant problem in India and also an issue of immediate concern in school education it is worthwhile to conduct a research that focuses on the implementation of ESL policy of India.

To understand the complexities of curricular change with special reference to the English language in India, it is imperative to understand the nature of educational change. In describing the nature of educational change Fullan (2001) proffers that educational change involves “change in practice”. Fullan observed that innovation is multidimensional and at least 3 components are at stake in any curriculum policy implementation: the possible use of new or revised materials, the possible use of new teaching approaches and the possible alteration of beliefs. Similarly, with the changes in curriculum there will be a host of other issues that surface. Hence a related purpose is to examine the issues arising from the changes and the consequences they have for the teachers, students and the school. This will provide a comprehensive view of the ESL curriculum implementation in India.

Based on the above purpose, this study employs a qualitative research design to document the implementation of ESL policy at the classroom level. Document analysis and interviews with people involved in curriculum formulation will be carried out to study the curriculum changes that have taken place. The analysis will look at the approach adopted in dealing with the educational problems it was attempting to respond with respect to the English language as well as the changes in the focus over the years. Interviews with teachers will look into the issues arising in implementing the English curriculum in view of the changes in the curriculum policies in India.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

An ideal curriculum document will contain information about problems to which the curriculum is responding and a clear idea of what students are supposed to learn. Apart from this the rationale for selecting particular learning objectives and some prescriptions to achieve the objectives in teaching the content will also be detailed. However, an official curriculum does not have any merit unless it is translated in the classrooms by the teachers. A curriculum is considered as implemented only when it is taught to the students and hence implementation must take into account the realities of teaching. This view is best expressed by MacLaughlin (1987) who proffers that the end point of policy is in the classroom on a teacher's desk with the teacher who determines the effectiveness of policy.

The present study then is focused on the implementation of the ESL curriculum policy and the implications due to the changes in the policy. Issues that surface due to the changes in curriculum are possible to understand only when the teaching unfolds in the classrooms. Analyzing the educational problems the curriculum was attempting to solve requires probing beneath the surface of the document. In adapting the curriculum to suit the particular context in which teaching takes place the teacher is confronted with several issues. The intended audience, the way students learn, the school as a context, the best ways to teach and the extent to which the curriculum should be adapted require the teacher to make decisions which have implications for practice. The context of curriculum implementation is vital as it will illuminate the educational problems it was attempting to respond to. The emphasis given in the curriculum documents will reflect the problems it was attempting to resolve and the reasons for the subsequent shift in the policies.

In the Indian context, the educational policies are formulated by the constitutional authority. This forms the basis for the action of Governments at different levels. Being a democratic, multilingual country the medium of instruction is one of the most debated topics in Indian education. The following section is a brief discussion of policy formulation scenario in the context of school education in India.

### **1.2.1 The System of Education in India**

Since gaining independence in 1947, the University Education Commission (1948-49), The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53), and the Education Commission (1964-66) has played a significant role in the formulation of educational policies in India. The years 1968, 1986, and 1992 are historically considered as landmark years in the formulation of the country's education policy. The year 1968 led to the acceptance of a common education structure throughout the country. The same year the 10+2+3 pattern of education was introduced and implemented by the majority of the states in India. Although the framework formulated by The National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) continues to be relevant, changes were introduced in the NPE (1992) based on the experience gained in implementation and hence a revised Programme of Action (1992) was adopted. The year 1976 marked an important development in the form of the 42<sup>nd</sup> amendment of the Indian Constitution. The amendment included education in the concurrent list thus investing Parliament with the authority to legislate on education. This required a shared responsibility between the union government and those of the states. The Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan advise and assist on matters related to development of languages.

Based on the recommendations of the National Policy on Education (1968) most states in India now follow the 10+2+3 pattern of education (i.e., ten years of primary and secondary education (grades 1-10) followed by two years of higher secondary education and three years of tertiary education leading to the award of the first degree. A child is admitted to grade 1 at the age of 5 and expected to complete grade 5 at the age of 10+ years, grade 10 at the age of 15+ years and grade 12 at the age of 17+ years. For children unable to follow the formal school systems open schools are available as an alternative.

### **1.2.2 Education Policies and the Curriculum in India**

India is a union comprised of twenty-seven states and nine territories. The Constitution provides directives regarding the development of education throughout the country. The central government establishes broad education policies for school curricula development and management practices. These serve as guidelines for the states. In practice, the school system in India is the responsibility of the state government. The formulation of broad policy frameworks to ensure quality and set norms for utilizing resources through centrally sponsored schemes is confined to the central government. Achieving Universal Elementary Education (UEE) has proved an elusive goal for India. A major concern for the Government of India during the post-independence period was education as a factor vital to national development. The deliberations and recommendations of the several committees have formed the basis for the 1968 National Policy on Education (NPE) and the National Policy on Education Resolution of 1986.

The Five Year Plans are translated for implementation into detailed Annual Plans at the State level. Responsibility for Plan implementation is shared by the central and State/Union Territories governments according to the three Lists set out in the Constitution: State subjects, central subjects, and concurrent subjects. The process of curriculum development in India lies between the two extremes of centralization and decentralization. Guidelines regarding content and process of education are formulated by the National Policy on Education. These guidelines are further elaborated by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). However, the states consider whether to adopt or adapt the NCERT syllabi and the instructional materials. The NCERT curriculum framework is not enforceable by law in the states. As a result of the formulation of the National Policy on Education in 1986 there is a common structure of education by most states of the 10+2+3 system. There are eight years of elementary education (five years of primary school and three years of upper primary/middle schooling) and four years of secondary education (two years of general secondary and two years of higher secondary).

The National Curriculum Framework envisages the study of three languages at the upper primary and secondary stages: first, the mother tongue/regional language; second, Hindi or English (in the case of non-Hindi speaking states); and third, one of the modern Indian languages (English in Hindi-speaking states; Hindi or English in non-Hindi speaking states). There is no explicit statement in the Indian constitution regarding the languages to be taught. This is viewed as omission by the constitution to avoid linguistic complexity faced by the nation (Mallikarjun 2002).

### **1.2.3 The Three Language Formula, TLF**

The “Three language policy” was recommended in September 1956, by the All India Council for Education for Schools and in 1961, India adopted TLF. The TLF was further improved by The Education Commission, 1964-66 (known as the modified and graduated TLF). Pattnaik (2004) pointed out that the TLF originated as pressure from many fronts faced by the country as: (a) to preserve its unique linguistic and cultural identity, (b) to maintain unity among various linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups, (c) to facilitate the development of regional languages which were severely neglected under colonial rule, (d) to grant equal access to education, especially by children from lower socioeconomic groups, and (e) to bring modernization and economic self-sufficiency to a poor country.

However, Pattnaik (2004) noted the failure of TLF in its uneven and inconsistent implementation even after 40 years of its formulation. The author draws attention to the qualifications of lower primary grade teachers who teach English in those states that have introduced English as one of the reasons for the failure of TLF. Though the states provide in-service training to teachers, unlike the teachers of upper primary and secondary schools, teachers in the lower primary grades have not received English language training in their teacher preparation phase. Pattnaik (2004) viewed this reason

coupled with the lack of motivation and exposure to teach English to be a major cause in the failure of the TLF.

Although the TLF charted the introduction of only one language, the mother tongue or the regional language, in the lower primary grades and the introduction of the second language in the upper primary grades, the pressure from parents, the decision of the courts, and the competition posed by the English medium states has forced some states to adopt English as a language subject as early as the first grade. English is introduced as a language subject in third grade in the state of Tamil Nadu. Except in the case of linguistic minorities there is no explicit statement in the Indian Constitution regarding the language(s) to be taught in schools and in universities or the language(s) that will be used as the medium of education. This is viewed as an omission on the part of the Constitution makers to avoid the linguistic complexity faced by the nation (Mallikarjun, 2002). Nevertheless the Constitution recognizes Hindi as the official language of India and English as the associate official language.

There is no widespread disagreement in India about the need for learning English. The primary reason for the demand for English medium in education is the belief that students would gain proficiency in English. With the reorganization of the administrative units into linguistic states in the 1950s with one majority language in each state, other languages in that state became minority languages. A policy of language choice known as ‘Three-Language-Formula’ was evolved as a political consensus arrived at by the chief ministers to be implemented in the states (Aggarwal, 1991). The three languages are the regional language, which is the majority language of the state, English or Hindi or another Indian language. It is Hindi in the states where it is not the regional language. It is another Indian language in the states where Hindi is the regional language.

The three languages are called first, second, and third language in the curricular sense. Their teaching starts at different grades with different instructional hours and different weights in grade points or credits. The regional language is the first language; it is



taught from class one and is generally the medium of instruction. In English-medium schools the first language is English. English is the second language all over the country though its teaching begins in different classes in different states. In many states it is taught from a primary-level class and in some states from class one. All three languages are taught up to the end of the secondary level. In the higher secondary level there is no third language.

#### **1.2.4 Changes affecting ESL Curriculum**

The Three Language Formula or TLF emphasizes trilingualism in the official languages at the State and federal levels. TLF does not explicitly state which language should be taught as the first, second, and third. The majority language is the official language of the State. Thus multilingualism enabled by the language policy has its limitations. Many rural and rural-urban schools which adopted the ABL (Activity Based Learning) syllabus used the regional language for communicative, cognitive, academic skills and for culture acquisition. Hindi/English was used for communicative purpose in inter-lingual situations.

Students become literate but read mostly in regional languages. English language acquisition was therefore minimal. Though the ABL syllabus focused on activity based learning students who were not able to speak English were able to speak a few sentences. However their proficiency was limited and they did not acquire higher levels of proficiency. While the previous syllabus was structured with a textbook to complete, the new ABL allowed the students to complete the syllabus at their own pace and also allowed them to proceed to the next level regardless of their mastery of the English language.

Some of the specific challenges in implementing the ESL curriculum changes included providing equal opportunities to primary school children for their further education and employment. There were disparities between schools and to be able to provide the right

stimulus and bridge the gap between the rural and urban school in terms of resources needed immediate attention. Different types of schools exist within a particular State such as a.) English medium private/govt.aided elite schools, b.) new English medium private schools, c.) govt-aided regional schools, d.) govt. regional schools. English as an associate official language played a role in maintaining the diversity of India's language scene. The need for English language education arises from the multicultural nature of the society. However English was implemented differently in different States with each schools adopting different teaching methods and learning materials.

### **1.2.5 Evolution of India's Education Policy**

A number of challenges need to be addressed with regard to education policy by the Indian government. The key challenges are: (a) giving importance to improving access and equality to all levels of education, (b) increasing the funds for higher education, and (c) improving literacy rates.

After gaining independence India's school curriculum placed emphasis on inclusiveness and national pride. The Kothari Commission's (1964-6) sole aim was to formulate a coherent education policy for India. However a recently published report based on comprehensive field research PROBE 1999 (Public Report on Basic Education in India) claims that "the state of elementary education in India is dismal". The main pillar of the education policy was free and compulsory education for children up to the age of 14. Education was the sole means to bring about social and national unity apart from increasing productivity as well as to develop social, moral and spiritual values. The study of science and mathematics rather than social sciences or arts was historically given priority by the school curriculum. The perception remained until 1986 when the National Policy on Education (NPE) was announced by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. Change was needed to address problems of access and equality as well as to enforce the national and integrative character of education to maintain quality and standards.

Promotion of privatization and continued emphasis on secularism and science remained the key legacy of the 1986 policy. In line with its objectives the subsequent policies placed emphasis on different aspects of the school curriculum. The most important ones are:

Continuous upgrading of teacher's knowledge and competence was created by the restructuring and reorganization of Teacher Education 1987.

Revised textbooks and the levels of achievement at various stages were laid down by Minimum Levels of Learning (1991).

To encourage children to attend primary schooling a National Program for Nutritional Support (1995) provided cooked meals for children in class 1-5 to all government, government-aided and local body schools.

The District Primary Education Program (DPEP) 1993 emphasized decentralized planning and management, school effectiveness and improved teaching and learning materials.

Universal Primary Education by 2010 through micro-planning and school-mapping exercises was aimed by the Movement to Educate All (2000) thereby bridging gender and social gaps.

The 1986 National Policy recognized the need for a systematic program of non-formal education to ensure access to elementary education as a significant number of the young population still remained uneducated by the 1970s. Hence in 1992 the policy was re-examined with the continued focus on education for minorities and women with emphasis on the expansion of secondary education.

### **1.2.6 Current Challenges Faced by the Indian Government**

The Indian government in recognizing the need to ensure minimum levels of learning and to remove illiteracy introduced the scheme "Education for All" during 2001-2002. Under the scheme 1112 Elementary schools, 2106 Middle schools, 295 High schools

and 335 higher secondary schools have been opened between the years 2001-2005. As a result of these measures taken by the government the primary classes drop out rate of 16% in the year 2001-2002 reduced considerably to 8% in the year 2003-2004 and further to 6% in the subsequent year 2004-2005

Despite all these measures there is still a wide disparity between the rural and the urban school children in terms of access to quality education. There is no common school system and children are channeled into private government aided and government schools on the basis of their social hierarchy as well as their ability to pay. At the top end are English language schools affiliated to the upscale CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education), CISCE (Council for the Indian School Certificates Examination) and IB (International Baccalaureate) examination boards, offering well recognized curriculum. The less fortunate attend English language government-aided schools, affiliated to state-level examination boards, while the poor children attend poorly managed government or municipal schools. Thus the quality of education that young children receive varies widely according to their means and social standing.

While there is a common structure of school education throughout the country, there is variation in the division of the first ten years of schooling in terms of stages of education and medium of instruction. The medium of instruction becomes a crucial question considering the diversity of a country like India with multiplicity of languages and cultures. In the case of learners whose mother tongue is also the language of the region, the medium of instruction at the elementary and secondary stages is the regional language. Whereas, in the case of those whose mother tongue is different from the regional language, the mother tongue may be used as the medium of instruction during the first two years of primary education, and the regional language is used subsequently.

The Indian Education Commission and the National Policy on Education has identified the teacher as the single most important factor influencing the quality of education. The peculiar situation prevailing in India's primary schools with two sets of

teachers appointed as ‘regulars’ and ‘para-teachers’ who perform the same duties but are governed by different service conditions gives rise to serious implications regarding the quality of education at primary level. These conditions have a great implication on the quality of primary education and school effectiveness.

Conversely, there have been some serious concerns raised regarding the quality of these teachers. There are some 500,000 para-teachers in India and a majority of the states rely on these teachers. The provision of at least two teachers at the primary level was envisaged by the Operation Blackboard Scheme (OB) in 1987. The states which have high teacher-pupil ratio and high dropout rates at primary level rely on these teachers to overcome teacher shortage and to fulfill the promise of Education for All. Primarily the evolution and the growth of para-teachers could be attributed to several factors such as the need to provide universal access, to overcome the teacher shortage and the failure on the part of the government to fill the large number of vacancies for primary teachers; it has its own drawbacks on the quality of primary education.

Many children had been denied the opportunity of an adequate education due to the bareness of the ‘vision’ for elementary education combined with factors like poor quality government teachers with low morale (Kumar 1991; UNICEF, 1991; Varghese & Tilak, 1991). UEE (Universal Elementary Education) was not a success in reality while the ‘anguish that had inspired it (has) withered away’ (Kumar, 1991, p. 109). The failure of the Basic education is often associated to bottlenecks in implementation. Conditions such as inadequate dissemination of information, poorly trained teachers, lack of materials, and the failure to close the gap between school and environment still exists.

Some of the specific challenges in implementing the ESL curriculum changes included providing equal opportunities to primary school children for their further education and employment. There were disparities between schools and to be able to provide the right stimulus and bridge the gap between the rural and urban school in terms of resources needed immediate attention. Different types of schools exists within a particular

State such as a.) English medium private/government aided elite schools, b.) new English medium private schools, c.) government aided regional schools, d.) government regional schools. English as an associate official language played a role in maintain the diversity of India's language scene. The need for English language education arises from the multicultural nature of the society. However English was implemented differently in different States with each schools adopting different teaching methods and learning materials.

### **1.3 Problem Statement and Rationale of the Study**

Primary school teachers are faced with a great deal of pressure due to the student teacher ratio not being proportionate. Overburdened with more students in the classroom coupled with the lack of sufficient materials, training and support implementing the curriculum policy efficiently is hampered due to the mounting challenges faced by the teachers. A Study by the National Institute for Educational Research in Japan (1999) identified the barriers faced by the teachers in both Malaysia and India. The pressure of population on schools and the lack of institutionalized mechanism for in-service teacher education hinder effective curriculum implementation. The study reveals a lack of support materials and resources and a wide disparity between the urban and the rural schools in the Indian context.

The relations between policy and practice embody a dilemma. Under this circumstance the government devises instruments to encourage implementation but they help only if utilized well by those with the problem whose capability is often weak. This implies that the realization of policy in practice actually depends on the fit between capabilities that support the implementation and aims. Different schools and teachers did different things with the same resources, which resulted in different effects on learning. Resources alone do not influence effects on practice; rather the quality of use is influenced

by the practitioners' understanding and circumstances that influence that understanding (Cohen, Moffitt, & Glodin, 2007).

Congruent with this, Hargreaves (1994) postulated that teachers at the primary school work in a culture "with high sensitivity to unpredictabilities and particularities of context, to the importance of interpersonal relationships, and to the successful completion of the tasks-in-hand" (p. 104). He advocated that primary teachers being faced with the limitations of resources have to develop strategies to make the best of classroom space for effective teaching and learning to take place. Verspoor (1992, p. 237) cited a review of 19 developing countries which found "an almost universal neglect of implementation issues".

There is often a gap between policies and their implementation. Incidentally plans devised by the Government encourage implementation which is not beneficial unless they are utilized well by those with the problem. However, more often the realization of policy in practice depends on the fit between the capabilities that support these implementations. Therefore the relations between policy and practice embody a dilemma (Cohen et al., 2007). Different schools and teachers utilize the resources differently and hence the effect of policy on practice varies significantly. As McLaughlin (1987) stated, policy cannot mandate what matters to outcomes and effective implementation requires a strategic balance of pressure and support. He proffered that programs fall short of expectations and also cause enormous variability in what constitutes a "program" in communities across the nations. The author illustrates that they not only vary in their definitions but also in seriousness and tractability.

In relation to the above McLaughlin (1987) contended that policy cannot mandate what matters as the success of the policy depends on two broad factors: local capacity and will. He put forth that though capacity is a difficult issue it can be addressed by policy by means of providing the necessary resources; however, will or the attitudes, motivation, and beliefs underlie an implementer's response to policy. The author emphasizes that will or motivation is influenced by other external factors which are largely

beyond the reach of policy. Both pressure and support are identified as factors necessary for successful implementation for pressure helps to focus attention on a reform objective and support, on the other hand, enables implementation. The author in highlighting the problematic nature of implementation says that because implementation takes place in a fluid setting, problems are never solved. New issues, new requirements and new considerations emerge as the process unfolds.

As such implementation is an evolutionary process which is not always linear or predictable. In the implementation process external factors recede in importance and internal factors such as commitment and competence dominate. Due to the very nature of the implementation process which creates new reality unanticipated problems or counter-cyclical consequences emerge. As policy is transformed and adapted to conditions of the implementing unit effective implementation may have different meanings in different settings. The negotiation process continues as policy resources and objectives are played against a dynamic institutional setting. This results in the nature of the bargain changing over time within settings and it will also differ across the different units of the policy system (McLaughlin, 1987).

In the same vein McLaughlin (1990) summarizes the findings of the Rand Agent study that change efforts should sufficiently challenge teachers and kindle interest and resources alone do not secure successful implementation. A one-to-one relationship is assumed to exist between policy and practice. However the study demonstrates that the nature, amount, and pace of change at the local level are a product of factors which are beyond the control of policy makers. Moreover these factors change over time and create strategically different settings for policy. Local practices do and will vary significantly among sites and over time. The study identifies three significant interpretations in support of planned change. The significance of teachers' motivation, the role of external consultants and the structure available to provide resources are emphasized in the study.



The above study emphasizes that the important lesson in policy making is that removing constraints or obstacles does not ensure effective practice. The study underscores the contribution of teachers' perspectives as informants and guides to policy and the challenge lies in understanding how policy can enable and facilitate effective practice.

Research on the process of curriculum implementation gained prominence in the late 1960s and early 1970s. By the late 1970s it was realized that assessment of planned outcomes was not sufficient to evaluate the program. This could also account for the failure of some of the innovations. The assumption that "the move from the drawing board to the school or classroom was unproblematic, that the innovation would be implemented or used more or less as planned, and that the actual use would eventually correspond to planned or intended use" (Fullan & Pomfret 1977) was questionable.

The rationale for initiation of curriculum implementation studies is best described in Fullan and Pomfret's (1977) review of the first decade of research in this area. The reasons suggested can be summarized as follows:

- a. To know what exactly has changed it must be conceptual and measured.
- b. To understand why changes fail it is imperative to study the problematic aspects involved in bringing about a change.
- c. Failure to do so would result in implementation being ignored or confused.
- d. Implementation of innovation must be examined separately to interpret learning outcomes.

As such this study would examine the policy changes in India and the issues arising due to the changes in the curriculum particularly with respect to the English language. Summarizing Fullan's quote (1982) "fidelity" is likely to be achievable within limits as "mutual adoption will take place when it is implemented in the classrooms by the individual teachers." This quote by Fullan demonstrates the problematic nature of the curriculum implementation. The question addressed in this study is the policy changes that

have been undertaken in response to the educational problems in India and the issues arising due to the changes in curriculum policies. This gives insight into the issues that arise in implementing the policy in a country with different social context.

Educational change is an implementation driven process and this study adopts the mutual adaptation concept of curriculum implementation. In adopting “mutual adaptation” stance to curriculum the study has the potential to illuminate what has happened in the context that was studied and in this case the policy changes in India. Mutual adaptation assumes that implementation involves adjustments in the needs, interests and the skills of the participants. This is reflective of the environment in schools as teachers and students make adjustments along the process in which the curriculum is implemented in the classrooms. As Berman and McLaughlin (1976) advocated, effective and desired changes could not be brought about by straightforward application of the curriculum. “Specifically, the change agent study concluded that successful implementation is characterized by a process of mutual adaptation” (McLaughlin, 1976, p. 340). The process of planned curriculum change is complex which is often disregarded by those adopting the fidelity orientation to curriculum.

It is evident that India is faced with constraints in adopting the primary school curriculum despite the government measures to successfully implement the curriculum. Thus implementation could no longer be seen as a straightforward process which could work well provided the environment is conducive to ensure smooth implementation. On the contrary several other factors come into play and successful innovation to a large extent depends upon the social, historical, political and ideological factors that make up the school. Hence, adapting a curriculum is seen as an activity that goes on during implementation and is viewed differently by the different people involved in it.

In the Indian context there exists a gap between policy rhetoric and practice. Although there was widespread concern within the policy community itself (cf. Dhingra, 1991) and among analysts (e.g., Jain, 1990; Khan, 1989, as cited in Dyer, 2000) with the

failure to implement policy successfully there exists very little documentation on the procedures adopted to implement policy. As Dyer (1999) illustrated, ‘policy’ in the primary education section in India derives from three types of instruments: the national, 5 year development plans; national policy; and the constitution which promises universal free elementary education. However, implementation is a routine ‘follow-on’ within the administrative structures of three tiers of government: from the center, to the state or union territory, through local government at the district and lower levels. The author draws attention to the three problems with the system: alienation of the child; unsuitability of the formal structure of working children; and bareness of the school facilities. The strategy adopted to rectify the faults with a child-centered approach focusing on activity based learning, a comprehensive review of non-formal education and also to bring about substantial improvement in school facilities with a phase called ‘Operation Blackboard’.

The ‘Operation Blackboard’ emanating from the 1986 National Policy on Education was unsuccessful in its intention to provide minimum norm of facilities for primary schools. The lack of success is attributed to the highly centralized top-down mode of implementation. Implementation was viewed as something straightforward and centrally prescribed which could be translated directly from the blueprint. However the nature and the scale of challenges India faced in its pledge of Education for All has been challenging for various reasons. Though the role of teachers has been widely recognized in all the policy documents and has been reiterated in reality, it tended to happen neither in practice nor in theory. The teacher component showed discrepancies across the different sites which failed to assure the normative component of Operation Blackboard. The teaching-learning aids were not provided for teaching language (Dyer, 1999). Dyer pointed out that the teachers had only 3 days of orientation to the policy organized by the state; however the training sessions had not been synchronized with distribution of materials and the teachers did not understand how to implement the new policy ideas to their working situations. The inspectors were equally unclear and no follow-ups were held for further clarifications.

Observations in the school level had revealed long delays in the implementation of Operation Blackboard.

As Dyer (1999) proffered, the difficulties arose from a wide range of interconnected reasons which included pre-service training, the lack of fit between curriculum content and the environment of the children as well as lack of pedagogical support and teaching-learning aids. As Dyer (1999) illustrated, the policy underlying Operation Blackboard is that improvement in educational quality could not occur without the necessary infrastructure and therefore the context in which the policy will operate is equally important. The depth and the complexity in the implementation environment must be considered and planned for in the policy.

According to Khaparde (2002) systematic efforts have been made to promote educational research in India and the most prominent among them are the Surveys of Research in Education (Buch, 1974, 1979, 1987, 1991; NCERT, 1997). However, the author points out that by the period of first survey, the maximum number of studies were related to educational evaluation and examination which was followed by the development of tests and measurement. The period of 1987 to 1999 has a significant place in the educational scenario of developing countries including India. Therefore, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of educational research in India 182 studies conducted from 1987 to 1999 in the field of elementary education were analyzed. Khaparde (2002) reported that the analysis of these studies indicates that about 24% of the studies used a sample size of less than 100 and in about 20% studies the sample size ranged between 100 and 300. About 36% studies in elementary education were related to children and 27% to teachers. Hence the author concludes that the use of the case study method and other qualitative approaches has been negligible. Less than one per cent of the studies employed the qualitative approach. Khaparde (2002) asserted that a large number of studies have been quantitative in nature and there has been little effort to analyze the school or classroom processes. The author reiterates the need for research with consideration to the

local/regional variations as the majority of these researches have used the concepts and tools developed in the West and hence have little value for policy making as they are not applicable to the local context.

Classroom teaching has much in common across different contemporary education systems. The primary school teacher besides being skillful in motivating and being able to communicate with students should be able to identify with the learners to view the world from their perspective (Whitebread, 2000). Teachers are at the forefront of education policy implementation and as such are central for the consequences of reform. In fact some feel teachers are the most critical factor in determining policy outcomes. “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think-it’s as simple and as complex as that.” (Sarason, 1971, p. 193). As McLaughlin (1987) pointed out, the environment within which implementation takes place is important for both the individuals and the institution. He advocates that since implementation takes place in a fluid setting implementation problems are never resolved. As the process of implementation unfolds, new issues, new requirements and new considerations emerge and in his view this process is not always linear. McLaughlin (1987) observed that effective implementation will have different meanings in different settings as the policy is transformed and adapted to conditions of the implementing unit.

To enable teachers to implement innovative practices, however, their input and ideas have to be taken into consideration. However an international comparative study of school curriculum done by the National Institute for Educational Research (1999) proves otherwise. This study indicates that in India teachers receive information but are not really involved in planning the curriculum. Hence teachers are not given ownership over curriculum decisions.

Gaps between policy planning and implementation often exist, despite careful planning of the educational policy. Research on implementation around the world indicates that many educational reforms designed to improve the quality of schooling have been

more rhetorical than substantive in their impact on school and classroom organization (Fullan, 1991).

The objectives of the policies are sometimes reconciled characterized by “grand pretensions, faulty execution, puny results” (Elmore 1997, p. 241). Their beliefs are shaped in part, by time and context and have a socio-historical dimension. Classroom practice and teaching decisions are influenced by the teacher’s educational and pedagogical beliefs and values as cited by Pajares (1992). This variation, according to Pajares, could also account for the gap between policy and practice as policy is interpreted differently by the teachers teaching the language.

In the Indian schools the use of para-teachers promoted by the central government as a cost effective measure for overcoming the shortage of primary teachers has led to a situation whereby the promise for quality education has been compromised. Though the scheme has drawn much criticism from various quarters the National Committee rationalizes the use of the para-teacher scheme. The support rendered by the National Committee for the para-teacher scheme which justifies the scheme for economic reasons further negates and ignores the National Policy on Education which emphasizes improvement of working conditions including the social and economic status of teachers. This goes against the spirit of the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) which left no scope for such a scheme. These ‘teachers’ who are identified by different names in different states have become an integral part of the primary education system. They are less qualified than the regular teachers and conditions such as pre-service training are considered not essential in their case. The objective of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) which placed high priority on teachers and the quality of their teaching was seriously neglected with the implementation of this scheme.

Studies conducted by Pandey and Raj Rani (2003) testified to the fact that the teaching-learning process adopted by the teachers were largely textbook based and was neither child-centered nor activity-based. The transactions in the classroom were dull and

ineffective with little understanding of content and pedagogy and lacking the enthusiasm, involvement, continuity, and dynamism required for the quality improvement of education. Without the proper training and the skill required the approaches adopted by these teachers remained largely ineffective as the teachers were less proficient with the formal orientation on the methodology of teaching primary classes.

The government in its report has expressed serious concerns over the quality of education provided by these teachers. Para 3.11 of the Hundred Forty Ninth Report of the parliamentary committee on demands for grants 2004-2005 of the Department of Elementary Education and Literacy (MHRD) presented to the Rajya Sabha on 20 August 2004 states that the:

Committee is a little apprehensive about the feasibility of appointing education volunteer/para-teachers for imparting quality education to the children. The Committee strongly feels that a child needs to be tended under well-trained hands to initiate him into the art of learning. The Committee is aware of the fact that there was a problem in getting regular teachers in remote and inaccessible habitations. It, however, emphasizes the importance of trained teachers for child education. The Committee is happy to know that the Department had made a provision of pre-service induction/ training as well as in service training of Education Volunteers even at block/cluster levels. However, the Committee finds that due to a shortage of teachers, not to speak of trained teachers/qualified resource persons at block and cluster levels, the aims of the program are not being achieved. (para 3.11, p. 6)

Thus it is evident that the quality of education has deteriorated with the para-teacher scheme as an alternative measure of teacher recruitment. There also exists a wider gap between the rich and well educated and the poor children as the poor children are being thrust with teachers of poor quality. Though the scheme may seem a viable option under some circumstances, replacing the regular teachers with para-teachers has proven to be detrimental for the quality of education and effectiveness of schools. Hence this study in

understanding and identifying the factors that have affected the implementation of the ESL policy in India would be a valuable addition to expand the knowledge on the literature for future implementation efforts.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of ESL curriculum policy and its implications for practice. In examining the implementation of ESL curriculum policy this study will look at the ESL policy changes that have taken place in India and the circumstances that contributed to these policy changes. A related purpose would be to examine how the ESL policy changes affect the teaching and the planning of the ESL curriculum. In examining the changes that have occurred the study seeks to understand the issues that arise from the ESL changes and how the context of the school affect curriculum implementation in practice.

Based on the above purposes, the research questions in this study are as follows:

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

- 1) What are the ESL policy changes that have taken place in India since 1990?

To what educational problems were these policies attempting to respond?

- 2) How do the curriculum policies affect the planning and the teaching of the ESL curriculum?
- 3) In what way does the context of the school affect ESL curriculum implementation in practice?

#### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

Policy is always in a state of flux as it is being interpreted continually. The fragmentation in the policy process arises due to the different interpretation given to it by the teachers who implement it in schools (Scott, 2000). Discrepancies exist between policy



planning and implementation and this study on the implementation of ESL policy in India will attempt to look into the educational problems the policy was attempting to address. The study would provide insights into the approaches that characterized the change efforts and the consequences for the teachers, students and the school. The study will be a significant addition to the literature as it can provide insights into the effects of policy implementation in classrooms, and the issues that arise in curriculum implementation in India. The study is important as it can shed light on the concerns shared by India to aspects of curriculum organization, subject knowledge and teaching methods adopted by the teachers as well as the impact of policy changes on educational practices. The study will also focus on how classroom practice influence policy and the findings will be useful to discuss policy process that may influence the direction of future policy execution in classrooms.

Similarly Pratt (2003) posits, ‘good’ research in education policy identifies what works and what does not. This research will hence seek to provide an explanation on the implementation of ESL policy and the circumstances within which the policies were implemented in India. Identifying the unintended and undesirable consequences of policies would be helpful to create a better policy. The author in highlighting the significance of policy implementation studies proffers that implementing the solution is not the same as solving the problem. Therefore this study would be significant as the question of whether the policies solved the educational problems it was attempting to respond is also addressed in the study. The interpretation of the events in the implementation of ESL policy will generate some insights as to the extent to which policies can be implemented under different circumstances. This information can be helpful in the formulation of new policies for India.

As illustrated by Cohen et al. (2007) the divide between policy and practice occurs due to the gap between the street-level bureaucrats and policy makers. Street-level bureaucrats are portrayed as knowing things about their clients, work and their

circumstances that policy makers do not know. On the other hand policy makers are portrayed as knowing things about political goals, policy instruments, and the policy-making process that are crucial to policy formulation which practitioners are unaware of. The authors in demonstrating the relationship between policy and practice postulate that policy and practice depend on each other in continuing interaction. Policies cannot specify practice but rely on practitioners to realize them in varied situations, while practitioners depend on policy to frame action and offer resources. While the policy makers depend on the people and the organizations which have the problem to solve it, people who have problems depend on policy makers to offer the resources that may enable a solution.

Researchers have demonstrated the worth of curriculum implementation studies as an entity which has given rise to a new dimension to curriculum implementation studies. While the earlier researchers assumed adoption as the biggest barrier to educational change focusing on overcoming initial resistance to change, curriculum implementation studies have shed light on new perspectives and hence added a significant dimension to studies of change. However, the findings by researchers that the curriculum was never really implemented as planned but merely adapted by the users is a significant addition to literature on implementation studies. Though the term “implementation” has different meanings assigned to it the mutual adaptation perspective focuses on how the planned curriculum is shaped by the adapters as well as the situational context within which it was adapted.

Curriculum reform policies and implementation are often put together under the assumption that they can be replicated in schools. Yet school settings are complex and it is impossible to identify those problems into discrete variables that can be described and controlled as specific ‘implementation problems’ (Hargreaves, 1996). While Malaysia adopts a centralized curriculum, India’s curriculum development lies between the two extremes of centralization and decentralization. Hence the focus of the present study in attempting to document and understand the issues that arise out of the changes in a different

context will be a valuable addition to the literature. This is useful to both teachers and policy makers to seek ways to redress the problem that may arise in translating the policy into practice, in a decentralized curriculum setting.

Cohen et al. (2007) offer good advice in asserting that policies can cause incompetence in practice because ambitious policies require practitioners to acquire new capabilities which in turn could make it difficult to mobilize resources that express mutual dependence and cooperation. Policies create incompetence either because they are ignorant of practice or because their goals are ambitious. Such policies in their opinion create a scenario whereby the capability required for implementation lies nowhere, and implementation depends on its invention. The means to achieve policy aims they posit lie in practitioners' capabilities, the instruments the policies deploy and the environments of policy and practice.

This study is significant as it attempts to understand the manner in which policies are variously implemented in classrooms by the individuals in India. The dilemma in language policy is universal. This is realized in the Three-language formula (TLF) which was arrived at during an important conference of the Chief Ministers of Indian States in 1961. Under the TLF students in primary schooling learn in their mother tongue and the regional language where the mother tongue is different. They also learn Hindi and English or any other modern European language. The underlying belief is in the unique strengths of the child's home language as the best means of literacy and making Hindi as the nation's link language, whereas English will play the role of the most powerful "library language" (Education Commission, 1966). However it has not been a uniform success. While several state- level schooling systems operate a two-language formula, other states have failed to uphold the formula's spirit in their choice of the third language.

Many Indian states in responding to the demands of providing English language have reversed their policy of not allowing English into early years of elementary school. English is introduced as a compulsory subject from class 1, 2, or 3 of all State- run schools.

However changes are ineffective due to the deficiency in resources and materials. The study conducted by the National Advisory Committee (NAC) in 1993 has identified problems confronting the teachers. In its report the inability to distinguish between information and knowledge, non-participation of teachers in the various curriculum development processes, excessive dependence on experts and incomprehensibility of textbooks are highlighted as some of the problems faced by the teachers. The study emphasizes the need for local languages in education because they are the most accessible to the people as they have local relevance and play a role in enhancing self-determination as well as encouraging creativity. On the other hand there is a need in every country for an international language such as English as a means to access modern science and technology.

In this context it is noteworthy to highlight the Cohen et al. (2007) views on capability and knowledge that is crucial to implementation. Capability is considered crucial as it concerns the resources implementers bring to policy. Capability in their opinion either enhances or weakens the will to implement policy by either improving or enhancing acquisition skills and knowledge that are crucial for implementation. Policies tend to depart from current practice when tougher requirements create more incompetence which implies a need for more competence by teachers who are more often not equipped with that kind of capability.

The most comprehensive reviews of educational innovations in developing countries paint a very dismal picture of their efforts. Adams and Chen (1981) describe educational innovation as 'doleful' and mainly characterized by failure. The fidelity approach to curriculum adopts a structured approach to implementation whereby teachers are given explicit instructions about how to teach. Little provision is provided for the various contexts in which it is used. The fidelity approach maintains that central planning is necessary to eliminate inefficiencies and slippages at the school level. Besides, specialists are needed to produce comprehensive and up-to-date units. However as Fullan posits,

mutual adaptation is likely to take place as teachers interpret and implement the curriculum. Fullan (1997) stated that the macro-context of the national policy and the way in which it is implemented in the micro context of the individual schools varies significantly.

As Holliday (1994) puts it: “English language education [in school] is supported by decisions already taking place elsewhere, which place the classroom as a culture, within a wider complex of cultures between which there are many complex channels of influence” (p. 15).

Curriculum implementation studies have gained significance as due recognition has been given to the fact that how a curriculum is implemented is equally significant to its outcomes as it is to its content. The mutual adaptation model views curriculum change as less linear in its process with an active “consumer” at the end. This concurs well with the theoretical framework of the study in which change is viewed as unpredictable considering the nature of the various participants involved in enacting the curriculum. The role of the teacher is very crucial in shaping the curriculum to meet the local contextual demands . The mutual adaptation perspective recognizes the role of the teacher in successful curriculum implementation. Adapting the curriculum to a particular setting is more relevant in this context as the study involves implementing curriculum in different social settings and hence adaptations occur pertaining to the context in which the curriculum is enacted.

The input for educational policies in the Indian context is drawn primarily from the discourse generated by various commissions constituted by the governments at the states and the center. Except for broad policies, most of the strategic policies and programs in the education sector are made through Five Year Plans in India. One of the important sources of data used for policy formulation and measurement of change over the period of time is drawn from the census conducted by the Central Census Organization. Khaparde (2002) posits that another source of data in the area of school education comes from the All India Educational Survey (AIES) which is conducted periodically. These surveys according to the author were brought out by the National Council of Educational Research and Training

(NCERT) in the years 1967, 1979, 1982, 1992 and 1999 respectively. These surveys provide a database for educational planning at micro as well as macro levels. Khaparde (2002) points out that these surveys provide information about rural habitations, number of schools, pupil-teacher ratio, type of management of schools, enrolment, facilities for non-formal and pre-primary education, education of disadvantaged population groups, buildings and other facilities and so forth. Information obtained from this survey is widely used in policy formulation both at national and state levels. However, relative to the size of the country, the variations in educational contexts and size of investment on education, the incidence of research based policy formulation is relatively low. There is a need for educational researches in India focusing on socially relevant problems and issues of immediate concern in school education having implication for policy and practice.

Hence examining the implementation of ESL policy in primary schools of India can contribute to helping the present generation to identify attainable targets. In identifying the factors affecting curriculum implementation this research can contribute in improving the effectiveness of future implementation efforts. However, in identifying the factors that affect the curriculum the study acknowledges that variation of implementation is not a dilemma but is inevitable considering the fact that the curriculum under study is enacted in a different social context. The profound influence of the context in which the curriculum is implemented is taken into consideration. Finally the knowledge gained will be helpful in fostering understanding of the complex nature of the educational settings and problems of adapting the curriculum in a mixed ability classroom.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical underpinning for the present study can be found in Fullan's theory of educational change (1993, 2001) in which he expounds the meaning of educational change. In exploring the nature of educational change he points out that many changes fail because of the failure in distinguishing between theories of change, the causes for change

and theories of changing, the way to influence those causes. Fullan suggested that reform efforts fail because many reform initiatives have a theory of education but rarely a theory of action. Such a claim implies that change initiatives have disregarded the complexity of the nature of change as a result of which meaningful reform is difficult to achieve.

Changing a practice is difficult to realize as educational change is not a single entity and involves changes in many levels. Innovation is multidimensional and at least three components are involved in the change process. According to Fullan's (2001) perspective the possible use of new materials, the use of new teaching approaches and the possible alteration of beliefs are at stake in implementing any policy innovation; any change that does not occur in practice along these three dimensions will not achieve the intended outcomes. As Charters and Jones (cited in Fullan, 2001) observed, if we do not pay careful attention to whether change in practice actually occurred, we run the "risk of appraising non-events." Another reason the theory is suitable for this study is for the due emphasis Fullan accorded to both, theory as well as practice and the crucial role of teachers in implementing an innovation. This study seeks to explore the implementation of ESL policy and its implications in practice and such a theory supports the framework of the study. Innovations ignoring the three components of change will fail to make a significant change.

Fullan (2001) noted that innovations should take into consideration how teachers confront the change and the implications for change. Change is more complex as the innovations challenge the beliefs held by individual teachers. As Sarason (1990) argued, the failure of educational reform has been persistent and predictable- for two reasons. First, it has failed because innovations have been tinkered with one at a time. Much of the rest of the system has been left untouched and has systematically undermined our reform efforts every time we have made them. In concurring with this view Stenhouse (1975) is also of the opinion that curriculum development is difficult to achieve without teacher development. As Stenhouse (1975) pointed out curricula resources are for teachers to

reconstruct their view of knowledge and eventually its pedagogical relationship with students in the classroom. The curriculum as it represents the language of education refers not only to the content as such, but the stance the teacher adopts towards the use of the child's mind in relation to them.

Many teachers are unaware of the gulf between their progressive rhetoric and their practice. However, Fullan acknowledged that educational reform has either ignored teachers or has oversimplified teaching. Considerable focus has not been given to the total school and teacher and he attributed this reason for the failure of educational reform. Fullan (2001) referred to three broad phases to the change process and Phase 1 called initiation, mobilization or adoption consists of the process that leads up to the adoption or proceeding with a change. Phase 2 called implementation or initial use is the process of putting an idea into practice and Phase 3 which is called continuation, incorporation, routinization, or institutionalization refers to whether the change gets built in the system or disappears. Though numerous factors operate at each level he pointed out that change is not a linear process. On the other hand, events transpire back and forth and provisions are made for revisions or alterations based on the feedback. The idea he put forth is that change is a process, not an event. In referring to the complexity of the change process he stated that change is often uncertain and is too important to be left entirely in the hands of the experts. Personal mind set and mastery is cited to be the ultimate protection from failure.

In propounding the complex nature of educational change Fullan said that implementation consists of the process of putting into practice an idea, program, or set of activities to the people attempting or expected to change. Implementation is critical and crucial as it is the means of translating the objectives into practice. Considering the fact that implementation is a variable, in the event that the change is potentially a good one, success will depend on the quality of change in actual practice. This theory supports the framework of the study as the study involves the implementation of ESL policy and the implications arising for practice. In this context Fullan highlights the nature of the reform as more



problems arise when the reforms are complex. Unspecified means of implementation with no clear guidelines on the goals leaves teachers with a predicament and confusion as to what it means in practice. A similar view is shared by Lighthall (cited in Fullan, 2001) that educational change is a process of coming to grips with the multiple realities of people, who are the key agents in implementing change.

Changes are often introduced without considering the situations faced by potential implementers. Fullan (2001) advocates that innovations do not provide the means to identify and confront the situational constraints faced by the implementers and their values, ideas, and experiences are often overlooked.

In further explaining the complexity of change, Fullan identifies that a certain amount of ambiguity, ambivalence, and uncertainty prevails for the individual in interpreting the meaning of change. It is natural for complexities to arise and often a smooth implementation implies that changes do not really take place. The strength of using this framework for this study lies in the fact that it addresses the issue of multiple perspectives on change. Fullan (2001) explores the full complexity of change, and considers the various stages as well as the people involved in implementing a change. Educational change he says can be effected only when changes in beliefs, teaching style, and materials take place which is not possible without personal development in the social context. However, the author cautions that the belief that changes working well in one school and therefore can be applied to any other schools is a false notion of change. Each school has a unique context and there are different ways in which factors interrelate.

The belief that underpins this approach is that change is complex and there are various factors to be taken into consideration in order to effect successful change. Change is non-linear and it is a process. As Cuban (1990) posited, most efforts for reform are adopted as policy, but are not implemented in practice:

Most get implemented in word rather than deed, especially in classrooms. What often ends up in districts and schools are signs of reform in new rules, different tests,

revised organizational charts and new equipment. Seldom are the deepest structures of schooling that are embedded in the school's use of time and space, teaching practices, and classroom routines fundamentally altered even at those historical moments when reforms see those alterations as the goal (Cuban 1990).

In attempting to describe the complex nature of change Fullan (2001) likens change to a journey metaphor as riddled with uncertainties and fear of the unknown which are all intrinsic to the change process. Schools will be successful when problems are treated like natural occurrence. A spirit of inquiry is vital since circumstances and context are changing forever. Changes must be managed on an ongoing basis to effect improvements as education, he says, has a moral purpose. To cope with multiple influences on change in an integrated way, Fullan (1999) proposed that there needs to be an infrastructure for 'developing the capacity of the multilevel system to manage complex change on a continuous basis' (p. 74). Fullan (2001) identifies active initiation and participation, pressure and support, change in behavior and beliefs, and ownership as the four important processes that should be addressed for successful curriculum implementation.

Another theory that underpins the framework of this study is Hoban's (2002) complexity theory. Hoban holds a similar view to that of Fullan's theory of educational change and uses complexity theory as a new mindset to view schools and classrooms as complex systems. Hoban (2002) proffered that teaching is not an art that can be mastered and the process of educational change is non-linear. Hoban views teaching as more than a set of skills whereby teachers are also required to demonstrate their professional and personal judgments in their teaching. He contends that complexity theory is different from chaos as complexity theory acknowledges that non-linear interactions can bring about order and balance apart from highlighting the multidimensional nature of change. A similar view is subscribed by Hargreaves (1998) when he says that comparing educational change to chaos theory suggests that schools are totally unique and hence unmanageable. However, viewed through the lens of complexity theory gives implications for educational

knowledge, the nature of teaching, teacher learning and educational change. The strength of complexity theory lies in the fact that it does not deny the existence of reality, but acknowledges that reality is dynamic and ever changing. Changes are expected as reality is fluid and hence unintended outcomes are likely to result from the interactions of the multiple elements involved in change. Multiple factors come into interplay when change takes place.

Hoban's (2002) complexity theory acknowledges the dynamic concept of each classroom and as such the teaching strategies vary from one scenario to another and what works best under one circumstance may be a failure in another instance. In this respect teachers' judgments are influenced by a combination of elements which includes the curriculum, the context and the student's response to instruction. Hoban (2002) refers each class to a unique complex system due to the range of students in a class and hence it is important for teachers to have some autonomy to make judgments about the changing context. Hoban, like Fullan, acknowledges that teaching involves balancing between many elements and subscribes to the fact that classrooms are complex systems involving many elements that can generate inertia to resist change. This he proffers, happens when change is presented in a fragmented way without giving an opportunity for teachers to adapt to the new changes.

Congruent with this, Bascia and Hargreaves (2000) stated that the educational landscape is not static, as "the context of change operates as a complex and interrelated system where everything depends on (or undermines) everything else" (p. 18). In order to cope with the multiple influences on change in an integrated way, Fullan (1999) proposed that there needs to be an infrastructure for "developing the capacity of the multilevel system to manage complex change on a continuous basis" (p. 74). Fullan used complexity theory to recast his ideas about educational change which underwent a paradigm breakthrough since the 1980s, as "the pursuit of planned change is a mug's game because reality under conditions of dynamic complexity is fundamentally non-linear. Most change is unplanned."

(Fullan 1993, p. 138). He argued that planned change does not cater to the dynamic or the holistic nature of the change process.

It is no longer sufficient to study factors associated with the success or failure of the latest innovation or policy. It is no longer acceptable to separate planned change from seemingly spontaneous or naturally occurring change. It is only by raising our consciousness and insights about the totality of educational change that we can do something about it. (Fullan, 1993, p. vii)

In a similar vein Hargreaves (1998) also is of the view that educational change should not be thought of as a conglomeration of independent elements because “managing change becomes a collective process, not an individual one” (p. 285).

Complexity theory is in contrast to the mechanistic paradigm, which focuses on independent elements that have a linear cause and effect. On the contrary, complexity focuses on the world view and on multiple interdependent elements and the non-linear interactions that emerge. Curriculum innovations may eventually alter the existing system and lead to significant change provided there prevail positive leadership, a receptive political context, and the school culture is consistent with a framework to support teacher learning during the phase of non-linear change. The existence of the various elements and frames interacting in the system leads to the unpredictable nature of change. Hence, Hoban (2002) advocates that the multiple influences involved in the change process as well as the dynamics of the change process should be given due consideration in managing change. Hoban likens the context of educational change to a ‘spider web’, which is consistent with complexity theory since it acknowledges the connectedness and dynamic nature of change.

Hoban (2002) emphasized that educational change be viewed as a complex system that acknowledges the need for teacher learning, because change entails doing something differently which involves many elements of classroom practice. These changes, he says, take place in the ever-changing context of the school. According to Hoban (2002), educational change in essence requires the structure of the schools to be reconceptualized

as learning environments for the teachers. In essence Hoban's complexity theory supports the framework of this study as the study seeks to understanding the complexities involved in translating policies into practice. In highlighting the multidimensionality and the problematic nature of educational change, Hoban's (2002) complexity theory has implications for thinking about the nature of teaching, teacher learning and the change process. Hargreaves (1998) highlights that much of the change literature tends to focus on cultural, structural and strategic influences on educational change. It thereby under theorizes the influence of teacher learning.

The theoretical framework draws on a number of concepts of the change frames from complexity theory, such as structure, culture, context, leadership, teachers' lives and their work and teacher learning and the influence of these change frames in the resulting practice will be closely looked at. As these change frames work together as a system the interrelationships among these multiple change factors explains the nature of the complexity in educational change. Policy changes and the implications for practice are caused by the multiple change factors mentioned above and such a theory supports the framework of this study in dealing with the complexity of educational change. Each change factor influences the change process significantly as the change factors act collectively in impacting a change. Adopting these change frames in the framework of the study, the study acknowledges the dynamic nature of change and the various factors involved in the change process. The implementation of ESL curriculum policy and the implications for practice will be analyzed using these change frames as they have a significant impact on classroom practice. Such a framework also acknowledges the role of teachers and their beliefs and values which impact on classroom practice.

The theory emphasizes the nature of educational change focusing on the interrelationships among combinations of elements that interact to create possibilities for change. Schools are influenced by both micro systems as well as macro systems which makes change complex due to the various interrelated systems operating in the school

context. Looking at educational change as a complex system gives a clear insight into the reasons for resistance to change. Dynamic interactions are involved and change is rarely effected due to a single influence. Adopting this theory as a framework is suitable for this study as the theory represents a closer approximation to how the world works. Sarason (1990) sums up the facilitator's challenge when he argues that schools need to be learning cultures for all who participate in them, "because teachers cannot create and sustain the conditions for productive development of children if those conditions do not exist for teachers" (p. xiv).

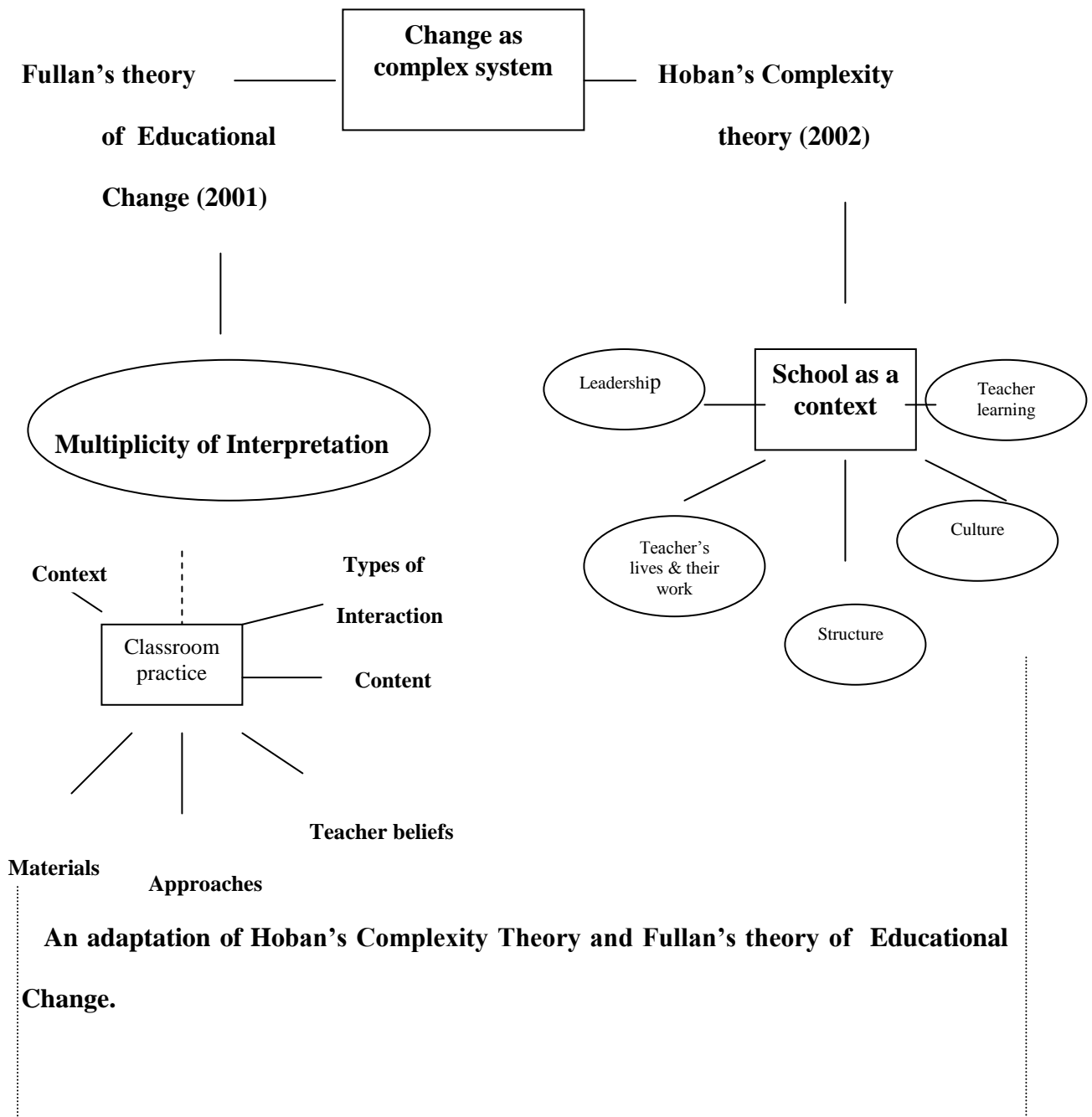
As Richards (1989) propounded, teaching is acknowledged to be intuitive, individual, and a personal response to classroom events and situations. In the ESL context the study explores the teachers' values and beliefs that shape their response to classroom events in view of the policy changes. Teachers' beliefs, attitudes and their knowledge of the content form the basis for the decisions they make in the classroom. Hence the process of policy implementation by the teacher such as the techniques, activities and the experiences of the teacher will also be explored. As Richards (1991) pointed out, each teacher develops an internally coherent personal approach to the classroom and as such teaching situations are very unique. Teachers use different strategies and practices that have promise for that situation.

Teachers' own beliefs and attitudes and practices are explored in this context. Their assumptions about their own teaching are reflected in their actual teaching practices. Richards (1991) observed that a focus on the processes of learning and teaching is gaining prominence as it could lead to revitalization of teaching. Changes in teachers' practices are the result of changes in teachers' beliefs. Hence in order to understand how teachers approach their work it is necessary to understand the beliefs and principles they uphold. Their beliefs have a strong influence on the materials and the activities that they choose for the classroom. Hence examining their beliefs would highlight how they approach their teaching and learning and the causes for the change in relation to their practice. On the

different notions of change Freeman (1989) notes that change can also be an affirmation of a current practice and not necessarily mean doing something differently.

Teacher practice usually changes due to the external factors they encounter. Bailey (1992) identified some of the catalysts for teacher change such as dissatisfaction with the current situation, a connection of a new idea with teacher's own situation, or a change in the teaching context, the experiences a teacher encounters and a conflict between the teachers' new beliefs and their practices. Hence what is done in the classroom is influenced by all these factors collectively. From the point of view of Ellis (1994) the events that transpire in the classroom will reflect the pedagogic decisions that have been taken in the process of accomplishing the lesson. Developing an understanding into teachers' current beliefs about language teaching and learning, the changes in the approaches to teaching as well as the sources of change will help provide an understanding of the process in which the ESL curriculum is implemented in the classrooms.

An overview of the research approach is attached in the next page.



### How and why change must occur

*Figure 1.1.* Theoretical Framework: The Implementation of ESL Curriculum Policy and Its Impact on Practice In Selected Primary Schools of Madurai District, India.



## **1.8 Definition of Key Terms**

The key terms used in this study are defined as follows:

### **Curriculum Policy**

Elmore and Skyes (1992) defined curriculum policy as the formal body of law and regulation that pertains to what should be taught in schools. They argued that research on curriculum policy was intended to explore “how official actions are determined, what these actions require of schools and teachers, and how they affect what is taught to particular students” (p.186).

The origins of the word “curriculum” can be traced to Latin. During the early years of the twentieth century, most educators held on to the traditional concept and referred to curriculum as “the body of subjects or subject matters set out by teachers for students to cover” (Tanner & Tanner, 1991, p.151). In a narrow sense, curriculum is defined as a “plan, for instance, “a plan for learning” (Taba, 1962). Since the study explores the change in the language policy, what is required of teachers in view with the changes and how it affects their planning and teaching, this definition is taken to be the operational definition to guide the study.

### **Teaching**

“Teaching may be characterized as an activity aimed at the achievement of learning” (Scheffler, 1989).

### **Learning**

“Learning occurs as a function of the activity, context and culture in which it occurs (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

As teachers make conscious decisions to achieve the learning outcomes in a particular context these definitions on teaching and learning are taken to be the working definition for this study.

Taking into consideration the aspects of language curriculum the definitions on curriculum and syllabus by Roberston (1971) is adopted for this study.

## **Curriculum**

Robertson (1971) defines curriculum as “the curriculum includes the goals, objectives, content, processes, resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experiences planned for pupils both in and out of the schools and community through classroom instruction and related programs” (p.566).

## **Syllabus**

Roberston (1971) defines syllabus as “a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum extending the element of curriculum evaluation itself” (p.566).

## **1.9 Chapter Summary**

Curriculum policy has significant outcomes for the people involved. The main purpose of this study is to examine the implementation of ESL curriculum policy and implications for practice in India. The curriculum that reaches the student is a product of a number of influences including a variety of policies. Policy is not just the intentions of policy makers but also the stream of actions that follow from those intentions. The task undertaken is to examine the policy changes that have taken place in India in an attempt to respond to the educational problems and to examine how the changes affect the planning and the teaching of the curriculum, the ways in which the school context affects teachers' ability and inclination to change as well as the issues that arise from the curriculum changes in India. The study will highlight the issues confronting teachers in the classrooms.

At the classroom level, teachers are still faced with decisions even if general content areas have been prescribed. Even within the one country, schools can vary in their availability of resources, staffing provision, classroom space and many other factors. Meaningful educational change requires teachers to play a crucial part in implementing the curriculum as change processes are defined differently by different people. The prior experience of teachers cannot be discounted and curriculum policy changes should make sense to teachers and should be in congruence with teacher beliefs. Changes should be

meaningful and the principles and practice be clearly understood by the teachers in order to make an impact in the learning culture. As implementation involves many factors such as people, process, as well as the outcomes, teacher belief plays a central role in curriculum implementation. The pedagogical decisions largely reflect the teacher beliefs. Hence educational change should be beneficial to all concerned as mundane classroom practices will only reinforce poor student performance.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The literature review of this chapter will involve looking at the various areas of research pertaining to curriculum policy and curriculum planning. The review examines the impact of the curriculum on classroom practices. The aim of the review is to provide the research and theoretical background that inform the study. The presentation and discussion of the literature reviewed are organized in the following manner.

Literature pertaining to curriculum policy and planning will begin the review. This will be followed by the various theories and approaches pertaining to teaching English as a Second Language. In discussing the various approaches to teaching English as a second language the importance of learning English, the role of age in second language acquisition and the critical issues that are faced by the language teachers in the profession are discussed. In addressing the complexity of language teaching the literature review also considers why ESL educational reform is so difficult and what it takes for successful reform. The review also highlights school as a context of change as an important aspect of ESL implementation outlining the ABL syllabus and content and the impact of ESL policy changes in the classrooms. This review seeks to address the role of the ESL teacher in the process of ESL curriculum implementation and the constraints they face in the process. The final section of the literature review highlights the common trends pertaining to the constraints faced in implementing ESL curriculum in India such as the social context of language teaching, the importance of teacher development, concerns of language teachers and the role of communication in language teaching.

## **2.2 Definitions and Perspectives on Curriculum Policy**

The origin of the word “curriculum” can be traced to Latin. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most educators held on to the traditional concept and referred to curriculum as “the body of subjects or subject matters set out by teachers for students to cover” (Tanner & Tanner, 1995, p.151). Taba (1962) described curriculum as “plan, for instance, “a plan for learning.” For teachers, curriculum is often a statement of what the school authorities, the state government, or some group outside the classroom requires the teacher to teach (Doll, 1996).

Franklin Bobbitt’s (1918) assertion of curriculum as being “educative experience” can be cited as the starting point of theorizing in curriculum studies. Identifying the distinction between syllabus and curriculum (White, 1988) refers to the different usage in the USA and Britain. In Britain, a syllabus referred to “the content or subject matter of an individual subject,” whereas curriculum meant “the totality of content to be taught and aims to be realized within one school or educational system” (p. 4). Elmore and Skyes (1992) contended that research on curriculum policy was intended to explore “how official actions are determined, what these actions require of schools and teachers, and how they affect what is taught to particular subjects (p. 198). They postulate that once policy is formulated, developed, and carried through the school to the classroom, the implementation will have impact on teaching practices, which will considerably influence student learning. These various definitions on curriculum offer a starting point for the discussion on curriculum policy and practice.

“Curriculum Policy” can be defined as the formal body of law and regulation that pertains to what should be taught in schools (Elmore, 1992). Research on curriculum policy, then, would explore how the policies are determined, what is required of schools and teachers and the effect of policies on what is taught to particular students.

Policies are not simply made and then implemented as the distinction between policy statements and policy action suggests. Policy requirements for specific grade levels

are often implemented very differently across localities, schools, and classrooms. This attributes to the contradiction between the intent of formal policies and the ensuing actions of people and institutions. Various factors such as relative emphasis given to particular topics, the materials used to present the topics, and the instructional strategies employed contribute to the significant variation in the curriculum delivered to students. Policy is then interpreted by the policy makers as that which is stipulated in the regulation whereas the teachers and parents' view of policy is likely to mean what is actually delivered in the classroom.

This tension could be attributed to several factors, one of which is when policy statements lack sufficient detail to prescribe actions fully. Disputes could also result when policy statements do not resolve important conflicts among political interests. The practical issues are often pushed aside such as; an adaptation of a new textbook would for instance overlook the account of transitional problems of moving from one text to another. This would result in teachers making significant adaptations to the initial policy when faced with the prospect of handling practical issues that emerge in carrying out policy statements. Policy actions often precede rather than follow from policy statements.

Practice makes policy, just as policy shapes practice. Hence the conception of the policy should not just include official statements of what is intended but also the reciprocal relationship between intention and action. Uncertainties occur when policies are not sure of the potential consequences that will arise eventually. Most policies are more or less well-informed guesses, or hypotheses, about means-end relationships.

While policy advocates may see a policy as transparently beneficial and feasible policy researchers on the other hand, see the same as highly uncertain, interdependent events. Both policy makers and policy researchers hold opposing views of policies. From the perspective of policy makers, policies appear to be tightly connected assertions of value and fact whereas policy researchers are likely to look for the cause of failure in faulty prediction and design.

Fullan and Pomfret (1977) identified four reasons on why it is important to study policy implementation. They were:

- (1) To know what has changed, people must conceptualize and measure it directly;
- (2) To understand why so many educational changes fail to become established, people should study some of the most problematic aspects to bring about change;
- (3) To not do so may result in implementation being ignored, or being confused with other aspects of the change process such as adoption;
- (4) To interpret learning outcomes and to relate them to possible determinants, people should conduct implementation studies. (pp. 336-339).

Scott (2003) stated that many policies are impossible to implement because they are too ambiguous, while Desimone (2002) argued that a policy tends to achieve more success in implementation if it is operated in a stable environment with little turnover- that is, a low mobility of teacher, students, and administrators. She categorized the authoritative aspects of policy as: (a) normative authority, which includes teacher participation in decision-making, teacher buy-in, participation in networks and collaborative activities, and norms related to race, ethnicity and income; (b) individual authority, that is, principal leadership; and (c) institutional authority which includes district leadership, resource support, and parent and community support.

Spillane et al. (2002) viewed that the position of administrators in the organizational hierarchy empowers them to focus their work in two directions. One is that administrators are themselves the enactors, responsible for implementing policies at both national and institutional levels. Second they depend on other enactors-- classroom teachers-- for successful implementation of these policies. Spillane (1998) discerned policy implementation as a interpretive process, because “implementers must figure out what a policy means and whether and how it applies to their school to decide whether and how to ignore, adapt, or adopt policy locally” (Spillane et al., 2002, p. 733). Berman (1978)

identified two types of problems in national policy implementation. Macro-implementation problems are generally caused by the government, which intends to “execute its policy so as to influence local delivery organizations to behave in desired ways” (p. 164). As a result of the government policy, micro-implementation problems spring up when the local organizations feel that they are forced to “devise and carry out their own internal policies” (p. 164). The clash between these two levels is “sometimes fluid, frequently chaotic, and always conflictual” (p. 165). To facilitate the adaptation process McLaughlin (1987) recommended integrating the macro world of policy makers with the micro world of individual implementers.

### **2.3 Teacher Beliefs and Values as Factors Influencing the Change Process**

Research on teachers’ thinking and knowledge suggests that not only do cognitive and behavioral factors in teaching influence student learning, but affective dimensions such as teachers’ belief, values and the theories guiding their actions. Nevertheless, beliefs and values and their relationship to classroom action have come to take an important place in contributing to understanding the nature of teaching. Teachers’ beliefs and values are often implicit as it is difficult to determine the relationship between the two. It is dialectical rather than unilateral, in the sense that practice does not always follow directly from beliefs. Changes in beliefs do come about after or result from, a change in practice. It is important to acknowledge teacher beliefs in educational practice so that they are carefully conceptualized as they have wider implications for classroom practice.

Teacher beliefs and values are not only individual and personal but have a socio-historical dimension and are hence shaped by time, context and circumstance as Pajares (1992) noted. Fullan and Hargreaves (1994) outlined a number of contextual factors that help to shape teacher beliefs and values. Among them they identify the time when teachers enter their profession, the dominant values prevailing at that time, the stage of their career and their confidence in teaching. Despite the theoretical and methodological diversity in



studies of teacher beliefs, Pajares (1992) pointed out that the literature suggests teacher beliefs and values as a profound influence in classroom practice and teaching decisions. This complexity in teacher beliefs has led to the diversity in the methodology of teaching. These differences may also account for the differences in interpreting and making sense of the policy requirements. Pajares (1992) suggests that teacher beliefs tend to remain unchanged over time. He attributes the failure of educational reform to the fact that teachers are not provided with help to cope or to accommodate to innovations by relating them to their existing theoretical beliefs.

Curriculum processes and tasks are carried out differently by different people owing to the different interpretations they ascribe to curriculum implementation. Individuals who subscribe to the rational-logical process which is an outcomes approach believe that the events in the world are predictable and hence view the revised curriculum as a solution to the problems that exists in school. Teachers are expected to carry out the curriculum as conceived by the developers and implementation is viewed as non problematic. This perspective of change process is both rational and systematic and involves top-down strategic planning. However evidence attest to the fact that this perspective on change is ineffective (Fullan, 2001; Patterson, Purkey, & Parker, 1986).

When proponents place their trust on programs and procedures, rather than the people who are instrumental in effecting change, change is unlikely to happen. Procedural change alone does not account for improvement and success. However school personnel, who subscribe to this belief, often have an objective view of reality. Evaluation under this aspect involves judging how closely the implementers adhere to the planned curriculum.

Teacher's role in planning and developing the curriculum in every phase is crucial as they have a major role in curriculum implementation. "Teachers make important decisions with consequences for students. In the classroom, they do so behind closed doors. No one can control all of the specific decisions that teachers make, even during a highly specified instructional episode" (Tanner & Tanner, 1995, p. 619). Teachers with their

ability, experience, and expertise have the chance to translate the curriculum theory into practice. However, the effectiveness of translating theory into practice stems from strong support on the part of the school without which teacher initiative can result in a futile attempt at change. The problem remains complicated considering the fact that curriculum theorists, and not practitioners, are the majority to contribute to the field. They draw from past experience and make adaptations to the existing approaches; nonetheless it is the teachers who will be able to judge the circumstances and conditions under which a curriculum could be implemented successfully. Contradictions arise when individual teachers hold different beliefs towards the given set of guidelines and hence results in the same curriculum being implemented differently due to the differences in teacher beliefs.

However the use of theory to explain the process of curriculum cannot be disregarded altogether; as Posner (2004) argued, theory enables us to see educational landscapes in certain ways. Understanding theory is imperative if the curriculum is to be conceptualized and developed in a meaningful way to students. The key reason advanced by Sarason (1990) for failure of educational reform is the weak understanding of the culture of the schools by those in charge of implementing the reform. As Sarason pointed out, two kinds of understanding are very essential for implementation. Theoretical information which relates to organizational change and theory of knowledge that fits into the context of real life. The second category of understanding relates to change in social-institutional contexts. The role of the members and how they define their roles and the nature of the context in which curriculum is bound to take place is of utmost importance. This is largely influenced by the perception of their world as either technical or non technical.

Curriculum is devised as a partial solution to a problem in school. Implementers in collaboration with the developers adapt the revised curriculum to the particular context where the curriculum is implemented with learners. Adapting the curriculum enables teachers to develop a sense of ownership which in turn leads to the effective use of

curriculum with learners. Change process is seen as growth in a valued direction with the collaborative effort among professionals.

The third perspective views change as a subjective view of reality. Curriculum development is viewed as a mutual construction of content and meaning by teachers and learners. The curriculum is enacted rather than implemented as it is created in the same situation in which it is used (Doyle, 1992).

Change processes are individually oriented according to this perspective. Individuals develop their own meanings of social phenomena and this often leads to the different approaches to curriculum processes. Fullan (2001) identified four main issues in the change process as active initiation and participation, pressure and support, change in behavior and beliefs, and ownership for the successful implementation of the curriculum. Successful participation on the part of the teacher is crucial for successful innovation.

Along the process teachers do change the beliefs they hold as they develop meanings for change. The teachers do not understand the nature of change until they get involved with the curriculum. Teachers may change their beliefs along the process of implementing the curriculum as a result of the changes in the revised curriculum (Fullan, 1985).

“The relationship between behavioral and belief change is reciprocal and ongoing, with change in doing or behavior a necessary experience on the way to breakthroughs in meaning and understanding” (Fullan, 2001, p. 92).

Nevertheless, Fullan emphasizes that change is extremely difficult and hence teachers must develop ownership in order to effect meaningful change. However, other factors are also crucial such as time to familiarize with the change, the individuals' receptivity to change, and familiarity with change. Once teachers have grappled with these issues in change factors they can develop a sense of ownership which in turn helps to bring a sense of clarity, skill and commitment which is required for institutionalization of change.

This sense of ownership can be achieved by getting teachers involved in development of the curriculum as this provides them opportunity to make the necessary transitions.

### **2.3.1 Issues Arising in the Change Process**

Curriculum implementation is the process of transforming school purposes and school problems into actions. Two main issues need to be addressed in implementing a curriculum: the need for congruence between purpose and action and the need for teachers to apply sound curriculum knowledge. In implementing the curriculum the teacher is required to exercise sound instructional and pedagogical judgment for the learners' benefit. Hence implementation in its true sense of the word is not a matter of teacher compliance; rather teachers should be encouraged to develop a sense of ownership and to use their professional judgment within the mandate of the school. The coordination between curriculum design and practice is likely to be different owing to the differing perspectives held by the individual teachers on the nature of curriculum implementation.

### **2.3.2 Different Approaches to Curriculum**

The fidelity approach to curriculum is concerned with the strict adherence of the implemented curriculum to that of the planned curriculum and any deviation from the original plan is considered unjustified and a shortcoming on the part of the implementers. On the other hand the mutual adaptation approach adopts the stance of curriculum development as an interplay between the design of the curriculum and its practice. While the teacher is accountable to the normative features of the school, the school, on the other hand, is obliged to provide direction to the teacher while accommodating to the professional judgments of the teacher that emerge in the curriculum implementation process. The curriculum enactment perspective gives independence to the teachers to become the designers and the implementers of the curriculum. However, the curriculum enactment does not require the teachers to be responsible to the normative mandate of the

school unlike the fidelity approach which is the polar opposite of this approach. Hence the problem of curriculum implementation lies in ensuring that the dynamics of the school mission is given full emphasis without measuring teacher compliance and dictating teachers how to teach.

For effectiveness it is imperative that the main agents of the curriculum to be in agreement with the normative tasks at hand. It is pertinent at the same time for the agents to have the necessary resources, time and insight to accomplish their task while comprehending at the same time that their work is subjected to evaluation for the benefit of the school experience. Nonetheless though teachers have an opportunity to exercise a great deal of curriculum authority in their classrooms they are crippled by other mandates beyond their jurisdiction. This restricts them in many ways as they do not have a say in matters pertaining to their practice. To rectify such a problem Schwab describes a process called group deliberation whereby various participants of the school are involved in the ongoing discussion over what needs to be done.

The strength of such group deliberations lies in the fact that it enables teachers to draw ideas from multiple perspectives of expertise and experience. The most important advantage is that teachers are orientated towards it as they play their part in determining it. Fullan posits that group deliberation is a means of getting teachers to be more inclined to support the curriculum as they played a part in it.

Fullan (1982) observed:

One of the basic reasons why planning fails is that planners or decision-makers are unaware of the situations which potential implementers are facing. They introduce changes without providing a means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any change (p. 83).

### **2.3.3 Issues Faced by Teachers**

However teachers are still faced with the stark reality that much of the content is inherited as requirements of the curriculum which affects the practice of the curriculum. Just as group deliberation acts as a foil to overcome such problems, in-service programs also help to resolve the conflicts teachers encounter. These programs can function to identify the common concerns of the teachers whereby teachers not only change according to the new design but the design considerations also change according to the teacher involvement. Good implementation of the curriculum takes into consideration the opinions of the key participants, while keeping the main mechanisms of the curriculum development in mind. Another crucial issue faced by teachers is the issues of time and resources which more often acts as a barrier to curriculum implementation.

The staff development strategies are fragmented and oblivious to the real needs and concerns of teachers (Fullan, 1990, 1991). The authors point out that staff development is fragmented in nature as it does not take into consideration the different needs among teachers in terms of their gender, age and experience. In other words the total teacher is ignored, and conditions such as the context within which a teacher works, the culture of teaching, the teacher as a person and the purpose of the teacher is not given due importance. However, for such an improvement to take place the schools must emerge and develop as total schools whereby due recognition is given to the teacher's judgment and expertise.

Addressing the issue of implementation requires an understanding of the behavior of all the players in the field of curriculum. The real purpose of the curriculum must be clear and the potential benefits of the curriculum innovation realized by all the people concerned. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) stress the importance of time, personal interaction, in-service training and other forms of people support for effective implementation. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) proffer that evidence from research attest to the importance of personal contacts. Support and understanding between implementers and planners is crucial if the process of unlearning old roles and learning new ones is to occur. Winning over people and

influencing their attitudes to win their support to alter their ways requires time and effort. They must be convinced that enacting the new curriculum would be a rewarding and enriching experience and to attempt to make a change is worth their time and effort. Internal motivation is imperative for a curriculum innovation to be institutionalized. Individual teachers contribute their best only when they welcome the innovation and believe that their contributions would add to the quality of the students' education.

### **2.3.4 Teacher Development**

Teacher development involves changing the person the teacher is. Focusing on behavioral skills alone without reference to their grounding in or impact on attitudes and beliefs is misguided and liable to prove ineffective (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, p. 7). The elements of effective teacher development programs are summarized by Griffin (1986) based on a large scale research program comprising three major studies conducted in the United States.

The program must be embedded in a school context (defining property), and be (1) context-sensitive, (2) purposeful & articulated, (3) participatory & collaborative, (4) knowledge-based, (5) on-going, (6) developmental, and (7) analytic & reflective (p. 7).

Such programs give teachers a chance to participate and acquire new knowledge besides offering them a chance to reflect and gain new insights. This will enable them to improve their teaching practices. Darling-Hammond (1998) applauds the direction of new teacher education programs which “envision the professional teacher as one who has finished learning how to teach” (p. 7). Growth is an outcome of a change in practice and can be viewed as development. Doyle (1990) points to instructional supervision as a valuable resource for teachers in their quest for answers to questions of classroom conduct and curriculum enactment. Glickman and Bey (1990) presume it to be “vital to school success” (p. 549).

Grant (1996) pointed out that teachers' experience as students play a vital role in their thinking and practice. Personal influences also have an impact on their teaching. The author posited that personal factors do not revolve around a single issue and they encompass diverse experiences which can be formal, informal, outside school and within school. However he pointed out that not all beliefs reinforce teachers' practices; in fact some of them can work against the teachers' practices. Understanding why and how they carry out their instructional practices cannot be ignored as it has implications for policy.

Grant (1996) highlighted the different factors such as textbooks, curriculum guidelines and other factors which influence teachers' decision making and these influences often interact in many ways. However, he asserted that these influences have a significant impact only when teachers assign importance to them. One level of interaction could be personal factors and organizational factors. Personal factors include teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and experiences, and their views. Organizational factors on the other hand include the individual and group teachers' norms and structures they encounter. Hence decision making in the classrooms often is a result of personal and organizational factors.

The second type of interaction is between personal and policy influences. Here too the author establishes the connection between the two by pointing out how the teachers interpret organizational and policy influences as justifying their pre-existing beliefs. In this instance the teachers are comfortable with the policy as long as it confirms and does not contradict their views on teaching and learning. In this case the policy confirms their practice but it could also be otherwise whereby the policies do not match teacher beliefs and therefore they act against it.

The third factor Grant (1996) illustrates is the interaction between organizational and policy factors. The teachers' content and pedagogical decisions reflect intersections between organizational influences such as individuals, norms, resources and an array of policy directives. He illustrates the example of a teacher who employs successful strategies



in class as a result of which more students are enrolled in her class. This workload forces her to cut back on her strategies which were the cause of the success in the first place.

The final factor is the instance where personal and organizational context and policy can interact. Influences can push in multiple and competing directions. Policy influence does have an effect on instructional decisions. Nevertheless personal and organizational context is also a prominent factor.

Individuals develop their own meanings of social phenomena and this often leads to the different approaches to curriculum processes. Fullan (2001) identified four main issues in the change process: active initiation and participation, pressure and support, change in behavior and beliefs, and ownership for the successful implementation of the curriculum. Successful participation on the part of the teacher is crucial for successful innovation.

Along the process teachers do change the beliefs they hold as they develop meanings for change. The teachers do not understand the nature of change until they get involved with the curriculum. Teachers may change their beliefs along the process of implementing the curriculum as a result of the changes in the revised curriculum. (Fullan, 1985).

The relationship between behavioral and belief change is reciprocal and ongoing, with change in doing or behavior a necessary experience on the way to breakthroughs in meaning and understanding (Fullan, 2001, p. 92).

### **2.3.5 School as Context of Change**

The school as a context of change process is very crucial in affecting the teachers' ability and inclination to change. Fullan and Goodlad (1975) cite the organization of the school with the self-contained classroom with no room for teacher interaction as one reason for the teachers to succumb to the daily routine. The teaching culture that exists in the school promotes this self isolation of the teachers with no opportunity for interaction.

Sarason (1990) held a similar view when he commented on the isolation of the school organization which has a negative impact on schools. The culture of the school which has cultivated a feeling of isolation among teachers has impacted them in a negative way. Teachers feel isolated and responsible for their own actions and they approach a change program with this view of change as an individual activity. This psychological loneliness creates hostility among teachers which the change facilitators fail to notice or acknowledge. As Sarason noted, the context within which curriculum reform takes place needs to be changed.

In identifying the key problem of implementing a new curriculum, Sarason pointed out that individuals view schools and their environments as all the same. Sarason (1990) wrote: “... for our schools to do better than they do we have to give up the belief that it is possible to create the conditions for productive learning when those conditions do not exist for educational personnel.” (p. 145).

Collegiality and individuality are the two factors Fullan (1993) cited as the most important in order to improve schools. Reform has failed time and again either because teachers have been ignored or because teaching has been oversimplified. Fullan pointed to the failure of the reform which he ascribes to the fact that the focus of the school has not been on the total school and the total teacher. A failure to concentrate on these two factors is a clear evidence that student learning has not been given due consideration. The complexity of planning and preparation is compounded by the changing composition of teachers' classes over the years which has implications for the teachers. Accountability to the school and to the parents has increased teachers' workload and innovations in the curriculum had in no way helped the teachers to manage their workload. Fullan cites overload of expectations and fragmented solutions as one main factor in exacerbating teachers' workload.

The professional isolation of teachers limits access to new ideas and better solutions, drives stress inwards to fester and accumulate, fails to recognize and praise

success, and permits incompetence to exist and persist to the detriment of pupils, colleagues, and the teachers themselves.

Curriculum innovations should be adapted to the needs of the individual schools. Schools must be effective so that classrooms are effective for teachers to play their part. However forces outside the classroom like access to ideas and resources, organizational and timetabling arrangements have a great influence on what transpires in the classrooms. Though the innovations might be sophisticated and the proposals for change are bright it amounts to nothing if the individual teachers do not translate them into effective classroom practice and schools must provide the required support for effective adoption of practices. The teacher plays a key role in effecting school change. When attention is devoted to structural solutions like redefining the curriculum and the assessment ignoring teacher development and classroom issues then reform is bound to fail. Getting teachers to participate and motivating them will provide the conducive environment for the reform to take effect.

Schools must provide the conducive environment to encourage teachers' quest for improvement and change. Teachers on the other hand must be sensitive to the context of teaching. Capability to adapt to innovations varies from one school to another and this sensitivity to context is vital when teachers attempt to improve teaching. Realism and practicality of the innovation should be taken into consideration in the pursuit of classroom excellence. Prescribed curriculum encourages teacher dependency.

As Rosenholtz (1986) observes, in effective schools, collaboration is linked with norms and opportunities for improvement and career-long learning. Teachers who have been given ample opportunities to analyze, evaluate and experiment with colleagues are hence able to perform better in schools. Educational research attest to the fact that teachers become better teachers in some schools while in some other schools teachers fail to grow. This is evident in Rosenholtz's study on collaborative or 'moving' schools versus those in the isolated or 'stuck' schools. The schools must encourage teachers to collaborate and seek

ideas from colleagues which in turn will increase their confidence and commitment to improvement. Collaborative cultures in schools will facilitate commitment to change and improvement. This will encourage teachers to respond to change critically, and in the process they will be able to adapt those innovations in their own school.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) suggested that teachers' ability to adapt their practices successfully depends upon "participation in a professional community that discusses new teaching materials and strategies and that supports the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice." (p. 15). Hence the role of the school in the process of successful reform cannot be undermined. The situational factor or the environment under which a teacher is required to perform is very crucial for the success of reform. Apart from the situational characteristic their personal characteristic such as their beliefs about teaching and learning and themselves as teachers also play a vital role in the reform effort. The school should hence be receptive to providing and supporting ideas for effective practices for significant change to take place. Changes thrive when supported so that cycles are recursive, with each bringing new understanding and new pedagogies and practices to the existing ones.

School structure also has a powerful influence on the quality and kind of professional culture. The classroom setting provides both a structural frame and a cultural context for teaching (Goodlad, 1984; Hargreaves, 1992; Lortie, 1973; Rosenholtz, 1989). Opportunities for teacher learning can occur both in and out of the classroom and in a variety of ways (Fullan, 1987; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989). Teacher isolation leads to a prevalent and inherent uncertainty about many practical aspects of teachers' work (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989; Sarason, 1982) and the creation of a culture of individualism (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Hargreaves, 1992; Lortie, 1975). While collaboration can lead to continuous improvement efforts it can be counter productive.

There is nothing virtuous about collaboration per se. It can serve to block students or put students down as well as to elevate learning. Thus, collegiality must be linked to norms of continuous improvement and experimentation in which teachers are constantly seeking and assessing potentially better practices. (Fullan, 1990, p. 15). Collegiality is alien to most teachers. If collegial relations are to make a positive contribution to school reforms and norms of continuous improvement in practice then they must have a focus on specific and concrete goals (Schmoker, 1997).

## **2.4 The Role of Policy in Curriculum Planning**

Curricular decisions take their cue from many sources of authority besides government intervention being the major source. Teachers and schools also take their cues about curriculum from a number of authoritative sources, including their own professional judgment, informal networks of colleagues, and higher education institutions. The simple definition of curriculum policy as a prescription of what should be taught to whom does not capture the many dimensions of policy as it actually operates. Policies include the stream of actions that follow from those intentions. Policies are uncertain predictions about means and ends that can be subjected to test. Besides being instruments for accomplishing tangible results they also operate as powerful symbols for mobilizing political interests and as ideologies that legitimize authority.

The complexity in the meaning of policy runs parallel to complexities in the meaning of curriculum. There is complexity between policy as formal statements of intentions and the actions associated with them, just as there is complexity between curriculum, as stated in formal terms and the curriculum as enacted in the classrooms. Attempts by researchers to separate “what is (or should be) taught,” “how it is (or should be) taught”, “and to whom it is taught” to separate the curriculum from instruction directed at particular students have proven futile. The complexities in the meaning of policy and curriculum are parallel.

### **2.4.1 Different Views on Policy**

There are two views which impute considerable rationality to policy making. The instrumental view sees policy as rising out of well-defined social purposes, and policy making as the joining of purposes with means. In this view policy making is seen as purposeful, goal-directed behavior designed to accomplish tangible results by changing people and institutions. It is seen as a rational means for achieving collective social ends and for making improvements on a scale that cannot be achieved by even the most enlightened individual actions. On the other hand the pluralist views see policy as rising out of purposeful actions of diverse political interests, and policy making as the process of reconciling these competing interests. Policy making is depicted as political bargaining, where policy emerges from people with their own political interests, each exercising limited influence on specific decisions. People are portrayed as acting rationally on their interests, in each of these views and the resulting policy is seen as an expression of these interests.

Issues that arise in the process of implementing curriculum policy are related to the type of action embedded in policies. Understanding curriculum policy entails an understanding of the parallel processes by which policy and curriculum are elaborated in teaching practice. This policy-practice connection can be portrayed as a system in which curriculum emanates from authoritative sources, is influenced by the medium of school organization and established patterns of teaching practice, and results in certain effects on student learning. The implementation mechanism of the developed policy reach practitioners through their immediate working environment and have some impact on teaching practice, which in turn has some impact on student learning.

### **2.4.2 Impact of Educational Policy in the Classrooms**

A number of accounts are offered by policy analysts on the influence of educational policy on classroom practice. While some profess that policy has a major

impact on practice, some others see only modest effects. Others argue that policy impact varies across classrooms and schools. There are also differing schools of thought in the nature of the change in practice that results from policy. While some argue that educational policy has a negative impact on teaching, others believe that policy can have a positive impact on teachers' content decisions. Contrasting explanations are offered by the relationships they describe between educational policy and classroom practice. While the minimal influence of educational policy is attributed to the inherent conditions of practitioners' work, others attribute it to the nature of the educational organization. Yet others suggest that the explanation for minimal impact lies in the nature of policy rather than in the nature of organization or work.

Wise in *Legislated Learning* (1979) suggests that policy has had an ever-increasing impact on practice, constraining and regulating the work of teachers in the interest of efficiency and cost effectiveness. Teachers approach their work based on their intuition, relying on their own school experiences and the particulars of their classrooms. While Wise offers no empirical support for his arguments he views policy as having substantial, pernicious effects on teaching, learning, and curriculum.

McNeil (1986) also in a similar vein, views externally initiated policies as having a negative impact on teachers' curriculum practices. She attributes the decline in educational quality to the irreconcilable goals of schooling. Efficiency-oriented controls, designed to streamline selection have come to trivialize the school curriculum. She concurs that reforms that rely on policies which centralize control over the school curriculum--testing, graduation requirement, teacher certification and the like --only result in increasing the pressure to control, and select rather than to educate.

McNeil further highlights the contradiction between teachers' expressed goals and the teaching styles they employ. Defensive teaching in McNeil's view oversimplifies knowledge and presents fragmented information results due to the administrative structure of schools, which places primary importance on classroom control. Genuine teaching and

learning is undermined by the administrative structure that rewards teachers for controlling students rather than educating them. Students then become deskilled, being passive receptors of knowledge with minimal effort invested in their school work. Weatherly and Lipsky (1977) point out that curriculum policies have limited influence on what gets taught to whom. This is attributed to teachers' heavy workload that results in modification of policies in accordance with the amount of time and expertise available in the workplace.

Meyer and Rowan (1977, 1978) drawing on Weick's (1976) notion of loose coupling cite the minimal impact on practice to weak core technology of teaching and due to the lack of agreement on the instructional methods deemed most effective. Policy in this sense is just seen as sustaining society's confidence in schooling as an important social instruction with little or no influence in the curriculum. Informal factors such as student and parental pressures as well as teachers' prior convictions and beliefs of what should be taught to whom have a significant effects on content decisions made by the teacher.

Due to the the promotion of the stratification functions of schooling over the educative functions Wise and Neil suggest that external policies have a negative influence on what is taught to whom. On the other hand, the low-impact perspectives of Lipsky and Meyer and Rowan (1977) suggest that the nature of teaching work and the institutional structure of schooling buffer teaching practice from the effects of external policies. Hence teachers make authoritative decisions about what is taught to whom by default. Both these views portray teaching as judgmental activity difficult to be influenced positively via external controls. The content determinants research cites the limited impact, attributing it to poorly designed and articulated policies. Policies have considerable effect on teachers' content decision making. Considerable variation emerges across teachers in their practices.

The relationship between policy and administration is expressed by Shulman (1983) thus:

... policies are very much like laws and teachers like judges. Educational systems are organized to permit the design of policies and their interaction in the court of



the classroom. Teachers must understand the grounds for competing demands on their time, energy, and commitment. They must be free to make choices that will cumulate justly in the interests of their students, the society, and humanity. (pp. 501-502).

## **2.5 The Nature of Language Acquisition**

Studies in first and second language acquisition attest that learners acquire language to an inner structural pattern which is best served by a rich language environment that allows them to speak when they are ready to do so. It is therefore suggested that the initial emphasis in a school language curriculum should be on the receptive skills of listening and reading. The language teaching profession has undergone a number of resolutions from the inclusion of knowledge to the developing of a skill: specifically that of communication focusing on three principal factors such as accuracy, appropriateness and fluency. Adequate meaningful exposure to language should precede any attempt to train productive skills.

Berko (1958) demonstrated that children learn language not as a series of separate discrete items, but as an integrated system. Looking at second Language acquisition it is important to consider the differences between the young and older children. Older children have to overcome affective dissonance in their attempt to learn a second language. Very young children, who are not developed enough cognitively to possess “attitudes” toward races, culture, ethnic groups, classes of people, and languages, may be less affected than adults. However, the learning situation can be meaningful if the new learning task relates to what they already know and if the task itself is potentially meaningful to them.

Harley (1986) and Singleton (1989) have shown the complex relationship between the question of age and language acquisition. The research that supports the hypothesis that ‘young is better’ does so with reference to phonological advantage, while the ‘older is

better' is based on syntax and morphological measures of ability. However Genesee (1987) who investigated the various immersion programs in Canada is of the opinion that:

Second language proficiency tends to increase the earlier immersion begins and the more second language exposure the learner has. Thus, early total immersion generally yields higher levels of second language proficiency than early partial immersion, delayed immersion, or late immersion. (Genesee, 1987,p. 191).

Singleton (1989) argues that many factors are involved in language acquisition and that examples of age-related research have to be analyzed individually.

He concludes: there is a fair amount of evidence suggestive of a long-term advantage for learners whose experience of the target language begins in their childhood years...with regard to short-term attainment, the picture is more confused. However, the balance of evidence does seem to indicate an initial advantage for older learners at least as far as grammatical development is concerned. (Singleton, 1989, p. 122).

Language is essentially social and successfully acquired during spontaneous use with other people. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research (Ellis 1985, 1994) established that teaching does not and cannot determine the way the learner's language will develop. The processes by which the learner operates are 'natural' processes. Teachers and learners cannot simply 'choose' what is to be learned. The syllabus to a large extent is 'built in' to the learner. In learning a language learners go through a developmental sequence which involves a number of errors. These errors are not the result of first language interference, but are common to learners from a wide variety of L1 backgrounds. The changed views on language and their implications for language teaching was a major concern of SLA research. It is important for teachers to produce high quality and 'tuned' language input.

The main requirement for adequate function of the acquisition process in the classroom is that students must be exposed to a rich language environment and active comprehension. Manifold opportunities to use the language in creative ways must be

provided. The primary means of language acquisition is to keep the students active in the comprehension of a rich linguistic environment. In naturalistic contexts the tendency is for younger beginners to catch up with older beginners. In formal learning situations any long-term advantage conferred by early exposure will be slow to manifest itself unless articulation between primary and secondary programs and the learning environment are properly managed. Singleton (1989) emphasized that decisions about primary school language learning must be made with the same planning and foresight and on the same preoccupations as other aspects of language in the curriculum.

Teachers and material writers need to understand how the cognitive and physical development of young learners is central to teaching and learning. Teaching a language to young learners involves understanding not only the learners' linguistic needs and learning goals but also their cognitive and social needs. Brian Kenny (1996) in his article, *Knowledge, Experience and Language Teaching* discusses the two types of syllabus in teaching a language. The knowledge transmission syllabus is essentially an organization of ready-made knowledge. The experience syllabus is an organization of people.

### **2.5.1 Approaches to Second Language Acquisition**

The next section of the literature review addresses the different approaches within the context of the motivation students bring to second language learning. There are significant differences in second language acquisition of young children and language acquisition of older students and adults. Young children seem to acquire a second language 'intuitively' and 'unconsciously'. While the older children rationalize and attempt to fit the new language into the conceptual and communication system that they developed in their first language, second language learning for older students must be systematic and methodical. The teacher in determining a pedagogical approach to second language teaching should decide on the intended goal and then the approaches that would facilitate reaching them.

Language and the structure of the language must be obtained through context. "...language exists not for the sake of form or structure, but for the sake of use, the organization of the sentences of language must be in terms of the situation they share, that is, their functional use" (Fishman, 1975, pp. 17-27). The natural development of the language of children indicates that situational rather than grammatical cohesion is necessary and sufficient. Presenting language in situation presents instances of meaningful use of language. The learner then stores and recombines eventually to synthesize new utterances appropriate for use in new situations. Lakoff (1972) states that too much attention paid to form does not encourage the learner to explore the limits on the use of the form, for example, why the use of a form is good or bad in a particular situation.

Newmark (1972) in criticizing this points out that this type of approach handles language as if it is additive and linear, which it is not. Otherwise, "The Child learner would be old before he could say a simple appropriate thing..." (Newmark, 1972, p. 39). A rationalist approach to language learning assumes that man's unique ability to speak is based on his equally unique ability to reason (Newmark, 1972, p. 14). In this case it is the teacher's job to provide language data for the student with explanations and reasons that may be utilized in generalization.

The transformational approach, adopts a rationalistic approach to language learning in that it is based on man's ability to reason and generalize. Both the transformationalist and the language teachers are interested in the intuitive ability of the speakers of a language to generate new sentences. Then again the danger in this approach is pointed out by Lakoff, that the students are taught to use new formulas instead of encouraging their reasoning processes. 'Instead of filling in patterns of sentences- surface sentences- students now have to learn patterns of abstractions- the rules themselves' (Lakoff, 1972, p. 62). The transformational grammar and contrastive analysis complement each other as a synthesized approach to second language learning.

Suggestopedia according to Lozanov (1979) draws on the strength of the people's capacity of learning through music as the central method. A significant amount of the classroom methodology was carried out with background classical music. Students were encouraged to be as "childlike" as possible, yielding all authority to the teacher and sometimes assuming the roles of native speakers of foreign language. Students thus became "suggestible". However Scovel (1979) criticized the practicality of the method of using music in classrooms. Nevertheless certain aspects of the method can be adapted to suit the learners.

The Silent Way, like Suggestopedia, rested more on cognitive than affective arguments for its theoretical substance. Summarized in the words of Richards and Rodgers (1986), learning was facilitated by accompanying physical objects, and facilitated by problem solving involving the material to be learned. The method capitalized on discovery-learning procedures. The method however, was criticized as the teacher was too distant to encourage a communicative atmosphere.

The Total Physical Response (TPR), by Asher (1977) noted that children do a lot of listening before they speak in learning their first language, and that listening is accompanied by physical responses. In this approach students did a great deal of listening and acting. "The instructor is the director of a stage play in which the students are the actors" (Asher 1977, p. 43). Then again, though effective in the beginning levels of language proficiency, it lost its distinctiveness as learners advanced in competency.

Later, the Natural Approach advocated the use of Total Physical Response at the beginning level of language learning, when "comprehensible input" is essential for triggering language acquisition. The teacher provides comprehensible input which is a little beyond the learner's level. While the role of the learner is silent during this period the teacher provided the input and variety of classroom activities for the class. The "silent period" whereby the students did not do anything was considered controversial by those who criticized the Natural Approach. According to them Language learning is an

interactive process, and an over-reliance on the role of input at the expense of the stimulation of output could thwart the second language acquisition process.

The Direct Method is best summarized by Richards and Rodgers (1986) as classroom instruction conducted exclusively in the target language. Grammar is taught inductively and vocabulary taught through demonstration. In the Direct Method both speech and listening comprehension were taught and correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized. The Direct Method enjoyed great popularity during the nineteenth and twentieth century. Though criticized for its weak theoretical foundations the method was revived in the modern era.

While each method has its own strengths and weaknesses, a number of factors influence the choice of strategy at the core of the decision-making process such as the teacher, the content and the students themselves. While no single method is seen as the right approach a teacher adapts a model best suited to the goals of the lesson. The need for teachers to be able to use different strategies is even more important today given the growing diversity of learners in our schools (Villegas, 1991).

Students would use language in use through communication by being placed in a real situation which leads them to communicate. Hence a combination of these three approaches transformational, situational, or contextual, and contrastive should form a system to better enable the teacher to teach and the student to learn the intricacies and nuances of a second language.

## **2.6. Approaches to Second Language Teaching**

The following section of the literature review highlights some of the class-centered approaches to language teaching and a framework for integration of content and language in second language instruction.

Experienced language teachers are sensitive to the social needs of their class-group and their pedagogically and socially-oriented behaviors are closely intertwined. Allwright

(1992, 1996) pointed out that teachers spend a significant amount of class time behaving in ways that are not directly related to the business of teaching. He suggested that teacher-classroom behavior can be viewed as ‘balancing act between opposing forces’, a tightrope walk’, or ‘a continually reinvented compromise between competing social and pedagogic demands’ (1996, p. 223).

### **2.6.1 Syllabus and Content in Language Teaching**

Teaching involves making choices and sometimes teachers due to time constraint cannot teach a syllabus explicitly. The syllabus must be effective in achieving the purposes as well as be appropriate to the students.

Candlin (1984) in his investigation of syllabus design points out that “syllabuses typically come in two ideological forms.” While learners “bank” received knowledge as a collection of ‘communiques’ or “states of knowing,” in the other, learners are encouraged “to explore ways of knowing, to interpret knowledge and to engage in dialogue with it and with themselves.” (p. 30). The first he calls “static and imposed” while the second is “dynamic and negotiated” (p. 33). Candlin (1984) in describing dynamic syllabus in a variety of ways wrote that it could be “a series of guided experiences, focusing both on what is to be learned and on how and why it is to be learned” (p. 34). An experiential syllabus on the other hand allows both for re-enactments and interpretations as its participants report back to each other about what they have been doing and the experiences they have had. The difference between the two lies in whether a syllabus and its participants are engaged with real work, or whether the syllabus and its transmitters are presenting knowledge for learners to memorize.

Kenny and Savage (1997) predicted that experiential learning- a development of task-based approach will be on the increase given the world-wide spread of task-based approaches to language learning and teaching. David Carless (2003) in his case study highlights the challenges for the implementation of task-based teaching. His study

concluded that large classes tend to accentuate problems of noise and indiscipline as do classes with wide discrepancies in ability. Secondly Eldrige (1996) found that code-switching was purposeful, and related to pedagogical goals. The use of mother tongue seems to serve a number of functions such as: an opportunity for pupils to clarify the meaning of what the teacher has said; to discuss the required task, and a social function, in terms of creating a sense of group cohesion or reducing student anxiety.

A similar view was expressed by Swain and Lapkin (2000) in their study; they found that pupils used first language for three main purposes such as, moving the task along, focusing attention, and interpersonal interaction. The third factor identified was pupils' involvement in the task. In this context Seedhouse (1999) pointed out that students often focus principally on task completion, and that, as a result, they sometimes produce only the most minimal display of linguistic output necessary to complete the task. The fourth theme was the use of 'non-linguistic elements' such as drawing and coloring to achieve the target language. However, Cheng and Wong (1996) highlight that in Hong Kong culture 'serious learning' seems to be valued more than enjoyable learning.

## **2.7 The Role of Language in the Curriculum**

This section of the literature review deals with the place of language in the curriculum, the role of teachers in the language curriculum and the issues faced by the language teachers in teaching the subject.

Kilpatrick (1997) attributes a lack of understanding by secondary teachers about the outcomes achieved at the primary level. Hargreaves and Galton (2002) in their longitudinal study in UK spanning twenty years, found that the critical concerns are discontinuity in the curriculum, difficulty in communication regarding curriculum, assessment and pupils, and a clash of values and cultures between primary and secondary.

Hargreaves and Galton (2002) also found that primary and secondary teachers had little knowledge of each other's approach to teaching. The link between communication



and development of a coherent cross-grade curriculum is recognized by Reston and McClendon (2000) who point to a critical need for communication across all language personnel to create a common understanding about the scope and sequence of the program

### **2.7.1 Social Context of Language Teaching**

Language teaching needs to be seen including knowledge about culture as well as language. Day and Conklin's (1992) division of procedural knowledge capture the complexities involved in language teaching. Pedagogic knowledge involves knowledge of the general educational documents, knowledge of the school, knowledge of the students as well as stakeholders. Classroom management by which the teachers promote and maintain an effective environment is also a dimension of teacher's pedagogic knowledge. Rather than maintaining discipline it relates to the teacher's ability to deploy appropriate strategies for creating an appropriate learning environment.

Pedagogic knowledge then, is more complex and multivariate. Hence the core impact of it would seem to be on the facilitation of learning within the classroom. The aim then is to achieve an appropriate learning environment taking into consideration the constraints imposed by the situation in which the teacher teaches. There is a strong emphasis on what Kumaravadivelu calls 'particularity' in the choice of instructional approaches in contemporary approaches to language teaching. Kumaravadivelu (2003) argues that language pedagogy is to be ...sensitive to a particular group of teachers teaching a particular group of learners pursuing a particular set of goals within a particular institutional context embedded in a particular sociocultural milieu (p. 538).

The Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001) asserts it very strongly that the determinant of choices of method should be the objectives of teaching rather than a pre-established methodological position. Effective teaching is characterized by a rich repertoire of teaching approaches and flexibility in methodological choices. Knowledge of learning and

knowledge of teaching therefore combine as a resource for developing a reflective approach to pedagogy. Hence Shulman (1987) argues that assigning uniform standards for determining teacher quality ignores the highly contextual nature of teaching since a language teacher's knowledge base is more than a set of basic skills. The accomplished teacher is not one who has developed a particular level of teacher competence but one who has the ability to expand, change, and add to practice over time.

Good language teaching then relates to being able to achieve language teaching goals in a particular program, with a particular group of students, and in a particular social and cultural context. It is important that standards for language teachers reflect the inherent variability of good teaching. There is room for a certain amount of flexibility rather than imposing a model of professional practice because there is a range of variation in what constitutes a good practice as far as language teaching is concerned. Good teachers teach in widely different ways which are considered nonetheless good in that particular context the teacher is teaching.

### **2.7.2 The Notion of Standards in Language Teaching**

The discussion of standards in language teaching merits attention as there is a range of variation in what constitutes good teaching, because good teachers may teach in widely different ways which are nonetheless equally good in context. Good teaching then, relates to being able to achieve language teaching goals in a particular program, with a particular group of students, and in a particular social and cultural context. It is pertinent that standards for language teachers reflect the inherent variability of good teaching and allow for flexibility rather than imposing a model of professional practice.

A regulatory approach seeks to develop a standardized form of practice against which particular teachers can be measured to determine whether their practice is good. It seeks to ensure the development of knowledge which can be used in different ways in response to particular contexts (Darling-Hammond, 1999). However this approach has been

criticized on two dimensions, one they undermine the trust placed in teachers as professionals and the other is that, they reduce the importance of professional judgments in the practice of teaching. Reviewing a practice becomes difficult when it is codified through standards. Professional practice is then reduced to the implementation of predetermined ways and the importance given to teachers' decision making in particular contexts is reduced (Sachs, 2003).

Developments approaches on the other hand, view that teachers should be allowed to become capable in their professional expertise. The standards articulated are not statements of codified practice but rather the aspirations of teachers as lifelong learners. Teaching is viewed as being complex and creative and the importance of the context in which the teaching occurs is acknowledged. The work on the generic standards for teachers has relevance to language teachers as language teaching incorporates both professional knowledge of language teachers and professional knowledge of teachers in general.

### **2.7.3 Proficiency of Language Teachers**

Four career dimensions are identified as crucial for teachers in the aspects of professional standards. Professional knowledge, professional practice, professional values and professional relationships are seen important as these are manifested in the career of a teacher. Standards for Teachers of English Language and Literacy in Australia (STELLA) provides a detailed picture of accomplished English/ literacy teaching based on two principles. The professional standards only have validity when grounded in teachers' own knowledge, experience, skills, and values. Second is that teachers' knowledge, experience, skills, and values are, in important respects, discipline specific.

According to Stein-Parbury (1999) good teachers should demonstrate qualities like passion for learning, ability to arouse imagination and a concern for students' experience as learners. He identified teaching methods and practices as both reflective and reflexive. Approaches to learning results from thought about the nature and needs of learners and the

teacher-student relationship is seen in terms of the quality of learning. Language proficiency for language teachers then, is not a question of how they measure on the scale of proficiency but rather their ability to use the target language to enact language pedagogy. The assumption that there is only one form of proficiency is a flawed understanding of the nature of linguistic competence:

A certain level of sophistication is called for in addressing issues of language proficiency for language teachers which certainly goes beyond simple tests of global proficiency. Wright and Bolitho (1997) deal with the issue of the nature of language knowledge by identifying two aspects of the content knowledge of language teachers: to be 'proficient users' and to be 'skilled analysts' of the language. Being a proficient user however, does not equate with native-speaker proficiency in the language.

#### **2.7.4 The Concerns of Language Teachers**

Hadfield (1992) identified the key concern of language teachers relating to 'the atmosphere of the class and the chemistry of the class group', since no two classes are alike. Educators such as Stevick (1976), Littlewood (1981), and Rivers (1992) refer to the importance of developing non-threatening classroom atmospheres, in which students feel comfortable enough to interact readily with others in the target language. Achieving social and pedagogical goals govern the classroom behavior of language teachers. The teachers' goals should be effective pedagogically by establishing prior student knowledge as well as effective socially by validating prior student knowledge. Focusing on the content of what people say about themselves, rather than on the form alone, will enable language learners to evolve into learning communities. It is evident that experienced teachers are governed by an intuitive understanding of certain key principles of group development. They help to develop and maintain the identity of the group and also to help the group make significant progress towards achieving its collective goals.

By reinforcing the feeling that every student is progressing in the class rather than learning in isolation from one another experienced teachers manage to adopt a class-centered approach to their teaching. It only highlights the importance of attending to the social well-being of the class besides being able to teach effectively. Integration of language and content is important because in young children cognitive development and language development go hand in hand. An integrated approach brings these two domains together. The merit of this approach lies in the fact that the integration of content with language instruction provides a substantive basis for language teaching and learning.

Language is learned most effectively for communication in meaningful, purposeful, social and academic contexts. However, in a typical school setting this fact is often treated independently. Mohan (1986) noted that “In subject matter learning we overlook the role of language as a medium of learning. In language learning we overlook the fact that content is being communicated” (p. 1). This point is further underscored by Cantoni Harvey (1987): “When the learners’ second language is both the object and medium of instruction, the content of each lesson must be taught simultaneously with the linguistic skills necessary for understanding it” (p. 22). Both motivational and a cognitive basis for language learning is provided by the content. It also provides a cognitive basis for language learning in that it provides real meaning. The intrinsic characteristic of language variation is another rationale of using this model. The proposed model calls for the recognition of the importance of language structures, skills, or functions that are characteristic of different content areas.

Specification of language-learning objectives must be undertaken with deliberate, systematic planning and coordination of the language and content curricula. Content-obligatory language objectives are both structural and functional. The content teacher knows the key concepts to be imparted, and the language teacher knows how to teach the pertinent language skills. However the use of such an integrated approach of language and content teaching carries with it a number of broad implications. First, both the language and

the content teachers must collaborate. This implies that the language instructor should incorporate into language instruction meaningful and important content that has evident language-related value in the rest of the curriculum.

This model has in mind that language skills learned in the foreign language class will be useful and usable in content classes, since it effectively obviates the need for transfer. Full integration of language and content instruction also implies integration of instruction across grade levels so as to achieve a coherent developmental program. The communicative learners' needs and/or the communicative requirements of particular content inform the teachers as to what and when particular language elements are to be taught. Furthermore, it implies the integration of higher order thinking skills into the language classroom. The final implication concerns the relationship between learning and teaching. Ellis (1984) has argued that language use, or "doing discourse", and language learning are the same thing. That is to say, "the procedures that the learner employs in using L2 knowledge are also the means by which new L2 knowledge is internalized" (p. 52). This approach then aims to engage students fully with teaching activities and pedagogical materials.

Having discussed the various methods and approaches to second language teaching the next section of the literature review considers what is expected of language teachers in today's schools. The qualities of what equates to best practice in language teaching fall into five main areas such as personality traits, instructional skills, interactional skills, organized skills and target language proficiency. Stronge (2002) acknowledges a wide variety of aspects involved in effective teaching, but he emphasizes personality, enthusiasm, and caring in particular.

Cobb (1999) (cited in West wood 2005), in reviewing the attributes desired for teachers across several countries found that quality teaching comprised a combination of attributes. Additional factors have been identified as necessary in literature specific to language teaching. Factors required include gestures and facial expressions, eye contact, rapport (Gower & Walters, 1983), knowledge about the technology integration into

classroom teaching (Kreeft-Peyton, 1997) personality traits such as warm and caring manner, an adventurous and live nature, and a passion for language (Breen, Briguglio & Tognini, 1996).

Clearly the attributes that are wanted by schools and individuals vary. However, a professionally competent teacher has a greater impact on learning than any other factors in a students' learning. It cannot be denied that energy and passion to teach are certainly required to be a good language teacher besides language proficiency. The classroom is only one resource in language teaching, but other resources such as learners, teachers and texts come into interplay during the teaching learning process. In tandem with the changing views on the nature of language and learning, the teacher plays many roles such as facilitator of the communication process, needs analyst, counselor, and process manager. Hence the activities in class will involve information sharing and negotiation of meaning and interaction.

## **2.8 Implementing Language Curriculum in Classrooms**

The following section of the literature review deals with the issues language teachers face and teacher attitudes in change implementation. The role of teachers' attitudes in the implementation of change is one part of that complexity. Despite the number of changes occurring, there has been relatively little study in ELT of the process of change and why some changes succeed while others fail. There is often a gap between statements of intent and the reality of what happens in classrooms. The introduction of materials, methods, and teacher education program are involved in the changes taking place in ELT. A change in teacher and student behavior in the classroom is important for effective and successful change. Besides attitude and behavior other factors are to be equally considered and taken into consideration.

Several other factors override attitudes and result in behavior different from what might be predicted from attitudes alone. Such findings are mirrored in ELT contexts. But

many writers have linked attitudes and behavior in a cause-effect relationship and the following quote attests to this:

...teachers attitude are a crucial variable in the dynamic of English as a foreign language curriculum innovation;...without effecting a change in teachers' attitudes any systemic innovation in the curriculum...will not have a significant effect on what goes on elsewhere (Young & Lee, 1984, p. 184).

Teacher development involves changing the person the teacher is. To focus on behavioral skills alone without reference to their grounding in or impact on attitudes and beliefs is misguided and liable to prove ineffective (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1992, p. 7).

What people say and what people do are different things and hence people involved in change implementation and evaluation will need to examine more closely why people do things and why they do not, without an over reliance on the statement of their attitudes alone. To get teachers to change or to get them to question their beliefs an awareness-raising of beliefs and their origins is important. Though attitude change is important, it is not sufficient. On the other hand the social norms and the perceived behavior control specific to a particular context should be taken into consideration. Classroom observation will help to gain some knowledge of actual, rather than reported behavior and hence it should be included in any evaluation of change implementation. The large scale change that takes place outside school and the classroom change should complement each other. The bottom-up initiatives for change by teachers will need top-down support and encouragement for long term success. What is needed then, is not radical shifts in teaching and learning, but contextually appropriate methods and materials. Hence rather than move at their pace, curriculum makers should move along with the society's pace since methods and materials change in line with societal change.



### **2.8.1 The Nature of Language Policies**

The period from 1978 to 1996 is one of great progress for language teaching and Australia came to be regarded as leading the English speaking world in systematic language policy development and implementation. Though language learning had relevance to everyday life the economic rationale for language learning became prominent by 1991. Ingram (2003) addresses six critical issues that face the profession. First language teachers are required to maintain their confidence and realize their vital role in language teaching. They have to take into account of the distinctive contribution requirements of languages education and maintain their relationships to their local branches or associations. It is important that in responding to society's diverse interests and decision-making process they should justify their existence. Self-reliance, a strong sense of responsibility and the quality of the service are considered the hallmarks of the profession. Finally, he concurs that language teachers need to be politically astute.

Language education needs arise from the multicultural nature of our society. Hence language policy needs to be designed on a long-term and systematic basis if it is to succeed in creating and maintaining a significant pool of people with useful language skills. It is crucial for any new policy to view the teaching and learning of languages as a cycle rather than a linear series of stages, and thus take a longer-term perspective.

To ensure that language policies are more than 'warm words', they must be rigorous and rational, based firmly on an understanding of the nature of society and society's language related needs. They must be articulated through specific goals and objectives to specific policy proposals. Policy proposals, in turn, must be traced through specific implementation recommendations and evaluation in practice to provide ongoing policy evaluation, review and development.

Curriculum design clichés as 'content-based' and 'outcomes-based', language across the curriculum', 'big' or 'rich' tasks, provide insights and approaches to learning which in turn, could provide useful contributions to language curriculum. However Ingram

cautions on the nature of the language development which develops both in a sequential and hierarchical manner. Hence the level of proficiency strongly influences the task being carried out and how it is being carried out. Teachers must cater to the systematic development of the language capitalizing on the content-based aspects of the curriculum. The teachers must accelerate learners' use of the target language by encouraging active learning methods which in turn, will help them to maximize the effectiveness of their receptive skills. Language teachers should assert the distinctive nature of their activity and the distinctive needs of language learners. Social interaction should be the central activity in most approaches to language syllabus design.

Besides the aspects mentioned above some other factors deserve attention in language teaching. To maximize efficiency new learning modes are required and issues such as teacher quality, periods of intensive learning, technology use to maximize learning, making the rote-learning elements such as grammar more interesting, as well as increasing the authenticity of language learning experience merit attention.

### **2.8.2 Role of Communication in Language Teaching**

Communication is defined by James Lee and Bill Van Patten (1995) as "...a complex dynamic of interactions; the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meaning, both in and out of the classroom" (p. 14). Students learn a language best when they are provided opportunities to use the target language in a wide variety of activities. Active use of language is central to the learning process. Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development also emphasizes the importance of active learning. His Socio cultural theory asserts that "human development cannot be viewed independently of social context" (Schinke-Llano, 1995, p. 22). It holds that "development is social, not individual, and is the result of joint problem-solving activities" (Schinke-Llano, 1993, p. 123). As he put it, "the primary function of language and speech is social, for the purpose of communicating culturally established meanings." (Dixon-Krauss, p. 17). Vygotsky believed that creating experiences

help people to learn. He suggested that language acquisition “occurs as a result of meaningful verbal interaction...between novices and experts in the experiment” (Schinke-Llano, 1995, p. 22). Role-plays provide opportunities for students to interact effectively.

Depending on the teaching techniques the learner retention rate varies widely. However, the “Learning Pyramid” formulated by the National Training Laboratory of Bethel, Maine in rating the different teaching methodologies such as lectures, reading, audio-visual, demonstration, group discussion, practice by using and immediate use of learning rates the use of learning as the highest. Findings also suggest that successful language teaching focuses its attention to the immediate use of learning.

In view of the changing paradigm shift in how we view teaching and learning the Standards remind us that “Any language learner, regardless of age, must internalize (whether consciously or unconsciously) the sound system, a basic lexicon, basic grammatical structures, communication strategies, and rules about how the language is used appropriately in interaction” (p. 20).

Vygotskian theory carries many implications for teachers. The teacher as an expert should act as a guide or facilitator who aids the novice in learning. Teachers must view the classroom as a social organization and hence look for ways to provide a supportive instructional environment that focuses on social interaction (Dixon-Krauss, 1996, p. 20). Described in Foley’s (1991) words, they must “teach the second language system not as an end in itself, but as a resource for achieving meaning” (p. 36).

The next section of the literature review is a discussion on techniques that generate information for curriculum development and why educational reform is so difficult and what makes for successful reform.

## **2.9 The Complexity of Educational Reform**

Curriculum development ought to be informed by empirical data as well as by value-based principles. At least three sets of testable assumptions are involved in any

curriculum development that proceeds to the level of building units or lessons. Prior knowledge assumptions, Readiness assumptions, and Application assumptions of which, only the first receives much research attention. However, learners in the primary grades have very limited prior knowledge and the degrees to which they can manipulate concepts are limited. Lessons and activities need to be implemented as planned, particularly with respect to emphasis on key ideas.

Complexity theory, Fullan suggests, claims that the link between cause and effect is difficult to trace, that change (planned or otherwise) unfolds in non linear ways, that paradoxes and contradictions abound and that creative solutions arise out of interaction under conditions of uncertainty, diversity and instability. It advocates that nothing is to be taken for granted in complex societies and even more in terms of educational policy. Reform often fails when imposed from top down and based on their “goodness” and “soundness” of objectives. The top down conception of change fails to consider the internal logic build by the local structures which stands as their landmark and is often difficult to depart from. The complexity of the structures that nurture schools should be accounted for when implementing a reform in school.

Healey and De Stefano (1997) say that in terms of reforms, success stories are success stories because: (a) the reform addressed a well-understood local need, (b) there is a significant local demand for the reform, (c) the reform itself is locally derived, (d) it is championed by one or more ‘messiahs’, (e) it is adequately financed, and (f) there is widespread ownership of the reform.

This concurs well with Farrell (2000) who affirms that: (a) educational change of consequence is inherently and necessarily intensely political and conflictual; (b) the “policy elites” who tend from their distant posts to devise and prescribe “one size fits all” educational solutions generally get it wrong; (c) accomplishing even modest educational change involves long hard work, with generally unpredictable results; (d) there are good reasons to believe that the basic “grammar” of schooling is resistant to quick fixes and

visionary programs; (e) changes that last and make a difference in learning generally come from the inside out rather than from the outside in or the top down.

Fullan affirms that neither top down nor bottom up strategies by themselves can achieve coherence- because the top is too distant and the bottom too overwhelmed. Tyack and Cuban (1995) define the “grammar” of schooling as the basic structural patterns which construct for all almost all concerned a vision of what a “real school” is like, and which are consequently difficult to change.

### **2.9.1 The Task of Educational Change**

Schools are faced with the prospect of what to do and how they do it due to the changes taking place in the pace of globalization, communication technologies and the changes in the structure of the society as such. Under these circumstances it has become inevitable for schools to change and be accountable for what and how they teach. However, educational change is complex by nature as it involves many things and change in itself is perpetual.

Morrison (1998) identified the following themes on the management of educational change. He identified that change is structural as well as systemic and does not take place immediately. It is a process which is viewed differently by various participants and therefore calls up for a range of responses. This is so because change involves many people in the process and hence the varied response. He proffers that owing to the nature of change, which is multi-dimensional in nature it must emerge over time, and also be flexible and adaptable. He concurs that change is multi-dimensional which encompasses a number of different dimensions. However not all educational changes are welcome by everyone since different people have different conceptions of change. It evokes various responses in different people

Fullan views change as a journey (1993). His notion of change is that it is complex, due to the unpredictable nature of change and due to the unforeseen things that unfold

during the process of change. The people who actually implemented in change are often ignored in the change process as pointed out by Fullan. Change is actually related to people and their implementation of practices in their respective schools and classrooms. Hence due consideration should be given to people who implement change; for a change to be successful it must be humanely oriented and attention should be paid towards change by skilled and knowledgeable facilitators. Changes taken place at the individual level but always within an organizational context. To Summarize Hargreaves' (1997) ideas on change, the central task of educational change involves a working collaboration between teachers and principals and among teachers themselves.

So far the literature review has covered general topics related to the study. The next section of the review will now delve into studies related to India. Of great importance is a summary conducted by the National Institute for Educational Research in 1999 titled *An International Comparative Study of School Curriculum*.

## **2.10 Background of Indian Education System**

India adopted the three language formula, Hindi being the official language and English as link language (Second foreign language) and learning of one regional language. India is moving from content to an outcome-based approach. The content or topic based approach lists the topics or themes of the subject area or discipline. The listing is generally broad and includes the aims and objectives for the subject area. The outcome-based approach to curriculum defines the outcomes, usually as abilities or skills. Teachers however adapt the curriculum to the local needs of the students.

Functional literacy and numeracy are the major aims at the primary level of education. In India the curriculum transaction focuses more on educational effects of learning outcomes and their equalization among children. The requirements of the first generation learners are given due consideration as they constitute a large proportion of school going children in the country. A pluralistic society based on the principles of

equality and social justice is visualized by the Constitution of India. School curriculum, therefore promotes the development of learners in all aspects of social settings. The National Curriculum Framework approved in 1986/1992 based on National Policy serves as a guideline by means of which all states formulate their own needs based curricula with a flexibility to accommodate local context. However due to the diversity of the country with multiplicity of languages and cultures there is no fixed curriculum. In this context the medium of instruction becomes a crucial question in curriculum transaction. The child's mother tongue is acknowledged as the medium of communication. In the case of the learners whose mother tongue is also the language of the region, the medium of instruction at elementary and secondary stages is the regional language. When the child's mother tongue is different from the regional language, the mother tongue is used as the medium of instruction during the first two years of primary education, and the regional language used subsequently.

#### **2.10.1 Decentralized Curriculum in Indian Schools**

Primary school functions for five hours a day out of which four hours are for instructional work and the duration of each class period being 40 minutes. The major concerns of the National Policy on Education formulated in 1986 among other aspects, emphasizes child-centered and activity-based processes rather than the teacher centered approach. The examination also underwent revamp with the introduction of continuous and comprehensive evaluation incorporating both scholastic and non-scholastic aspects of education. The Policy underwent a revision in 1992 with the revised version titled "Education for Human Resource Development." Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) and Issues of Gender Equality are considered the most important aspects of curriculum development. While the curriculum development process is not centralized nationally it is partially centralized as the curriculum development agency in each state is responsible for formulation and development of curricula.

### **2.10.2 The Formulation of Curriculum Policies in India**

The National Council of Educational Research and Training, NCERT's mandate is to assist and advise the Indian Government in the formulation and implementation of policies in the field of school education. Consensus is evolved through seminars, workshops and conferences involving state level educational functionaries to concentrate in the formulation of frameworks. Whereas, at the state level the respective state has a State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) which is a counterpart of NCERT. Professional bodies like NCERT and SCERT decide on curriculum design in consultation with the School Board. In evolving the curriculum, stake holders including professional associations of teachers participate though parents and students' participation would be equally desirable. The state is free to adopt and adapt the framework formulated by the NCERT to suit their specific needs.

The basic design is based on the National Curriculum Framework which is elaborated into syllabus outlines stating aims and objectives of each area of curriculum. The Minimum Levels of Learning (MLLs) were formulated at the primary level as a consequence of NPE 86/92. However it is the teachers who interpret the curriculum and implement it with variations considered appropriate for learning suitable to the needs of learners. There is no regulation which prevents the teacher from modifying the syllabus to suit the realities of the classroom. However English is compulsory from classes 6 to 10 only.

### **2.10.3 The Barriers in Implementing the Curriculum in India**

The study highlights some issues with regard to the coverage of the curriculum issues. Inadequate instructional time, pressure of information content, teacher professional development and load arising out of language comprehensibility are identified as some of the issues arising. In India universalization of elementary education is still not achieved and there is no prescribed curriculum for pre-service teacher education; however there are



guidelines for pre-service teacher education developed by NCCERT. The textbooks and other related materials are undertaken by agencies such as NCERT at the national level and the SCERTs at the state level besides Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and other State Boards of School Education. However, the private schools choose their own textbooks through their own resources. The State is responsible for the universal free compulsory education for children up to the age of 14. Teachers provide assessment on curriculum periodically through feedback. Based on the feedback of the evaluation the curriculum is revised once in five years.

In India curriculum research in languages was strong until 1998 before it lost its appeal. The study also highlights some of the barriers or difficulties faced in the effective implementation of the curriculum. The most prominent issues are the population pressure on schools, large classes, lack of an institutionalized mechanism for in-service teacher education for effective implementation of the curriculum when introduced, and inadequacy of support materials are some of the factors identified.

## **2.11 Issues Confronting Indian Schools**

The Ministry of Education, Government of India has several functions to play in the field of education. Though the Ministry discharges the major responsibility there are other Ministries at the Centre which also perform functions in the field of Education. It states, as we visualize it, the responsibility for school education will rest squarely on the State Governments. The Local authorities will, no doubt, have a good deal of initiative and we should like the State Governments to encourage them by adopting flexible policies. But, by and large, they will act as agents of the State Governments and exercise delegated powers.

An examination of the language-related educational policies by Khubchandani (1997) highlights the language policies in India, among colonial administrators which had an imprint on contemporary language ideologies for different nations. The great debate

about language policies among colonial administrators and the 'native' elite for over a century has left a deep imprint on contemporary language ideologies of different nations on the sub continent (Das Gupta 1970; Khubchandani, 1997).

Owing to the different phases of the political expediency of times the colonial policy also underwent changes. The three basic issues of education: content, the spread, the medium could not be resolved by the British (Dakin, 1968, pp. 5-12). Governor-General Bentick (1835), concurring with the sentiments of Macaulay, made it explicit that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone" (Sharp, 1920, pp. 130-31).

A committee was required to establish a standard variety for Indian languages, for use in formal communication due to the shift in the rulers' policy to run their administration at the lower level. Mother tongue as the medium of instruction for all classes up to the higher secondary level was recommended by the Education Commission in 1902. The British recognized three types of education 1.) English medium, in urban centers for the education of the elite, 2.) Two-tier medium, vernacular medium for primary education, and English medium for advanced education in towns, 3.) Vernacular medium, in rural areas for primary education. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, "although the official policy was that of the Despatch of 1854, it was Macaulay's policy of selective higher education in English that had achieved comparatively the greatest success", under the plea of devoting the inadequate financial resources to improving the quality of education (Dakin, 1968, p. 8).

Though intellectuals like Gokhale wanted the use of mother tongue in administration the Hartog Report (1929) wanted "a drastic re-organization of the elementary system {to} precede any wide application of compulsion". Thus the British policies made a significant impact on the role of education for plural societies of the subcontinent. People like Tagore (1906) and Gandhi (1916) advocated vernacularization in education and the tension between the elite and the masses was also perpetuated by the

English rulers. The ideological issues concerning the content of education took a back seat in the politicization of the language issue in India.

The plural character of the Indian society at large, whereby a child's experiences in life does not show semblance with the formal 'school version' of his mother tongue was not fully comprehended by the experts. Thus, the supporters of the mother tongue ideology failed to define the bounds of mother tongue. The diverse patterns of language hierarchy prevailing in multilingual plural society were not taken into consideration. Native speech is distinguished as 'the first speech acquired in infancy through which a child gets socialized'. The term 'mother tongue' is mainly 'categorized by one's allegiance to a particular tradition, and is societally identifiable'.

The stages of development differ in languages and the wide sociocultural traditions of states is highlighted by the study conducted by the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT). The report points out that education through minority languages which hold subordinate position in society is likely to produce uneven levels of achievement. The safeguards of mother tongue education at the primary school stage for linguistic minorities were spelled out in the Three Language Formula in 1956. The linguistic minorities on their part have tried to influence the authorities concerned, to accept their interpretation of mother tongue, 'the language spoken from the cradle' as their mother tongue which is evident by the Census conducted in 1951 and 1954.

Many problems are confronting many developing nations as a result of present language strategies. There is a rigid insistence on different normative systems and a pervasive competition for language privileges existing in different regions. The development of language is linked to clear-cut demarcation of language use. Thus continuum of language hierarchy gets compartmentalized. Language experts question the supremacy of the mother tongue and this coupled with the pressure from political parties it is now viewed that mother tongue alone is not sufficient.

## **2.12 Contribution of Backward Mapping Model to Implementation Process**

Policy planning if not thought out carefully will result in strong resistance to policy messages and will produce unexpected policy outcomes. Verspoor (1992) posits that a review of 19 developing countries which found “an almost universal neglect of implementation issues”. As Dyer (1999) noted, the appropriacy and viability of the policy message is tested in practice which gives the opportunity to adjust policy in light of the experience that arises. Dyer points out to the meager literature on implementation in developing countries including India. Therefore the author proffers that many aspects of the processes involved are not yet well understood. Operation Blackboard, a program under the National Policy on Education (1986; revised 1992), the ‘backward mapping’ model generated insights into the ‘black box’ of processes involved in implementing policy.

Two different perspectives on policy implementation are discussed by Dyer (1999). The ‘bureaucratic process model’ starts with the policy message at ‘top’ and implementation is seen occurring in a chain which can be controlled or regulated from above. The second model of ‘bargaining and conflict’, in contrast accepts the fact that implementation is untidy. Challenges and resistance to policy is seen as rational and implementation is viewed as a process of mediation between competing interests, which can have unexpected outcomes. Elmore (1980) describes the inherent logic of the top-down approach as one of forward mapping, which ‘begins at the top of the process, with as clear a statement as possible of the policy maker’s intent, and proceeds through a sequence of increasingly more specific steps’ to state ‘an outcome against which success or failure can be measured’ (pp. 603-603). Elmore argues that implementation can be controlled from the top is a myth and therefore the logic of forward mapping is faulty. Elmore (1980) however states that Backward mapping begins with ‘a statement of the specific behaviour at the lowest level of the implementation process that generates the need for a policy’ (p. 604). Elmore proffers that policy making in this sense is not informed by ‘statement of intent’ but by an understanding of the discrepancy between actual and desired which the policy

message will seek to close. Dyer (1999) propounds that this backward mapping model will provide a useful departure for an investigation into policy implementation.

### **2.13 The Role of Policy in Primary Education in India**

Since this study is related to primary schools, discussion of research on policy implementation in primary schools in India is required. Policy in primary education according to Dyer (1999) derives from three types of instrument: the national, 5 year development plans; national policy; and the constitution, which in its Article 45 promises universal free elementary education. Implementation is a routine ‘follow-on’ carried out by bureaucrats operating within the administrative structures of three tiers of government; from the center, to the state or union territory, through to local government at the district and lower levels. The National Policy on Education (1986) has identified three problems within the system- alienation of the child; unsuitability of formal structure for working children; and bareness of the school facilities and adopted a three-pronged strategy in response. These include a child-centered approach with activity-based learning; a comprehensive system of non-formal education and to bring about a “substantial improvement in school facilities.” Dyer (1999) notes that the Blackboard Operation had many issues to confront and there were discrepancies across the different sites which failed to address the objectives of Operation Blackboard. The teaching-learning aids were of substandard quality with nothing for teaching language. The training sessions did not synchronize with the materials and there were no follow up sessions. In some schools there had been long delays in the implementing of Operation Blackboard. However the author points out that the serious obstacle was that the state level resented the centrally sponsored scheme in which the state had no involvement in the design and hence they had no ownership of the program. This as Dyer (1999) posits is one of the major problems faced in implementing policy as actors in the implementation process did not perceive themselves as having any stake in the changes suggested.

Dyer (1999) in this instance pointed out the importance of generating questions of and about teachers in classrooms, and the relationship between their behaviors and the policy intention. Such a move according to the author will generate insights which in turn will question the fit between the intended policy and school contexts. Problems such as the lack of fit between curriculum content and children's environment, lack of pedagogical support, lack of pre-service training and the absence of teaching-learning aids surfaced in this study which recognizes the need for a range of policy options which need to be considered in pursuit of improving the quality of primary education.

## **2.14 Chapter Summary**

The review of the literature shows that teachers are frequently required to implement pedagogic changes and these changes could not be effected due to a number of reasons.

Studies on the implementation of curriculum policy with reference to English curriculum policy have identified the factors impacting on curriculum change. The literature review pointed out the importance of language in the curriculum and the issues confronted by teachers in implementing this change.

Besides that, studies on policy implementation have identified that lack of conviction or ownership as one of the major causes for innovations to fail and it is very essential for the subsequent implementation phase. Teachers are those who would be eventually responsible for implementation and as such their interests and concerns needs to be addressed. More important is the context in which the policy is translated into action. The need to plan implementation is pertinent and it is useful to generate the required information to do so. The depth and the complexity in the implementation environment must be considered in policy formulation for successful implementation.

Nonetheless, the implications of implementing English curriculum in the primary schools of India have not been examined and implementation as a subject is worth serious

attention. Such a study will be a valuable addition to the literature pertaining to the implementation of English curriculum in the primary schools of India. Such a study will provide insights for policy inputs which will help to realize the objectives of Education for All which is very much stressed in the education policies of India.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to examine the implementation of ESL curriculum policy and its implications for practice in the selected primary schools of India. The proposed study is a qualitative study. As Gaies (1980) noted: “the classroom is the crucible- the place where teachers and learners come together and language learning, we hope, happens”. (p. 18).

In studying the schools in India the researcher does not set out to prove a particular perspective but to understand the world as it is and to be balanced in reporting both confirming and disconfirming evidence. It is impossible to anticipate in advance the implications of curriculum and how it will adapt to local conditions, needs and interests. Under these conditions a strategy of inquiry is particularly appropriate.

School outcomes can be looked at both in terms of quantity of change and quality of change. The outcomes of policies have corresponding quality dimension that require description. What policy meant to these participants and what is the quality of their experiences requires detailed, in-depth and holistic descriptions.

This study will involve an examination of the curriculum policy changes in India and the educational problems to which the policies were attempting to respond. This study will also look into the issues arising from the changes in the curriculum and how they affect its planning and teaching. The study will examine how the values, attitudes and beliefs of the teachers influence the process of change in schools and how the context of the school affect the teachers’ ability and inclination to change. Finally the study will also look into issues arising from changes in curriculum policies in India. Qualitative inquiry methods such as interviewing, documentary and archival sources, classroom observation and detailed description will be adopted in this study.



### 3.2 Rationale for Choosing the Qualitative Approach

Qualitative research is “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Van Maanen, 1979, pp. 520-526).

The mandate of qualitative methods is to go into the field and learn about the program first hand. This study will employ a qualitative approach to research to reach an understanding on the implementation of curriculum policy and its implications in practice in the selected primary schools of India.

Understanding comes from trying to put oneself in the other person’s shoes, in this case from trying to discern how teachers think, act and feel. Direct observations will provide a good perspective on how the curriculum is implemented and its implications in practice. The teacher brings into the classroom the syllabus, often embodied in a textbook. The success of the interaction cannot be guaranteed just by exhaustive planning; if the interaction is totally planned in advance then the result is play-reading, rather than a lesson. Interaction is something people do together, collectively. The learners make a contribution to the interaction, which is crucial to the success of the lesson itself as a social event.

In trying to understand the world of the child John Dewey advocates a holistic approach to both teaching and research.

The child’s life is an integral one, a total one. He passes quickly and readily from one topic to another, as from the spot to another, but is not conscious of transition or break. There is no conscious isolation, hardly conscious distinction. The things that occupy him are held together by the unity of the personal and social interests, which his life carries along... { His } universe is fluid and fluent; its content dissolve and reform with amazing rapidity. But after all, it is the child’s own world. It has the unity and completeness of his own life. (Dewey, 1956, pp. 5-6)

The central idea explored in this research will be the implementation of policy and its implications for practice. The focus is just to explore and give a descriptive detail of the events that unfold. As Lancy (1993) observed, “Every aspect of one’s work as a qualitative researcher demands more writing than would be the case for a quantitative scholar. Writing is to qualitative research what mathematics is to quantitative researcher.” (p. 234)

The research focuses on process, meaning and understanding. The product of a qualitative study is richly descriptive. Qualitative research “implies a direct concern with experience as it is ‘lived’ or ‘felt’ or ‘undergone’” (Sherman & Webb, 1988, p. 7).

Adopting a qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it facilitates the researcher in exploring the meaning of reality by interacting with the participants in their world. The qualitative method allows the researcher to explore complexities beyond the scope of more controlled approaches. The researcher will understand the phenomenon from the points of view of the participants in their social context.

### **3.3 Selection of Schools and Participants**

Anthropologists have long maintained that non-probability sampling methods “are logical as long as the field-worker expects mainly to use his data not to answer questions like ‘how much’ and ‘how often’ but to solve qualitative problems, such as discovering what occurs, the implications of what occurs, and the relationships linking occurrences” (Honigmann, 1982, p. 84).

The researcher will use purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990). Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned.

Patton (1990) argued that: the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research, thus the term purposeful sampling. (p. 169).

Lecompte and Preissle (1993, p. 69) prefer the term criterion-based selection to the terms purposive or purposeful sampling. In criterion-based selection you “create a list of attributes essential” to your study and then “proceed to find or locate a unit matching the list” (p. 70). The criteria established for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in information-rich cases.

To determine the number of sample Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend sampling until a point of saturation or redundancy is reached. Hence the researcher will select 3 schools in South India for the proposed study. One school will be located in an urban area, the other in a rural setting and the third school with a mix of rural and urban population. These three schools will be a representative sample for the study undertaken.

In purposeful sampling the size of the sample is determined by informational considerations. If the purpose is to maximize information, the sampling is terminated when no new information is forthcoming from new sampled units; thus redundancy is the primary criterion (p. 202).

The researcher will select three schools in South India in Madurai district for the proposed study. All three schools are located in the Madurai district. The schools are referred to as School A, School B, and School C respectively. The three schools are a mix of rural and urban population and the linguistically and culturally diverse students of the three schools will be a representative sample for the study. The use of these schools is warranted as these schools are affiliated to the State Board of Education and thus provide a basis for generalization to primary education in these schools. Due to variations among states no claim is made for generalizing changes to all primary schools. A similar view is contended by Patton (1990) who recommends specifying a minimum sample size “based on expected reasonable coverage of the phenomenon given the purpose of the study”. (p. 186)

The participants in this study will be teachers and pupils of the respective primary schools in India as well as the people involved in the curriculum divisions responsible for curriculum policy making. The researcher will obtain permission from the respective

schools and teachers to conduct the study. Approval will also be obtained from the relevant curriculum divisions to conduct the interviews.

### **3.3.1 Criteria for Selecting the Participants**

The participants of this study will be the teachers and students of the respective primary schools as well as the people involved in curriculum policy divisions.

The following criteria will be used for the teacher participants in this study:

#### **a. Teachers**

1. The teachers should have been teaching English as second language in the primary schools for a period of 10 to 15 years. Twelve (12) ESL teachers were interviewed based on their expertise with the ABL system.

This criterion will be important to the researcher as the teacher can share her insights about the previous curriculum policy and the changes that have taken place. This in turn will enable the researcher to raise questions on the implications of the curriculum in practice as the knowledge of the teacher on previous curriculum policy changes will give insights pertaining to the research questions proposed.

2. The teacher should be willing to let the researcher observe her class in progress for a period of 3 months.

This criterion will enable the researcher to observe the teacher in action, which will help the researcher to understand in what ways the context of the school affect the teachers' ability and inclination to change as well as the issues arising from changes in the curriculum. The observed data can then be triangulated with the teachers concerned.

Access to classrooms was important as it allows the researcher to establish the contexts in which policies were to be implemented and also to consider the effects of policies on practice.

3. The teacher should be willing to be interviewed.

This criterion is important as the researcher can clarify the data obtained and it also enables the researcher to validate the data obtained. However, the teachers were not in favor of their interviews being tape recorded. The researcher will attempt to assure the teacher of confidentiality and explain the purpose of the study. Selection of these teachers did not necessarily mean they were representatives of the teacher population.

Three teachers were interviewed in school A. These teachers had been teaching in the school for 15 years and all the teachers taught all subjects and were not subject matter specialists. All of them had Secondary teacher training (SGTT) qualification. In school B 4 teachers were interviewed and the teachers in this school had 13 years of teaching experience. All the teachers in this school also had secondary teacher training qualification. In school C 5 teachers were interviewed and 3 teachers had secondary teacher qualification and 2 teachers had degree in home science. All the teachers were experienced. 3 teachers had 17 years of teaching experience and 2 teachers had 22 years of teaching experience. All the teachers had been working in the same school.

## **b. Students**

Four groups of students each comprising 5 students in a group were interviewed. Considering that participants of this study are the primary school children the following criteria were used:

1. The students should be conversing fluently in English.

2. The students should not be intimidated by the researcher. They should be more vocal in expressing their views.

The researcher will frequently visit the school to familiarize herself with the students to establish better rapport during the interview. Since the participants will be young learners interviews will be conducted more in a conversational style to elicit answers from them and also to ensure that they will not be intimidated by the presence of the researcher. The students for the interview will be selected with the help of the teacher as the teacher will be able to identify students who can express their views. Focus group interview will be conducted with the students and the number of interviews to be conducted will be determined as the data is collected.

#### **c. curriculum development officers**

The following criteria were used for the curriculum experts. 4 policy makers were interviewed for their perspectives on ABL policy changes.

1. Their willingness to participate in the study.
2. Their experience and expertise in the field.
3. Their involvement in the central curriculum committee for a period of 15 to 20 years.

This will be essential to the researcher in view of the number of follow-up interviews to be conducted to gain a valuable insight of the proposed study. Their expertise in the field will yield rich data regarding the changes in the curriculum policies and the implications arising from the changes.

#### **d. Parents**

The following criterion was used for the parents

- 1.) Their willingness to participate in the study.

### **e. Principals**

3 Principals were interviewed for the 3 schools visited by the researcher. The following criteria were used for selecting the principals

1. Their willingness to participate in the study
2. Their experience as principals of that particular school for a period of 5 years.

A total of 3 principals were interviewed. Principals of school A and school B had diploma in teacher training and had served as principals of the school for a total of 17 years. Principal of school C had a degree and had served the school for 20 years. She has been the principal of the current school for the last 5 years.

### **f. Selection Criteria of the 3 Schools**

Three schools were selected due to the demographic considerations of the schools. It should be mentioned in this context that only the government schools in that locality carried out the new ABL policy change. Sample was determined by informant considerations. Key informants of the study were subjects with special expertise. Moreover no claims are made in generalizing the findings as representing the standards of primary education to the whole State. To preserve the anonymity the schools were referred to as school A, school B, and school C. These sites were approached for permission to conduct the study. The following is a brief description of the schools. All the three schools were situated in the same district. There was some difficulty in gaining access as some schools viewed this study as evaluating ABL changes.

#### **School A.**

School A is situated in a rural area. This school had the least facilities. There were only 82 students in this school and they were divided into 2 classes. All subjects are taught by the same teacher. This school implemented the current ABL method in 2006. The school did not have playground, library and language lab facilities. English was taught once

a week for three hours. The school operates from 9.40 until 4.00 pm and students have their lunch break from 12.40 to 1.40. Most of the students who attended this school were from the surrounding areas. There were only 2 teachers and one principal operating this school. The school had a total of 220 working days in a year. This school was the smallest among the 3 schools visited with only 2 rooms that were converted into classrooms. The classrooms were also used to serve lunch for the students after which they resume classes for the noon session.

### **School B**

School B is attended by a mix of rural and urban children. This school was slightly bigger than school A. There were 132 students attending this school. In this school English was taught for 3 days in a week 2 hours for each class. Most of the teachers in this school have a secondary teacher training certificate. Though the campus is slightly bigger than school A. The school operated a total of 220 days in a year. The classrooms were bare except for the board in which students could write their work. The school implemented the current ABL system in 2006.

### **School C**

This school had a bigger campus compared to the other two schools. The classrooms were bigger and students had lot of space to do their activities. The school had a television and the afternoon sessions were reserved for listening activities. Being located in a urban area most of the students who attended this school were a mostly from the urban areas surrounding the school. All the subjects were taught by the same teacher and the school operated for 220 days in a year. The school did not have a library or other facilities like language lab. This school had both primary and secondary classes. Most of the teachers teaching in this school also had secondary teacher training certificate.



### **3.3.2 Criteria for Selecting the Interview Questions**

As the proposed study will involve looking into the policy changes in India the interview questions will be different based on the imperatives that drive the curriculum policy in India. The questions posed will also focus on the nature of the educational problems to which the country was responding in formulating the curriculum policies. Interview questions will also focus on teacher beliefs and the problems faced in dealing with the policy changes over the years. The study will also focus on how the policy changes affect the planning and the teaching of the curriculum.

### **3.4. Data Collection Procedures**

The study aimed at investigating the implementation of ESL curriculum policy and its implications in practice. The data will be collected over a period of three months. The data collection procedures will include:

1. Interviews
2. Classroom observation
3. Documentary and Archival Sources
4. Field Notes

The data collection procedures would be carried out in three cycles. The first cycle would be classroom observation and interviews conducted in school A followed by second cycle with school B and third cycle with school C. The observation will serve as means of gathering first hand information for the researcher to get a better perspective on the implications for curriculum practice. The data obtained from the classroom observation will then be validated with the teachers during the interview.

The researcher will use varied data collection methods for the present study. By using a combination of observations, interviews, and document analysis the researcher is able to use different data sources to validate and cross-check findings. Each type and source

of data has strengths and weaknesses. Using a combination of data increases validity as the strengths of one approach can compensate for the weaknesses of another approach. (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 244). The researcher would go back to the respective schools for any further information that arises after the classroom observation has been carried out.

### **3.4.1 Interviews**

Qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit. The fundamental principle of qualitative interviewing is to provide a framework within which respondents can express their own understandings in their own terms.

In the proposed study the researcher will conduct formal interviews with the officers involved in policy making in the relevant divisions. According to Richards (2003), formal interviews are “formally arranged in advance and all parties understand what is taking place” (p. 51).

The participant and the researcher will agree upon the time and the place of the interview earlier so that interviews could be facilitated according to the convenience of both the researcher and the participants. The researcher will conduct face-to -face, semi-structured interviews with the curriculum experts. In conducting the interviews the researcher will adopt the interview guide approach in that the topics and issues to be covered are specified in advance, in outline form and the interviewer decides the sequence and wording of questions in the course of the interview.

As Patton explains: We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe...we cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to

ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspectives. (p. 196).

The interview questions with the officers involved in curriculum policy making will focus on the conditions under which curriculum came to be developed and the educational problems to which the country was attempting to respond. The data collected will be useful to compare and contrast the trends in the policy changes over the years.

In depth interviewing is a data collection method relied on quite extensively by qualitative researchers (Patton, 2002). Interviews are a useful way of acquiring a large amount of data. When more than one person is used as respondent, the interview process allows for a wide variety of information; potentially a large number of subjects, and triangulation of the data. It also allows for immediate follow-up questions. Extensive notes would be made immediately after each interview had finished and the subsequent interviews will be designed to elaborate topics and interpretations with the participants. The interview followed what Patton (2002) referred to as the interview guide. This enabled me to be "free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject" (Patton, 2002, p. 343). The advantage of this "formal, semi-structured, and in-depth interview" allowed me to conduct the interview with guiding questions and meanwhile remain open to "following the leads of informants and probing into areas that arise during interview transactions" (Hatch, 2002, p. 94). The interviews together with the observational data would be helpful in determining the relationship between what informants say they do and what they actually seem to do.

The extended interview sessions would enable the researcher to seek further clarification on the issues arising. It also helps the researcher to approach an idea from a more fruitful angle, to test the interviewee's statement with a similar question, to challenge an assertion to test validity and to discuss concepts so that meaning becomes more precise.

Credibility of the data with the curriculum officers will be ensured by member checks whereby the data collected and the tentative interpretations will be taken back to the

people from whom they were derived to check for any discrepancies. When there is a necessity for clarification or further information is required the interviewer will use probes to get further information.

Probes are always a combination of verbal and non-verbal cues. They also provide the interviewer with a way to maintain control on the flow of the interview. A probe is a neutral verbal or non-verbal way of encouraging the interviewee to answer, or to clarify or extend an answer. It helps the researcher to identify which topics cause interviewees to hesitate, as it enables the interviewer to know when to encourage further reply or information. Probing can come in the form of asking for more details, for clarification, and for examples. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) pointed out that “Probes may take numerous forms; they range from silence, to sounds, to a single word, to complete sentences”.

All the interviews will be audio taped with the prior permission of the participants. Using a tape recorder, however, does not eliminate the need for taking notes. As Patton pointed out:

Notes can serve at least two purposes. 1.) Notes taken during the interview can help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along, particularly where it may be appropriate to check out something that was said earlier; and 2.) taking notes about what is said will facilitate later analysis, including locating important quotations from the tape itself... the failure to take notes will often indicate to the respondent that nothing of importance is being said. (p. 462)

The interview with teachers will be conducted after the class at the convenience of the teachers. The interviewer will conduct the interview immediately after the class, as this will enable the teacher to recall the activities done in her class and the relevance to it. The interviewer will question the teacher on how the values, attitudes and beliefs of the individual teachers influence the change process in the schools. The focus of the interview will be how curriculum is implemented in the classroom and how the teachers interpret the curriculum policy. In attempting to interpret the curriculum in practice the teachers will

also be questioned on how the context of the school affect the teachers' ability and inclination to change as this has a profound influence on the process of change. Questions will also be posed to the teachers pertaining to the issues arising from curriculum implementation.

Interview with students will begin with open-ended questions and subsequent questions are of a conversational nature in an attempt to get the relevant and required information. The interviewer will adopt this conversational style in order to capture the whole phenomenon as experienced by the students as accurately as possible. The students will be interviewed on their involvement with the subject and their understanding of the lesson as a whole. This will enable the researcher to get their perspectives on the meanings and significance they attach to the curriculum that transpires in the classroom.

#### **3.4.2 Children as Interviewees**

Interviews with children will follow the courtesies of adult interviews including careful attention to explanation and listening to responses in children's interview besides checking back with the children to ensure the interviewer has "got it right". As suggested by Wilson and Powell (2001, p. 27) the interviewer will have a list of prompts related to the issues being raised that could act as "possible lines of enquiry". The children will be given explanations on the purpose of the interview and the interviewer will spend time to build rapport, and use simple and clear language and ensure that the interview is conducted in a friendly setting.

In following the advice of Wilson and Powell (2001) the researcher would adopt both non-verbal and verbal interviewing skills to facilitate the child's free narrative by featuring a gentle approach in interviewing the child. The researcher would not come to premature conclusions of the child's statement, but would instead adopt a reflective approach and wait patiently to enable the child to relate the points. The verbal qualities

referred to by Ivey and Ivey (2003) such as vocal tone, speech rate and verbal tracking will be used judiciously.

As Wilson and Powell (2002, p. 51) posited it requires ‘the ability to tolerate silences and to hold one’s tongue’. However, he cautions the researcher that amidst this active silence the interviewer must nevertheless observe the child, maintaining gentle eye contact apart from keeping distracting body movements under control. Good interviews often begin with a skeletal framework and adjustments emerge as the conversations take shape. The researcher will adopt a casual, conversational approach and continue to ask open-ended questions to follow up on the students’ responses. The improvisational tone adopted will allow the researcher to come to an interview with an idea of what to ask, but ready to adjust the sequence of questions or build on the answer. The researcher in being flexible with the questioning will conduct the interview long enough so that important points are able to surface. This will only occur when the researcher has talked with the children long enough to get them involved and interested in the conversation. The interviews with students will illuminate students’ understanding and their experiences of the teaching learning process.

In ensuring the ethical effectiveness of the interview the researcher will acknowledge the child’s development stage and will use age-appropriate practices and the child’s free narrative remains the central concern in managing the child-focused interview. At all times the researcher will ensure that the cooperation between the interviewer and the children are maintained throughout the interview.

### **3.4.3 Focus Group Interviews**

Focus group interviews will be conducted with the students and groups will be formed with the help of the class teacher’s suggestion. Past research experience of utilizing focus groups (Reay & Lucey, 2003) attest to the evidence of focus group interviews as an effective research tool for eliciting commonalities and differences of opinion among young

people (Lewis, 1992). Focus group interviews with the students will provide insights into students' viewpoints about classroom participation, and their experience of the curriculum in the classroom. The focus group interview with the students and the individual interviews with teachers will help to provide insights into the same issues but from different perspectives. The interviews together with the participant observation will allow for triangulation. Focus group interviews are clearly an appropriate research method for attempting to access group voice (Morgan, 1997).

### **3.5 Documentary and Archival Sources**

In the present study documentary and archival sources are deemed important as curriculum policy changes are best reflected in documents. Documents such as policy statements, minutes of meetings, school time-tables with respect to their arrangement of the cognitive subjects and affective subjects, mission statement of the school in India will be analyzed in order to collect data on the curriculum policy changes. Such an analysis will take into account how the documents came into being; by whom; and under what circumstances and constraints. Such an analysis and interpretation will also take into consideration the motives and assumptions underlying these documents.

Documents would be interpreted in terms of the circumstances in which they came about, how they were selected, the motives and assumptions as well as the constraints faced. The documents would be analyzed in terms of the educational problems they were attempting to resolve. Analyzing the documents in terms of the above would provide a good understanding of the process by which the documents came into being. The researcher takes into account the circumstances under which a document came about and the constraints faced in order to interpret how it affects the planning and the teaching of the curriculum.

As Guba and Lincoln (1981) noted, “The first and most important injunction to anyone looking for official records is to presume that if an event happened, some record of it exists” (p. 253).

Documents provide valuable information because of what the researcher can learn by reading them; they also provide stimulus for generating questions that can be pursued through direct observation and interviewing. Records and documents in this context serve a dual purpose: 1) they are a basic source of information about decisions and background, or activities and processes; and 2) they give ideas about important questions to pursue through interviewing.

One of the greatest advantages in using documentary material is its stability. The presence of the investigator does not alter what is being studied. Documents can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated. Analysis of this data source “lends contextual richness and helps to ground an inquiry in the milieu of the writer. This grounding in real-world issues and day-to-day concerns is ultimately what the naturalistic inquiry is working toward.” (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 234).

### **3.6 Observation**

One of the salient features employed in this study will be classroom observation. The researcher will play the role of a non-participant observer. Naturalistic observation involves observing individuals in their natural setting. The researcher makes no effort whatsoever to manipulate variables or to control the activities of individuals, but simply observes and records what happens as things naturally occur.

What people say is a major source of qualitative data, whether what they say is obtained verbally through an interview or in written form through document analysis or survey responses. There are limitations, however, to how much can be learned from what people say. To understand fully the complexities of many situations, observation of the phenomenon of interest may be the best research method. Howard S. Becker, one of the



leading practitioners of qualitative methods in social science research, argued that participant observation is the most comprehensive of all types of research strategies:

The most complete form of the Sociological datum, after all; is the form in which the participant observer gathers it: an observation of some social event, the events which precede and follow it, and explanations of its meaning by participants and spectators, before, during, and after its occurrence. Such a datum gives us more information about the event under study than data gathered by any other Sociological method. (Becker & Geer, 1970, p. 133)

The researcher will observe the physical setting in which learning takes place, the participants, activities and interactions during the lesson. The activities that transpire in the classroom and how the students react to it will be observed. Their involvement, interest and understanding of the lesson will be observed. The nonverbal forms of communication are not overlooked. The researcher will take a non-judgemental stance in observing the data.

Notes taken down during the observation in this study would provide information about the participants' perspectives which will be followed up in interviews and conversations. The notes taken down by the researcher will be clearly distinguished between verbatim records of speech, summaries of events and interpretations so as to facilitate later analysis. Taking notes in the classroom will be helpful as new questions will emerge from the notes taken which can be subsequently followed up in the interviews for further clarification.

Observing young children in the classroom allows for an understanding of what is transpiring around them. Observing them in the classroom provides information on the patterns and regularities in the environment as well as the behavior of the children in their natural setting. The observation data would be useful to supplement the information obtained from other sources as well as to verify the information obtained in the interviews. The researcher will not adhere to a structured observation. Instead it is characterized by flexibility and a minimum of restructuring. Less structured observation provides an

insider's perspective for examining the interactions among students over some time. Information obtained from observation would be combined with information from conversations, interviews, and documentary sources.

The observation would be characterized by flexibility and a minimum of pre structuring. There is a commitment to approach observation with a relatively open mind. It gives the researcher some sense of an insider's perspective.

On the number of observations the researcher should make Glaser and Strauss (1967) suggest that data are collected on a particular theoretical category until it is "saturated"; that is, until nothing new is being learned about that category. The emphasis is on flexibility and on recording behavior and events in their wholeness taking into account the social and cultural context in which they occur and examining the perspectives on interpretations of participants. If prolonged engagement provides scope, persistent observation provides depth.

Though critics say it is highly subjective and therefore unreliable Patton contends that training to be a skilled observer includes "learning how to write descriptively; practicing the disciplined recording of field notes; knowing how to separate detail from trivia... and using rigorous methods to validate observations" (Patton, 1990, p. 201).

The researcher will address the limitations of observations in the research. Limitations include the possibility that the observer may affect the situation being observed in unknown ways often constrained by the limited sample of activities observed. The researcher will build relationships of trust with subjects in order to facilitate access and reduce reactivity. Using a variety of sources and resources, the researcher can build on the strengths of each type of data collection while minimizing the weaknesses of any single approach.

To address the problem of the observer effect the researcher will stay around long enough to get people used to the observer's presence. To control observer bias, the researcher will study the subjective factors objectively and spend a considerable amount of

time at the site, getting to know the subjects and the environment (both physical and cultural) in which they live.

### **3.7 Field Notes**

Aside from getting along in the setting, the fundamental work of the observer is to take down field notes. Field notes are “the most important determinant of later bringing off a qualitative analysis. Field notes provide the observer’s *raison d’etre*. If he is not doing them he might as well not be in the setting”. (Lofland, 1971, p. 239)

The researcher will jot down in the field notes where the observation took place, the participants present, what the physical setting is like, and the social interactions that take place and the activities that transpire. The field notes will also contain what people say, direct quotations, or as near as possible recall of direct quotations. These quotations will come from what people said during observed activities as well as what they said during interviews, both informal and formal. These quotations are essential for capturing what anthropologists call the “emic perspective”.

According to Bogdon and Biklen (1998) “field notes are written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study”. (p. 108).

The researcher’s reflective notes will record her own feeling, reactions to the experience, ideas and hunches that arise from time to time and reflections about the personal meaning and significance to what is observed. Glasser and Strauss (1967) refer to this as memos.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Like many other researchers, Ely (1991, p. 87) was perfectly frank about the elusive quality of qualitative research: “Establishing categories from qualitative data”, she

said, “seems rather like a simultaneous left-brain right-brain exercise”. Thus it is not reducible to any convenient protocol:

Bogdan and Biklen define qualitative data analysis as “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others”. (1982, p. 143).

Analysis is not about adhering to any one correct approach or set of right techniques; it is imaginative, artful, flexible and reflexive. It should also be methodical, scholarly, and intellectually rigorous (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 269).

In this study each interview is recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Generating as many categories as possible is good as it will enable the researcher to see features of the data, or of what the data refer to, that might be overlooked with a more focused approach. The constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) was used to analyze the interview data. The recurring themes or categories that emerged were tagged together with terms that the participants used in the transcribed interviews (Huberman & Miles, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 2005).

According to Hatch (2002) and other scholars (Denzin, 1994; Patton, 2002), interpretation is a defining element that permeates all qualitative research through making inferences, developing insights, attaching importance, refining understandings, drawing conclusions, and extrapolating lessons. Denzin (1994) also contended that interpretations are “a productive process that sets forth the multiple meanings of an event, object, experience, or text” (p. 504). An analysis of data with reference to each research question of the proposed study is presented below.

### **3.8.1 Research Question 1**

What are the ESL curriculum policy changes that have taken place in India since 1990? To what educational problems were these policies attempting to respond?

In reflecting the purpose of the research question the data collected from policy documents will be analyzed for the policy changes that have taken place in India. In analyzing the changes the researcher will describe in detail the characteristic features and trends that had resulted in the changes. In analyzing the policy changes the educational problems that have contributed to the changes will be described in detail by the researcher. In the interpretative explanation of qualitative analysis the emphasis is on illumination, understanding and extrapolation rather than causal determination, prediction and generalization.

### **3.8.2 Research Question 2**

How do the curriculum policies affect the planning and the teaching of the ESL curriculum?

Interviews would be conducted with the teachers to gather information on how the policy changes affect the planning and the teaching of the curriculum. Interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed and analyzed individually. The emerging data would be coded according to themes. Teachers will be interviewed on how their values, attitudes and beliefs influence the process of change in the schools. The emerging data would again be coded according to themes. Individual teachers have their own perspectives on curriculum implementation and they assign different contextual understandings to the same phenomenon. Hence the interview with teachers will highlight how the individual teacher's beliefs, values and attitudes had profound influence on the process of change. This data would again help to shed light on the dynamic nature of curriculum change and the process it entails as well as the key people involved in curriculum change. The importance of teachers' role in implementing a curriculum and their orientation to policy changes will be evident in the data collected from the interviews. The aim of the researcher is not to identify the range and the diversity of teacher beliefs but to comprehend the complexity of

educational change and how teacher beliefs and values influence the process of change in schools.

### **3.8.3 Research Question 3**

In what ways does the context of the school affect ESL curriculum implementation in practice?

Schools play a significant role in managing change and hence the context of the school and the effect it has on teachers' ability and inclination to change is of utmost importance. Interviews will be conducted with teachers to establish how the school as a context affects teachers' ability and inclination to change. The individual teachers' responses will be tape recorded and the data transcribed and coded according to the emerging themes. Interviews conducted with the teachers will enable the researcher to find out the core functions of the school as a major focus and the role it plays in affecting teachers' ability and inclination to change. The teachers will be interviewed on the role the school played in facilitating teachers' participation in policy changes and the encouragement accorded to them to incline themselves towards change. The principal focus is on the role of the school itself. The school's capacity to enact change and its momentum in maintaining the change will highlight the importance of the school as a context in promoting or inhibiting a change.

The analysis will be interpretative and to ensure the validity of the data the researcher will share the findings with the respective teachers to check for any discrepancies in the interpretation. The interviews with the student participants will also be transcribed and the emerging data will be a representative analysis of their perspective of the curriculum and their experience. The researcher's own observation and field notes can be checked against the data obtained from both the teachers and the students.

The use of multiple methods such as document analysis, together with non-participant observations and interviews to corroborate data sources increases the reliability

of the research. The idea behind triangulation is that the more agreement of different data sources on a particular issue, the more reliable the interpretation of the data.

In light of the research questions proposed the study is significant as the main purpose is to study the effects of curriculum policy on students, which will provide information for program improvement. The focus is on the curriculum implementation and its implications for practice and the results will explore a variety of effective practices for future needs and future planning. The study is significant as the findings can help stakeholders to rethink and change the existing practice; when teachers reflect on their practice it inevitably extends their understanding of the practice. Teachers' prior knowledge and belief about classroom practice influences how they interpret new pedagogical ideas. This involves their interpretation of the curriculum policy changes as well and hence this study can highlight some of the facts about classroom practices and their implications.

### **3.9 Data Verification**

#### **3.9.1 (Internal validity) Credibility**

The participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results (Mertens, 2005). Validity deals with the issue of appropriateness of the method to the research questions. In Mason's (1996) words, you should be asking yourself "how well matched is the logic of the method to the kinds of research questions you are asking and the kind of social explanation you are intending to develop". (p. 147)

To ensure validity the researcher will share the data with the interviewees to check for any discrepancies in the interpretation. This will be done throughout the study and immediately after each interview. Member checks (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998, 2002, 2003; Stake, 1995) were used whereby the emerging patterns or themes were shown to some of the participants interviewed to check if the assertions of the findings were probable. For the researcher it provides an opportunity to summarize the respondents' view points as well as to assess the intentionality of the respondents.

Besides, the researcher will use multiple methods like interview, observation, document analysis and field notes to collect the data. “By combining multiple observations theories, methods and data sources” researchers can hope to “overcome the intrinsic bias that comes from single-methods, single-observer, and single-theory studies”. (Denzin, 1970,p.464).

### **3.9.2 (External Validity) Transferability**

This refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other context or settings. The researcher will enhance transferability by describing thoroughly the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. In aiming for generalizability the researcher will give a sufficiently detailed account, which will allow the readers to respond to it in terms of their own experience.

### **3.9.3 (Reliability) Dependability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 288) suggest the term “dependability” or “consistency” to describe Reliability. “If we cannot expect others to replicate our account, the best we can do is explain how we arrived at our results”. (Dey, 1993, p. 251).

In ensuring reliability the researcher will describe in detail how data will be collected, how categories will be derived and how decisions will be made throughout the inquiry. Rich, thick descriptions are presented to assist readers in determining whether the context and the findings can be transformed to the reader’s situation (Creswell, 2003; Merriam, 1998, 2003; Stake, 1995).

Peer review/ examination involves showing the findings and tentative interpretations to peers and experts. In this study the patterns of the findings that emerged and the interpretations were shown and discussed with my supervisor for review throughout the study.



### **3.10 Chapter Summary**

Based on the aims and research questions put forth, qualitative inquiry methods such as interviewing, document analysis, observation and field notes were proposed for the study.

The interviews and the document analysis were intended to give a deeper understanding of the curriculum policy changes that had taken place in India as well as the educational problems the policy changes were attempting to resolve. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate to study the policy changes that have taken place in India. Besides that, the teachers' perspectives on the implications of the curriculum in practice would help to further understand the curriculum change. The curriculum as translated in the classroom and experienced by the students gives a deeper understanding on the implications of curriculum policy in the classrooms.

A detailed description of how data would be collected and analyzed for each question is discussed in the research matrix attached at the end of Chapter 3.

The results and the findings of the research questions would be discussed in Chapter 4.

## RESEARCH MATRIX/CONCEPT MAP

RESEARCH TOPIC: The Implementation of ESL Curriculum Policy and

Implications for practice in selected primary schools of Madurai district, India.

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEORY/MODEL TO DISCUSS THE FINDINGS	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	TYPE OF DATA	DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE
What are the ESL policy changes that have taken place since 1990?	Fullan's theory of educational change (2001). Hoban's complexity theory (2002).	Document Analysis *Policy statement& documents * minutes of meeting * school time-tables * mission statement of the school *textbooks/reference books for teachers *Lesson plans Handouts to students Interivews with curriculum officers in relevant divisions	Document/ Content analysis	Documents analyzed and summarized according to themes. *changes in curriculum policy *features and trends that resulted in the changes *factors that contributed to the changes

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEORY/MODEL To DISCUSS THE FINDINGS	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	TYPE OF DATA	DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE
To what educational problems were these policies attempting to respond?	Hoban's complexity theory and Fullan's theory of educational change.	Analysis of the policy documents. Interviews with curriculum officers	Content summary Interview transcripts	Emerging data summarized according to themes *approach adopted in language teaching
How do the curriculum policies affect the planning and teaching of the ESL curriculum?	Hoban's complexity theory and Fullan's theory of educational change. -the need to recognize change for teacher learning -change in essence has implications for teacher learning as it involves adjustments to classroom practice.	Classroom observation  Interview with teachers -their approach to teaching -goals set for lessons -demands they structure into class tasks.		*global picture in terms of implementation *data coded according to themes.

RESEARCH QUESTION	MODEL?THEORY TO DISCUSS THE FINDINGS	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	TYPE OF DATA	DATA ANALYSIS/ PROCEDURE
In what ways does the context of the school affect ESL curriculum implementation in practice	Hoban's complexity theory and Fullan's theory of educational change	Interview with teachers Classroom observation Field notes Interview with school administrations Interview with students	Interview transcripts Filed notes Summary of classroom observation	Codified according to themes emerging Descriptive analysis Overall analysis and tying up to Hoban's model and Fullan's theory of educational change.

*Figure 3.1.* Research matrix for the study.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings of the study are presented. The data are presented according to the Research Questions and the emerging themes indicate the challenges of implementing the ELT Policy in the Indian context.

**Research Question 1: What are the ESL policy changes that have taken place in India since 1990? To what educational problems were these policies attempting to respond?**

Question 1 looks at the policy changes that have taken place since 1990 and at the social context in which these changes have taken place. The discussion outlines the policy changes that have occurred and examines how such changes have had an impact on the planning and the teaching of the English language curriculum. The analysis focuses on certain aspects of the policy such as access policy which is regarding the designation of languages to be studied, curriculum and community policy which deals with what will be taught and the way the teaching is organized. However the specification of outcomes and assessment instruments discussed by Kaplan and Baldauf (1992, 2003) will not be the focus of this discussion. Resources policy that deals with funding and evaluation which focuses on the impact and its effectiveness will not be examined as it is not the focus of this study. The discussion will look at aspects of methods and materials policy which include the prescription of methodology and the texts used.

Findings from document analysis as well as interviews with the policy makers are discussed to answer research question 1. The documents used in the discussion are the policy documents/policy note. Findings from the document analysis were corroborated with interviews with policy makers. In using documents for research Hodder notes, “As the text is reread in different contexts it is given new meanings, often contradictory and always socially embedded. Thus there is no ‘original’ or ‘true’ meaning of a text outside specific historical

contexts” (2003, p. 156). As Hodder suggests, “Texts can be used alongside other forms of evidence so that the particular biases of each can be understood and compared” (2003, p. 156).

Interviews regarding the policy rationale provide the justifications behind the policy documents, while the interviews regarding the policy objectives focus on the salient features of the policy document, on what they hoped to achieve, the appropriateness of the policy and the support rendered to achieve the aims. The third aspect of the interviews deals with the strategies used to communicate the policy to the stakeholders, the people who participated in the policy formulation and the expectations of the policy makers. The final dimension of the discussion deals with the challenges faced in implementing the policies. Next the discussion deals with the sub research question 1 which is to what educational problems were these policies attempting to respond. Interviews for this question focus on the reasons behind the rationale of the policy change and the educational problems the policies were attempting to resolve.

The data were triangulated for a consistent and comprehensive answer. A thematic approach is adopted in presenting the findings. The discussion is supported by Hoban’s complexity theory and Fullan’s theory of educational change which forms the theoretical framework of this study. The findings shed light on the dynamic nature of curriculum change.

#### **4.2. ESL Policy Changes Since 1990**

The National Curriculum Framework approved in 1986/1992 serves as a guideline for the States to formulate their own needs based curriculum. In this context the medium of instruction becomes crucial. Changes in the English language policy have resulted in drastic changes to the curriculum which includes (a) curriculum and assessment, (b) adoption of new materials, and (c) de-emphasis on content areas. In India, there are two official languages, Hindi and English at the federal level and 15 additional ones at the State level. In the domain of Education 33 languages, including English, are used as the media of instruction. Including English 41 languages are made available for study in the school curriculum (NCERT, 1999).

The first language in most cases is the mother tongue (which may be a minor language different from the majority or the official language of the state) or the regional language (which is the majority language of the State and generally its official language). The second language is English and the third language is Hindi (where it is not the regional language). English is the only language taught in all States as a first, second or third language and it is also taught in the largest number of schools.

In the program of national development at the time of independence in 1947, the medium of education was an important issue. The Secondary Education (Mudaliar) Commission (1953) reiterated the pre-Independence recommendations of the Wardha (Zakir Hussain) Committee (1937) and the Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education (1937), which states that “mother tongue or the regional language should generally be the medium of instruction throughout the secondary stage” (Bhatt & Aggarwal, 1977, p. 152).

After Independence, the country was reorganized linguistically into States, each with one Indian language as regional language. There are 12 regional languages, which are the official languages of the States and generally their majority language. The flexibility the schools exercise in relation to the medium of education varies from one school to another. Besides the variation in the use of Indian languages across levels of education and across States, the important point to be noted in the policy implementation is the dilution of the policy by the government to satisfy conflicting political interests. The policy is compromised by allowing other sources of schooling, such as the schools of the Central Board of Education, private schools such as the Matriculation schools in the State of Tamil Nadu, which constitute about 5% as well as the educational institutions established by minorities under a constitutional provision of safeguard for preservation of diversity which also constitutes about 5% of the schools (Probe Team, 1999, p. 102).

Prior to the implementation of the current ABL (Activity Based Learning) policy, the students followed the conventional grading system and students proceeded from standard 1 to standard 2 from one grade to the next grade. The current ABL system was adopted in 2003 but

some of the schools only adopted the policy in 2006 due to lack of available resources and other factors. The new policy is a major departure from the conventional classroom. Under the new system the students are placed in an inter-graded grade structure whereby students from standard 1 to standard 4 are placed in the same classroom but each group of students followed their own syllabus as per the ladder system. The new system enabled vertical and horizontal grouping according to the individual student's progress in the lesson. The earlier policy used the textbook system and each class had a prescribed textbook to complete for the academic year. With the new policy change ABL activity cards replaced textbooks and only the students in standard 5 used the textbooks because these students were considered as a transition class before they proceed to the upper primary (i.e., class VI).

#### **4.2.1 Changes in the ESL Policy and the Curriculum Content**

The current change in the ESL pertained to three areas such as 1.) the replacement of the textbooks with the new ABL worksheets, 2.) the intergraded classes whereby students from grades 1 to 4 were allowed to be in the same class 3.) changes in the assessment. The formal exams were to be replaced with ongoing tests conducted when students reach their target milestone.

The aim of the new ABL system was to introduce to students skills such as reading, writing, spelling and listening. The portfolio of each student was maintained by the teacher to keep track of students' progress. The attainment card was marked daily by the teacher and the achievement card indicated the milestone reached by the individual student. The tray of cards was labeled for easy identification, with the ship 1 cards for quarterly, ship 2 half-yearly and ship 3 for final exam. However the system has no formal exam conducted as in the previous system. The cards were arranged under various categories for the acquisition of different skills such as drills card for basic command, train cards for speaking activity, baby walker for informal conversations and tricycle cards for rhymes. The students who have completed one



level could proceed to the next level of cards. The students were not compelled to complete the syllabus before they reach standard 5 in which they revert back to the textbook system.

#### **4.2.2 Implementation of the ABL Curriculum in the schools**

The new ABL curriculum was implemented in stages with the aim of improving reading, writing, spelling, and listening. The first stage of its use in the classroom is fully assisted by the teachers, the second, third, and fourth stages of the curriculum it is partially assisted by the teachers, the fifth stage is partially peer supported and the sixth stage is self-supported whereby students learn without the help of teachers. Thus the new ABL system replaced the textbook with activity cards and teachers played a role in facilitating it. Commenting on the implementation of the ABL system one Policy Maker notes:

So far the ABL policy has been implemented in 37,486 primary schools with more schools keen to adopt the system, Moreover In-service for teachers is conducted in collaboration with Directorate of Teacher Education, Research and Training (DTERT). There are teams visiting the schools to conduct evaluation and their feedback will be taken into consideration in the next phase of the implementation (PM 4 line 31-35).

Adhering to the principles of the National Curriculum Framework it aimed to provide flexibility in learning. Each milestone had activities for skills like introductory, reinforcement, practice, evaluation and enrichment activities. The cards were color coded to indicate the different levels. The final stage is the self evaluation cards which students did in class before they proceeded to the next level. In all the schools each student had a low level blackboard which served as the main learning aid. Classes operated in half day units. One teacher notes how the skills are introduced to the students as per the milestones as follows:

I ask students to recite rhymes as I find they are motivated to them. I start the lesson by asking them to form a circle. First I introduce some drills like sit, stand, raise your hands and hands down. Then I teach them body parts. I use a chart for this activity and

show them pictures. They are taught basic commands. I allow only 8 students in one group. (TSh line 21-25).

Another teacher explains how her activities are conducted in the class in school B as follows:

I teach the words with pictures so that students can understand the meaning of the word. In the second stage I only tell the word without the picture and students should by now know the meaning of the word. Then I proceed with dictation and practice activities. The road roller cards are used for reading practice while the Train cards are used for speaking activities. I pick two students to do the speaking activity using the baby walker cards which are used for informal speaking. (Tsar line 27-32)

Observations revealed that implementation of the ABL curriculum in all the 3 schools were similar with slight variations in the support provided by the teachers and the opportunities for students to learn in natural settings. School A for example implemented a reading activity as follows:

Teacher: Reads the text and the student repeats after the teacher

Activity set for this reading class

1. Students read from the card
2. Students write in notebook
3. Students copy the same in blackboard
4. Students finally write in activity book

Teachers just emphasized repetitive method and there was no set induction or time to understand the reading passage. The students followed to class rules and their pace of work was very slow (*described on page 191*). The support from the teacher was minimal in terms of teacher input. Students' control and participation in peer group learning was strongly circumscribed by the rules set by teacher as well as the dynamics of the classroom. A similar scenario was noted in school B and activities could be easily categorized as predictable and

routine work. However though implementation was weaker in these two schools implementation in school C was strong with more opportunities for students to participate in the learning process. Students were asked questions and they were asked to come out of the class for activities giving them a chance for imaginative development (*described on page 177*). Placing a crown for those students who performed well helped them to develop their competence and confidence.

#### **4.2.3 Development of ESL in the classrooms**

The Government's initiative in extending equal educational opportunities is reflected in its effort in implementing the ABL syllabus in the primary schools. It has been designed with a focus on classroom reform. Explaining the development of ESL in the classroom a policymaker notes:

The ABL syllabus has enriching features such as the Montessori approach. By 2007 the project scaled up to 375000 schools run by the Panchayat union in the entire State adopting this. This accounts for the success of the approach.

(PM 4 line 36-38).

While most of the teachers experienced weaknesses in the implementation they also noted that students were confident now and attributed this to the child-centered approach advocated in the policy. Students from class 1 to class 4 benefited the most from this approach. Departing from the conventional 45 minutes for a particular subject the schools now operated in half day units.

While the previous system of using textbook was suitable for students who has achieved a certain level of proficiency the current ABL placed emphasis for students who had no exposure to English especially students from the rural schools. In ensuring English as one of the three important languages the current curriculum placed emphasis on communicative skills (*described on page 172*). Most of the teachers did acknowledge that students made progress though on a small scale (*described on page 178*). Though there were differences

among the schools in achieving objectives as (described on page 233) all the three schools ensured that English is given importance and allocated teaching time accordingly.

### **4.3. Salient Features of the ABL Policy**

The Activity Based Learning (ABL) was implemented in 2003. The schools the researcher visited implemented the above policy in 2006. The ABL card system was first designed and tested by the Rishi Valley School in Andhra Pradesh state in the 1990s. Now the ABL card system is successfully implemented in many States including Karnataka, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. In Tamil Nadu (Madurai) where the study is undertaken for this research the UNICEF supported the Chennai (Madras) Corporation initiative to introduce the ABL methods. The ABL venture was undertaken by the Chennai Corporation in 13 schools on a trial basis in 2003 and the system was adopted by about 270 primary schools in Chennai. In line with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) Scheme which envisages Universal Elementary Education for children by 2010 some of the government schools have adopted the ABL Card System. The curriculum in the ABL card system (Activity Based Learning system) is divided into small units, each a group of Self Learning Materials (SLM) comprising attractively designed study cards for English, Tamil, Mathematics, Science and Social Science.

The ABL card system for English language teaching was mooted in 2003 but it was adopted by the schools the researcher visited in 2006. Prior to the introduction of this system English language teaching was carried out using the text book. The current system departs from the previous policy in terms of the following:

1. The introduction of the ABL cards for classes 1 to 4 instead of the common text book for each grade although students revert to text book in standard 5. The upper primary classes from standard 6 to standard 8 also use text book.
2. It emphasizes child-centered activities and there is less emphasis on output.
3. Classes are integrated into multi-grade and multi-level.

4. A single teacher handles all the subjects for the particular class.
5. Evaluation is inbuilt in the system for the purpose of which separate cards and activities are used
6. There is less emphasis on exams
7. All children are allowed to proceed at their own pace.
8. It departs from the previous traditional mode of teaching by emphasizing child-centered activities.

#### **4.3.1 Objectives of the ABL policy**

The following statements in the policy documents reflect the child-centered approach advocated by the policy makers. It reads:

“A Child-centered and activity-based process of learning should be adopted at the primary stage. First generation learners should be allowed to set their own pace and be given supplementary remedial instruction. As the child grows, the component of cognitive learning will be increased and skills organized through practice. (Policy document, NPE 1986, p. 14)”

One of the objectives of using the ABL method is for teachers to use teaching time judiciously focusing more on children who need help. This ensures the weaker students receive attention in class. This is stated in the document “only needy children are addressed by teachers” (ABL policy document, p. 5). The policy makers interviewed stressed on the changes in the syllabus which have accommodated to this need. The students work on their own using the cards while the teacher facilitates the lesson.

A typical ABL classroom is expected to have the following characteristics

- A class size not exceeding 40 girls and boys spread across classes 1-4.
- Teacher is a facilitator monitoring activities of children seated in circles of 6 groups.
- The sequential arrangement of activities in the ladder determines the group of the child.
- Group 1 and 2 are teacher supported, with lot of input by the teacher. The teacher teaches basic competencies to children in group 2

- Group 3 is partially supported by the teacher with students seeking help when needed. Students use lower level blackboard in a space allocated for each child.
- Group 4 focuses on reinforcement activities. This is a partially peer-supported group.
- Group 5 is a fully peer-supported one and at this stage children are comfortable working at their own pace. Enrichment activities are carried out at this stage
- Group 6 is a self-support group and the students do their evaluation cards.

One of the objectives of the ABL learning method is that repetitive activity is encouraged for mastery in learning. Upon reading from the card, the children write in their notebooks and then they move to the blackboard before they finally write in their activity book. (Teacher Interviews).

#### **4.3.2 Child-Centered Approach advocated in the ESL Policy**

The opening statement of India's policy on elementary education emphasizes three objectives (a) universal access and enrolment, (b) universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (c) a substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning. (Policy Document, p. 14). The policy emphasizes a child centered approach. The Activity Based Learning (ABL) Modules are termed as Joyful Learning. Guidelines in the form of teachers' handbook were given to teachers to help them implement the ABL method. The policy advocates a team approach; it addressed the need for change in the medium of instruction. The National Policy on Education, which is a statutory document on which educational planning is based, was approved by Parliament and promulgated by the government in 1976; it did not mention any time frame. It said instead that: the regional languages are already in use as media of education at primary and secondary levels. Urgent steps should be taken to adopt them as media of education at the university level. (Bhatt & Aggarwal, 1977, p. 132).

In the policy rhetoric the teacher was placed at the center of the 1986 policy. The status of the teacher reflects the socio-cultural ethos of a society; it is said that no people can rise above the level of its teachers. The government and the community should endeavour to create conditions which will help motivate and inspire teachers on constructive and creative lines. Teachers should have the freedom to innovate, to devise appropriate methods of communication and activities relevant to the needs and capabilities of and the concerns of the community (NPE, 1986, p. 25).

All the policy makers interviewed maintained that the new policy has several salient features and in that sense it departs from the previous policy of using textbooks for teaching and learning. The use of the activity cards is lauded by the policy makers which in their opinion have helped to increase students' self-confidence. Congruent with this one policy maker shares his views on the salient features of the syllabus.

Policy Maker 1 comments on the policy design highlights the salient features of the syllabus:

In the previous method students used textbooks and the teacher followed the scheme of work as per the textbook. This method was teacher-centered and the current ABL system deviates from that. The key feature of the policy is to tap the potential in the child using play method and it is considered joyful learning as learning is considered more fun. (PM1 line 1-13).

The relevance of his claims are affirmed from the classroom observations where students were seen working together in groups in a 'communicative context'. However the researcher observed that it does not take place most of the time unless aided by the teacher. While it may be an advantage to the weaker students the clever students find these materials too simple. However the policy makers do acknowledge that but note that the system provides

many types of activities for the students and therefore teachers can engage their students in a variety of ways.

Examination of the policy documents revealed that they are written in general and neither the teachers nor the instructional materials are the primary focus of the documents. There is no explicit guidance to link planning to practice. The Policy changes for English language are not stated explicitly except for reference to the three language formula. Though the development of languages have been discussed and debated the policy acknowledges the fact that implementation has been uneven. This is evident in the policy statement that reads:

The Education Policy of 1968 had examined the question of the development of languages in great detail; its essential provisions can hardly be improved upon and are as relevant today as before. The implementation of this part of the 1968 policy has, however, been uneven. The Policy will be implemented more energetically and purposefully.

(Source Policy Document, 1968, p. 27).

The Policy does not state any coherent instructional goals. Therefore the teachers are to formulate their own instructional goals based on the workshops or the training they received. This implies there are no uniform instructional goals for all the schools and teachers in each school follow their own method of instruction. The only significant change in approach stated in the policy is the mention of the child-centered approach which clearly states that the curriculum should be child-centered and focus on activity-based process of learning in the elementary stage. The Policy also refers to non-detention at the primary stage in order to encourage them.

The NPE (National Policy on Education) called for a 'child-centered' approach and the establishment of minimum levels of learning-- an agreed set of learning outcomes and competencies for each grade level-- in an effort to encourage both equity and quality in primary teaching and learning (Raina, 2002, p. 177).



This component of the 1986 policy that came to be known as the Operation Blackboard (OB) scheme has been documented in Dyer's (2000) case study of its implementation in 30 schools in the Baroda district of Gujarat.

Although there is an overarching, unifying policy intention of moving towards UEE (Universal Elementary Education), there was dissent among key stakeholders as to what the route to achieve this should be, and to who should set the direction and pace of change a political subtext (Dyer, 2000, p. 147).

Findings from interviews with the policy makers in the following section deal with the focus of the policy, participants in the policy formulation process, the different stakeholders' reactions to change, as well as the obstacles faced in policy implementation.

#### **4.4 Focus of the ABL Policy**

This section deals with the focus of the policy and policy makers' view on what they hoped to achieve in implementing this policy.

Commenting on the focus of the policy design the policy maker expressed his views thus: The syllabus is designed in such a manner that the teacher can focus her attention on weaker students. The other students could work on their own as per the chart indicates. The textbook the lesson is very much structured and everybody follows the same lesson plan. This ensures that all students are taken care of and the change also promotes communication between the teacher and the student at a personal level. (PM2 line 1-13).

All the policy makers interviewed opined that the change focused in addressing the students' need to be independent, and develop their communicative skills. Another change objective stated in the document titled Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Education for All (p. 5) emphasizes group learning, mutual learning and self learning. Yet again this change objective

departs from the previous policy of using textbook for instruction where group learning and self-learning seldom takes place. The current objective encourages students to work in groups and the progression of their work according to the chart they follow allows them to be independent self-learners. The policy makers affirm that this practice of placing students in a group of 4 to 5 allows them to interact and learn in a 'joyful' manner which is one of the policy objectives. With support from their peers the students help each other and learning is more fun.

The policy maker's view on the concept of group work is captured in the following interview excerpt: Children's natural inclination towards activities like drama, dance, stories, songs and similar entertaining methods form the basis for joyful learning. This is also known as 'Child Activities Oriented Education' which is stated in the policy note 2002-2003. On our visits to certain schools the ABL method has been noted to be very successful. To make this a success the government has selected some schools which are nurtured as Model Schools. Each of the selected schools are placed under one Assistant Elementary Education Officer and these schools will serve as a model in teaching learning and other activities. The Government has taken steps to ensure that the teachers are also trained in these methods and the results are very positive. (PM3 line 1-16).

On being questioned regarding the lack of correct guidance for the concept of 'joyful learning' lacking in some of the schools visited by the researcher, the policy maker did agree that some of the teachers and school principals were skeptical about the change objectives since they were not trained English teachers to adapt this concept 'successfully'.

He noted: Different schools had different interpretations to the change objectives and some teachers and principals were skeptical of any changes taking place. Some teachers were positive and others had negative feelings. It is the responsibility of the teacher to make sure that students learn and proceed to the next level although students are allowed to proceed at their own pace and to make it interesting. (PM3 line 17-27).

While the policy makers are affirmative of the change objective placing more emphasis on the child-centered activity the interviews with the teachers as well as the classroom

observations revealed that most of the time students did not work in groups unless monitored by the teacher and the child-centered activity often turned to teacher centered lessons. The objective was achieved only partially and in some schools even the teachers opined that child-centered activities worked best with students in standard 6, 7, and 8 which are upper primary classes.

The teachers' responses to this aspect of the change objectives are dealt with under research question 2. From the view of the policy makers and the teachers we could conceive that significant differences exist regarding the objectives that could be realized in practice. While the policy makers are overly optimistic the teachers opined that it could be realized only partially. Their assertion underscores the complexity of educational change.

To illustrate his views the policy maker summarizes on the different types of cards and the activities as follows:

We have cards with different color codes that indicate the level as well as the type of activities for the students. For instance the alphabet cards are students learning the basic alphabets, the truck cards introduces the cursive writing, the picture cards are for students to identify and name the picture, the horse cards introduces 100 new words, whereas the van cards introduces numbers, the car cards introduces words related to occupation, rhyme cards introduce simple rhymes, and the train cards are for group work where students are given instructions to improve their social skills. Using these cards students can work in pairs and they learn to introduce themselves. All these were designed to facilitate student learning. (PM3 line 37-46).

While it is tempting to credit the new features of the policy the data also indicates the need for the English teachers to have the ability to modify the content and pedagogy in response to the students' reactions and their level of motivation manifested in the classroom. Most of the teachers expressed their inability relating to this and recounting their experiences

in the classroom they opined that it requires training to handle such activities. Their views pertaining to this aspect are dealt with in the analysis of the second research question.

#### **4.4.1 Measures adopted to strengthen the ESL Policy**

Corroborating evidence from the document titled “Quality Issues in Elementary Education” specifies the role of a teacher as a ‘facilitator’ enabling children to construct knowledge from activities and experiences in day to day life. The activities conducted in the classroom will encourage a child-centered approach. Therefore the syllabus has been completely revamped and changed from the use of textbook to the ABL card system. These changes have been done to accommodate the objectives of the child-centered approach.

Commenting on the role of the teacher as a facilitator the policy maker notes as follows:

Policy changes have been made to enhance learning among primary school children. The teacher should play the role of a facilitator and conduct child-centered activities. The policy document also emphasizes on these aspects and the changes in the syllabus promote communication between the teacher and the student. Previously there were many children who were not able to read and write and with the new system most of them are able to read and communicate. (PM4 line 1-14).

Commenting on the appropriateness of the syllabus the Policy Maker 2 opined:

The syllabus is appropriate for elementary school children and their level of English has been taken into consideration. It starts from the basic and proceeds to the subsequent level. Also keeping in mind that the learners are young we have devised activities like coloring, rhymes and games to keep them active. In the afternoon sessions the kids get to watch video tapes which will help them to learn pronunciation. (PM2 line 37-44).

The key legacies of the National Policy on Education (1986) were the promotion of privatization and the continued emphasis on secularism and science. Before the ABL system was introduced the government had taken several initiatives in ensuring the quality of education in India. Summarizing the policy maker's statements on the measures adopted by the government to strengthen the National Policy on Education the following were adopted by the government between 1990- 2000: Minimum Levels of Learning (1991) laid down levels of achievement at various stages and revised textbooks.

National Programme for Nutritional Support to Primary Education (1995) Provided meals to children in classes 1-5 of all government, government-aided and local body schools every day. District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) (1993) emphasized decentralized planning and management, improved teaching and learning materials, and school effectiveness. Movement to Educate All (2000) aimed to achieve universal primary education by 2010 through micro-planning and school-mapping exercises, bridging gender and social gaps.

#### **4.5 Participation in the ESL Policy Process**

The participation in policy process is limited to few individuals and the materials are devised by the State. The participation is confined to few individuals such as policy makers, government officials and administrators. Policy Maker 2 opined on the limited individuals who participated in the policy process as follows: Of course not everybody is involved in the formulation of the policy process. However there are meetings conducted prior to policy formulation but the final decision rests with the committee. (line 14-16).

The following comments by Policy Maker 3 on the participation of the policy process further helps us to understand the scenario better:

The policy is formulated at the administrative level and the administrators and it is top-down. Not all the stakeholders are involved in the policy process and the functions of the department of school education includes overall control of education in the states,

policy formulation, finalization of the portion of the annual budget relating to school education, administrative sanctions for various projects and programs and to provide administrative assistance to government departments in education and training. (PM3 line 28-36).

The Policy does not provide any specific guidelines or instruction for the multi-grade teaching. The majority of the Primary school teachers in Tamil Nadu are responsible for more than one grade in a classroom. However the current guidelines do not include training or instructions on how to deal with multi-grade instruction which requires a different approach as opposed to traditional teaching. As Little (2001) posited, teachers need to be equipped with a range of teaching strategies at their disposal. The policy does not deal with this aspect of instruction and teachers are not trained adequately to deal with these issues.

In relation to the above most of the teachers interviewed lamented they were not part of the policy process. This concern was shared by many teachers who viewed decision making as important. Many of them opined that teachers must be represented in the decision making as it relates to them and they will be able to give their input regarding the decisions to be made. The teachers regarded the policy process as top- down and such an approach to the policy process is often viewed negatively by the teachers.

Their views on policy formulations affirm the complexity of change and that school principals must be empowered to take action at least in some matters. It is schools that have a strong “internal accountability system” or a clear, strong internal focus on issues of instruction, student learning and expectations for teacher and student performance that will be the most effective (Elmore, 2002). Participation in policy development is a good thing as it leads to a feeling of ownership; furthermore, participation encourages implementation. There is a need, then, for the creation of a new culture in terms of participation in institutional issues (Elmore, 1995; Fullan, 1993).

#### **4.6 Stakeholders' Reactions to ESL Policy changes**

Prior to the ABL system the textbook was used for teaching English and other subjects. Until 2004 students followed the grade system and each class had a prescribed textbook to be completed for the academic year. Progression to the next level depended on their exam marks and the syllabus was structured accordingly. However the introduction of the ABL system in 2003 resulted in many changes to the curriculum. The students followed the new ABL syllabus and the system of multi-grade replaced the earlier system. The ABL or Activity Based Learning followed the ladder system whereby individual students could learn at their own pace and students from grade 1 to grade 4 were placed in the same class. However the students in standard 5 revert back to the usage of textbook. These changes imply a change in the pedagogy, changes in assessment as well as the syllabus and the curriculum materials. The policy makers, teachers, principals and parents had differing opinions and their reactions to these changes are captured in the following segment. Policy Maker 1 said that certainly the demand for English by the parents as well as the global demand for English is the reason for the change in the policy.

English plays a pivotal role in all sectors of the society. The demand for English medium schools have risen in the past few years with many parents even from the poor families wanting to send their children to kindergarten and to English medium schools. The policy also aimed to increase access to primary and upper primary education and the number of enrolment in the schools have risen steadily. (PM1 line 14-20).

The interviews with policy makers also revealed that the policy change was to reduce the gender and social gaps and to reduce drop-out rates among primary school children. Though the drop-out rates have reduced significantly many rural children did not have access to primary education and gender and social gaps still exists.

The rationale of the policy change is justified by Policy Maker 3 as follows:

The changes have been made to achieve the objective of education for all children up to the age of 14 years. The government passed the Compulsory Elementary Education Act in the year 1994/95. Ensuring quality education and all round development of the child's personality can be achieved through the change in the syllabus. Tamil Nadu is considered to be the forerunner in implementing the schemes to achieve Universal Elementary Education. (PM3 line 47-56).

On the rationale behind the three-language formula, Policy Maker 1 commented thus: The three-language formula was devised to basically cater to the language sensitivities of all the groups. The changes towards the English language policy suggested an approach towards communicative competence. Although the policies are devised centrally the States are allowed to modify it to suit their particular context. The policy also aimed to achieve universal elementary education and to attain 100% literacy by providing quality education. Great emphasis has been made on "Education for All". In order to achieve this, the government implemented the scheme called 'Operation Black Board'. Under this scheme the elementary school teachers were given refresher courses. The government is keen on bridging the social and gender gaps at the primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010. (PM1 line 21-31).

His views were corroborated by Policy Maker 2 who also reiterated that:

The government is aware of the global impact of the English language and therefore took steps to improve the proficiency of the English language among the rural school kids who did not have much exposure to the English language. Continuing this line of development, the current version of the syllabus was introduced to promote the



communicative competence of school children and to enable them to have basic proficiency in the English language. (PM2 line 17-26).

The National Policy on Education 1992, was revised and titled “Education for Human Resource Development”. Minimum Levels of Learning (MLL) and Issues of Gender Equality were considered the most important aspects of curriculum development. The Programme of Action 1992 stressed the need to lay down Minimum Levels of Learning at Primary and Upper Primary stage. This need emerged from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, all children must be given access to education of comparable standards. The MLL strategy for improving the quality of elementary education was seen as an attempt to combine quality with equity. The curriculum is partially centralized and each State is responsible for its own curriculum.

Policy Maker 2 stated his views as: Curriculum is centrally sponsored scheme and the State has no ownership. The curriculum is partially centralized and each State is responsible for its own curriculum. Therefore the changes that take place at each state would be varied and eventually different schools will implement it variously. (PM2 line 27-31).

However when asked by the researcher why some of the teachers are unhappy with the variation in the time frame of its implementation from one school to another and the unclear definition of implementation phases, the policy maker noted that it depended on the individual school’s capacity to absorb the change process and therefore it varied from one school to another. Policy Maker 2 noted: The time frame in which it is implemented varied from one school to another. Of course not all schools were ready at the same time and it depended on the individual schools’ capacity to absorb the change in terms of syllabus, teachers and so on. Implementation has to be carried out in phases and some schools implemented the policies after a few years. (PM2 line 32-36).

The ABL system was in operation since 2003 while prior to it English was taught using the textbook. However the new changes are not really stated in the policy except the

explanation of the three language formula. A number of issues are not covered by the policy; the target to be achieved is not mentioned. Each State is allowed to follow their medium of instruction which is either the regional language of the State or English. The evaluation and monitoring tools are not identified in the policy document. Therefore the outcomes to be achieved vary from one school to another and in accordance with the individual schools' ability to cope with the change. Interview data reveals that these factors were not taken into consideration or given due attention in the change process. One feature that surfaced was that the policy was designed in accordance with the national development needs and the social demands.

Different stakeholders are involved in the implementation and therefore the implementation is determined by the interaction of various components in the institution, the context of operation in the institution as well as the individuals who interact. It has been noted that the reactions from the parents and the teachers were negative while the policy makers' stance on the changes was positive. While some teachers agreed that after a few years they have noticed some merit in the changes in terms of students' performance they considered the success as marginal.

In defining policy and ideology, Ball (1990) says the process is characterized by bargaining and negotiations, as the stakeholders try to come to a common understanding. Ball and Bowe (1992a, p. 98) advocate that the policy process should move beyond the traditional stages of formulation and implementation. Scott (2002) observes that a policy text is usually poised between two extremes: the prescriptive and the non-prescriptive, the ideologically explicit or opaque, generic, or directed, single-authored or multiple-authored, diagrammatical or written, referenced to other texts or free of such references, coherent or fragmented, and narrowly or widely focused.

One policy maker noted that the policy implementation could be inconsistent due to various factors. Policy Maker 1 noted:

Though the Curriculum Framework serves as a guideline for the States to implement the policy each State can formulate their own need based curriculum. The schools differ in terms of teacher-pupil ratio, infrastructure facilities and so on. The inconsistencies stem from various factors. However most of the parents now are in favor of English though they may not be English educated. (PM1 line 31-36)

However the policy makers acknowledged that discrepancies have been noted across the different schools in which the policy was implemented. This uneven implementation of policies resulted because of various factors such as the receptivity from the individual schools, the school's capacity to implement change and other factors. The policy changes had resulted in drastic changes to the curriculum in terms of curriculum and assessment, adoption of new materials and de-emphasis on content areas. The new ABL curriculum focuses more on the communicative aspects of language teaching. Ball and Bowe (1992a) view policy implementation as a process characterized by competing interests and views, and one that can only be realized when policy is used or applied in reality. All the policy makers interviewed expressed positive perceptions on the policy changes and the underlying justifications for the policy changes is that the States can plan and manage their curriculum through community participation.

#### **4.7 Obstacles Faced in Implementing the ESL Policy**

Changes in the policy were initiated due to political governance, demand for the use of English, as well as trends in ICT making the policy scenario complex and complicated. However the rationale behind the policy change and driving force is to achieve universal elementary education as well as providing quality education to all children to achieve minimum levels of learning competencies. In line with the objective the government has initiated many schemes and projects to achieve this goal.

The goals of the policy emphasize three aspects (a) universal access and enrolment, (b) universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (c) quality of education to achieve essential levels of learning. In line with the goals the government has opened many primary schools to achieve the aim of universal access and to achieve essential levels of learning. The policy maker noted that there are some obstacles in implementing the policy; regarding in-service training provided, Policy Maker 4 said:

The government has provided in-service training to teachers who are posted in rural areas so that they are ready to implement the new changes. Children are not detained in one class and are allowed to proceed to the next class so that they are motivated. It also motivates them to complete their education until the age of 14 and to help the poor students the government has initiated the mid-day meals schemes. With all these initiatives by the government the enrolment has increased and the results are positive. (PM4 line 15-22).

However the interviews with the policy makers revealed that the medium of education varies from one school to another. The adoption of the policy by the individual schools varies and results in uneven implementation. Almost all the schools recognize the importance of English, however, and there is a great demand for the English language which supersedes the ethnic and national cultures. Given the demand for English medium schools many kindergartens now exist which was not the norm a few years back. Though the existence of pre-schools continues to increase the disparity between urban and rural schools still exists resulting in uneven implementation.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) translated from Hindi as ‘education for all movement’ is the Government of India’s main program for delivering the Millennium Development Goal of achieving universal primary education by 2015.

In criticizing this Sarangapani (2010) suggests the management-accountancy approach of western donor agencies to quality, manifested in SSA, distracted attention from the proper meaning of the quality of education. She argues that the policy texts highlighted the importance of reforming children’s school experiences away from passive learning, rote and

examination oriented teaching and poor textbooks, dull classrooms and routine based teaching methods. But these policies did not crystallize programs for action around the theme of quality.

Clearly the state was committed to transforming a colonial system so as to serve the needs of an emerging democracy. The central idea was to reform the system to support a social reform agenda (Sarangapani, 2010, p. 43).

In 1990, access to enrolment and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning faced five main challenges.

- \* access to basic education for the unreached segments and uncovered habitations.
- \* qualitative improvement in content and processes of education; to make them more responsive to learning needs of individuals.
- \* consolidation and newer orientation wherever required in different areas of education through innovative programs and changed role of educational personnel.
- \* community participation and efficient management structures in education.
- \* evolving effective and efficient management structures in education.

(National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, 2000).

#### **4.7.1 Lack of Clear Instructional Goals in the ABL Policy**

Discussion on the goals of the policy revealed that the goals stated are very general. The policy document (p. 27) acknowledges the uneven implementation of language policy. The policy aimed to increase access to primary and upper primary education to students between 6-14 years old. The policy makers interviewed regard the lack of specific goals in the policy as one of the hurdles in implementation. Further more, the disparity in the economic status as well as the acceptance of the new policy by society are other constraints faced by the policy makers. The uneven implementation stems from several factors. Says policy maker 1 regarding the goals: “The policy doesn’t state clear goals. Urban schools emphasize on competency while the rural school teachers just settle for comprehension skills. There are no clear cut rules on the goals to be achieved and this leads to confusion.”

Another obstacle relates to the students' background. This is related by Policy Maker 2 as follows: The students from rural schools who form a large percentage of students in government schools have almost nil or very limited exposure to English. This in turn makes it difficult for the teachers who teach these students and they are at a disadvantage compared to urban school teachers whose students are far better in terms of their exposure to English. Sometimes the teachers "localize" the English language so much that students fail to learn much. (PM2 line 45-50).

Adds another policy maker (Policy Maker 4) to the factors of uneven implementation: Sometimes even the teachers themselves are not very proficient in English and they teach weaker students whose English is equally bad. The schools are also another aspect. While some urban schools are more prepared to implement the policy the rural schools are late to implement the policy. Therefore there is a difference and huge disparity in terms of implementation. The glitches in the policies are also due to political influence in certain instances. We try our best to address the gap but there are always limitations. (PM4 line 23-30).

However all the policy makers interviewed were optimistic of the success in the policy though they acknowledged that it had certain weaknesses. All the policy makers interviewed said that provisions are made to monitor the outcomes of the policy in terms of its suitability, feasibility and acceptability. Says Policy Maker 1: "The government has taken many initiatives to monitor the outcomes of the policy and there are follow-ups to check on the feasibility and the acceptability of the policy by the stakeholders. Teachers are sent for training according to "blocks" to ensure that they are fully equipped to implement the policy. (PM1 line 40-44).

On how the transition of the policy was handled Policy Maker 2 replied: The transition was done gradually and the policy was originally implemented in few schools before it was extended to the other schools. Parent-Teacher association meetings were held to explain the objectives of the policy before it was implemented. The policy implementation was carried out

in cycles to ensure that it is not sudden transition. I would say that the objectives of this policy have been fairly achieved. (PM2 line 51-64).

On the question of why the policy is compromised by allowing other sources of schooling the Policy Maker 1 notes that:

The three languages prescribed in the policy are the official languages of the state and of the Union. Though the mother tongue of the linguistic minorities in the states are not stated in the formula, the Constitution allows the states to use it as the medium of instruction at the primary level provided there are minimum number of minority students in the class. Apart from this there are other types of schools like Matriculation schools, Government-aided schools and such that makes it difficult for uniform implementation across all types of schools. (PM1 line 45-52).

The policy also reverts back to the use of textbook in standard 5. Most of the teachers are unhappy with this change in the system. Teachers' understanding on the goals of the policy differed. On the rationale of reverting back to the textbook system when students come to standard 5 Policy Maker 3 notes that:

The policy of reverting back to the textbook when the students reach standard 5 is to help them prepare for their upper primary classes 6, 7, and 8 and their secondary classes 9, and 10. Reverting back to the textbook helps them to adjust to the usage of textbook and prepares them for the higher levels. Though some teachers are not in favor of this system it has its own merits. There is a chance that teachers could interpret the goals differently. (PM3 line 57-66).

The policy maker notes that at the policy level it is intended to improve teachers' working conditions and promote child-learning. The teachers are not supposed to be burdened

with paperwork and the pressure of having to prepare students for examination. They could concentrate on weaker students instead and help them to learn better. With no formal exam the teachers can devote more time on teaching and learning. Policy Maker 2 explains the concept thus: The teachers' working conditions are taken into consideration in the current policy and provisions are made to lessen their burden. The teachers teaching from standard 1 to standard 4 use the ABL system under which there is no examination for the pupils. (PM2 line 65-69).

On criticisms that under the circumstances the quality of change in actual practice is questionable, Policy Maker 2 replied thus:

Of course there are strong negative criticisms that the quality of change in actual practice is questionable from certain quarters. We conduct reviews periodically and visit schools to ensure that everything goes well and also to get feedback from teachers. The policy also considers the objective of reducing the drop-out rate of students which is another reason that exams are not emphasized in the current syllabus. We consider the need based expansion of upper primary education facilities so that students could benefit and achieve the goal. (PM2 line 70-80).

A careful examination of the policy documents and the syllabus revealed that the short-term gain is considered and the policy is implemented with the short term goal in sight. The long term effects are not taken into consideration. There is a lack of instructional goals and no specific guidelines are stated for teaching a multi-grade level. The same package did not suit all the schools. The local context in which the policy is implemented is not taken into consideration. The policy process was not an open process as only the representatives participated in the policy formulation. There still remain gender and social gaps which the policy aimed to address.

The next part of the discussion answers the question: **To what educational problems were these policies attempting to respond?**



This section of the discussion deals with the educational problems the policies were attempting to respond to. Interviews with policy maker's gives an insight into the problems the policies attempted to resolve and the steps taken by the government to implement the policies.

#### **4.8 To Address Quality Issues**

Policy Maker 4 highlights the problems the policy was attempting to handle as: Certainly the focus of the policy is to ensure improvement in the quality of classroom transactions and improvement in certain parameters like infrastructure, support services, teacher training, curriculum, and teaching-learning materials have been looked into to improve the system further. It is an attempt to combine quality with equity. Many steps have been taken by Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan to address the quality issues of education. Districts are given authority to modify the curriculum to define their content areas in their local contexts. The curriculum takes on a constructivist approach to learning. The focus on basic skills in early grades is also emphasized to make sure the children have minimum levels of learning. (PM4 line 31-40).

The objectives to be achieved are highlighted in Policy note No. 41 which reads as follows: The Policy note No. 41 (2002-2003) outlines the policies formulated by the government in School Education Department. The focus is to improve teaching and learning and to eradicate drop-outs before 2010 and to improve and enrich the syllabus. In order to ensure the minimum levels of learning textbooks are made available at a fair price and libraries were opened in villages. Decentralized planning and managing through community participation is also one of the objectives highlighted.

Referring to the above note Policy Maker 2 observes that: The prime policy of the government is to provide elementary education where the population is more than 300 within a radius of one kilometer. New Minimum Levels of Learning based text books were prepared and published for Standards I to V from 1995-96 to 1999-2000. (PM2 line- 81-84).

On whether the policy contributed positively in terms of reducing the number of school dropouts after the innovations Policy Maker 3 noted as follows:

In the year 2001-2005 about 1112 elementary schools, 2106 middle schools, 295 secondary schools and 335 higher secondary schools have been opened. With this the aim of the government to establish minimum elementary education for all has been achieved. Apart from that the ABL scheme itself has been successful with many students making progress. Though there may be certain schools which did not implement it fully, on the whole the policy changes are moving in the right direction. A lot more could be done if all the stakeholders involved participate in the policy process. The guidelines are indeed general and the teachers could modify it according to the context. (PM3 line 67-75).

Almost all the policy makers agreed that the introduction of the new policy reduced the number of school drop-outs and they were positive that these students would definitely complete their secondary education. However they were quick to note that it did not ensure the quality of education they received as absenteeism among students was still an issue with most schools. Policy Maker 1 notes as follows in commenting on this issue:

While it is true that the number of school drop outs have been significantly reduced the same cannot be said about the quality of the education. The schools did not have strict regulations to deal with absenteeism and they were usually given verbal warning. Therefore while the government's attempt to reduce the number of drop-outs was successful to a certain extent there were still other problems. (PM1 line 53-60).

#### **4.8.1 Reduce the Number of School Drop-outs**

The other policy makers affirmed that absenteeism is a problem with many students and the principals usually advised them to attend classes regularly while none of the schools

dismissed students for lack of attendance as it would be against the interest of the policy to reduce the number of school drop-outs. Another educational problem the policy was attempting to address is the issue of teachers being absent regularly. Interviews with the respective school principals revealed that none of the three schools visited by the researcher faced problems with teacher absence. However interviews with policy makers revealed that this problem existed in other rural schools. Says this policy maker on teacher absenteeism:

There are many rural schools which deal with the problem of teacher absenteeism and something has to be done to rectify this situation. The students are left unattended when a teacher is absent due to shortage of teachers. Though the government has the para- teacher scheme some schools still face this problem. (PM1 line 61-64).

#### **4.8.2 Ensuring quality of instruction among teachers**

The Government in initiating this new policy also aimed at ensuring the quality of instruction among the teachers. To achieve this, teacher training programs were conducted periodically to ensure teachers are being equipped with the necessary skills. Interviews with the policy makers however revealed contradicting views on this aspect. While most of the policy makers were positive in their comments about the in-service training offered to the teachers to raise their quality of instruction one policy maker felt that the in-service training did not address the issue well. Policy Maker 2 opines:

The in-service training was conducted with the objective of ensuring quality of instruction. However the training was conducted in a cascading manner and therefore the teachers did not benefit from the training. Moreover the one-day training conducted was not sufficient to cover all the aspects of teaching. Most of the teachers in the rural schools teach all the subjects and these trainings were not subject related. (PM2 line 85-89).

This policy maker's views corroborated the views of some teachers who expressed similar opinions on the in-service programs conducted. Their views raise questions on issues of teacher proficiency. Yet again there are contradictory statements from policy makers on the

issue of teacher proficiency. While some policy makers opine that teachers are proficient to carry out their job others feel that teachers should be given subject-specific training to empower them with the right skills. Says a Policy Maker 3: The government has spent a lot of money on providing text books and establishing libraries in the village. Similarly a lot of money is spent on teacher training and teachers must take measures to ensure they are qualified by taking up courses related to their subject. (line 76-79).

In this context the policy makers also commented on the quality of instruction among the primary school teachers. They opined that the objective of the in-service training apart from familiarizing teachers with the new syllabus was also aimed at improving the quality of instruction. Almost all the policy makers were positive about the improvement in the quality of instruction; however they agreed that teachers have to improve on many aspects of instruction. Says this policy maker (Policy Maker 1) on the quality of instruction:

Comparatively teachers have gained new perspectives with the in-service instruction which is reflected in their quality of instruction. We received good reports from the officers who came down to inspect our classroom teaching. However some teachers also face constraints in terms of facilities, reading materials and their working conditions which impact their classroom teaching. (PM1 line 65-69).

However the policy maker acknowledges that not all educational problems which the policy has attempted to solve has been resolved. He notes that such a large scale exercise takes time and could improve when certain shortcomings are rectified. Policy Maker 1 also comments on teacher proficiency as follows:

Most of the primary teachers in rural areas were educated in Tamil medium schools and therefore they are not proficient in the English language. Therefore teachers have to be given special training and they have to get themselves familiarized with the change. I

have to emphasize that some positive changes have been noted in terms of students' performance. (PM1 line 70-75).

The general understanding of the policy which includes aspects like guidelines on what is required from academics, guidelines for implementation and adaptability varied from one school to another. This again underscores the complexity of change; and though at the policy level the changes were intended to improve the teachers' working conditions and implement the curriculum through a visual medium, in the actual scenario the same package did not suit all the schools. The lack of specific communication strategies at different levels of policy implementation led to varied interpretations and perceptions among school staff. The lack of coherence coupled with the school's lack of capacity to implement weakened the impact of these policies on instruction.

An analysis of research question 1 what are policy changes that have taken place in India since 1990 and what educational problems were these policies attempting to address revealed that the first feature of the policy aimed for increased access in primary education and universal retention up to the age of 14. The policy also aimed to address the social and gender gaps. It signaled the importance of elementary education and reflected the government's objective of achieving universal elementary education.

McLaughlin (1987) suggested that there are different phases or periods of policy implementation. In the first phase, the challenge lies in the uncertain relationship between policies and implementation programs in broad parameters. The second phase is characterized by unpacking of the implementation process and looking at the relations between policy and practice. The third phase is an attempt to integrate the micro-world of individual implementations. He concluded by making the following points:

- Individual incentives and beliefs are central to local responses
- Policy cannot mandate what matters to outcomes at the local level
- Effective implementation requires a strategic balance of pressure and support and

- Policy-directed change is ultimately a problem of the smallest unit.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

In conclusion, analysis of the policy documents indicates that there is fragmentation between planning and implementation. There is a lack of coordination among the various schools and among the teachers in the same school. There is no time for communication between teachers and teachers do not care much for professional development. The curriculum guidelines are not clear and their goals are stated in very general terms. The long term implementation of the policy is not taken into consideration. Only the short term gain is considered and it is implemented with the short term goal in sight. Therefore the policy fails to address the limitations that may occur in this policy implementation. Professional development is not taken seriously and there is no room for deep instructional improvement. The policies were attempting to respond to some of the educational problems like reducing the number of school drop-outs, and ensuring quality of instruction among school teachers. While the number of school drop-outs reduced to a certain extent the findings reveal that the quality of instruction varied from one school to another. Most of the teachers were not receptive of the new changes as they preferred the previous policy and teachers opined that they were not ready to adapt to the new changes. The underlying justification for the change in the policy lacked the contextual considerations under which the policies will be implemented.

As Corson explains, school language policies are viewed by many in education as an integral and necessary part of the administration and curriculum practice of schools. A language policy...identifies areas of the school's scope of operation and program where language problems exist that need the commonly agreed approach offered by a policy. A language policy sets out what the school intends to do about these areas of concern and includes provision for follow-up, monitoring, and revision of the policy itself (1999, p. 1).

The theoretical framework in chapter 1 used a number of concepts of the change frames from complexity structure, such as culture, context, leadership, teachers' lives and their work

and teacher learning. The analysis to the research question affirms the complexity of change and in the case of the schools the openness within school communities (as advocated by Fullan, 1991; Hargreaves, 1997; Stoll & Fink, 1996) did not exist which explains the fragmentation between the planning and implementation. Adopting these change frameworks in the study acknowledges the dynamic nature of change and its significant impact on classroom practice.

## **Research Question 2: How do the curriculum policies affect the planning and the teaching of the ESL curriculum?**

### **4.10 Introduction**

While research question 1 dealt with the policy changes that took place between 1990-2005 and the educational problems they were attempting to respond to, research question 2 deals with how the curriculum policies affect the planning and the teaching of the curriculum. Interviews with teachers, focus group interview with students together with classroom observation and field notes were analyzed and the results are presented in the following section. Interviews focused on the different dimensions of planning that related to materials, classroom organization, and assessment to explore their beliefs and values. The major themes emerged related to the changes in the curriculum objectives, and the syllabus which impacted the planning and the monitoring of the lessons. In terms of planning teachers faced a major impact of the changes in the policy which involved a drastic change from the use of textbook to the ABL cards. Teachers had to adapt to the new syllabus which has different objectives which impacted their planning and teaching. The second major change was in terms of reorganizing students in an integrated grade system which also affected the planning and the teaching of the curriculum. The third major change related to the assessment and evaluation which changed the paradigm of classroom teaching. Apart from these major changes other factors which impacted the planning and the teaching of the curriculum are also detailed.

#### **4.11 Teachers' views on planning under the new ABL system.**

An analysis of research question 1 revealed that the changes in the policy resulted in major changes to the curriculum materials as well as assessment which in turn altered teachers' belief of their classroom teaching as well as the role of the teacher. In a traditional Indian classroom where the teacher dominates the class the new changes brought about a drastic change to their role in the classroom. The teachers no longer had a prescribed textbook to teach a particular grade but in its place they had the new materials in the form of cards. The introduction of the card system also redefined their role in the classroom. The teachers no longer were the center of attention who dominated the teaching and learning but had to play the role of facilitators, making way for a change in their beliefs about the role of the teacher. The current curriculum called for a more learner-centered approach and teachers had to get used to this new concept. As Teacher Annam reported: "In a traditional classroom in India the teacher does most of the talking. With the new concept however our beliefs about the traditional method of teaching had to be changed." (line 1-8)

Her views are corroborated with another teacher, Sagayam, who expressed similar views: With the new system teachers are expected to be more of a facilitator which is quite new for all of us. It took some time to get used to the concept. I was not comfortable with this system. I teach but it is so different with so many students following different ladder in the syllabus and it was difficult to keep track of all the groups. (TS line 1-7).

One teacher, Roselyn, points out to what she perceives as the demerit in this new system: When I used the textbook I know what exactly the lesson is for the day. I know where to start the lesson from in the next day. Of course the current system also allows for the continuity of the lesson but it is so different. Different groups of students follow different steps in the ladder and only one teacher to monitor all the groups. This will work only in a small classroom with few students. It is not appropriate for a big class. (TR line 1-7).

Another teacher, Kanaga, elaborates on the implications of using the new materials as follows: The academic learning time is different in different schools and therefore the



achievement also varies. The new materials also affect the student participation in class. But now with each group following their own ladder the questioning strategy also has to be different. With the new system it is very difficult to achieve a common goal. I know the materials are devised for the individual students' ability but in reality there are many issues which we have to deal with. (TK line 1-12).

Most of the teachers had to cope with the new method and go against their beliefs about teaching English. In this regard some of the teachers were able to cope with the system though they believed that it is not totally good for the students. Others resisted as it contradicted their beliefs about learning and teaching English. Most of the teachers' response to this change was negative although some teachers opined that with the new changes some of the students could read and write. However it is significant to note that even these teachers viewed this success as short term and they acknowledge that it is marginal compared to other students who underwent different forms of schooling.

Post instruction interviews with the teachers also revealed that the current system was not ideal for upper primary students. The teachers were unhappy with the reversal to the textbook when students reached standard 5. They were unhappy because the syllabus was left incomplete and students who do not complete the cards are still allowed to proceed to the next level. This implies that students in standard 5 would not be ready for that level if they had not completed the syllabus. A teacher teaching standard 5, Sayagam, states her views on this as follows: There is huge disparity in their competency as opposed to a regular class because the students who come to standard 5 were at different levels. Moreover the sudden reversal causes a lot of confusion and they are not comfortable with it. The Government's rationale that the use of textbook is to prepare them for the upper primary level is of no use to these students as it still means a reversal. Although they have to mark a daily attainment card it is achieved at their own pace as there is no pressure to complete the syllabus. (TS line 8-15).

Most of the parents expressed unhappiness with the current system. Says one parent (Meena): There is wide disparity between the rural and urban schools. How are they going to

make sure that the students benefit? They don't have homework and therefore there is no way to monitor what they do in the class. These are primary students and how responsible will they be to be independent in class? (Meena Interview 1 2008/2009) (line 1-6).

Another parent was concerned about teachers' response to change. She says, "I am concerned that if teachers had to change their methodologies and strategies often they might lose hope in the system". She says, Parent 1: I am afraid teachers will have to learn new system. The experienced teachers see no point and the new teachers will be de-motivated. Most of the time group work isn't really effective. The teacher can't be blamed there are too many kids in one class and the teacher cannot monitor all the kids. (line 1-9).

According to one parent (Thiru) who represented the other rural parents:

We lack the funds or resources to send our children to school. So it is what the teachers teach that will help them to speak in English. We don't speak English at home, we speak Tamil at home and therefore there is no way for us to find out if the children speak correct English. We ask the teachers for the monthly progress during the meetings and find out about the progress of our children. (line 1-5).

Most of the parents were concerned about their lack of knowledge in English and thus were unable to be actively involved in their children's progress. Their socio-economic background served as a disadvantage to most of them. According to one parent, Thana:

There is no way for us to help our children. We have neither time nor the knowledge to help them improve in their studies. We totally rely on teachers and the school. Most of these schools do not have libraries and we do not have the means to buy books. Our children are at a disadvantage compared to children who attend private schools. (line 1-5).

There are multiple benefits from parents being involved in their child's education. Research has shown that parental involvement in schooling enhances children's self-esteem, improves academic achievement and improves parent-child relationships. Parents also benefit

in that such involvement helps them develop positive attitudes towards school and attain a better understanding of the schooling process (Baker & Soden, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Sanders & Epstein, 2000).

The parents were at a disadvantage and the schools did not have the support mechanism to cope for the learners' needs. Students did not have access to extra resource materials. In a primary school, a very important aid for children learning to read with comprehension is access to many books. It is usually better if these are in a classroom library (Elley, 1992, 1993), or at least available in a school library where pupils can take the books home to read.

The interviews with teachers and discussions with them after class revealed that most of them felt the initial success they experienced is marginal and only a short-term gain. The relevance of this is expressed by Fullan (1993) when he notes that teachers have the potential to be major decision-makers but it depends upon the extent to which they have been able to succeed with their inner learning (learning to cope with the immediate environment even if it is adverse) and with their outer learning (being able to work, learn and network with colleagues). Apart from the teaching learning materials the change in the curriculum objectives implied a change in classroom practice for the teachers which are discussed next.

#### **4.12 Changes in ESL Curriculum Objectives**

The teachers interviewed said they were confused about what their students should be learning since all of them are grouped together and that made it difficult for the teacher to focus their attention in class. The curriculum document they opined did not specify any strategies and tools to achieve the curriculum objectives except for the phrase “learner-centered” and ‘joyful learning’ which were very vague terms. Teachers in this case did not receive coherent instructions on what they were supposed to do in the classrooms. The individual student achievement chart which is currently used is seen as redundant by the teachers because it is displayed there to indicate the progress of the child but there is no scope for further action. One teacher, Sayagam, comments on this:

The ladder activity has an achievement chart for the individual students. However it is seen redundant. The numbers of students are big and with the multi-grade level it is difficult to indentify the strength and weakness of the individual student and offer help. With no formal exam for students we cannot compare their past performance and set goals for their subsequent levels. (TS line 16-23).

Their views on the sense of lack of ownership give an insight into their views regarding the changes. The variation in implementation results from different factors and the inconsistencies would create opportunities for different and divergent interpretations of the policy and that would reduce consistency in implementation and policy effects. This again reflects the complex nature of educational change. Implementation is a critical phase in the cycle of planning and teaching a new curriculum. This affirms the nature of commitment to change as not all teachers will automatically accept the notion that a newly proposed curriculum is what they should use, nor will all want to use it with their students (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991).

Under the current ABL system the students are grouped together and students who belong to standard 1 to standard 4 are placed in the same classroom with different students pursuing different levels. These multi-grade classrooms lauded by policy makers as being beneficial pose a disadvantage to teachers. Interviews with the teachers as well as classroom observations revealed that these multi-grade classrooms are a disadvantage and teachers are not trained to teach multi-grade classes. From the data gathered the teachers opined that with such a big classroom with noisy children their objective was to keep the class in order most of the time. At the same time they also wanted to get the students interested in the lesson. Achieving these two tasks together was a great challenge they faced.

Another external factor that affected policy implementation is the curriculum objective. The current policy departs from the previous policy in terms of its objectives. The ABL policy places a lot of emphasis on child-centered learning with formative learning and less emphasis on exams. The previous usage of textbooks was more teacher-centered with the teacher being

in control most of the time. There are differing opinions of the change in the objectives with some of the teachers believing it has a negative impact while the others believe that policy changes have a positive impact with regard to teachers' decisions in the content of the lessons. Though the primary objective of the policy states that the materials facilitate child-to-child learning discrepancies exist across the different schools in the extent to which these objectives are realized. One teacher, Niranjana, expressed her frustrations in realizing the curriculum objectives thus:

I am a senior teacher with 21 years of teaching experience and I can clearly see the merits and the demerits of this system. What is good is about the hands-on-approach which gives the students motivation to learn. However the objectives are hard to achieve due to several factors. Moreover the transition of the activities is not smooth. (TN line 1-11).

Many of the teachers were also confused with the terms 'learner-centered' and 'joyful learning'. Teachers in each school had differing opinions on these two terms and the common consensus among the teachers regarding these terms was that if the students enjoyed their class or were engaged on their task then it constituted 'joyful-learning'. Such a stance adopted by the teachers indicates that as long as the student is engaged in a task it is constituted as learner-centered. However interviews with individual teachers revealed otherwise. Says one teacher, Annam: "As long as I see that they are doing their work then it is considered learner-centered. Although in policy terms it means a learner-centered approach I often adopt the teacher-centered approach because these students achieve nothing without teacher's interventions." (line 9-13).

Another teacher, Roselyn, opined: "Irrespective of the objectives I make sure they learn at least something in my class. That is the most important to me. That to me is the objective and I don't really think the concept of joyful learning matters the most". (line 7-10).

On being asked how the changes in the objectives impacts practice one teacher, Kanaga, shares her experience on this as follows: It affects all aspects of classroom practice such as specifying a task for students to complete, presenting information in various ways, pacing of instruction and engaging students actively. The teacher feedback also has to be different to each group since they have their own ladder to follow. When the resources are limited I use my own judgment to switch to another activity. (TK line 13-19).

Their responses imply that they must be able to adjust the content and pedagogy in response to the students' reactions and abilities in the classroom. Most of the teachers sensed a challenge to facilitate student learning under the current system. Though they adopted the materials in the classroom their pedagogy remained the same and this implies a change in practice is difficult to achieve. Though the curriculum allowed teachers flexibility in handling the materials most of the teachers sensed there is no intensive involvement owing to the differences of opinion among teachers in achieving the objectives. Having discussed the curriculum objectives the following is an account of the teacher's input in the class.

#### **4.12.1 Teacher's ESL Instructional Strategies**

With the changes in the curriculum objectives teachers' instructional strategies had to change from the traditional chalk-and-talk method to that of being a facilitator. The training teachers received did not really prepare them for the transition and the interviews with teachers reveal the conflicts they faced. There were contradictions between the expectations from the policy makers and what was practiced by the teachers in the classrooms. When there was a conflict between teachers' beliefs and what was expected from them the teachers practiced as per their beliefs. Though they adopted the policy in certain ways they still preferred their tried and tested method of teaching. The curriculum objective emphasizes communicative aspects of language learning. Minimum competency is expected to be achieved by the learners. However the teachers prefer textbook based teaching as they felt it gave them a unified structure. The adoption of the policy by the individual teachers varied and teachers resorted to traditional

teaching most of the time. Classroom observations revealed that teachers resorted to choral recitation, review and practice most of the time. Below is an excerpt of a standard 2 classroom observation

Children aged 6 to 7. Standard 2

The students are asked to stand in a circle and the teacher stands in the center of the circle.

Teacher brings the class to attention and asks them to clap their hands. She asks them questions about their breakfast and calls out each student by name.

Then teacher tells them they are going to learn the name of fruits. She calls out a girl and asks her to read the name of the fruit from the card (mango). The whole class is asked to repeat and the picture is shown to the class.

The teacher asks the girl to write the word on the board.

The whole class repeats the spelling of the word several times after the teacher while the teacher walks around the class.

Teacher then calls out a boy and asks him to spell out the word. The boy spells the word correctly and the whole class claps.

The teacher proceeds with the reading activity. A boy is asked to read the passage aloud and the others repeat after him. The teacher asks the questions and the whole class is asked to repeat the answer in chorus.

Students are asked to copy the words on their board and repeat the words in chorus again.

End of the lesson.

In the above mentioned lesson the teacher most of the time resorted to choral recitation, repetition and review for practice. However the observation revealed that some of the students did not recite the word and the teacher did not take note of it since the group was loud and the teachers also recited the word along with the students. When the students went back to the board to write the word some of them spelled it incorrectly. During the interview the teacher (Roselyn) described her practice as follows:

I do not believe so much on just focusing on the communicative aspects of language teaching. Most of the time this is how we were taught English and I follow the same concept with my students. I think choral recitation works fine with my students. They like to sing rhymes in chorus and they like this activity. (TRline 11-16).

This notion was reflected in some of the views expressed by the teachers who did not believe in placing too much emphasis on the communicative aspects of English language with little focus on grammar. Despite some visible results with their students' progress with spoken English these teachers still held on to the view that English should be learnt the way they had learnt it in school with emphasis on grammar. Some of the teachers held fast to this view and resented the change. Though most of them emphasized the need to learn grammar none of the teachers taught even taught basic grammar rules in the class. This contradicted their own views as all the teachers viewed grammar as an important component.

However along the process some teachers did change their beliefs as they saw the benefits of the change. The teachers do not understand the nature of change until they get involved with the curriculum. Teachers may change their beliefs along the process of implementing the curriculum as a result of changes in the revised curriculum (Fullan, 1985). Fullan (2001, p. 92) had also stated that "The relationship between behavioral change and belief change is reciprocal and ongoing, with change in doing or behavior a necessary experience on the way to breakthroughs in meaning and understanding."

This notion is justified given the fact that there are some teachers who have altered their beliefs at least partially after having undergone the training. The training basically highlights the goals of the policies and the methodology they should employ in classrooms. These teachers do get to teach the same group of students at least for four years and are therefore able to see their students' progress. This is also the reason attributed to their change in the belief that the new policy is good to a certain measure. The students who were unable to speak a word in standard 1 were able to demonstrate basic understanding and were able to speak a few sentences when they came up to standard 4. However this did not totally alter the



teachers' belief about the system since they had reservations about using such an approach. Their beliefs were partially altered only after considering the fact that this system aimed at promoting proficiency for students who come from a low socio economic background and who have no exposure to English language except in schools. The context in which changes take place is also important in the planning and the teaching of the curriculum and failing to take that into consideration has its own consequences.

Classroom observations also revealed that the kind of instructions that the teachers gave were too structured and they preferred to revert back to drill and practice on basic skills. The teachers also preferred to go through the materials sequentially irrespective of the ladder the individual student followed. Though they were given room for adapting the materials most of the teachers never used any materials other than the ABL cards. The pattern of implementation was the same in all the schools with most of the teachers resorting to drill and choral recitation which relates to teacher's knowledge of the English language.

Questioned on the aspects of instruction targeted, one teacher, Kanaga, replied:

there are no specific instructions on how language should be taught. It is open to various interpretations. We have freedom to exercise our own judgment and the good teachers will use extra materials and the students in the rural schools will not get any extra materials. I would say that we need more time to prepare extra materials for the students. We need resources and training. (TK line 23-29).

The teachers viewed support as very important in shaping their implementation efforts and practice. There are no specific instructions in the policy documents in terms of pacing their lessons and this accounted for the variation in terms of implementation. Some teachers did not feel the need to adhere to the syllabus strictly and relied on their experience to adapt the activities in class.

A teacher in school A, Niranjana, shares about the activities she conducts in her classroom as follows:

Most of the students in my class come from rural areas and I let them listen to the tapes in the afternoon sessions almost every day. However, there are no follow-up activities after the listening session. I have no time to conduct follow-up activities. (line 12-15)

While Sharmila, the teacher in school B. finds some time to conduct follow-up activities, she commented that in her practice “. . . I let them listen to recognize the words and to identify the pictures and objects. After the lesson is over I ask questions related to the video they have watched.” (line 9-13)

The teachers in school C also conducted some activities to enhance the students’ understanding. Thus while some teachers’ objective of the lesson was purely for the sake of comprehension, others tried to engage students actively in the class and went one step further than pure comprehension. The teachers who did not have any activities were unaware of what they could do in the class as most of them were not language teachers. The strategies that teachers used did not encourage the learners to clarify meanings, learn about other perspectives or encourage elaboration. The listening activities did not provide them with any learning opportunities as their language is limited and students listened without the benefit and help of the context.

#### **4.12.2 Teachers’ Preference for Using Textbooks**

Though the new syllabus provided teachers with a set of cards to be used, teachers still preferred to use the textbook in class. They still resort to traditional teaching and teacher’s response to policy changes is noted as both positive and negative with most of them expressing their views that mutual and peer learning is most appropriate with young learners. The classroom environment is not conducive for the teachers to carry out their lessons. One school is so small that the classrooms are used to serve lunch, after which the classes resume for the afternoon session. The materials are kept in boxes or trays and students’ work is displayed on a

string which is tried across the classrooms. In all the schools there is one common room with television and CD player set which students use for the listening session. Again all the schools do not provide them with microphone and therefore while some students listen to the CDs other students talk to each other making it difficult for the teacher to conduct the lesson. The teacher admitted that a lot of time is wasted in trying to keep them quiet before they can resume teaching. One teacher, Kanaga, shares her view on the cause of the slow progress thus:

There are 34 students in my class and the students are required to sit on the floor. But I feel 34 is a large number for a language class, 20 students will be the ideal number. There is no homework and no test and therefore the progress is slow. I do encourage them to learn at home. Most of my students come from rural background. So the classroom is the only place for them to learn. (TK line 32-39).

Classroom observations revealed that the teachers resorted to traditional teaching and their response to policy demands to be a facilitator drew negative responses from them. Says a teacher, Mary:

Most of the parents view teacher as a person who should be doing the talking in the class most of the time. Students also expect teachers to teach them and the concept of teacher being a facilitator is quite new to the Indian culture. Traditionally teachers are expected to “teach”. Apart from that most of us are not comfortable with just being a facilitator considering the fact that our learners are young kids. (TM line 1-9).

Standard 5 teacher Ms. Mary’s views on the preference for textbook are as follows: From the students’ perception the ABL cards are good as it is interesting for them. But in my opinion the textbook system is good in terms of achieving the outcomes. But with the ABL cards each student can learn at their own pace which makes it difficult for the teacher to set an objective and to follow-up. (TM line 10-19).

Most of the teachers preferred the previous system of using text books which in their opinion were structured as all students followed the same curriculum. The current ABL system's success is described by them as short-term and does not reflect the actual standard of the students. Adopted in the proper manner the previous system of using textbook would yield better results. With the previous system the teachers had one whiteboard to be used for the whole class. With the current change in the syllabus the students are provided with small white boards on the wall which they can use to write. Teachers opine that this is also a hindrance as they had to walk around to check on each student's work. While it gives freedom and space for the students to work at their own pace the teachers' opinion varied on this. Some teachers expressed this as a good practice while others were divided on their views saying it affected their time spent on each student and they preferred the earlier method. This also changed the dimension of teaching and learning and classroom observations revealed that sometimes the students did not make judicious use of the whiteboard. They preferred to write in their notebooks instead.

Most of the teachers preferred the use of textbook though the policy makers stressed that the same materials are printed in the cards. The preference for the textbook on the teachers' part justifies the fact that they prefer all the students to follow the same lesson as it is easy for them to monitor the class; in their own words the lessons are 'structured' and 'organized'. However textbooks should also be adapted according to the needs of the student and it is noteworthy to highlight Richards' quote on the usage of textbooks. Richards (1998) called for a "deconstruction" and "reconstruction" in this regard, proposing that teachers approach textbooks with the expectations of deletion, adaptation, and extension of content to meet both students' needs and their own teaching style. "In this way, the potential negative impact of using textbooks can be minimized and they can find their rightful place in the educational system--namely, as resources to support and facilitate teaching rather than dominate it" (p. 140). In this case though provisions are made for adapting extra materials in reality it never materialized. Teachers' response to policy varied and the quality of change in

actual practice also varied from one school to another. Conflicts between teachers' beliefs and their practices also led to uneven implementation. Many of the teachers' practices were in conflict with the intentions of the policy makers as teachers viewed change as top-down and therefore they viewed the change as a disadvantage.

#### **4.12.3 Teachers' Perception of the ESL Syllabus**

The use of ABL cards is perceived as useful only for beginners and students who are very weak in English. According to the teachers interviewed the syllabus is good for students who have weak command of the language but it is not very helpful for good students. Though all the teachers agreed that most of their students have poor command of the language they identified some students who have the potential to learn fast and who are good compared to the others. When these students complete their ladder then teachers can help them with the extra materials; however, in reality, most of the teachers agreed that they do not have time to devote attention to these children and they did not find time to get extra materials. Classroom observations also confirmed the teachers' views whereby some good students in the class were sitting around doing nothing as their peers struggled with the lesson.

This further strengthens the teachers' belief that the system is not very effective. However the majority of the teachers were positive that it could help the weak students to learn English. But even these teachers expressed doubts about the effectiveness of the system since the students have to revert back to the textbook that not only poses a challenge to the teacher but also to the students as they struggle to adapt to the change. A teacher teaching standard 5, Roselyn, says her views on this:

The vigor in implementation is deterred because I feel I had to abandon all the efforts when the student reaches standard 5. They revert back to the textbook system which can be confusing both to the teachers and the students. It produces positive results but the results are not very encouraging. When these students reach standard 5 there is a lot

of disparity in their levels. The students need a lot of help and individual attention since until standard 4 most of them manage only to master the basic communication. (TR line 18-33).

Many teachers expressed their views on the syllabus as something appropriate for beginners and ideal for students with no exposure to English. However the continuity is most important to achieve uniform success. Reverting back in standard 5 does not allow the teachers the possibility of maximizing the potential benefits of the card system. Most teachers agree that in order for the current system to succeed they should be provided with more materials, small classes and training to specialize in individual subjects.

#### **4.13 Planning and Monitoring the ESL Lesson Progress**

The educational culture the teacher has been exposed to also has an impact in the way the teacher handled the classes. The time frames for the lessons were fixed and the lesson usually had an introductory stage, developmental stage and a conclusion. The lesson structures were predictable with almost all the teachers resorting to the same procedures and practices. The teachers usually resorted to direct instruction and the lessons were reiterative most of the times. The teachers during the interview confided that they were taught English during their school days in this manner and they resorted to the same while they taught English. One teacher, Kanaga, noted that changes in pedagogy will be difficult owing to the following aspects:

We are comfortable with what we teach and so are the students. Very few parents are interested to find out what happens in the classroom. We are not trained to handle multi-grade classes and the training we receive is very basic and the realities of the training ground and the actual classrooms are very different. (TK line 45-55).

Classroom observations also revealed that students in the classrooms are seated on the floor and many times they had to share the learning cards. Some of them resort to talking and playing while the teacher is making her rounds or busy attending to other children. Interviews with the teachers also reveal that most of them had not attended seminars and have no knowledge about the second language learning theory or the developments related to it. They freely use the terms like ‘joyful learning’, ‘mutual learning’, ‘peer-learning’ which are phrases from the curriculum documents or what they had picked from their training. However the classroom pedagogy is mostly didactic with no room for creativity or any mutual learning.

Teacher Annam shares her views on the difficulty of planning the lesson:

Planning the lesson with the new system is difficult since all the students from standard 1 to standard 4 are in the same class. However these students are at different stages of the ladder with each group following their own syllabus. In this case I have to plan for each group although the materials are readily available. But I don’t have the time to prepare extra materials for them. (TA line 14-23).

Other teachers interviewed also shared similar views that planning a lesson under the new system could be “unpredictable” and “difficult” due to the nature of the syllabus. It is also tedious for the teachers to go through the lesson sequentially as different students follow different steps in their ladder chart. Similar views were expressed regarding the monitoring of the lessons. Teachers opined that monitoring the lessons is not possible because of limited time and the teacher could not divide their time between the different groups.

Classroom observations and post instruction interviews with the teachers revealed that most of them did not monitor the progress of the students. Students under the new system have the individual attainment chart to monitor their progress. However most of the teachers did not take steps to monitor their progress and help them to proceed to the next level. One teacher, TS talks about monitoring the progress as follows: “I hardly have time to monitor the progress as

there are several groups working on different levels in the same class. Sometimes I take note of their progress but do not have the time to monitor them individually.”

Other teachers also opined that monitoring was difficult due to the nature of the activities conducted in the class and the number of students who amounted to 40 in a class.

Most of the teachers interviewed also opined that in planning the lesson with the new objectives in mind they had to consider the impact on students’ learning. Previously in planning a lesson the teacher has one objective common to all students and therefore it is easier to plan the lesson for a class. Under the new concept with students working in various groups teachers have to consider the impact on students’ learning and the objectives varied from one group to another based on the activity the group is engaged in. Says one teacher, Annam: “I have to consider the impact it will have on their learning outcomes. Achieving different objectives for various groups in one class is challenging and some students enjoy learning while others achieve very little.”

The teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with the progression of the lesson. Previously teachers used the prescribed textbook and usually targeted to complete the textbook by the end of the year. Students also tried to progress and keep pace with the lessons. With the new system there is no pressure to complete and with students working at their own pace there is no ‘fixed’ portion to complete. This works to the disadvantage of the teacher who cannot do a proper planning. Says one teacher, Sagayam: “The planning and the monitoring of the lesson is difficult because there is no specific target to achieve. The principle behind the change being communicative learning and joyful learning is very abstract as each of us interprets this according to our own understanding of the term (TS line 1-4).

Moreover teachers also expressed that with this new objective each teacher’s plan could be different and the planning could be varied from one school to another. There will be a vast disparity in terms of each school’s achievement and implementation varied due to various factors.



#### **4.13.1 Learners' Context in the ESL classroom**

Another important aspect that concerned lesson planning and the monitoring pertained to the learners' context which had an impact in the planning and the teaching of the curriculum that accentuates the complexity of change. Attitudes are often shaped by the social context which "develop early in childhood and are the result of parents and peers' attitudes" (Brown, 2000 p. 180) as well as contact with others from different cultures. The socio-economic background of learners (Ellis, 2003) could affect their response to change. In the second language learning context, factors like age, gender, language background, type of school attended, and peer influences are some of the variables that influence language acquisition and attitudes (Merisou-Strom, 2007).

Interviews with the teachers helped the researcher to understand the context of the learners and their background. All the teachers in the 3 schools acknowledged that the context of the learners has to a certain extent influenced the kind of activities they decided to conduct. Most of the students came from families with no English background. They have no exposure to English other than what they learn from the classes. These students do not have an opportunity to listen to news or radio channels and neither do they read books in English. Therefore the students like the listening activities as it is the only time they are exposed to English tapes and videos. Therefore teachers used these tapes during the afternoon sessions. This pattern was similar in all the three schools. According to teacher, Niranjana:

"We conduct listening activities almost every noon since students seem to enjoy these activities. Moreover when they watch and listen at the same time they learn faster and they are excited." (TN line 16-20).

Her views are similar to another teacher (Mary) who talks about her students as:

Most of the students do have the means to buy story books. Our own schools also do not have the resources like libraries and therefore this is the only exposure they have. So many teachers resort to listening activities and the learner's context and their

background to a certain extent determines the activities we conduct in the class. (TM line 10-14).

Interviews with teachers from all the three schools revealed that teachers find students respond better when they listen to the audio cassettes which are mostly conducted in the afternoon sessions. Listening sessions are conducted in the afternoon sessions when students are sleepy and it is less taxing for them to do. One teacher, Mary, comments on her listening class as follows:

Most of the teachers conduct listening classes in the afternoon sessions when the students tend to be sleepy. They watch the CDs and also repeat after the word for pronunciation. My students like listening activities and they like to watch the videos as well. This way they can remember the word as they always make associations with the videos they watch. (line 15-20).

Interviews with students also revealed that they liked the activity very much; however there is no follow up activity conducted. The students describe their listening activity as follows: We like to listen to the CDs and watch the videos. Most of the time our teacher will ask us to repeat after a certain word, sometimes we follow the rhymes and sing along aloud. There is no homework or activity. After listening we do some coloring activity or sometimes continue with some games. But we look forward to this activity. (Focus Group 3 line 1-5).

However it was observed that a consequence of these activities resulted in students' lack of participation in class as they liked to be passive listeners and the teachers did not conduct any follow-up activities. Therefore a disadvantage of this is that teachers over relied on these cassettes to be used in class with no further purpose to it.

#### **4.13.2 Learners' Participation in the ESL classes**

Teachers termed learner participation in class as 'average' as not all students participated in the classroom activities. Only some students interacted while the others were happy to remain passive in class. The teachers attributed their lack of participation to their background as well as other factors such as the number of students in a particular class as well as the students' socio-economic background. Teachers reasoned that the students were not motivated because of a lack of self-confidence which stemmed from their poor knowledge as well as their background.

The teachers note that "some of the students come from middle class families and they are exposed to English. They sometimes read English story books at home and their parents can afford to buy books for them. But most of the students in our school come from poor families and they are not exposed to the language except at schools. Their opportunities are very restricted." Considering the learners' level of competence one teacher, Annam, shares her experience how she deals with them in the class:

I always encourage them to speak in English. Their confidence is very low. They assume it is very difficult and they even think only rich people speak in English. But majority of my students are happy with their progress. Their parents are happy too since they do not know how to speak in English themselves. (TA line 24-36).

Since most of the students come from poor families and are responsible for helping their parents to take care of their family business or their siblings, attendance in school is another factor the teachers have to address. One teacher, Shiamala, explains the difficulties they have to face in addressing this problem:

Attendance is one major problem in our schools. Some don't come for classes due to illness and sometimes they also don't come because they take time off for certain

celebrations like “Ponggal” and “Deepavali”. The problem with being absent for a long time means I have to teach them all over again. (TSh line 1-10).

Learners’ motivation was another aspect that impacted teaching and learning and one teacher (Roselyn) points out her students’ motivation to learn as follows:

Most of the students in my class are motivated but their motivation to learn is ‘short-lived’. So I have to ensure that the nature of my classroom activity is interesting and keeps them engaged in the task. I motivate them and give sweets. I assign each group different tasks and hang their work from the strings tied across the classrooms. When people come for inspections my students are proud of their work displayed. (TR line 34-44).

Her views are corroborated by the students who voiced their opinion on the activities conducted by their teacher:

Our teacher will sometimes ask us to practice certain topics and sometimes it is homework. Most of the days we work in groups and our teacher will go around the class to check and monitor us. This is the time for us to clarify doubts and our teacher will explain it to us. (Focus Group 2 line 1-9).

However classroom observations showed that teachers never questioned students during the listening activity and there were no follow-up activities conducted for the listening classes. Teachers questioned students during the regular hours and most teachers perceived listening sessions as “purely listening” sessions.

Classroom observations revealed that students were not provided with enough opportunities for class participation. Most of the time students were engaged in their group work and the teachers walked around the class to ensure students were engaged in their task. Teachers only asked questions occasionally and apart from that there were no activities like role-plays or other activities in which students could take part. This attests to the fact that most of the teachers merely complied with the policy changes and there was no real ‘context’ for

joyful learning to take place. Teacher Mary commented on the lack of activities in her class as follows:

“I have tried to incorporate some activities but I can’t conduct it too often as I don’t have time. Students have to complete their ladder chart and sometimes I don’t have any idea on what activities I can conduct in class.” (TM line 1-4)

#### **4.13.3 The Interest of the Class in ESL Activities**

The interest of the class and the mood of the students were different in all the 3 schools. The morning classes in all the three schools were conducted actively and students participated in group work productively. However the noon sessions were slow and the students in school A were enthusiastic learners but their enthusiasm was just confined to the classroom. At home they were expected to help their parents and take care of their siblings. The situation was only slightly better in school B where most of the students went back home after the morning sessions. None of the schools penalized their students for poor attendance and they were just given verbal warning most of the time. The students in school C came from slightly better socio-economic conditions and their parents were in the middle income group and therefore could afford to buy books. Almost all the teachers in the three schools did not emphasize homework. Some teachers assigned homework but there was no follow-up and it was up to the students’ initiative to complete the work. The teachers opined that it was sufficient to follow the syllabus and homework was optional. Says teacher Niranjana, “we do not assign any homework, it is pointless they will do not any work at home.” She adds, “moreover since the current system does not really emphasize on grades most of the teachers do not give homework to students.” Teachers also acknowledged that their own workload was heavy. The disposition of the learners to learn English also affected the enthusiasm of the teacher.

On the other hand interviews with students revealed that they would be motivated if they had stimulating activities to motivate them. On what motivates them some of the students answered thus:

We like to learn English but sometimes we always repeat after the teacher and we forget after some days. We like fun activities and games and some competition among us. Our classes are always the same every day. (Focus group 3 line1-4)

Teachers interviewed opined that while this may be true they do not have access to extra materials and therefore just focus on the activity cards. Classroom observations revealed that there are no objectives set for any particular class and therefore each group works at its own pace and thus there is lack of guidance from the teacher. Teachers claim that the appeal of marks is lost with the no exam policy and therefore students have lost interest in gaining competence or the drive to excel.

Contradicting views are given by the teachers and the students on this issue. The students expressed their desire for positive atmosphere and variety in classes while the teachers resorted to traditional teaching. From the student interview data it was clear that students did not place any personal meaning or value in learning English and being awarded the ‘star’ for performing well was not enough motivation for them.

The teachers were not aware of using other materials for the classroom except the ABL cards given to them. On the possibility of using other materials like magazines, newspapers, advertisements, brochures and so forth, Teacher Shiamala replied as follows: “Most of the teachers in my school do not know that these materials can be used to teach English. We did not think beyond the textbook and the ABL materials given to us. We are not specialized in English” (TSh line 11-13).

Classroom observations as well as interviews with teachers confirmed that all the teachers in the 3 schools were not aware of using different approaches as well as materials for teaching and learning. The teachers did not have the positive environment to stimulate students’ interest and students who worked in groups did not achieve the concept of co-operative learning. This was evident from the fact that some students in a group who had finished their work were sitting down doing nothing.

Positive attitudes and behaviors towards schools, often referred to as ‘school engagement’, are crucial elements in learning and success. Research shows that successful students persevere when encountering difficulties, make greater effort to learn and pay attention to their school work. In addition, they tend to display motivation, self-confidence, enthusiasm, interest and pride in success. Engaged students learn, retain and enjoy learning activities more than students who are not engaged (Finn & Rock, 1997; Newmann, 1989; OECD, 2002; Voelkl, 1995).

Students in all the 3 schools were not given the right stimulus for learning. While teachers cited students’ lack of interest in learning English, interviews with students and classroom observations revealed that students were not given enough motivation and that teachers did not try different approaches which might work well with different students.

#### **4.13.4 Students’ response to ESL instruction**

The next part of the discussion relates to students’ response to instruction, the learners’ context and the disposition of learners. The change in the teaching context had also made an impact on the teaching learning activities. The students are interested in learning but their exposure to language is limited and their interest is short lived. Most of the students have no exposure to English and their socio-economic background makes it difficult for them to learn English. The interviews with teachers revealed that the majority of the students were interested in learning English but they did not have the right atmosphere to sustain their interest. Their interest is lost along the way because of several reasons. One teacher, Selvi, talks about the standard 4 students of her class:

The students in my class are really interested to learn and they come to me all the time and ask me how to pronounce a word or how to answer a question. They are motivated learners and I am happy to entertain them. But my students are also poor with their

memory since they do not get the opportunity to use the word outside the class. (TSel line 1-11).

Her answer is similar to what is experienced by another teacher, Sagayam, who teaches standard 3 and 4. She shares her views as follows:

Although we have to teach every student and give equal attention sometimes the interest of the student is also a motivational factor for the teachers. They especially like the activities and other language games we conduct in class. But the problem with my students is their interest is short lived and we have to constantly motivate them to learn. (TS line 26-42).

Observations in the classroom also revealed that the students were highly interested to learn new words but when they came back the next day the researcher had asked them regarding their previous lesson and the students admitted that they had forgotten the words. Students did not have enough opportunity to keep their interest alive by interacting with someone or using the words in conversation. The teachers also revealed the difficulty they face with those who are not totally interested to learn. Says teacher Annam:

Some of the students in my standard 4 are not interested to learn simply because they had no opportunity to use the language at home. Their disposition to learn a new language like English is very low. I give them tasks like writing the word a few times or to repeat the word so that they master the vocabulary. Again time is a constraint as I can't do that often due to the number of students. The students must also be initiated to learn and demonstrate keen interest to learn new things. To them English is an alien language and their chances of using it outside the classroom is almost zero. (TA line 37-46).



In this regard a standard 5 teacher (Saraswathy) shares her experiences on the different strategies she used to gain the attention of her students: “It really depends what time of the day we have English Class and based on that I vary my activities for the class accordingly. Morning classes are usually easier to handle as they are still fresh and I try to teach them vocabulary or even writing.” (TSar line 1-7).

However all the teachers did acknowledge that “engaging students actively” and “promoting involvement” in class is a great challenge for them. The teachers also reiterated that they are not trained English teachers and therefore their methodology is quite limited. One teacher, Roselyn, shares her experience on what she considers as an enabling factor in sustaining the interest of her students:

“One thing that had made it easy for the teachers to sustain the interest of the class is the hands on approach with the materials. They sometimes want to ‘outdo’ their friends and the negative side to this is that the good students finish their work earlier and they tend to get bored. Very few go back and revise and the majority of the students learn only in the classroom and there is no time or chance for reinforcement”. (TR line 45-55).

Post instruction interviews with students revealed that they liked the activities conducted in the classrooms; however, unlike the teachers who viewed the lack of homework as a negative factor in sustaining the interest of the students, the students did not have any worries about the lack of practice at home. They maintained that the classroom instruction is sufficient enough to keep them motivated. Understanding the learners’ context and their socio-economic background is important as it affects the planning and the teaching of the curriculum. As one teacher, Sharmila, explains:

“Our students are different from the students who go to private schools. Normally majority of the kids these days go to LKG and UKG (Lower Kindergarten and Upper Kindergarten) before they start standard 1. So we have to take into consideration the fact that not all learners come with background education. Their exposure to language is also not the same”. (TSh line 14-22).

One group of students shares their view on learning English: “We like to learn English. Sometimes it is interesting to learn with friends. When we go home we don’t speak in English. It is because our parents are not educated and we don’t have access to story books in English. We learn only with the teacher and most of us like the listening and group activities. We don’t know to write but we can speak better. Writing is very difficult for us”. (Focus group 3: line 5-10).

Another group of students’ response to the support they receive from the teacher is as follows:

Most of the times my teacher will ask us to form groups to do activities. We like group work especially mind map. It is so fun and interesting. We also like to display our work in the classroom. Mind map is easier than writing. Our group leader will help us. But sometimes my teacher is too busy. (Focus group1: line 6-9).

Yet another group of students in class 4 views class participation as interesting and fun.

It is better to do group work. We can share our ideas. We like to draw pictures to explain a story. It is better to explain a story through pictures because writing is more difficult. Some students don’t like to do work in a group. They draw their own mind map in a book. (Focus group 3: line 11-14.).

Most of the students expressed their liking for group work and listening activities. Asked by the researcher on what they considered daunting task in the ESL class they said it is learning new words and writing paragraphs. One group of students explain on how they learn new vocabulary thus:

Most of the times when we want to learn a new word the teacher will say the word and ask us to repeat it. Then she will explain the meaning of the word in Tamil. After that we will copy the words in our notebooks. Sometimes she will ask us to make sentences but most of the times we must memorize the word. Few days later we forget the meaning of the word. Focus group 2: line 10-14).

Their responses showed some similarities across the contexts again school C had greater levels of opportunities as the teachers were more experienced though they also faced some setbacks. These students' voices help to understand the way knowledge was transmitted and it reflects the realities of the classrooms conditions, the constraints students faced and the social conditions in the classroom.

#### **4.13.5 Situational Constraints faced by the ESL teacher**

Classroom observation revealed that the teacher of this particular class in school C conducted activities sometimes for review, practice, and sometimes for the sake of enrichment and assessment. However the teacher noted that "enrichment activities are only conducted when students are at the blank steps of the ladders when the teacher can use her own materials for the students. Other times the students just follow their particular ladder and each group could be at different points of the ladder and therefore it is difficult to conduct enrichment activities as often as possible".

However the situation is not the same in all the classroom and sometimes the teachers also face students who lack motivation either because it is too difficult for them to learn or they lose interest very fast. One teacher (Selvi) comments on her students thus: "My students are not always motivated to learn. So it turns out that managing them takes up most of the time rather than instructional time. Their motivation is low when they find it is too difficult or sometimes they are just not interested." (TSel line 12-20).

Teacher Kanaga comments on the homework aspect: "Perhaps if there is homework for the students they might be motivated to complete it for the next day's class. In this system there is no homework and I see that as a disadvantage. Of course some are of the opinion that there is no pressure to perform and students perform at their own pace. In my opinion a certain amount of pressure is good for them and that can be a motivational factor". (TK line 56-65).

Her views are corroborated by another teacher, Sagayam, who notes: "It's true that they need some positive motivation to learn. What they learn in class is not sufficient to master the

language. It is good for beginners who start at standard 1 but the system is not good for students who join in between the class. They should have homework as a form of reinforcement that work as positive motivation”. (TS line 43-52).

One teacher, Mary, talks about their attitude towards English: “Most of the students in my school view English as a ‘foreign’ language and cannot relate to it. Speaking in English is even considered ‘prestigious’ as most of them come from rural areas. Majority of these students might never enter tertiary education and that is also another reason for their lack of interest to pursue learning English. Some students complete standard 10 or standard 12 and go on to find jobs to support their families”. (TM line 21-29)

Her views are similar to that of other teachers in all the three schools. Teacher Shiamala notes that: “It is mostly because of the environment they come from that makes them feel that it is good enough to learn to speak in English. Sometimes their parents tell them to stop studying so that they can help them in their business. Very often these children would be the first generation who attended school”. (TSh line 11-15)

Their attitude can also be influenced by certain activities conducted by the teacher such as teachers’ questions in the classrooms. This group of student commented thus: “We are questioned by the teacher in the class sometimes. Certain times we are able to answer and we feel happy. At other times we feel threatened since we do not know the answers. We are scared we might say the wrong answer and therefore we prefer to keep quiet. . . we prefer the teacher to ask general questions as it is easier and we might answer if we know or the others can try to answer the question”. (Focus Group 5: line 1-7).

However the teacher, Mary, who teaches the particular class notes that, “Not all the time I ask difficult questions. While it is true I reprimand them for not being able to answer I don’t punish them. It is only the good students who always try to answer. The others remain passive for the fear of giving the wrong answer.” (TM line 30-35).

On the social environment of the class Teacher Sharmila commented thus:

The environment in my class is not very formal. Students can walk around and talk and clarify questions with me. The student-teacher relationship in my class is quite friendly and they are not intimidated by my presence. Of course the physical conditions of the classrooms are not so conducive. There are not enough facilities for them but we make the best of what is available. (TSh line 14-20).

Another teacher, Roselyn, comments on the environment in her class from school C which is different from the previous years when the textbook was in use. The social environment in my class is very conducive for my students. My relationship with my students is not the typical teacher-student relationship that exists in normal classrooms. Their problem is more due to lack of exposure to the target language at home. Their preferred learning style is more of repetition which is acceptable as a way of reinforcement. These children are young learners and motivation to learn better is really an asset for them. (TR line 56-69).

Her views are corroborated by students' response when they commented on the environment in their class:

Our teacher is friendly and we are not scared of her. Our teacher will usually ask us to work in groups. We don't like to answer individually as we are scared we might give the wrong answer. With a group our friends will help us when we go wrong. So we prefer group work which we do most of the time. (Focus Group 4: line 1-4).

Another teacher, Saraswathy, notes the environment in her class is rather rigid for the following reasons:

In my class the students are allowed to ask questions and encouraged to be open in their group discussions. My students' preferred learning strategy is group work but they also like to come to me often to get their work checked. Their motivation to learn is positive but sometimes they are not so motivated to learn. (TSar line 8-21).

#### **4.14 Classroom Organization in English classes**

Classroom organization also played a part in implementation. In school A 82 students were divided into two classes for English lessons. The numbers are quite high considering that students from grade 1 to grade 4 were all placed in the same classroom. In school B there were 132 students and they were divided into three classes. Similarly school C also had about 40 students in each class. The students sit on the floor and there are no desks and benches for them. The classrooms in school C were bigger compared to the classrooms in school A and school B.

The sudden change in the teaching context left teachers confused and this coupled with the fact that the teachers were not subject matter experts left them with little option for the ability to change and add to practice over time. The students in standard 1 to standard 4 use cards and when the students reach standard 5 they revert back to the textbook system. This caused confusion to both the teachers and the students and teachers not only were dissatisfied with the change but they also disliked this change. Parents did not support the change as it was new and the multi-grade system was seen as ineffective. There were no formal exams and no homework given and this caused resistance from parents who preferred the previous system. The teachers do not have much planning to do to conduct the lessons but they felt burdened by the multi-grade teaching and the large number of students in their class. It was tiring for the teachers to teach different groups following different ladders simultaneously. In the event the instructional strategies used by the teachers were teacher-centered and the students were passive learners in the classrooms. Though the policy called for more learner-centered activities the teachers sometimes tend to be teacher- centered and resorted to the traditional

teaching. The following is an account of the activities conducted in the class and the teachers' use of the textbook in class.

#### **4.14.1 Activities in the ESL Class**

The activities conducted prior to teaching varied from one school to the other. In school A the students were just given verbal instructions on how to proceed with the materials and teacher's guidance was limited. The introduction to the lesson did not take up much time and students began their task soon after. In school B the instructions were elaborate and some activities were conducted by the teacher. The students were asked to form a circle and were given pictures to look at for a few seconds. Then each student was asked to relate something about the picture. However sometimes when students were unable to answer the questions the teachers did not allow enough time for them to think or give them a clue to help them answer the question. The teacher then posed the question to the next student. Asked on the rationale of her practice Teacher Niranjana commented thus:

If I wait for them to answer then I will not have enough time. Sometimes the student does not want to give the wrong answer therefore they prefer to remain silent. Anyway I would discuss the answers with them before they finish class. (TN line 21-24).

In school C, students were given guided instructions but sometimes the teacher asked the students to tell what they were supposed to do for the next session. Usually the teacher identified a clever student in the class to get to tell the rest of the class. Before the activities started there was some informal talk with the students. It was noticed that this served as an ice breaker and students were excited to share with the teacher some of their personal information. The teacher in this class was friendly in her approach.

Goals to be achieved for the particular lesson were set prior to the task. Though the materials were the same the teachers conducted different activities and their approaches were different. The following is an example of the observation in school A.

Pupils enter classroom and are directed to the center and form circle. Teacher stands in the middle and asks students to register their attendance by roll-call. Teacher opens a book and asks the student to refer to a particular page and leads pupils in reading a story aloud. Teacher asks pupils the meaning of certain words and writes it down on the board herself. Teacher calls for pupils' attention and ask them to repeat the word aloud The reading exercise continues. The teacher reminds students to memorize the word. The teacher does not pause to correct their pronunciation. The teacher reminds the class that the next lesson would be dialogue reading  
End Lesson.

It was observed that the students recited the word sometimes without knowing the meaning of the word. In the choral recitation the weaker students go unnoticed by the teacher. The teachers revealed that interrupting too often to correct mistakes would in turn de-motivate the students and lessen their enthusiasm for learning. Hence they intervened occasionally to check for the students' understanding and to correct for pronunciation. Apart from these the teachers in all the three schools conducted activities such as communicative drills like asking students to recite a dialogue, talk about the pictures given to them and to identify what is in the picture. Teachers in school A expected their students to complete their work but allowed them to continue the work the following day if the students could not complete it. Though all the teachers emphasized more on communications skills some teachers' expectations were just confined to general proficiency of the language while very few expected students to achieve mastery over a certain skill.

#### **4.14.2 Teachers' decision to use Regional Language**

Teachers' decisions were influenced by their pedagogical beliefs and values. Most of the teachers used Tamil to explain most of the concepts. Dual Language is accepted and



justified by the teachers, principals and even parents accept the use of mother tongue to explain English. Parents and principals have no complaints with teachers using DL. However on the reverse side the students never make an attempt to use English and teachers use DL too often. Students' attendance is problematic in some schools and they usually do not use dictionaries in the class. Therefore the teachers resort to using Tamil to explain words and concepts.

Classroom observation also revealed that the teacher resorted to the use of DL to explain the meaning of the words. The policy documents do not specify anything about the usage of mother tongue to explain in class. However the classroom observations revealed that it is the teachers teaching primary classes 1 to 4 who resorted to using mother tongue more often while the upper primary classes used it sparingly though all of them resorted to it at some point of time in their instruction.

Evidence of using mother tongue (Tamil) is found in the following teacher's class:

Teacher: What is the meaning of the word "queue"?

Student: Is it stand teacher?

Teacher: No it is line up. (Teacher uses Tamil to explain the word). Remember this and it will be easier for you to recall later.

The teacher, Mary, justifies the usage of DL as follows:

Dual Language instruction comes in at every point of instruction. I believe it helps student to understand and remember the word. This coerces me to continue using the word. Interestingly all the students in my class speak Tamil, there are none who are Telegu, Malayali or other students whose mother tongue is different. It is necessary to use DL since the students are very weak and it would be pointless to speak English. The principals are aware of this and they are okay with it. Even the parents never question us over the usage of DL. (TM line 36-42).

Students' answers also corroborated the teachers' response for the need to use dual language to facilitate their understanding. Again the complexity of change is accentuated. Change is not linear, it is complex and dynamic. Lack of English vocabulary among students revealed that teachers had to use concurrent translation of the English word or have to discuss

and explain the meaning of the words (e.g., Jackson & Bilton, 1994; Wellington & Osborne, 2001) to the learners. This point is further underscored by Eldridge (1996) who posits that code-switching was purposeful, and related to pedagogical goals. The use of mother tongue seems to serve a number of functions such as: an opportunity for pupils to clarify the meaning of what the teacher has said; to discuss the required task, and a social function, in terms of creating a sense of group cohesion or reducing student anxiety. While all the teachers seemed to be in favor of using mother tongue to explain there was no common consensus on how often it should be used in the classroom. Some teachers expressed their choice of using dual language as absolutely necessary while the other teachers said that they can use it once in a while. However all the classes observed did not use the dictionary though the objective was to promote learner autonomy. The implementation or the lack of it is related to how the individuals saw their roles in the whole process. The teachers said that the students are poor and cannot afford to buy dictionaries.

As Cook (1991), argued:

The teacher's language is of particular importance to language teaching...using the first language for classroom management and instructions deprived genuine examples of language use and set a tone for the class that influence much that happens in the second language use and set a tone for the class that influence much that happens in the second language activities...the whole context provides language...includes the patterns of interactions between teacher and the class and between the students in the class down to the actual gestures used. The input that the students are getting is far more than just the sentences they encounter. (p. 99).

One teacher, Sagayam, shares her views on the use of using mother tongue to achieve the objective as follows: "I use dual language instruction mainly to "promote involvement" and to "encourage active student participation in class". It is a conscious decision and I find it very effective. Their receptivity to it also prompts me to continue using it. But sometimes they just

wait for me to translate rather than making an attempt to guess the meaning of the word. I just use my own judgment to decide how often I should use”. (TS line 53-61).

The majority of teachers used DL as they felt it facilitated their understanding of the lesson and ensured their active engagement in the task. The teachers are of the opinion that the training is insufficient to provide them with updated knowledge that the profession demands. They need more time for planning and coordination which clearly indicates that there is a need for clear and consistent policies and dissemination of information. Apart from all these the expectations from parents and principals also made an impact in their teaching.

Teachers had to consider the situational demands in their teaching like the learners’ context and learner’s background knowledge. The policy makers stressed that competencies meant to be learnt from textbooks are presented in the form of learning cards and inputs are given to aid mastery. However the teachers disagree with that and insist that the textbook system was better. While some aspects of the new system were considered good, especially the weak students were able to speak few sentences in English, most of the teachers expressed their dissatisfaction over the new system. Changes were perceived as too sudden and abrupt.

Teacher Kanaga comments on this as follows: “Though the system was introduced in stages it is still considered sudden and abrupt as there was not enough time for us to conceive and understand it totally. The time frame of the implementation also varied from one school to another. Some teachers want mastery of the particular component whereas other teachers expect students to learn only basic communication”. (TK line 66-78).

Teacher Roselyn commented on the pair work in her class: “I do give attention to the good students once in a while by letting the student to lead the class in choral recitation and place a star on his or head to indicate his or her achievement. I also allow students to learn from their peers by asking them to form groups to work together. The good students help the weaker ones but this takes place only when I monitor them”. (TR line 70-76).

Some teachers lauded the new policy since they observed positive changes with students being able to understand basic commands in English and to speak a few sentences in English. These students were previously too weak and could not speak English. However the teachers are quick to add that this method is suitable only for the weak students who have ‘no exposure’ to English and totally rely on the school syllabus. The good students’ progress is stunted unless they can do their own activities in class which seldom takes place. Though the syllabus has blanks in the ladder whereby the teachers could use their own materials to fill in, classroom observations and interviews with the teachers did reveal that the majority of the teachers did not bring any materials to fill the gap in the ladder and most of the time students were allowed to do their own activities in class. The teachers cited lack of time as well as the big number of students in the class for their inability to conduct these kinds of activities.

Teacher Mary expresses her views on this as follows:

Yes there are blank slots in the ladder for us to fill in the gap. I could bring my own materials to class to keep my students engaged. But in reality this is not possible as it is the time most of the students use to seek clarifications. There is never a time that I am free to do extra materials. So although there is scope to be creative and flexible sometimes there are practical constraints on our part which I am sure the policy makers overlooked. In my class I bring extra materials but it is very limited maybe once in a while. (TM line 43-51).

#### **4.15 Need for ESL Professional Development**

Classroom observations after the listening activities also revealed that all the teachers conducted the listening activity without any pre-listening, while-listening or post-listening activities. Students listened to the words and just repeated the words they listened to. Sometimes the teacher would pause to clarify the meaning of the word. The CDs are repeatedly played for the students to comprehend and remember the words. However the

pacing of the instruction is rather slow and repetition is the norm in most of the classrooms. There are no activities conducted to test their comprehension and students repeat the words in chorus to remember the vocabulary. Students are not questioned individually to test their vocabulary comprehension and with no post listening activity the objectives of the listening activity remains vague except that they learn pronunciation.

Teachers faced pressure as parents' and principals' expectations on teachers were very high. Most of the parents being uneducated themselves expected the teachers to take control of their children's education and did not understand many of the things that teachers had to handle in their classrooms. These also had an impact on teachers in planning and delivering their lessons. Having to teach students with poor command of English most of the teachers also resorted to dual language teaching in order to cope with the demands placed on them.

Teachers expressed their appreciation to their school principals who they felt are supportive of the change but they also added that principals' expectations on them are very high. Though the principals knew that teachers go through a phase to adapt to the new changes they still expected teachers to perform well. However they were supportive of teachers' decisions in planning and delivering the lessons and sometimes would walk into their classes to talk to the students. With the parents, however, they faced a different expectation. Being uneducated themselves the parents expected teachers to educate their children.

Apart from the abovementioned factors, the teaching hours allocated for English class, the interest of the class and the classroom organization also posed constraints in planning and teaching of the curriculum. In all the three schools the teaching hours for the English class varied and therefore the time available for the lesson differed from one school to the other. In school A there were only 2 English teachers and the students had English classes only once a week for 3 hours. In school B students had English lessons 3 days a week and each class lasted 2 hours. In school C students had English lessons for 3 days, half a day each. English was conducted in the morning sessions on certain days and in the afternoon on other days. So the

students in all the three schools had different teaching hours and the time available to learn English also varied from one school to another.

The changes in the teaching methodology also highlight the need for professional development. The situational demands of the teacher also require them to come together with the other teachers to share ideas, to observe another teacher teaching, to learn new strategies and to make plans for improving teaching and learning. However as one teacher observes “there is absolutely no time for that kind of interaction to take place”. Teachers have to handle large classes and this has an impact on the planning and the teaching of the curriculum.

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) suggested that teachers’ ability to successfully adapt their practices depend upon “participation in a professional community that discusses new teaching materials and strategies and that supports the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice” (p. 15). In this case the role of the school in the process of ensuring successful reform cannot be undermined. Other than the familiarity of change the demands like the changes in teaching and the role of the teachers as a result of the policy changes also affected teachers’ planning and the implementation of the curriculum. One teacher, Selvi, shares her views on planning the lesson as follows: “I have to decide on the kind of instructions to be given based on the students’ understanding. All the skills are integrated and encompassed in the curriculum and I have to make a choice on the aspects of instruction to be targeted. Pacing of the lesson is another problem I face. Sometimes I have to force the students to learn”. (TSel line 21-29).

Her answers are corroborated in the classroom observation whereby the students did wait for the teacher to tell them what to do next rather than continuing on the next task. The following example illustrates this point:

Teacher Selvi: Have you finished the Ship Cards?

Student: Yes teacher. I have finished it long time back. (The student was sitting down doing nothing).

Teacher Selvi: Then please proceed to the next level and don't waste time talking to your friend. I will come back to you after some time.

Student: Okay.

The number of students in each class is very high which makes it difficult for the teacher to pay attention to all students in class. Says teacher Sharmila:

There are 82 students in my school and they are divided into two groups. So each class had 41 students and the students from standard 1 to standard 4 are all in the same class. The classroom is not very big and sometimes we could hear what is going on in the next class. I prefer small classes so that the teacher can really pay attention to the children and small classes are appropriate for language learning. (TSh line 21-34).

Her views are similar to that of another teacher (Selvi) who also shares her opinion on the number of students in her class which makes multi-grade classes difficult to teach:

There are a total of 132 students in my school and they are divided into three classes. The class rooms in my school are big and we do have a bigger compound. Since the nature of the activity requires group work the class is always noisy. The system could be more effective if there are few students in the class and if it is not reverted back in standard 5. (TSel line 30-41).

Interviews with the other teachers also revealed that the training and workshops were mostly conducted to address the changes in the policy and to equip them with the latest updates rather than to inform them about the advances in the knowledge base. They seldom get that opportunity to attend seminars. This reiterates the importance of professional development for teachers. A professional learning community has the greatest influence on teachers' practices and expectations (McLaughlin, 2005), and professional development programs are a natural place for teachers to learn about State policies. Some of the teachers interviewed believed that the professional practice they received is sufficient for them to carry out the curriculum policy

changes. These teachers resorted to practices they were familiar with and they did not feel that their own pedagogical practices required attention.

Teacher Mary expresses her view on the professional development she received as follows:

We do receive training from time to time on how the new policies should be implemented in the classrooms. I feel that the training we receive is adequate and we are equipped with the knowledge on how to handle the policy changes. However the training that we receive does not equip us with handling multilevel classes. We do that based on our own experience and through trial and error. (TM line 52-57).

The teachers also expressed their concern that the professional development or the training received is only for a short duration and sometimes not applicable in a class of multi-grade level. Teacher Kanaga expresses her views thus:

The training we receive sometimes is just for a day which is 8 hours or sometimes it is for 5 days. However the next subsequent training could be conducted with an entirely new objective. We pick up various strategies and methodologies but sometimes when we come back we only implement what we think is the right methodology or the ones we are used to. We are afraid to try a new pedagogy for the fear of failure or feel that is not appropriate for the context. (TK line 79-84).

Classroom observations also unearthed the fact that teachers should have enough time to reflect on their practices which is not possible due to the situational constraints they face. Therefore there is hardly any time for creativity and innovation. This brings the important factor well studied in relation to teacher change which is teachers' level of self-efficacy, a concept first outlined by Bandura (1995). Bandura defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's



capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (p. 2).

The training was conducted in a cascading model and therefore some of the teachers were unclear about the objectives. Moreover the teachers could not implement what they learnt in the training as the realities of the classroom were very different. To enhance resource support a team of 100 members, ten in each zone/block, were trained sufficiently in the ABL methodology (teacher instruction) who in turn trained all the classroom teachers handling classes I to III and other teachers also who are handling classes VI to VIII (PM line 3-6).

One teacher, Sharmila, notes on the training they are given as follows: The key element in the training is that teachers and supervisors are given training to fully equip them with all aspects of change including the materials, the pedagogy, and the assessment and so on. This group becomes the core group who in turn give training to the other teachers. (TSh line 35-38).

However this cascading model of training did not benefit the teachers as one teacher notes as follows:

We are given training once in a month and the trainings are usually conducted around the schools nearby. The training is conducted either for 1 day or for few days lasting for 8 hours a day. The realities are far different from the actual training that we receive. So we are not familiar with certain things and quite unsure of how to go about it. At times we seek assistance from the school principal. There is no time for discussion with the other teachers over professional matters. Even among the school we do have time to compare notes and talk to the other teachers about our classroom practices. (TS line 62-71).

#### **4.15.1 Need for Structure and Support**

The in-service training provided was not insufficient and did not address the actual problems teachers faced. Regardless of teachers' background and qualifications, professional development on curriculum or teaching methodologies, teacher training and teacher collaboration permits time for teachers to reflect on their own practices. McNeil (2001) posits that learning is a sequential activity and teachers are vital to plan, facilitate and support the learning process. Teachers are sensitive to mood and to the social dimensions of learning, to the subtleties of giving feedback, to the uniqueness of individual learning styles and intelligence.

He posits that teaching is a complex activity affected by subject matter, time available, character of the teacher, disposition of learners, resources, and the ethos of the institution. Teachers engage learners in a variety of ways which are socially interactive. Interviews with teachers, however, revealed that they were ignorant about the role of teacher collaboration and were of the opinion that their own pedagogical practices did not require attention. Many of them were satisfied with their teaching methodologies. Some of the teachers were positive about teacher collaboration but cited lack of time.

One teacher, Kanaga, noted:

It is good to collaborate and share ideas on how to improve delivery and plan for the lesson. However it does not take place in our school as we are busy most of the time. Each teacher goes about their own work and there is hardly a common time we get together except for lunches and tea. Most of the teachers are engaged in personal conversations during this time rather than share ideas. (TK line 85-90).

Her ideas are reflected by another teacher, Sharmila, who also has the same view:

Most of the teachers in my school talk personal stories during their lunch and tea time. Most of the teachers are happy with their own teaching methodologies. Of course some of them are open to the idea of teacher collaboration but would prefer to conduct it

during school hours and that is not possible. I am open to the idea of teacher collaboration and willing to learn from the other teachers. (TSh line 39-46).

On the benefits of pooling resources through collaborative effort some teachers are skeptical and even feel it is a waste of time. One teacher, Roselyn, notes: “I am not sure if it will help me because I have been teaching for many years and I am very set with my ways. I think it will be a waste of time listening to the other teachers. If it means more paper work then I am opposed to it. We have enough issues to deal with.” (TR line 77-81).

Those teachers who agreed to it as beneficial cited lack of time and support and assistance from the school. Teacher Annam shares her views thus:

Time is our premium. I think it could be useful to learn how to improve delivery and learn from each other but time is our constraint. We do not want to stay back after school hours and it will be beneficial if it is conducted within the school hours. Currently collaborative culture is not a practice. We also need encouragement and support from the principal to cultivate this practice . . . On their own I think the teachers will not make an effort as it is a burden to them. Without principal support and initiative I see that this culture is difficult to be practiced . . . (TA line 47-57).

#### **4.15.2 Teachers’ Lives and their Work**

The next part of the discussion highlights the impact of teachers’ lives and their work which reflects their beliefs and values along the change process. The classroom events are the representation of the lived experiences of the teacher and their lives and their work should not be ignored when planning for a change. Their account on their lives and work provides an insight into the impact of change in their lives. Most often when policies change teachers will have to relearn new skills and therefore it is important for policy makers to examine the consequences of the mandated changes on those responsible for implementation. Teachers

should be given adequate opportunities for learning to be able to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives. Interviews with teachers revealed that they had to juggle between their personal and professional lives and though they wanted to advance their career they had their own constraints and the personal domain of the teacher is often reflected in what is carried out in the classrooms. One teacher, Roselyn, comments on the impact of change in her life and the lack of control on certain issues beyond the teachers as follows:

Although I have been teaching for more than 18 years the new changes meant that I had to relearn everything. This included many aspects like how to use the materials in the classroom as the materials were totally different. The experienced teachers on the other hand tend to compare the merits and demerits of the system. The majority of the teachers in my school are experienced teachers who are set in their ways. (TR line 82-95).

Her views are similar to other teachers' views and it is evident in the terms they express like 'difficult', 'not easy' and 'not useful'. Teacher Mary commented on the new learning experience thus:

The teachers felt like novices once again because we had to start all over again. This change is considered drastic although we had one year time to adapt to the change. First we had to relearn the use of materials and moreover we had to teach multi-grade classes. It is sometimes difficult and confusing. Now I feel that I am 'very much in the process of learning to teach' which is weird after having so many years of teaching experience. (TM line 58-65).

Another teacher, Selvi, comments on the use of the resources and teaching learning materials which again reflects that teachers had no control over the changes and they have to follow the changes as directed.

The materials are developed by the State and we just follow syllabus in accordance with the ladder system. Not all the teachers were involved in the planning of the syllabus. With the textbook system we could use related materials but with this system we just follow the ladder. Of course there are certain blank spots in the ladder in which the teachers can use their own materials . . . different students reach the blank spot of the ladder at different times and it is difficult to use new materials. Sometimes I am not sure if I should follow the curriculum or address their needs. (TSel line 42-50).

One teacher, Niranjana, commented on the workload and the impact it had on their lives which hinders them from taking up any formalized study to further their professional development.

Although there is no exam and therefore no marking, teaching a class of 40 students with mixed ability and a multi-grade class leaves us with no time for other activities . . . moreover I am teaching all the subjects and that is even more difficult. Parents also expect us to play a significant role and cannot accept the policy's independent learning concept. As for documentation work, yes, we do have to write our lesson plans with the goals stated. So paper work takes up time. When we go back we have to take care of our families that leave us with no time for professional development. (TN line 25-36).

Most of the time traditionally teachers teach in their allocated classrooms and they are often isolated from each other. When they get together there is hardly any interaction on professional matters and teachers lamented on the lack of a formal platform for sharing their

views and ideas. However the teachers themselves did not take any initiative for sharing of ideas though some of them agreed that they have to be in charge of their own development. If teachers are, as Clarke (1995) believes, to be active, knowledgeable, and ready to learn rather than passive, deficient and resistant, it logically follows that teachers can and should be responsible at least in part for their own learning.

In school effectiveness studies, a number of authors (Freiberg, 1999; Ghaith, 2003; Purkey & Smith, 1983) reported on the important role played by what has been called a positive school ethos or school climate in fostering pupils' achievement, self-concept and motivation. In the sample schools instructional time which is considered the most valuable resource in school was wasted as teachers did not make use of the activities conducted wisely. Listening activities did not have any follow-up by the teachers and students engaged in listening activities with no purpose to it. Instructional time varied from schools within the same district and the schools did not have any other resources. Most of the teachers were also concerned with their salaries and promotion and with no prospect for promotion teachers were not motivated to do further. In many societies, the teaching profession has suffered during the last decades from a steady erosion in social status, and often from a decline in teacher salaries compared with other professions (Mehrotra & Buckland, 1998).

There was a general agreement among the teachers regarding the need for professional development. Most of the teachers interviewed expressed their desire to undertake some formalized study for their career advancement but cited financial constraints, their priority for personal needs and their own difficulty in juggling between work and personal life. As Goodson (1992) has argued, from teachers' point of view, "it would seem that professional practices are embedded in wider life concerns. We need to listen closely to their views on the relationship between 'school life' and 'whole life' for in that dialectic crucial tales about careers and commitments will be told" (p. 16).

As one teacher, Sharmila, says: Although I am aware that I should be a lifelong learner considering that I am a teacher by profession, my work demands seldom allows me to continue further studies. Culturally too, after work when I go back home I am expected to take care of my parents and family and therefore I am only able to handle the workload in school. (TSha line 39-43).

One teacher, Sagayam, shared her story on how she deals with balancing work and family:

I try to finish all my work in the school as much as possible and only bring back work when necessary. Otherwise it could give room for conflicts in the family when there is not enough time spent with the family members. So I try to find a balance. That is why whenever a new innovation takes place that means additional stress because we have to probably attend training and relearn which adds to stress. (TS line 72-77).

#### **4.15.3 Need for Teacher Collaboration**

While all the three schools did not have an existing culture of teacher collaboration some teachers see it as a constraint and some teachers view it as an opportunity. While the teachers who perceive it as a constraint note that sharing of ideas does not work and think that it is not a critical component in their teaching lives. They believe teamwork is not possible to take place as they prefer to work in isolation. Some teachers do agree that it could be a ground for sharing ideas and instructional issues but perceive that the initiative should come from the school rather than from them. These teachers realize time as a constraint and are unwilling to stay back after work or even discuss ideas during lunch. Also they perceive that teacher collaboration must take place in a formal setting and that it could be a platform to share ideas on teaching cross curriculum and multi-grade teaching. Teachers' work is grounded in the classroom. The classroom setting provides both a structural frame and a cultural context for teaching (Goodlad, 1984; Hargreaves 1992; Jackson, 1968; Lieberman, 1986; Lortie, 1973,

1975; Rosenholtz, 1989). However the majority of the teachers are yet to realize the potential benefits of teacher collaboration. Opportunities for teacher learning can occur both in and out of the classroom in a variety of ways (Fullan, 1987; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Rosenholtz, 1989). The teachers in all the three schools also did not realize that teacher learning could take place in an informal setting as they associated teacher collaboration as being similar to the training they receive regularly. As Sarason (1982) noted, teachers working in isolation from one another do not routinely interact about their work and thus lack a shared language of their craft.

The principals of all the three schools were positive about promoting teacher collaboration but were apprehensive about the administrative support they would receive. However they noted that it could be a possible direction for the future and teacher collaboration could take place if the teachers are willing to find their own time. While the teachers looked to the school for the right support and assistance the principals on the other hand expected the teachers to take the initiative to realize the benefits of teacher collaboration.

Benefits of teacher collaboration are manifold. Little (1982) found that the more effective schools could be differentiated from less effective schools by the degree of teacher collegiality, or collaboration they practiced. She observed that collegiality is the existence of four specific behaviors. First teachers talk frequently, continuously, and concretely about the practice of teaching. Second, they observe others' teaching frequently and offer constructive feedback and critiques. Third, they work together to plan, design, evaluate, and prepare instructional materials and curriculum. Finally, they teach each other about the practice of teaching. As Cook and Friend (1991) have noted, collaboration appears to be the unifying theme that will characterize many of the new developments in the successful school of the 1990s.

To sum up, the teachers in all the three schools were ignorant about the role of teacher collaboration and they found 'time' as the major hindrance for the lack of collaboration. Many of them did not see the benefits of teacher collaboration and work individually. The principals



on their part did not promote teacher collaboration. Collaboration takes place only when there is a shared goal and these teachers did not have a common goal. However the teachers noted that it could be beneficial if they could collaborate for ideas. The principals should prepare teachers for collaborative approaches.

#### **4.16 Personal Concerns of the Teachers**

Many teachers when interviewed expressed that their personal needs took precedence before they could take up professional development. Also the teachers had different orientations to change and some did not feel the ‘urgency’ to learn whenever a new innovation took place because according to them it changes ‘frequently’. Some teachers also expressed their concern that adequate training for teaching multi-grade classes is not being addressed. Teachers need to be equipped with a range of teaching strategies at their disposal (Little, 2001).

The interviews revealed that the teachers were aware of their personal needs. Some teachers had financial constraints and that hindered professional development. Most of the teachers were aware of striking a balance between their personal and professional lives. Understanding a teacher’s life is more important for the consequences of the educational agenda they embark upon. The teachers also require new skills to make changes happen and sometimes the experienced teachers are reluctant to acquire new skills. These are some of the issues Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) use to show that the work of the teacher is more complex. Many factors influence the professional development program. This will include the stage that teachers are at in their career, their qualifications, and the existing knowledge and skills that the participant may have (O’Brien, 2003, p. 8). Teachers’ lives and work have a profound influence on the change process. The view of the teacher as a person has crucial implications for our understandings of change, professional development, and working relationships between teachers and their colleagues (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 25). One of their personal concerns pertained to the lack of ownership with the materials devised. Teachers opined that

their views and inputs should be given utmost priority and the contents should be adapted to the local context of the school.

#### **4.16.1 Lack of Ownership**

The materials were devised by the State and teachers do not have a say in the curriculum. Many of the teachers interviewed stated that they felt a lack of ownership as they did not participate in the curriculum change or the policy process. They viewed the change as top-down since their opinions were not taken into consideration. One teacher, Sharmila, expresses her views as follows:

All the materials were devised by the State and not all teachers participate in the policy process. The change is top-down and most of the teachers don't agree with certain aspects in the syllabus and the grouping of all students in the same class. I am confused about the change myself and many of my friends teaching here also share similar sentiments regarding the change. There are no clear specifications on the outcome and I implement it the way I understand. (TSh line 44-52).

Her views are shared by another teacher, Annam, who asserts that: Any change has pros and cons to it. However teachers are the most affected by it as they have to understand it themselves before they implement it in the classroom. In this case I am confused about the guidelines and the outcome as it is very sketchy. I cannot understand the rationale of putting all the students in one class with different grades as it confuses the students and it is also difficult for the teacher teaching the particular grade. (TA line 58-63).

This had a significant impact on their practice as teachers deemed some of the materials as “too easy” or “too difficult” and the progression of the syllabus was not in tandem with the ladder chart given. Teachers also expressed their views on the inadequate grasp of the content to be taught, and the lack of professional induction. They were quick to point out that they still

had to submit their weekly lesson plans for scrutiny although the current system “does not require” a lesson plan since each student can work on his or her own pace. The principals on the other hand said they were “underpowered” in relation to the post they were holding. They received directives from the higher officials and therefore even the principals felt that lack of ownership is an issue to be dealt with.

The changes in the curriculum are top-down results and students do not get enough opportunities to express themselves in class. Says teacher Niranjana, “We are restricted as some of the materials require students to answer in sentences. This limits their feedback and the teachers faced with time constraint have to move on to the next group”. It is difficult to encourage ‘dialogue’ given the current situation.

#### **4.16.2 Lack of Coherence**

There are no clear guidelines on what is to be achieved by the teachers and guidelines on how the teachers could carry out the activities except for terms like ‘group work’ ‘joyful learning’ and ‘independent learning’. A specific target to be achieved is not stated in the policy document and therefore with no specific outcomes to be achieved within a certain time frame each class proceeds with its own pace and the coverage of syllabus varies from one school to another. The following interview excerpts with Teacher Kanaga reveal the rationale behind the response to classroom events and situations:

I usually use pictures a lot since my students can easily relate to it. If I find weak students in my class I will usually choose a clever student and a weak student to do pair work. The rationale is that the clever student will help the weak student and benefit the discussion. Of course sometimes the clever student is unwilling to help the weak student. Sometimes it is only the good students who often come to me for explanation. For this purpose I often pick the weak student to answer just to check his understanding

and in the process the clever student may not get attention as often as they would like to. (TK line 91-101).

Another teacher, Mary, expresses her views on how she reacts to certain events in her class: In my class I am more flexible with the flow of the lesson. Although the students are expected to follow the ladder I will allow them to skip and do a coloring activity or a puzzle just to break the monotony of the class. Switching from one task to another is still okay with me as long they learn something useful. (TM line 66-70).

Observations revealed that teachers in all the three schools used the same method such as drilling, choral recitation and practice over and over again. It is important for teachers to use multiple strategies as the students will benefit from some of the strategies that best suits their learning style. A similar view is expressed by Faltis and Hudelson (1998), that the more linguistically and culturally diverse the students are in the school community the greater the variety of teaching and learning strategy should be, with multiple opportunities to learn from peers as well as the teacher and other adult staff (p. 66). This again highlights the challenges that teachers face and the need for subject matter specialization. Each teacher viewed her practice as best considering their own context and that brings to the challenges of defining good practice which again underscores the complexity of change. Even the experienced teachers felt like novices since they had to re-learn the system and had to teach something new they are not comfortable with. Some did not believe in the new system and therefore did not totally comply with the demands of the new policy.

#### **4.17 Changes in ESL Assessment**

Though the study does not focus directly on the assessment it is discussed in relation to the context of classroom practice and how the changes in assessment had impacted classroom practice in various ways. The assessment was done by informal means. No formal exams are conducted and the assessment is carried out informally in class as per the ladder indicated.

Therefore each pupil does her assessment according to the progress and their progress is monitored by an achievement chart which indicates the position and the progress of each child. This reflects the policy of no-detention and the student can proceed to the next standard or class regardless of the assessment marks obtained.

One teacher, Sagayam, shares her views on this assessment system thus: Previously we had year-end exams and students will sit for the exam. If they pass they proceed to the next standard for example from standard 1 to standard 2. But under the current system they just do the achievement test to test their own progress and the student can still proceed to standard 2 but can continue doing the syllabus for standard 1. All this does not make sense because when they reach standard 5 they revert back to the textbook system. There is no way to monitor them. So we prefer the earlier system. (TS line 78-89).

With the case in this system the teachers felt that even though the students' performance was monitored the data obtained from the evaluation could not be used to adjust their instructional methods. The teachers continued teaching the way they did and though they did give prompt and correct feedback they still felt it insufficient and it did not suit their purposes. The no detention policy as much as it did boost students' self-confidence has also in a way led to students' poor performance since they knew they can still proceed to the next level regardless of their performance. Again there were divergent views on assessment with some teachers who expressed positive views about the no detention policy while others felt formal exams should be conducted to assess student's performance and they should be graded accordingly.

With the current system although the formative assessment is structured within the syllabus with the individual attainment card and the test there is no scope for formal feedback. Corrections are carried out but there is no recording of the grades by the individual teachers and teachers feel that this kind of assessment renders "no result". Asks one teacher, "what is the point of this assessment? Previously students had paper 1 and paper 2 for English and the

private students do have that but our students have no exams which is not positive in my opinion.”

#### **4.17.1 Social Conditions Impacting ESL Classroom Practice**

The classroom environment is not conducive for the teachers to carry out their lessons. One school is so small that the classrooms are used to serve lunch, after which the classes resume for the afternoon session. The materials are kept in boxes or trays and students’ work is displayed on a string which is tied across the classrooms. In all the schools there is one common room where there is a television and CD player set which students use for the listening session. Again all the schools do not provide them with microphones and therefore while some students listen to the CDs other students talk to each other making it difficult for the teacher to conduct the lesson. The teacher admitted that a lot of time is wasted trying to keep the students quiet before teaching can resume.

One teacher, Kanaga, shares her view on what causes the slow progress thus:

There are 34 students in my class and the students are required to sit on the floor. But I feel 34 is a large number for a language class based on activity learning. Twenty students in a class will be the ideal number. There is no homework and no test and therefore the progress is slow. Most of my students come from rural background and their parents are not able to read or write. So the classroom is the only place for them to learn. Some groups are big and some groups are small and I feel the system is good only for primary children who are beginners. When they come to the next level i.e. standard 5 ABL is no longer an ideal system. (TK 102-113).

Teachers are not trained to teach multi-grade classes. The teachers are given training based on the guidelines of the NCERT which advocates a ‘split up’ model in which 6-8 days training is provided and 2 days of training consists of actual class observation so that the

teachers could emulate those methodologies in their classrooms. The following interview excerpt from Teacher Selvi reveals some views and beliefs on the training received by them.

We are given training and it is useful to some extent but there are loopholes in the training given. What we learn cannot be always implemented in our classes. The students are of multiple intelligences and what seemed appropriate in the training is sometimes not applicable in the classroom. The realities of the classroom are far from the ideal setting. However there is a lack of coordination among us as each teacher implements the curriculum according to their own beliefs. For example I believe in choral recitation whereas my friend could be approaching from a totally different view. (TSel line 51-63).

#### **4.17.2 Mismatch Between ESL Policy Objectives and Classroom Practice**

The policy basically aimed to achieve universal access and enrolment. Interviews with teachers revealed that this aim was achieved to a certain extent. However they expressed doubts on the quality of the education received given the vast disparity between the urban and rural schools and the differences among the schools even within the particular state.

Secondly the ABL policy promoted student centered learning. The idea of group work is to promote mutual learning and peer- learning. However interviews with the teachers as well as students, and classroom observations, revealed that students work on their own and sometimes do not engage in peer learning. The mutual learning that is expected to take place does not always materialize for different reasons. As one teacher, Saraswathy, pointed out, although the objective is to promote independent learning it is not possible most of the time since the students are young learners who always turn to the teacher for guidance and assistance.

The problem that I encounter in my class is that most of the time the students do not know how to pronounce a word and they don't have dictionaries with them. So I have to teach them the meaning of the word as well as pronunciation. The meaning of the

word has to be related in Tamil since it is the only way the students will be able to understand the word. (TSar line 22-26).

The students were expected to work in groups and the teacher was expected to play the facilitator role. However the teachers opined that this is inappropriate for young learners who have always relied on the teacher for their learning. Mutual learning and peer learning best happens with adult learners who are independent and know how to make use of the time wisely. Focus group interviews with students on how they learn in a group elicited different responses from different groups of students with young learners always wanting the presence of the teacher. The following is an interview excerpt with one focus group on the aspect of mutual learning.

When the teacher asks us to learn on our own we usually learn for some time. Some of the group members talk to each other and play when our teacher is not paying attention to us. We like group work but some members do not like to help when our friends ask doubt. Therefore we wait for the teacher to attend to us and in the meantime we play or chat with friends. (Focus group 1: line 1-5).

Another group of standard 4 students said: We like group work when all the group members are serious with our work and we want to be the first group to complete. But sometimes we don't like to teach our friends and we always direct them to the teacher to clear their doubts. We like group work but only sometimes. (Focus group 4: line 5-8).

Another objective of improving the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning was only achieved partially. Most of the schools did not have enough resources and access materials which made the objective of essential learning a remote possibility. The schools lacked facilities and none of them had library facilities and all had very limited resource materials. Teachers were not subject matter experts and the training they received did not support the multi-grade classes they were expected to handle. There is no system to monitor the schools except for the visits by the officials to consolidate achievement



and to identify and help teachers and schools in their weak areas. The gaps in instructional time between schools within the same district meant the students' exposure to a particular subject varied from one school to another. With no real guidance from the policy authority there was disconnect between planning and implementation and the changes were marginal. Some of the teachers as well as principals misinterpreted this initial success and the peripheral changes as the good aspects of policy change. However most of them realized these changes are marginal against some of the better resourced schools. Thus the unequal resources in the schools were against the goal of equal educational opportunities advocated by the policy. The schools observed did not document the implementation process and thus there was no feedback for improvement.

#### **4.18 Challenges Faced in ESL policy implementation**

Adapting to the new ABL card system was unsettling for teachers as it challenged their long held beliefs about teaching and learning in the traditional classrooms. Though it is considered as a planned change in Fullan's (1991) terms it was multidimensional involving possible changes in goals, skills, philosophy or beliefs, and behavior but above all is change in practice. Only teachers who brought a sense of efficacy displayed positive signs of adapting to the changes. The others lamented that their tried and tested methods had to make way for the new method. In this case the change fundamentally altered the curriculum and instruction as the change encroached upon the materials and instruction. The extent of policy implementation is determined by the nature of the individual-level responses. This can be reflected in the individual teachers' practices in the classroom. Teachers' attitude and their teaching styles are correlated. As McLaguhlin and Marsh (1978) suggested, "even the best" educational practice is unlikely to fulfill its promise in the hands of the inadequately trained or unmotivated teachers" (p. 69). The literature on school change also focuses on the importance of learning and views change as proceeding over time, requiring constant problem solving, ongoing attention, and collaboration (Fullan & Miles, 1992).

#### **4.19 Summary**

In conclusion, teachers in all the three schools implemented the policy differently as the policy was seen as flexible and open. However the teachers believed that the flexibility given to them redefined their role as a teacher though many of the teachers were reluctant to change. The adoption of the policy varied by the individual teachers as teaching was still confined to the classrooms with each teacher confined to the domains of her classroom. Policy change affected the planning and the teaching of the curriculum which altered the teaching context. Implementation was uneven because of the conflicts between their beliefs and practices and teachers had divergent views on the effectiveness of the change. Teachers viewed the managing of the change process as top-down and changes were not approached as a team effort.. There were no shared decisions by the teachers although they tried to adopt the key concepts of the government. There was clearly a mismatch between the intentions of the policy makers and the teachers which led to uneven implementation in the resulting practice. In-service training provided was viewed as irrelevant and far from the real life classroom situations. As training is an indicator of the teaching quality, ineffective in-service training did not help teachers to improve themselves or to be familiar with the new methodology proposed. Teachers not being subject matter experts made their decisions influenced by their pedagogical beliefs and values considering their learners' background knowledge and their disposition to learning. Policy in their account was not seen as aiding the strategies adopted by the teacher due to the lack of proper training and there was a mismatch between the intended objectives to those realized in the classrooms. The assessment served no purpose and the feedback from the assessment was not being utilized for decision making.. The teachers opined that there were many loopholes in the system and were skeptical of positive changes in the long term though some of them said that there were instances of success.

### **Research question 3**

**In what ways does the context of the school affect ESL curriculum implementation in practice?**

#### **4.20 Introduction**

An analysis of data to answer research question 3, in what ways does the context of the school affect curriculum implementation in practice, revealed that some of the factors to be considered in policy implementation were ignored. Many factors affected the implementation of policy and the need to explore the schools' capacity for change was not considered before initiating change. The data revealed that the administrators' point of view in policy implementation was overlooked. The principals' role with regard to the impact on the school culture was overlooked and the context in which the changes took place was ignored by the policy makers. The data reveal the relationship between school culture and performance and highlights the complexity of changing a school culture.

As Cornbleth (2008) posits, the nature and extent of the impact varies, not only with the teachers' personal beliefs about diversity and their role as a teacher, but also with their perceptions of the community or school climate(s) of opinion, their subject and grade level, the mind of students in their classes, and their own knowledge and the resources available to them. In this context the instructional support, internal factors, the schools' working culture, governance of schools and the structure of the school were found to have a great influence in implementing the policy. The above factors identified by Cornbleth accounted for the diverse patterns of implementation in all the three schools.

Fullan (1991) argued that the circumstances of teaching ask a lot of teachers in terms of daily maintenance and student accountability, and give back little in the time needed for planning, constructive discussion, thinking and just plain reward and time for composure. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) used the concept of "culture" to refer to the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates, particularly in reference to how people

relate. Fullan (2006) posits that school wide factors shape and condition individual classroom success. Schools should make a good effort to personalize the change so that it can fit the context of the school. The themes that emerged are discussed in the following sections.

#### **4.21 The Context of ESL Change**

The interaction of various components in the institution affects the policy implementation variously. The context of operation varied from one school to the other. All the three schools visited were situated within the same district yet differed in terms of student population. The socio-economic environment of the school shapes the attitude of the teacher which has an impact on the educational effectiveness of the policy implemented. All the three schools had students from different backgrounds which resulted in the teachers' taking a different approach in their teaching. The Principal of school A talks about the socio-economic status of the students.

Most of the students from my school come from the surrounding rural areas and they are not exposed to any form of pre-school education. Some children come to school and after the mid-day meals go back home. (PA line 1-3).

The students who attend school B are slightly better off but also come from poor families. Says Principal of school B: Most of the students in my school are considered the 'urban poor'. Though our school is located in an urban area these kids are from poor families. They have attendance problems when they can't attend school due to family problems. (PB line 1-11).

School C has a different set of students slightly better than school A and school B in terms of their background. Principal of school C says: Our school is bigger and there are many students who attend this school being in the center of the town. Most of the students come from middle class families and some of them come from poor families. Given the Asian context and the culture of the school teachers do have a certain power and control and they

exercise their right in caning students who break rules. Parents also do not really interfere unless the punishment is taken to the extreme. (PC line 1-12)

Given the diverse background of the students, the culture of the schools were different and they also differed in terms of the facilities, the operationalization and the planning which varied from one school to another. Apart from that the external factors like access to learning materials, access to audio-visual resources, the class size, the teacher workload and the internal factors like teachers' working experience, their language teaching, the teaching conditions, their understanding of the syllabus, all had an impact in defining the context and the culture of the particular school. The opportunities and chances for policy implementation varied from one context to another which resulted in uneven implementation.

School A for example had very little chances of implementing the policy successfully because of the existing culture among the staff as well as the infrastructure facilities and lack of resources. As Brown (2000) posited, attitudes are shaped by social context. The observation around the school and the interaction between teachers and students as well as interviews with teachers revealed that certain social norms were strongly prevalent among the school staff which posed a hindrance to positive changes.

Teachers' orientation towards change was not positive and most of the teachers interviewed were happy the way they were teaching and were not interested in further professional development. As one teacher, Mary, explains, "As ladies we are expected to take care of family. It is difficult to travel after work to pursue our studies. Most of us feel this job is quite satisfying and we do not want to study further."

The principal of the school also did not take any initiative to motivate the teachers and the atmosphere of the school was not conducive to change. Classes were poorly equipped and the resources were inadequate. The teachers in school A had also conformed to group tendency and in their own words they were 'satisfied' with their job and did not want to enhance their skills.

Teachers in school B also faced similar constraints in terms of having to conform to the social norms and many teachers interviewed liked to take up further studies but did not do so in order to take care of their families.

Their schools were in a similar predicament like that of school A but the location of the school was in an urban place. However as one teacher, Kanaga, says, “Although we are in the urban center most of us do not take trouble to travel to libraries. Our school does not have any facilities for the students as well as teachers. If we had some facilities here perhaps the teachers would improve their skills.”

Teachers in school C were enthusiastic about many aspects of the policy and were keen to learn. The students were slightly better in their academic performance and the school had better infrastructure facilities. However motivated the teachers were, most of them cited lack of time, family commitments and other factors as keeping them away from taking up professional development. The principal of this school played an active role in motivating students to attend school. She attests that the motivation accorded to the students was a factor in lowering absenteeism. Though the school does not take any formal action against students absent from school the rate of absenteeism has declined. Says the principal of school C: “Before I became the principal lot of students were absent and unruly. After I took up this post most of them come to school every day. They even try to wear uniforms which was not the case before.”

However the school still lacked the capacity to absorb the change. The principal viewed this as something that should be addressed as the school has teachers who are committed given the right atmosphere and resources. She opined that the resources were limited and libraries would be helpful to students who come from poor socio-economic background.

Fullan (2006) posited that school wide factors shape and condition individual classroom success. Schools should make a good effort to personalize the change so that it can fit the context of the school. In all the 3 schools the opportunities and chances for policy implementation varied. Implementation context includes support from the school, from parents and community, availability of sufficient materials and resources, students’ reaction to change

as well as other factors. It is likely to affect its capacity for absorption of an innovation. The following aspects discussed differed from one school to another which had an impact in the implementation process.

#### **4.21.1 Opportunities for ESL Implementation**

School A was situated in a rural area and opportunities for implementation were limited given to the limited resources and materials available. Its own capacity to absorb and understand the innovation was limited due to the proficiency of teachers. Many of the teachers interviewed expressed their lack of expertise, while some teachers expected students to learn on their own initiative. Many teachers were content with their teaching methodologies and did not feel their lack of knowledge on pedagogy required attention or training. One teacher, Sharadha, shares her views on the background of her learners thus: “Most of the students in my school come from rural background and their parents are not educated. As far as parents are concerned if their children can speak a few sentences in English it is considered good enough. Most of them would never make it for tertiary education. As for the resources our school has limited resources”. (TShar line 1-11).

The teacher further adds on having to translate the English words to Tamil which she views as a disadvantage but she is obliged to do so as it is the ‘norm’ there and teachers are expected to do that to facilitate learners’ understanding. She adds:

These students are never exposed to English. Very often I have to explain first in Tamil and then in English. For example: When they go back home they don’t have the opportunity to practice these words. Therefore chances are that when they come for class the next day some or most of them might have forgotten the word and I have to repeat the procedure again. (TShar line 11-24).

The Principal of this school shared her views on how the opportunities and chances for implementation varied due to the location of the school and other factors. She opines: Apart from my administrative duty which includes school management, routine day-to-day administrative functioning and maintenance of school, I also have to attend the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA's) meetings and Village Education *Committees* (VEC's) at the local level. I also teach standard 5 students. The criterion to become a HM for the school is based on seniority and there is no special training for this post. There is no pre-service training before we take up this post. (PA line 14-27).

Classroom observations in all the three schools revealed teachers resorted to using "Tamil" extensively to translate as well as to teach vocabulary. Most of the time teachers gave instructions in Tamil language before the lesson commenced. Only simple instruction like "stand up", "quiet" were given in English. Learners' attitude and the social environment encouraged teachers to continue using mother tongue and the policy makers as well as the principals did not mind teachers using mother tongue to teach English. Apart from this most of the teachers were educated in Tamil medium schools and their proficiency in English was not good enough. These teachers did not provide the proper environment in their classes for students to practice English. As Cook (1991), contends:

Students' learn what they are taught...students who learn by listening methods turn out to be better at listening; students taught through the reading are better at reading. The best major source of language available to the learner is what they encounter in the classroom...their language input affects their language in broader terms. (p. 100).

Regional language interference in the classroom contravened with the concept of the communicative aspects of learning English whereby students mostly listened in Tamil and sometimes replied in the native language. There were very few instances for spontaneous use



of English language and this contradicted the concept of ‘joyful learning’ and ‘communicative learning’ stipulated in the policy.

Diverse school cultures also accounted for the variation in implementation. School A had the least opportunity for implementation in terms of instructional support, resources available, and the lack of proficiency among the teachers. School B also lacked in terms of resources available and the infrastructure. School C was slightly equipped though even this school lacked a library. The teachers in school C were experienced teachers. The surprising finding is that both the experienced as well as the novice teachers followed the same pedagogy and their experience served no purpose in this regard. The teachers were not trained in English and their experience rendered no use in teaching English.

#### **4.21.2 Instructional Support**

In all the 3 schools factors that facilitated instructional support like the role of the principal in facilitating change, teachers’ working experience, their understanding of the syllabus, gaps in instructional time among the different schools and the resources available had a considerable impact on implementation.

According to the school principals the role of HM’s has to be redefined completely which can have twofold advantages. All the principals interviewed lamented having to divide their time between instruction and administrative duties. All the principals interviewed also taught one class of English usually for the standard V children. By redefining their roles HM’s can have more time for school-based management which can be carried out effectively and they can enhance their relationship with teachers better as well as exercise their authority over teachers. They viewed that they could lend their support if their roles were clearly defined and their responsibilities confined to administrative work. The instructional time for English also varied from one school to another thus resulting in uneven implementation. The Principal acknowledged the fact that the instructional time for the English language varied from one school to another based on teacher availability and the materials available.

She expressed her views on the time allocation as follows: Principal school A: There is no standardization with regards to the instructional time for English. Each school follows their own time table and it is possible that one school will have more teaching time for English compared to another school. As for our school English is taught only once a week for 3 hours. There are 82 students and the class is divided into two. (line 28-32).

Her views are corroborated by teacher Sharmila who notes that, “the number of contact hours are equally important. In my opinion learning English just once a week is too little considering the fact these students are very weak in English. Of course students in urban areas get exposed and their contact hours are more compared to our school. (TSsha line 53-59).

The situation in the second school was slightly better compared to school A. However this school also faced similar predicament in terms of their students’ background and instructional time and other factors. The principal of school B says:

Our school although situated in an urban area the students who attend our school come from poor socio-economic status. I teach English and Mathematics apart from the administrative duty. As for the number of contact hours for English classes 3 days a week with each class lasting for 2 hours. There are only 32 students in our school. Our concern is lack of facilities for our students and I feel 6 hours of class is enough for English subject. (PB:line 12-23).

However her views regarding the instructional time is contradicted by the English teachers who feel that English should be in the time-table all 5 days in a week:

Although we teach 6 hours of English in our school I feel that they should learn English every day. It is very important since they do not learn English at home and with the current system we have no homework for the students. I try to get the group leaders to

teach but sometimes they do and sometimes they are not willing to take the lead. (TSha line 25-35).

Her views are corroborated by the student leader in the class who said that “*sometimes I teach my friend but sometimes I am just lazy and don’t want to lead the group*”. The situation in school C was also similar in certain aspects with regard to the number of students and instructional time but the teachers were exposed to training in this school and the infrastructure of the school was better compared to school A and school B. The Principal of this school opines on the factors that impede curriculum implementation as follows.

Principal school C: As far as my school is concerned the school has improved tremendously since I took over as the principal. I teach standard 5 and some upper primary classes. Apart from that I have meetings to attend and there are people from the Inspectorate who come for periodical inspection. As for the English classes we have 4 hours of English for 3 days a week.

Her views on providing support for teachers is considered vital and the following interview with the teacher affirms the fact that principal support is essential in achieving the objectives of the policy “The Principal always supports our decision as long as what we do in the classroom is in the interest of our students. The positive side is that the materials are readily available which is an advantage but the drawback was that it was not enough for all students to share.” (TS line 27-32).

All the teachers interviewed acknowledged the important part played by the principals and viewed principal support as one important factor in facilitating policy implementation. The principals on their part reiterated the importance of getting the involvement of all stakeholders in the formulation and subsequently the implementation of the policy. Policy implementation was better aided in school C with the support of the principal and the infrastructure facilities accorded to the school. The capacity for absorption of an innovation

varied from one school to another based on factors like the location of the school, the infrastructure, principal's support, the culture of the school and other factors.

In most of the schools the working experience the individual teachers had was not related to the pedagogy employed by the teachers in the classrooms. It was observed that even the most experienced teacher with 21 years of working experience employed the same instructional strategies such as “choral reading”, “recitation”, and “practice for review” just like the novice teachers. The training they received did not translate into practice. One teacher, Mary, who has experience in teaching for over 21 years says: “Our training is conducted in a cascading manner and therefore we do not learn much. Moreover training must be specific related to a particular subject so that we can specialize in that area. Our training is general and it is different from the realities of the classroom we teach.”

McLaughlin and Talbert (1993) suggested that teachers' ability to successfully adapt their practices depended upon “participation in a professional community that discusses new teaching materials and strategies and that supports the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice” (p. 15). Hence the role of the school in ensuring successful reform cannot be undermined.

Teachers interviewed in all the 3 schools also opined that their teaching conditions as well as the resources available were inadequate. For example, a teacher in school A, Annam relates the conditions of her classroom as follows: “My classroom is dark and the walls are dirty and the environment of the school is also not conducive. Our schools are run-down and sometimes students are not motivated to learn in this environment.”

As for the resources school C was better equipped with a television and CDs for the children. However the teachers just let the children watch with no input and it just served the purpose of keeping them awake. The teachers interviewed were unaware of what to do with the listening tapes other than letting the students just listen to them. Most of the teachers interviewed have never used any other materials except the ABL cards given to them.

Their understanding of the term “joyful learning” drew varied responses. One teacher said the students liked to watch CDs and that constituted “joyful learning”. Some cited group work, while others referred to the coloring activities and the placing of the star on the pupils’ head as an indication of achievement as “joyful learning”. The concept of “cooperative learning” which can be enjoyed by the students if carried out in the right manner were misinterpreted by the teachers. Their understanding of the term was diverse and the resulting implementation varied from one school to another.

Teachers have to make sense of the policy requirements and their differences in the above mentioned factors accounted for the different interpretations. The teachers expressed their resistance in the change as they believed that there is no structure to the lesson and the grouping of the students from standard 1 to standard 4 in the same class was ineffective. In their view the multi-grade system makes it difficult for the teachers to follow up and check on their progress. The teachers have to revert back and forth depending on the syllabus and monitoring the students’ progress was not effective. The teacher in school A, Niranjana, shares her views on the established culture of her school and why it is difficult to break away from it. She opines:

In a traditional culture in India the students do keep a distance from the teacher out of respect and I have to break that to get close to them. The opinion among parents and even among some teachers is that as long the students are able to speak English and understand English then the progress is considered satisfactory. Mastery of the language is something we seldom look into. (TN line 37-49).

The Principal of School C accounts for the variations in instructional time to the “lost school days”. According to her, The “lost school days” are those when we have holidays due to festivals, and also due to teachers’ not reporting to class due to sickness and so on. This also accounts for the variations in instructional time and there is no replacement for all these days.”

The other schools also faced similar problems and the teachers opined that there was no intensive involvement due to the discontinuity of the lessons. Moreover teachers also were dissatisfied that the students had to revert back to the textbook when they get to standard V. One teacher, Mary, comments on this as follows: “Many students do not manage to complete the syllabus since there is no pressure to complete and they could still proceed to the next standard. Therefore students in standard V are not “up to the level” and it is so difficult for me to teach them.”

#### **4.21.3 Access to ESL Materials**

In all the three schools interviews with teachers as well as school principals revealed a lack of resources and limited access to materials. The number of students in each class being 40 the resources materials had to be shared between the groups. As Niranjana, a teacher in school A observes: “Most of my students come from poor background and classroom is the only place they learn English. However the resources are limited and they have to share. There is no access to extra materials and this can be a hindrance.”

The situation was similar in the other two schools. Apart from the number of students in a class and lack of resources the teachers also complained of the workload. Teachers had administrative work besides teaching hours and the “lost days” are not replaced according to the interviews. This affects the learning time as the Principal of School C recounts: Sometimes teachers have to assist in administrative tasks and during that time students are left on their own. On other occasions teachers can be absent to work due to sickness or other personal reasons and again this affects the “class time” and there is no replacement for these “lost hours”. We don’t have another teacher to stand-in for these students.

All the three schools did not have sufficient facilities in the classroom to facilitate teaching and learning. There were no computer labs and other facilities like first-aid for the students, canteen for staff and students were not available. The classroom also served as a

dining hall during lunch break in one of the schools. All these factors also affected students' learning as the conditions were not conducive for learning.

#### **4.22 Working Culture in Schools**

The working culture among the 3 schools were similar in certain aspects like the interaction pattern among the academic staff, the lack of team work and collegiality and lack of decision making skills. The location of the schools and role of the principals in the governance of the school had an influence in the working culture of the staff. Principals who demonstrated strong leadership qualities and who seemed to be in control had better relationships with the staff and the students.

Classroom observations revealed that incompleteness of work sheets is quite a common occurrence among students. The students tend to abandon the task they are engaged in and sometimes resume work much later. It was also observed that it is the students' own initiative and interest that will help them to complete the task as not all teachers follow up with the previous days' work and the teachers attribute it to lack of time. Interviews conducted to determine if the teachers' teaching goals were achieved also revealed diverse answers from the teachers. Different teachers set different goals for their lessons. Most of the teachers emphasized the communicative aspect of the lesson and did not bother much about the accuracy. Though the intention of the change in policy was to get weaker students to grasp the basic aspects of communication most of the time the task is either half completed or sometimes skipped due to lack of supervision and sometimes because the classrooms are overcrowded and noisy. The teacher in school A, Niranjana, describes her predicament: "It is difficult to set a common objective for the whole class due to the nature of the group work each class follows. Moreover some students do not come to class regularly and this disrupts their work."

Her views are corroborated by a teacher, Sagayam, who says:

Our school is a rural school and therefore lacks many of the basic facilities that we find in a proper school. We basically impart what is stated in the curriculum. Our training is just for one or few days and even the experienced teachers teach the same curriculum in the tried and tested ways. (TSA line 50-60).

The culture of school B was quite similar to school A including the interaction patterns with students, staff and parents. One teachers shares her views on their interaction with students as follows Our school basically operates from a house converted into school therefore we have lot of restrictions. Most often the culture of this school is to put the clever students in the spotlight as a model student so that the other students will follow them. Even when there is an inspection the clever student's work is picked up by the teacher as a sample. I also let the clever student to lead the choral recitation while the weaker students are encouraged to form groups to learn from each other. (T Shan line 1-11).

Her views are shared by the school principal who describes her school culture as 'positive'. School Principal B opines: "I would say our culture is not so dynamic. I try not to be bureaucratic where possible and inculcate my teachers' ideas. There is no scope for extra-curricular activities in my school given the location and the space." (PB line 24-31).

Classroom observation revealed that teachers in this school were comfortable with their pedagogy and even those teachers with many years of teaching experience did not try any new methodology. The teachers believed in responding to the slow learners and therefore the pacing of the instruction was rather slow. The teacher occasionally let the good student lead the class in choral recitation; however when in groups the students were seen playing and sometimes the clever students were not willing to help the weaker ones.

Interviews with the teachers revealed that their knowledge of the syllabus was limited and they were reluctant to try new methodologies. However all the teachers acknowledged the need for training. The need for teamwork and collegiality were not viewed as urgent and the



teachers highlighted the teaching conditions which were not conducive as a reason for the difficulty in adopting the teacher-centered approach. It is important for teachers to use multiple strategies as the students will benefit from some of the strategies that best suits their learning style. A similar view is expressed by Faltis and Hudelson (1988) that the more linguistically and culturally diverse the students are in the school community the greater the variety of teaching and learning strategy should be, with multiple opportunities to learn from peers as well as the teacher and the other adult staff (p. 66). In this case only the teachers in school C were inclined to learn provided they are given the opportunity to do so. The Principal of school C encouraged teachers to be creative and assured them her full support.

Hollins (1996) argues that “schools are shaped by cultural practices and values and reflect the norms of the society for which they have been developed” (p. 31). In the case of the three schools the reforms did not materialize positively as the expectations among the staff were different. While the curriculum termed the learning as “joyous learning” and “learner-centered” the teachers’ interpretations were different. The culture of the schools promoted teacher-centered learning and the activity based learning was based on teachers’ assumptions and beliefs. Most of the teachers in the schools viewed letting students watch video as “joyous” as they described it as something students enjoy. Their priority was maintaining order in classroom and engaging students with something to do. Another culture among the teachers in terms of decision making related to their belief that directives should come from the principal, while the principals opined that teachers are given freedom to do what they like. As one teacher Sharada relates, “We don’t want to be seen as taking the lead. There is a principal in our school and directives should come from her. Otherwise it is perceived as a mark of disrespect to the authority.”

Their expectations were similar in terms of directives and most of the teachers viewed changes as something impermanent and therefore not to be taken seriously. Moreover the teachers strongly believed that activity-based learning should be assisted mostly by the teachers thus leaving no space for creativity on the student’s part. The teachers were

entrenched in their own culture and had difficulty accepting that the learning culture has changed.

#### **4.22.1 Lack of Teamwork and Collegiality**

Observations as well as interviews with the teachers revealed that there was lack of teamwork and collegiality among the staff in all the 3 schools. Again teachers cited lack of time and some teachers were not aware of teamwork or co-teaching and opined that it was a new concept to them. Says one teacher in school C Selvi: “If there is something important I refer to the principal. But none of us have meetings to discuss issues or do team work. That is a new concept to us. Informally sometimes we may discuss classroom issues. But we never had teamwork.”

Similar responses were expressed by the teachers in all the other schools. Teachers did not collaborate with others, neither did they have formal meetings to discuss issues regarding their classes. Most of them demonstrated lack of decision making skills as all the teachers in their own words “just wait for instructions from the principals”. Teachers in all the 3 schools merely complied with the changes and did not take effort to bring any new innovations in their classes. There were no instances where teachers accounted for the diversity of their learners. Classroom observations revealed that most of the teachers spend time to “discipline” their students which was the major factor in classroom management. This again contradicted with the principles of “joyful learning” whereby students were expected to learn in a communicative way and in groups. The teachers on the other hand expected students to be quiet as it indicated that they were good students. A noisy class was not conducive to study and seemed to be unruly in teachers’ opinion. These views are captured by Teacher Mary’s comments: “If the class is noisy the other students might be distracted. Moreover our classes are quite close and therefore I don’t allow them to be noisy. They can do their work quietly.”

The location of the schools and the role of the principal had an influence on the working culture of the staff. Among all the 3 schools, teachers in school C exhibited a dynamic

work culture compared to school A and school B. The principal of school C talks about the relationship between her and her school staff as follows: I make sure my teachers are teaching in the class and the students are not playing truant. I walk around not to intimidate but just to check things are in order. I also have a good relationship with my staff.

According to her ‘lack of supervision’ will lead to a laidback attitude among the staff. The principal maintains that she is friendly and helpful but firm at the same time. She points out that after she had assumed the post of the principal, student absenteeism among students had declined very much. Students follow rules and there are very few who break them.

#### **4.22.2 Schools as Learning Environments**

In this section the mission and the vision of the school, the atmosphere of the school and measures taken by the school to monitor, evaluate and improve are discussed. The governance of the school, and the schools’ learning environment shaped the context in which implementation took place.

The teachers in school C had 17 years of teaching experience and the school had better infrastructure facilities compared to school A and school B. The school had a bigger compound and the classrooms much bigger although they still had to share the resource materials. This school had their mission statement although many students could not say what their mission statement was. The Principal was active in advocating for positive resolutions. Though she admitted that teachers are not involved in the decision making she empowered them to make instructional decisions.

The principal talks about the vision for her school as follows:

I have taken over as the principal for the past three years and I have tried to bring positive changes. I try to build a positive culture by maintaining open communication with the staff. We have set norms established and our teachers are close knit. However

I do have constraints and much of my time is devoted to the school operational tasks.

(line 31-45)

Her views are corroborated by a teacher in this school, Mary, who describes the atmosphere in her classroom as follows, “The atmosphere in the class could be described as vibrant and active. The students are allowed to do their own activities while I monitor them walking around the class. My principal is supportive of the decisions we make in the classroom. But we don’t experiment any new approach and there is no team work and collegiality among us. The lack of appropriate training is another factor that hinders effective implementation”. ( line 71-83).

However the atmosphere in school A and B were not as vibrant as in school C. Though all the schools had experienced teachers none of them experimented new ways to motivate students. School A and School B does not have any mission or vision statements and the teachers as well as the students were not aware of it. However the principals of both schools state that they would like to improve the school conditions if given enough resources to do so.

As Hollins (1996), stated, the governance of schools shape culture. In this study all the 3 principals asserted that they could not initiate reforms as the system did not empower the principals to be involved in the operations and planning of the school. Principals took instructions from the higher authorities most of the time. They also opined that their expectations were not matched against their culture. The principals point to the communicative aspect emphasized in the documents which was difficult to materialize in the classrooms due to the established rituals and procedures. The principal of School C noted: “Parents are used to the teacher dominated classrooms and exams. Changing this system did not go down well with them. Teachers also preferred traditional teaching and were not ready to accept the integrated classes.”

Their attitudes toward teaching and learning reflected their traditional Indian mind set. As Brown (2000) posits, attitudes are shaped by social context. In their case the social norms

were strongly prevalent. Observations as well as interviews with principals and teachers revealed that regular meetings were not the norm in their schools and information was shared verbally in an informal manner.

There were no bulletins displayed around the school and one school principal replied on this as follows: We do not have school bulletins but normally we share the information with teachers and staff in our regular assembly before school commence. All the schools do the same time. We never displayed notices or bulletins around the school.

Cunnigham and Gresso (1993) define effective school cultures as those that accomplished achievements through a collective vision. All schools have cultures; strong or weak, functional or dysfunctional. Successful schools seem to have strong and functional cultures aligned with a vision of excellence in schooling...strong, functional cultures must be nourished, nurtured and supported through the correlates of cultural development (p. 50).

The teachers in all the 3 schools were not in favor of collaborative practices and did not like to change the strongly established rituals and procedures. Thus the culture of the school was different and all the three school principals cited workload and lack of resources as the challenges faced. Though most of them agreed they advocated positive resolutions they cited that the system is too bureaucratic to bring about any positive changes. There was some level of confidence and trust among the teachers but most of them agreed that their understanding of the syllabus was limited and the poor teaching conditions posed a hindrance in adopting a learner-centered approach. All the three schools had well established cultures and norms and they were unwilling to change their attitude towards change. Almost all the teachers in school A and B were complacent and resisted changes. The enforcement and the decision making come from the principal but even the school principals have limited authority. All the principals agreed that there was inadequate preparation for their role as principal. Therefore coordinating the change efforts posed a challenge. Principal school C describes her role as *“tiring”* and *“take decisions based on knowledge gained through experience”*.

Principals in school A and school B posited that the demographic and the socio economic aspects of their students do not change very much as most of them come from the same background most of the time.

However Principal of school C says: most of the times, the socio-economic factors of our students is the same. However we do get students from middle class who come from English speaking families as some of these students might have settled down here for a “period of time”. Otherwise it is the same kind of students who enroll each year.

Each school had an individualistic school culture depending on the extent of the involvement of principals in the administration of the school. While all the school principals had similar duties like overseeing the running of the school, administrative and operational duties not all the principals involved in trying to make an impact positively. In relating her role in trying to change the culture of the school principal of school C says: “When I became the school principal there were a lot of disciplinary problems. I slowly brought some system and now the students even try to wear uniform which was not the norm before. Their attendance has improved tremendously and they try to do well in studies.” (line 46-48)

She further notes that she had managed to forge a better relationship with her staff, students and parents and the staff always have “some get together lunches”. However most of the principals cited workload and lack of resources and training. Although they acknowledged that staff who are happy with their working atmosphere contribute productively they did not have enough time to build rapport with their staff. The principals in all the 3 schools had operational duties, looking into the discipline of students, teaching and other administrative duties. It was clear that a change in the administration will result in changes in the culture of the school as school principal C notes “*after I took over things have changed for the better*”.

The teachers on their part acknowledged the need for teamwork and collegiality which was missing in all the three schools. However in practice the teachers did not take any initiative on their part to attend training or initiate collaborative culture among them. In *The Moral Imperative of school Leadership* Micheal Fullan defines reform as “changing the

context for the better” and notes that “the leader’s job is to help change the context- to introduce new elements into the situation that are bound to influence behavior for the better” (Fullan, 2003, p. 1). Fullan goes on to explain that it is “little things” that make a huge difference in changing the working, learning, culture and leadership situations in schools (Fullan, 2003, p. 2). This underscores the importance of understanding the school culture and change processes which are important in bringing about effective changes.

Changing the structure of the classes and merging the grades did not score well with the teachers and the parents. Teachers were not ready to deal with that change and the time allocated for classes as well as the grouping of students according to their level did not facilitate teaching and learning. Elmore (1995) has concluded that changes “in structure are weakly related to changes in teaching practice, and therefore structural change does not necessarily lead to changes in teaching, learning, and student performance” (p. 25). He suggests that the relationship of structure to teaching practice is mediated by “relatively powerful forces such as the shared norms, knowledge and skills of teachers” (p. 26). While there is little evidence to suggest that structural changes alone make a significant difference to the change process, structural changes are important to provide opportunities for cultural changes (A. Hargreaves, 1994; Louis & Miles, 1990; Miles & Huberman, 1984).

#### **4.22.3 Individualistic School Culture and Climate**

In all the three schools observed the climate and the culture was not compatible for change. Broadly based restructuring efforts have made little difference in classrooms (Cohen, 1995; Elmore, 1995; Gewirtz, Ball, & Bowe, 1995) because different contexts bring diverse and often contradictory values, beliefs, and purposes for education. The success of a change introduced depends on the internal and the external context of the school in which the change is introduced. The rich linguistic environment was missing in the Indian context. The magnitude of the change was huge and the individual schools were unprepared to adapt to the change. What rendered change in original context did not work in the local context. As one

teacher, Sharada explains: “This was modeled based on the initial success in the Rishi Valley school but implementation in the other schools met with little success and everybody interprets it to be 100% successful. But the quality is poor and schools lack the resources.”

According to the Probe Report, “education is treated as an investment” (Probe Report, 1999). Indian families prefer to invest in the son’s education since returns of this investment remain within the family. In contrast, returns of the investment in daughter’s education typically flow into her husband’s family (Dreze & Saran, 1993; World Bank Report, 1997). Parents have to spend on various items such as note books, stationery, uniforms, tuition, and cash payments like exam fees, sports fee and so forth which can all add up to a substantial amount. According to Dreze, “more pertinent interpretation is that elementary education should not involve any expenditure for the parent. In that broader sense, elementary education in India is far from free” (Dreze, 2003, p. 980).

This above mentioned trait of considering the son’s education more important than the daughter’s was exhibited among parents from two of the three schools observed. Daughters were asked to abstain from school whenever there was a family commitment to be made followed by sons. Although not obvious parents did mention in the interview that they expected their daughter to learn only up to secondary school level before they get married. This was attributed partly to their economic status and also partly to their attitude towards daughters’ education. Dreze quotes the probit analysis of 1983-84 to show that caste has a significant influence, independent of per capita income specifically, children from SC (scheduled Caste) families are less likely to attend school than children from other families at a given level of income (Dreze & Saran, 1993).

The child-centered Montessori system was not in tandem with teacher beliefs. In teachers’ view performance was incentive based. Teachers were not motivated to take up the change. The rituals and procedures were the same in all the schools and the expectations from all quarters did not match against the existing school culture. The classroom interactions were teacher-centered and the sequential development patterns indicated in the ABL ladder chart



hardly took place in the classrooms. Most of the teachers encouraged minimum competency. Teachers also had the culture of conforming to group tendency. They followed what the senior teachers did; the little opportunities provided in the form of teacher training for adaptability were not utilized by the teachers. Their views on change highlight the complexity of change emphasized in the theoretical framework of the study. In all the three schools minimal display of linguistic output was celebrated as success by the teachers as well as the policy makers. The perceptions of the community the students came from placed minimum expectations on students and the schools did not have steps to monitor, evaluate, and improve their performance. As Brown (2000) remarks, attitudes are shaped by the social context. The social norms were strongly prevalent and difficult to change.

Indian society did not believe in equality of educational opportunity. In traditional Hindu Society, education was centered on religion and access to it was limited to the three upper castes. It was denied to women and the bulk of lower castes that lived in poverty, both were hence educationally deprived. Yogendra Singh explains the nature and content of education in early times: “Traditionally the content of education was esoteric, metaphysical...Its communication was limited to the upper classes or the twice born castes. The structure of its professional organization was hereditary and closed” (Singh, 1973). Modern education, introduced by the British was, on the contrary, liberal and scientific and based on merit.

#### **4.23 Diverse Patterns of ESL Implementation**

The following theme is a discussion on the diverse pattern of implementations and the differences in the resource support accorded to each school. Teachers and Principals in most of the schools had to divide their time between management duties and instructional time and the nature of the classroom activity like review practice, enrichment activities, assessment, homework and the tasks assigned in the classroom varied from one school to another. The individual's schools capacities to implement change and maintain the momentum of change

were diverse which in turn affected the impact on student's learning either positively or negatively.

The Principal of school A expresses her views on the reasons for the diverse patterns of implementation. She proffers, being a rural school and a school that comes under the type of management schools we have insufficient resources. All most all the teachers just have diploma in teaching and none with a degree. Moreover the parents are not so supportive or dynamic in getting involved with the activities conducted by the school. (PAline 35-47).

The teacher of this school, Teacher Niranjana, shares her views on the restraints faced that results in the diverse pattern of interaction and the interest of her students:

As far as I am concerned despite all the limitations the policy change has benefitted my students. The only positive factor is that the policy change has enabled the weak students to understand and speak English compared to the previous times. None of the teachers are specialized to teach a subject and we teach all the subjects for a particular class. The result is the teachers resort to the tried and tested method and most of the times I resort to review practice. (TNline 61-74).

The Principal in school B talks about the resource support in her school as follows: "All the principals face the constraint of having to divide their time between administrative and teaching time. I teach maths and science subjects and sometimes I have to attend meetings. There is also divided opinion among the teachers where some feel the system is good while others lament the change. Even the experienced teachers resort to the same pedagogies and there is no initiative for experimentation. There some positive results from the policy change but in my opinion I see the results as marginal success". (line 32-47).

The teacher in this school, Selvi, talks about the constraints she faces as: "There are just three classes and one teacher each to handle one class. Having to teach all the subjects is a burden to us. The current system does not have any formal assessment and there is no

homework to be done. This is the culture of our students because their environment at home is not conducive to study. The teachers who teach standard 5 often get students who are not ready because most of them never get to complete their ladder but still can proceed to the next class. Having to revert back to the textbook when they reach standard 5 is a drastic change for them”. (TSel line 64-79).

The Principals and the parents had their own expectations from the teachers which had a great impact on teachers in planning and delivering their lessons.

Researcher: The current ABL system has not emphasis on formal exams though they do have an assessment inbuilt in the system. Could this be interpreted as a positive change for the teachers since they do not have to be pressured about the performance of their students?

I would say it is both positive and negative. But we had to deal with the strong negative reactions from parents. We had lot of parent who are unhappy with this. From their point of view exam is the only way they get to judge and gauge their children’s performance and this was not a welcome change. Parents prefer the formal exam and the ranking system which they are so used to. (TK line 114-119).

Her answers were corroborated with the school principals’ views and how the school coped with the negative reactions from the parents. Many parents felt without the pressure of exams teachers might not really teach and therefore their children might not learn. We do call for PTA (parent-teacher association) meetings once in a month to explain how the system works. We even had some parents over to come and see how our classes are conducted so that they could see for themselves the merit of this new system. (PALine 48-56).

Says another teacher, Saraswathy, regarding this In my school the principal expects us to work hard and gain the trust of the parents who have negative views on the no exam policy. But our principal is understanding and listens to us from time to time and also offers moral support. However we are expected to achieve good target regardless of the constraints faced. (TSar line 23-27).

Teachers viewed the policy changes as sudden and abrupt. One teacher reflects about the changes as follows Though the system was introduced in stages it is still considered as sudden and abrupt as there was not enough time for us to understand the policy totally. The time frame of the implementation also varied from one school to another.. I expect them to thoroughly master the particular component before I proceed to the next lesson. (TM line 84-95).

Some teachers do not emphasize over the mastery of a component. As one teacher Roselyn states:

The change altered the way we teach English. Previously with the text book system the whole class followed the same syllabus and we knew what each student is supposed to be doing in class. When the students answer I say words of encouragement like ‘clever’, and ‘good’. But sometimes I pay more attention to those who do not answer since the good students will somehow learn. (TR line 96-104).

#### **4.23.1 Teachers’ Views on ESL Policy Changes**

This reflects the personal belief of the teacher in responding to the learner’s responses in class and their belief in student feedback. There are some teachers who lauded the new policy since they observed positive changes with students being able to understand basic commands in English and could speak few sentences in English. These students were previously too weak and could not utter a word in English. The teachers were quick to add that this method is suitable only for the weak students who have ‘no exposure’ to English. The good students’ progress is stunted unless they can do their own activities in class which seldom took place.

However one principal (PS3) is still optimistic when she says Most of the rural schools have benefitted from the system. The entire material is put into small incremental units to be completed and this provides structure to the curriculum while they are allowed to proceed at

their own pace. We do give scope for the teacher to be creative and innovative and there are lot of ways teachers can be flexible to break the monotony of the classroom. (PS3 line 46-53).

However classroom observations and interviews with the teachers did reveal that the majority of the teachers did not bring any materials to fill the gap in the ladder and most of the times students were allowed to do their own activities in class. The teachers cited lack of time as well as the big number of students in the class for not being able to do this in the classroom.

Teacher Mary expressed her views on this: Yes there are blank slots in the ladder for us to fill in the gap. I could bring my own materials to class to keep my students in class. But in reality this is not possible as it is the time most of the students will come to me to ask for clarifications. In my class the activities I conduct are subject to the availability of time which is limited. (TM line 96-103).

#### **4.23.2 Administrative Challenges in implementing ESL changes**

The capacity to implement change and maintain the momentum of change clearly differed from one school to another and implementation was uneven. The lack of ownership and the cascading system of information caused confusion among teachers and collaborative culture never manifested in their working culture. Their perception to the possibility of working together was vague and negative and issue of time was a prevalent issue with all the teachers. There needs to be a greater articulation of the mission and the vision of the school so that the teachers and the students could establish a better working culture towards a common goal. In effect, if teachers do not share the same essential perspectives on what constitutes desirable educational practice and do not maintain a common commitment to shared goals, they are unlikely to consistently work toward collective purposes. As Senge's (1990) seminal discourse about so-called 'learning organizations' in the corporate sector so forcefully pointed out, there is a marked distinction between persons who are truly committed to a goal and those who are merely compliant because they wish to avoid incurring negative feedback from those

in authority position. Principals in all the three schools were involved in the academic teaching and handling both administrative as well as the academic aspect was challenging.

Principals also revealed that they were appointed as principals based on their seniority without any proper training. As one principal (school C) notes: “Although I am the school principal I have limited power and I have to act according to directives from the top”. This includes matters pertaining to training and resources which are very crucial aspects in policy implementation. The same applies in appointing new teachers to the school. Principals pointed out that time is a crucial issue; with much of their time taken up for administrative matters there is not enough time to concentrate on academic issues. It was more relevant to principals who managed bigger schools that included not only primary but also upper primary and secondary students. School A and school B only had students from lower primary standards whereas school C had students until standard 10.

#### **4.24 Complexity of Changing a Culture**

The next part of the analysis focuses on the complexity of changing a culture and the awareness of the pedagogical practices among teachers. The factors that affected implementation included teachers’ lack of opportunity for professional development and the cascading model of training accorded to the teachers. The demands, the constraints and the limited resources teachers were faced with were not taken into consideration and the individual school’s capacity to initiate change was ignored. The stakeholders’ implicit and explicit assumptions about how teachers should carry out their work ignored the personality and the individual beliefs and values of the teacher. The data revealed that each teacher differed in how they perceived the changes.

The Programme of Action(1992) stressed the need to lay down Minimum Levels of Learning at Primary and Upper Primary stage. This need emerged from the basic concern that irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex all children must be given access to education of comparable standards. The MLL strategy for improving the quality of elementary education

was seen as an attempt to combine quality with equity. Apart from this the policy change also addressed the demand for the use of English, trends in ICT and political governance. The contextual considerations such as policies and activities that impact on the teaching and learning strategy like pedagogy and technology, target objective, the existing policy and the provision for the transition of the new policy including the context in which the new policies are to be introduced were overlooked. Teachers were not given adequate training as the change encroached upon various aspects and there were many stakeholders involved.

Teacher Niranjana shares her experience working in the school and her perception of change as follows: I have been teaching for the past 21 years and I can say that the change did not consider the context. The students are usually from the nearby rural areas and they hardly speak English. Of course the new change has enabled them to speak and understand basic English. Moreover I teach all the subjects to this group of students. This is the case with most of the teachers. I believe that at least a minimum of 20 students for one teacher would be ideal for a multi-grade classroom. (TN line 75-87).

Another teacher comments on the target objective and indicates that different teachers have different perceptions and interpretations to it. Teacher Sharmila opines:

The Policy states that the target is to gain basic competency and proficiency in the language but there is no particular outcomes specified. We would prefer some kind of definite outcomes specified as it gives us a sense of direction. The no detention policy by the government for students until standard 8 has given them a lot of advantage. But it has its own negative consequences. The only merit is that many of the rural children do gain basic grasp of the communication which was not the case previously. (TSh line 60-76)

On the professional development they receive teachers commented that the training conducted was inadequate to address the multi-level classes that they currently teach. They

view professional development for incentives like salary and promotion and most of the teachers cited that the one-day training they received did not fulfill the objectives.

The training they received and the realities of the classroom were far different. One teacher, Mary, shares her views on the professional development they received as: The new policy was implemented in stages and our school adopted the new policy in the year 2006. Of course we were not fully prepared to implement the policy in the beginning stages. I don't have a degree in English or TESL and most of the teachers do not have a degree in English. Certainly it does not address the issue of teaching multi-grade classes. The Key personnel receive the training and they in turn conduct the training for us. (TM line 104-118).

#### **4.24.1 Bureaucratic System in Schools**

All the three schools did not have an English department and the teachers did not realize the need for one such department. The teachers opined that since they teach all the subjects they did not really perceive themselves as "English teachers". The linguistic make up of all the three schools were predominantly Tamil. Among the 3 schools visited school C was comparatively better in terms of facilities and made use of the materials provided and therefore was the nearest to operation in conditions laid down by the ABL and hence could make a slight difference. The other schools were disadvantaged though School B had facilities such as CD players. However teachers were lacking in professional training and teacher collaboration seldom took place in all the three schools.

The teachers were ignorant about the role of teacher collaboration which could foster participation in the policy process. Policy changes along with the dynamic context of the schools and in this regard the context of the school and its capacity to implement the policy was overlooked. Once schools have formal policies, they can take steps to monitor, evaluate and improve them. It is important to see the official policy as something flexible and open to change, since in every school the socio linguistic context is dynamic (Corson, 1999). In other words, the manner in which teachers react to educational reforms is largely determined by



whether teachers perceive their professional identities as being reinforced or threatened by reforms. The implications of reforms for the daily practices of teachers should be taken into careful consideration.

Most of the teachers interviewed revealed that they bring their knowledge from the past experiences to apply in their classroom practices or simply emulate their teachers. The majority of them were unaware of the latest pedagogical practices or the latest advances in the knowledge base. They complained that their training was not useful.

Teacher Kanaga talks about the professional development they receive as follows:

I basically use my previous years experience and sometimes teach the way my teacher used to teach me. The training is more theory based and when we come back to the classroom the realities of the classroom are so different from the training ground. Most of them never implement what they learnt and resort to their own way of teaching. I feel comfortable with my own methodology that I am used to. (TK line 120-132).

#### **4.24.2 Lack of Language Training**

There was hardly any school based in-service program organized by the school. Rarely does a one-off workshop promote change, as it does not take into account existing complexity of a classroom context or have a framework to support teacher learning through the non-linear process of change (Hoban, 2002, p. 2). The teachers' views on professional development underscore Hoban's complexity theory which holds as a theoretical base for this study. The value of this approach lies in understanding that educational reform is complex. Having no sense of ownership teachers were unwilling to just practice what they had learnt in a one day workshop. In this regard Darling-Hammond (1994, p. 160) believes that "where teachers are expected to implement changes that they have not had input into there is poor record of educational success." In fact Hoban (2002, p. 3) supports this position when he articulated his views on imposed change: "If teachers understand how they learn in the work place, they may

begin to manage their own change that will help them to maintain interest in their job as well as coping with rapid pace of change swirling around them.”

It is noted that most of the teachers attended this sort of professional development only for incentives like promotion or a salary hike and they never implemented what they had learnt in the workshop. They were of the opinion that their tried and tested methodologies worked better in actual classrooms and that sooner or later these policy changes would fade out. In this regard Bell (1991) argued that the role models, which were available in the schools, might not be appropriate for an inexperienced teacher to follow. This approach to professional development is rather passive and inconsistent with the need to manage the classroom in a coherent and structured manner.

The external course-based teacher professional development carried a great deal of negative undertones (Clark, 1992). It implies, to Clark (1992, p. 75), “a process done to teachers; that teachers need to be forced into developing; that teachers have deficits in knowledge and skills that can be fixed by training and that teachers are pretty much alike”.

Teachers with many years of teaching experience were not enthusiastic with having to learn a new system which according to them did not help much. Although they lauded the policy change they also acknowledged that the success achieved is only marginal and that the actual results are yet to be seen. They preferred to work individually on their work and preferred to do things their own way. They were not ready to adopt something new and working in isolation was a norm with these teachers. As Teacher Annam points out:

Most of the teachers do not discuss about our classroom issues in the staff room. This is because we have never shared methodologies, or never consulted or discussed plans with our colleagues. Each teacher has her own way of teaching. We don't have any school-based in-service programs among the staff. Most of us practically teach the same way we have been teaching for years. That's kind of established and I didn't think of changing it. (TA line 66-71).

Many other teachers during the interview shared similar sentiments on teacher collaboration and their answers are a direct reflection of the lack of awareness on the

pedagogical practices among the teachers. Most of them are just content with their immediate classroom teaching and relied on their experience to teach their students. This reflects the state of primary school teachers and as Lortie (1975) established, the personal pre-dispositions of teachers are not only relevant, but in fact stand at the core of becoming a teacher. Hence, the heavily personal and private nature of primary school teaching tends to result in individualism, isolation and contrived collegiality (Hargreaves, 1998). Professional development should be seen as having wider purposes than “helping teachers to keep up with government or employer initiated policy changes-should also be about helping teachers keep up with ‘new thinking’ on part of teachers” (Ingaverson, 2000, pp. 160-161). In all the three schools teachers echoed frustration at having to learn new methodologies which were viewed as government initiated and as changes which will fade soon.

Fullan in *The New Meaning of Educational Reform* (1991) states that, “if reforms are to be successful, individuals and groups must find meaning concerning what should change as well as how to go about it” (p. xi). He makes a direct relationship between change and culture; “Reform is not putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on” (p. xii). The impetus for change must come from within. However the core belief of the teachers that they should play a significant role in their family lives and fulfill their responsibilities to family members deterred them from taking up courses for professional development. Most of them being female teachers believed that it is their culture to go home after work and though they believed in the culture of helping others it had to be confined within the working hours. They could not be committed to change as it involved long term commitment and time.

Their lifestyle also largely centered around their families. As one teacher, Kanaga, comments: Of course we like to take up further studies. I live with my in-laws and I have to go back home after work. That is our culture and we are not really encouraged to take up further studies. Moreover taking care of the family takes up time and there is little time left to pursue work related matters after working hours. Having to travel far away to the universities and

staying back late is not really acceptable in our culture. Their lifestyle and their culture served as an obstacle from taking up professional development. (TK line 133-138).

Collaboration among teachers takes time, effort, frequent communication and continual compromise. Rosenholtz (1989) states that “collective commitment to student learning in collaborative settings directs the definition of leadership towards those colleagues who instruct as well as inspire awakening all sorts of teaching possibilities in others” (p. 68). As Hargreaves (1991) points out, true collaborative cultures are deep, personal and enduring. This kind of collaboration is a full-time commitment with the joys of success and the stress that accompanies conflict and increased job demands. Most of the teachers were in the school for many years and therefore were comfortable with their own ways of teaching. Their set ways of teaching which is cultural to a certain extent with teacher being the dominant figure in the classroom was challenged with the new changes in the policy. Moreover the culture of the rural and the urban schools also differed with the urban schools being more open to change. However teachers in all the three schools clearly viewed changes as something transient and not permanent. Even teachers in the urban school viewed their lifestyle as a hindrance to teacher collaboration. Most of the teachers were ignorant of the role of teacher collaboration in professional development.

Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) discuss two types of school culture, individualistic and collaborative, with very different implications for change and improvement. The culture of individualism is formed after years of teaching in isolation and having a school full of teachers who are professionally estranged from one another. This sustains conservative views that generally oppose change and innovations. The collaborative culture believes that teaching is inherently difficult and good teacher never stops learning to teach. This culture embraces change that enhances continuous improvement and career-long learning. Clearly then teachers in these schools were individualistic and were not committed to change. Their core beliefs of the role of teachers and their lifestyle coupled with certain other conditions in the school like the infrastructure, resources and the number of students in class were certain other conditions

that stifled collaboration. Fullan (1991, p. 117) argued that schools become effective when quality people are recruited to teaching and the workplace, and when the school is organized to reward accomplishments. He opines that professionally rewarding workplace conditions attract and retain good people. The next theme is a discussion on the role of the Principal in the school and the structure of the school.

Researchers such as Fullan (1991), Rosenholtz (1989) are looking at the culture of the schools to determine why some schools are progressive, welcoming, effective, and reform minded while others are not. They also correlate the culture of a school with the leadership of the building administrators. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) use the concept of “culture” to refer to the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates, particularly in reference to how people relate (or fail to relate) to each other. In simple terms, culture is “the way we do things around here” (p. 37). The principals of all the three schools reveal the administrative challenges they face and having to deal with non-collaborating teachers. The principals opine that their opportunity to develop the dimensions of their school culture is restricted and voiced the need to be empowered with decision making as well as to redefine their role.

The Principal of school A describes the challenges she has to face: As a principal I am in charge of the overall operations of the school and the teachers always turn to me for advice on matters. Apart from that I have to get ready for inspections, visits by the authorities and other administrative matters. We are selected to be the HMs based on our seniority but we are not given any special training for the post of HM. HM’s of school in a “block” attend a meeting every month which is also attended by the senior officers. These meetings serve as the forum for the district administration to inform or train HM’s on any new decisions, schemes, government initiatives and policies affecting education at the district level. However we are not part of the decision making committee. (line 57-73).

The same view is echoed by another principal who lamented that the lack of training and staff development was not satisfactory due to other personal restraints faced by the teacher.

They viewed that principals have to be empowered to make decisions on the spot without having to wait for directive from the authorities concerned. As this principal of school C states:

Though technically our school is located in an urban area the students who attend our school are not well exposed to the English language. We don't have ICT facilities and library in our school. Even our own opportunities for professional development are limited due to time constraints and other factors. We would like to definitely take things forward and take up professional development seriously. (PC line 54-63).

#### **4.24.3 Role of the Principal in Facilitating English language Implementation**

The findings support Fullan's observation on the role of the principal. He opines that principals have an important role in determining the consequences of reform in the convention of education policy research. However, "the role is not straight forward as we are led to believe" (Fullan, 1995, p. 145). The more linguistically and culturally diverse the students are in the school community the greater the variety of teaching and learning strategies should be, with multiple opportunities to learn from peers as well as the teacher and other adult staff (Faltis & Hudleson, 1988, p. 66).

The principal placed much emphasis on friendly communication with her staff. The culture of their school promoted friendly atmosphere but professional collaboration was still not the norm. The principal cited "lack of time" and "lack of resources" as the reasons for encountering difficulties in organizing professional collaboration. The principals noted that although the schools may be similar demographically there could be differences in terms of the students who enroll in their school, the teachers and other aspects such as the facilities of the school.

Sergiovani (1998) posited that Principals have the opportunity to make a number of decisions at school level. They are the critical change agents, even though their styles as leaders may vary, encompassing the bureaucratic, visionary, entrepreneurial or pedagogical.

The roles of both teachers and principals are significant and so are their values and beliefs about teaching and learning since they are directly dealing with the day-to-day concerns of teaching. The principals of all the three schools were supportive of teachers' decision making skills. Teachers were given autonomy to make certain decisions regarding teaching and learning. The lesson plans to be used were flexible but they were also mindful of adhering to the plan to a certain extent due to the surprise visits by the officials to check on the teaching learning process. The principal of school C also taught English to year 5 students and therefore was able to 'see' and 'feel' for the teachers. In all the three schools teachers could go to the principals with their problems and hope to get a solution. However the infrastructure of the school and the limited resources posed a problem over which even the principals did not have much authority or control.

Teachers work in multiple, embedded contexts-including state, district, school and departmental contexts that affect their work (Talbert & MacLaughlin, 1993). Because these contexts interact, some researchers have begun to focus less on individual policies and more on the larger policy environment, which includes an assortment of policies initiated in different contexts (Knapp & MacLaughlin, 1999). Teachers may experience the impact of these policies as an array more than as distinct, individual policies. Moreover, as policies converge in teachers' working lives, it is possible they will interact with one another in ways that are consequential for teachers' practice, sometimes mutually reinforcing one another and at other times frustrating one another (Knapp, Bamberg, Ferguson, & Hill, 1998).

All the principals of the three schools noted that the objective of their schools is in line with the policy objectives. The schools did not have any specific objective or targets for the students. None of the three schools had any mission or vision statement displayed. Nevertheless they reiterated that discipline is always reinforced in their schools and moral values are imparted during assembly meetings and values are nurtured throughout the year whereby students are reminded to respect culture and tradition while trying to excel in academics. Hargreaves (1997) focuses on successful school cultures; characteristics of its

members are composed of: openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and a willingness to face uncertainty together. He asserts that the emotional climate of a building is directly tied to the school's culture. Though the schools had some of the characteristics Hargreaves highlighted of the successful schools the teachers and the principals did not engage in vibrant dialogue and each had their own divergent views on the syllabus with the views that tests are indispensable. Most of the teachers formed their own understanding of the policy and the principals on the other hand faced conflict in their role as academics as well as part of the management team.

The governance of schools shapes culture (Hollins, 1996). In all the three schools the principals did not try to change the existing school culture among the staff. The rituals and procedures were the same and the principals were not initiators of change most of the school principals just waited for 'orders' and did not use their influence to initiate change. As the Principal of school C remarked, "I can't do anything without approval from the authorities. Maybe I could initiate small level changes but usually we follow orders from superiors."

All the three schools did not have targets and plans for the academic year and there was no time line to set goals and achieve something for the school. The organization was not prepared to follow the changes and therefore positive resolutions were difficult to come by. Decisions at the school level were not made and there was no plan for the future. Parents had minimum involvement and there were areas of conflict. In all the three schools the atmosphere was not vibrant and principals cited the bureaucratic system in schools as the hindrance to change. Principals also agreed that collaboration was not their culture and all the three schools had no chances for successful implementation.

#### **4.24.4 Structure of the School**

The structure of the school and the schools as learning environment for teachers is another theme that emerged. The structural conditions of the school did not provide many opportunities for teachers and principals to further enhance their professional development. As



for the Principals, they were selected based on seniority and there was no special training conducted on carrying out their administrative functions. The principals are in charge of planning for the future of the school and at the same time maintain a good interpersonal relationship between the stakeholders and the teachers. It is the duty of the principal to maintain an atmosphere of trust and support while there were no special training given to them.

As the Principal of school C states:

The structural conditions of the school are not conducive for us to further enhance our professional development. While the State provides the curricular goals and objectives for the school it is the individual's school's responsibility to determine the method to achieve that goal. There is no special training conducted for us to carry out the administrative duties entrusted to us. Moreover the resources allocated are not sufficient and we need more resources to conduct workshops and collaborations among our teachers. There is no long term objective for our school. (PC line 64-81).

Another principal (of school B) also shares similar views when she says: The scheduling of classes for English varies from one school to another. The allocation of resources is not adequate and the facilities also differ from one school to another. In the event our students are short-changed because they happen to study in rural schools. Clearly these students are at a disadvantage. There are not many opportunities for teacher learning and the training conducted is fragmented in nature. The dissemination of information in our school is usually verbal considering the fact that our school is so small. (line 48-58).

Their views indicate that the structural conditions of the school did not facilitate professional development and highlight the role of the principal in the school. The principal is expected to provide the conditions of work to achieve the desired goals set by the government. However the capacity of the school to carry out reform is limited with insufficient infrastructure facilities, resources as well as training needs. The less competent leaders tend to

be passive and fail to provide a positive influence on learning. School culture defines what is of worth for teachers, specifies acceptable limits of behavior and beliefs, and acts as a powerful factor in promoting or resisting school improvement efforts (Hall & Loucks, 1978).

The principals' view highlights their conflict as part of the management and the academic team and their reflections presents the management point of view. They also have to deal with teachers whose assumptions about the value of change are diverse. Says the Principal of school C:

Teachers in my school have their assumptions about the value of change. Most of them view change as negative and something that is not permanent. Moreover the educational culture they have been exposed to makes it impossible for them to accept new changes. For example the current change in the style of teaching is more towards learner-centered, this is different from what the teachers have been exposed to. (line 82-93).

Another principal (school B) explained her choice on giving teachers autonomy in the classroom and her beliefs on that as follows Most of the teachers in my school had divergent views on the syllabus with the teachers teaching the lower classes of the view that the change brought about some results. Some of the teachers agreed that the changes brought about results, they also felt it is not long term. I only emphasize on using the ABL cards as it is compulsory but the methodology and the way they want go about is up to the individual teachers. (line 59-68).

Her views were corroborated by another teacher (Saradha) who talks about her school culture and also the cultural constraints to reform in India as follows:

I can say our school culture is positive because there is consensus among the staff to carry out activities and other programs. However I must agree that as much as we have

a robust tradition of celebrating rituals and ceremonies together the same cannot be said about academic activities. Our Principal is supportive but it is a matter of who takes the initiative. Our vision in school is operationalized mainly through verbal communication. There are no written or visual statements to be displayed around the school. (TSara line 36-44).

Her views reiterate the role of the principal in the school. As Sergiovanni (2001) stated, to encourage a school culture and climate that promotes individuals who are bonded together by natural will, and who are together bound to a set of shared ideas and ideals, principals must strengthen their efforts towards improving connections, coherence, capacity, commitment, and collaboration among their members. The principals in all the three schools described their working culture as supportive and non-threatening but also admitted that they do not have a robust academic culture. Most of the teachers relied on the practical knowledge obtained in the context of the teaching and were not aware of the developments in the field. They cited cultural constraints as a hindrance to reform in India and parents' preference for the traditional teacher centered classrooms. Even teachers believed that teacher centered classrooms keep classes more focused and ensure better student learning. The current changes challenged their perception of the traditional classroom and the teachers considered the change as 'cultural' change apart from the changes in pedagogy and materials.

The changes also affected their lives and their work. One teacher, Annam, comments how it had an impact on their work and teachers had to change their perceptions on homework:

Previously we used the textbook and after completing a unit we give them homework. But now with the current system homework is no longer the norm. Students can do work on their work which will seldom or never take place. I do set rules for them but we never expel students based on poor attendance record. We do have lesson plans but

it is very general and with each student following their own individual progress through the ladder system the lesson plan makes no sense. (line 72-88).

All the three schools visited did not have any specific departments and therefore the teachers did not have any sense of belonging to a particular department and they had no orientation towards a specific subject. None of the teachers in the three schools were subject matter experts and they did not take initiatives to improve their pedagogy or to attend training. Though Hargreaves (1993) suggests that departments tend to work against school wide initiatives and promote balkanization, Siskin (1994) indicates that departments have become “a crucial part of the context of teaching in high school, for it is the department which organizes teachers spatially, temporally, administratively, and symbolically” (p. 12).

#### **4.24.5 Parents’ Role**

According to the principals most of the parents did not actively participate in their children’s academic progress and it was the teacher’s responsibility to take care of it. Except for some of the parents in school C who showed some interest in the school’s activities the others remained passive. All the three schools did not place much emphasis on co-curricular activities and the schools lacked resources and facilities. Their academic objectives were mainly reinforced through verbal statements. The organizational chart indicated the principal as the main person who is chiefly responsible for the operations of the school. Teachers had to deal with family matters and their opportunities for further development were constrained due to cultural and other factors. All the teachers and the principals emphasized disciplinary measures and ensured that students followed the rules and regulations of the school. However all the schools did not emphasize on students wearing uniforms or badges. Their views implied the need for training for managerial positions. The importance of the principal’s influence in shaping school culture is best summarized in Sergiovanni’s (2001) words when he states that the influence of the principal once established in a school, strong culture acts as a powerful

socializer of thought and programmer of behavior. Yet, the shaping and the establishment of such a culture does not just happen; they are, instead, a negotiated product of the shared sentiments of school participants. When competing points of view and competing ideologies exist in school, deciding which ones will count requires some struggling. Principals are in an advantageous position to be a strong influence the outcome of this struggle.

Comments of one parent on the school culture and student achievement in School C as follows: I think school culture and student achievement are correlated. Just like the private schools government schools also must strive for better results rather than expecting others to contribute for better change. It is the onus of the school and principals must take larger part of the responsibility. Parents must take care of their own children but the collective responsibility must come from the school. (line 1-5)

Another parent from school B comments: The school's use of space also conveys the culture of the school. It must be attractive and every student must learn the motto of the school. It is good that teachers in this school display children's work and this gives them a sense of pride. But the negative side is that the school itself is very small and such a small space for a school is a disadvantage to students. (line 1-9)

While another parent (School A) corroborated the views above by saying: Most of us are uneducated and therefore school is the only place we rely on many matters both academic and co-curricular. Therefore the principals must try to incorporate shared values and reinforce the mission and the vision of the school and motivate children to study hard. Teachers can counsel students with family problems as most of the times children are in school and like to talk to teachers. (line 1-5).

The students' interviewed expressed their liking with the new ABL system as they do not have to face exams and most of the students perceived this as fun activity. Majority of the students were happy with the outcome they have achieved and viewed this positively. However the older students in standard 5 opined that they did not achieve enough proficiency and expressed their concerns in reverting back to the text book which was confusing to them.

As Cunningham and Gresso (1993) have defined, effective school cultures are those that accomplished achievements through a collective vision: “All schools have cultures; strong or weak, functional or dysfunctional. Successful schools seem to have strong and functional cultures aligned with a vision of excellence in schooling. Strong, functional cultures must be nourished, nurtured and supported through the correlates of cultural development” (p. 50). The schools observed did not exhibit such effective cultures for the changes to be effective.

This question dealt with how the context of the school affects curriculum implementation in practice. Introducing the ABL in the primary schools of India ignored the context in which the change was introduced. The schools did not have the rich linguistic environment and rote-learning prevailed in all the schools observed. The cultural background was not taken into consideration. The working culture as well as the schools’ learning environment did not support the change and therefore resulted in diverse patterns of implementation.

#### **4.25 Summary**

This chapter reported the findings of the study gathered through interviews, document analysis and field notes. The findings help to gain insights into the aspects impacting implementation in practice. The findings revealed a discrepancy between the policy makers’ intentions and the implementation in practice. The implications of the study are discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The thesis attempts to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1. The intent of this chapter is to present the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for subsequent leadership implementation and actions, and to suggest studies for future research based on the result of the research. A qualitative method was employed to answer the research questions. One of the main aims is to ascertain the policy changes and their implications for classroom practice. Research question 1 deals with the policy changes that have taken place and the educational problems the policies were attempting to address. Discussion of this question will deal with the major stakeholders' views on policy changes and the key concepts adopted by the government in implementing the policy. The second question deals with how policies affect the planning and the teaching of the curriculum. Discussion of this question deals with teachers who are one of the major stakeholders and their understanding of the curriculum and responses to policy change. The third research question deals with how the school context affects curriculum implementation in practice. Teachers and principals as the major stakeholders play a significant role in uncovering the policies and the school's capacity to implement policy is discussed. The results have implications for the nature and the extent of change undertaken in schools.

#### 5.2 Stakeholders' Response to ESL Policy Changes<sup>[L1][L2][L3][L4][L5][L6][L7][L8]</sup>

Adoption of the 3 language formula represented the Government's effort in recognizing the importance of English as a subject and the policy was also designed for national development and social needs. In that context it envisaged three principal goals: (a) universal access and enrolment, (b) universal retention of children up to 14 years of age, and (c) substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning. (Refer to the discussion on the background of the Indian

education system p. 107). However review of the documents as well as interviews with the stakeholders (policy makers and teachers) reveal that the policy objectives were not stated clearly and there were few measures adopted to strengthen the policy. The teachers did not have much instructional and organizational support in order to implement the policy. The policy makers in their interviews acknowledged this shortcoming. However, despite the shortcomings they assured that reviews are being conducted periodically to ensure smooth implementation (discussed on page 169).

These guidelines bring up what Berman (1978) delineated as the conflict of interests in macro- and micro implementation of policies in the general education field for the past three decades. He identified factors associated with the uncertainty and difficulty of macro implementation. One of them was an ambiguity in intention, which was “reflected by multiple goals, often conflicting, and in lack of specificity about means” (p. 168). Kritek (1976) highlighted the obvious tendency that policy makers and program planners had, to “write vague and abstract statements of a program’s goals and of the means towards those goals” (p. 88). This vagueness, he asserted, accounted for the failure of innovations.

### **5.3 Variations of time frame in the Transition of the ESL Policy**

The time frame in which the policy was implemented varied from one school to another. The policy makers were aware of this and they acknowledged that not all schools were ready to implement the changes at the same time. Therefore implementation had to be carried out in stages and this again underscores the complexity of change. Teaching is “a highly situated and highly interpretive activity that requires teachers to figure out what to do about a particular topic, with a particular group of students, in a particular time and place.” (Johnson, 2002, p. 1).

Kumaravadivelu (2001) suggests in the post-method pedagogy of practicality that the teacher incorporate both theory and practice. The teacher is engaged in “pedagogical thoughtfulness.” This requires the teacher to “...identify problems, analyze and assess



information, consider and evaluate alternatives, and then chose the best available alternative, which is then subjected to further critical approaches” (p. 541). This reflectivity by the teacher creates a “working theory” that improves teaching and learning as the teacher internalizes.

The teachers in the schools did not engage in any “pedagogical thoughtfulness” suggested by the author as they did not have time to experiment with new practices and find the best alternatives. The teachers were unaware of the theories and the policy makers did not consider the dynamics of change as well as the unique context of the different schools. Teachers were expected to implement changes with very little training and the teachers, not being subject matter specialists, were unaware of alternative choices that could be implemented in the classroom.

Instructional capacity of the individual schools to implement policies was not accounted for. The policy makers recognized that individual schools differ in their nature and capacity to adopt the changes. Interviews with policy makers (p. 13) confirm that all schools were not ready for the implementation and therefore some schools implemented the policies after few years. (referred to on pages 183) The new policies did not ensure liaison between staff and also parents. Teaching staff were not involved in decision making; with no plans to strengthen the instructional capacity of the teachers they resorted to their traditional practices with no positive changes. The complexity of change was ignored as most of the teachers were not clear of the changes and did not have the skill nor the commitment to carry out the changes.

The findings show that though the policy permits autonomy for teachers there are no clear guidelines for teachers to implement policies and to what extent the teachers are expected to adhere to the policy guidelines. Different teachers in different schools implemented them variously and the policy makers were not cognizant of the fact that it would result in multiple practices and this factor was not accounted for. There were no proper support mechanisms to facilitate implementation. (referred to on page 202, 203). As

with efforts to ‘implement’ planned changes in curriculum practice, local factors are critical, often resulting in mutual adaptations (e.g., McLaughlin, 1990). As Cornbleth (2008) posited, the nature and extent of the impact varies, not only with the teachers’ personal beliefs about diversity and their role as teachers, but also with their perceptions of the community or school climate(s) of opinion, their subject and grade level, the mind of students in their classes, and their own knowledge and the resources available to them. The author identifies teachers as both individually and collectively, mediators or interpreters of various social conditions, trends, events, and national-state-local priorities. The inconsistencies and the uneven implementation are recognized by the policy makers in their interviews but this factor was not accounted for in the policy formulation.

The present study confirms Cornbleth’s (2008) assertion that reforming curriculum practice is more likely to take place when changes are perceived as interesting to students or likely to increase their engagement and directly relevant to the local curriculum guidelines. Curriculum changes should enhance students’ understanding and be adapted to the local context. In this study the uneven implementation stems from several factors and the interviews with policy makers reveal that students’ lack of exposure to English coupled with the teachers’ lack of proficiency are factors for the uneven implementation of the policy in various schools (as described in pages 205, 214). The study looked at each aspect of the change and this information can shed light on the initiatives to be undertaken in future.

Cohen and Barnes (1993) argue that when implementing a change, policy-makers should not just focus on “putting the materials across” (p. 229) but need to ask questions such as “what enactors may have to learn in order to respond constructively to policy, what it may take for them to learn, how they might best learn, and how policy might be redesigned in consequence of learners’ experience” (Cohen & Barnes, 1993, p. 229). Although most policies do offer guidelines, step-by-step training or technical assistance; these are very basic curricula of policy (Cohen & Barnes, 1993).

In this regard all the policy makers interviewed acknowledged the weaknesses in the cascading mode of training given to teachers, but assured that steps are taken to ensure that teachers are fully equipped to implement the policy by providing them with training (referred to on p. 197). Pressure for reform in schools comes from many sources and the policy was designed to accommodate to the growing demands of the parents for their children to learn English as well as to serve the national development and social needs. Unfortunately, participation in the policy process was limited to few individuals and the materials were devised by the state. Clearly the interviews with the policy makers affirm the fact that the policy was formulated at the administrative level and it is top-down (as described in the interview with policy makers on page 182). Everard and Morris (1985) maintained that “all who are affected by the change need a clear picture of what it will mean for them: what will they be doing differently, after the change has been implemented? They want to know specifically what it means *in practice* for them” (p. 188). They argued that without clear conceptualizations of the goals, the transition from theoretical guidelines to practical operations may be difficult. Other researchers such as Desimone (2002) and Spillane et al. (2002) concurred that policy makers need to formulate clear, specific and consistent directives with helpful procedures so that policy would be more likely to be executed as intended. The policy makers note that the change in the policy is intended to improve teachers’ working conditions and promote child-learning. However teachers argue that the learning conditions in the classroom do not augur well in line with the policy objectives. This highlights the gap between policy makers’ intentions and teachers’ actual execution of the policies.

#### **5.4 Mismatch Between ESL Policy Makers’ Intention and the Implementation Execution of the ESL Policies**

The findings show that there is a mismatch between policy makers’ intention and the actual execution of the policy in the classrooms. The gaps existed primarily in terms of

the stakeholders' understanding of the policy and their interpretations of the goals. The guidelines provided in the policy were too vague and general and the lack of goals led to different interpretations. Though teachers were provided with a handbook to help them implement the ABL policy most of the teachers interviewed expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of clear instructional goals. Though the policy experienced limited change a closer look at the implementation issues experienced by the stakeholders reveals that the policies failed to look closely at both the planning as well as the implementation issues at stake. The policy would benefit from the assistance of external support. At present the study reveals that the policy changes did not take into consideration the different factors that will impact curriculum changes. The external support to implement changes was not sufficiently targeted and it was not coherent or intensive to influence meaningful change. (as described on p. 183). The schools were given flexibility in order to satisfy conflicting political interests. The policy document (p. 27) acknowledges the uneven implementation of the language policy. Interviews with policy makers (p. 16) reveal that factors like teachers' proficiency, the schools' capacity to implement changes and political influences are the limitations the policy makers have to deal with.

The gaps existed primarily in terms of the objectives to be achieved. While the documents emphasized child-centered activities and joyful learning, classroom observations on the salient features of instructional practices revealed that the majority of teachers resorted to the traditional grammar-translation method. While the teachers conducted group work as per the policy requirement the teachers did not have time to monitor students' work and teachers were not really clear about how to handle the situation. This vagueness is partly attributed to the curriculum documents which do not specify any guidelines for teachers (as described on page 214). Markee (2001) posited that the definition of innovation should consider the context of the innovation, the fundamental nature of the change, the extent to which the innovations improve on the status quo and the

extent to which innovations are necessarily deliberate and planned for. In this study, such factors deserve further consideration to ensure proper implementation in the classroom.

## **5.5 ESL Policy Communication**

Interviews with teachers highlighted the fact that most of the information and planning was top-down. They were not part of the change and the principals, though providing autonomy for teachers, did not address their concerns and the teachers were not ready for change (described on page 216). Communicating salient information to the participants about the change process raises awareness levels, keeps participants informed, and assists in reducing feelings of anxiety, frustration, and concerns. In addition, providing on-going information regarding rules and procedures for the change process and how this change will affect participating members is essential and creates a greater probability for building consensus (Anderson, 1993). The professional development teachers obtained was unstructured and restricted in scope. Most of the training teachers received was initiated by the government and was conducted in a cascading process. Many of the strategies they learnt were seldom implemented because of time constraints and other limitations they faced in the classroom.

As Ricento and Hornberger (1996) have discussed, policy is reinterpreted and modified as it moves through layers of legislation and political processes, states and supranational agencies, institutions and classroom practitioners. The data support Ricento and Hornberger's (1996) contention that language planning and policy is multilayered and reinterpretation occurs at every layer. The social and personal nature of classroom lessons can constrain policy implementation if policies are seen to be in conflict with the social roles and routinized events. For example, social expectations of teacher and student roles can constrain implementation of so-called communicative activities (Pica, 1987).

## 5.6 Teachers' Lack of Accountability

Most of the teachers as well as the parents believed that the existing system of assessment challenged their long held beliefs on examinations and that it was not comprehensive and with no formal exams students' attitude towards learning changed. They did not regard it as serious yet they had no choice but to accept the new changes. The teachers were still coming to terms with this new practice. With no formal exams there were no provisions for using learning outcomes as a focus for using them as -feedback and changing teaching practices according to students' needs. This student-centered system conflicted with their existing beliefs and values. Teachers are likely to be disappointed unless their views are taken into account in the reform process. The no exam policy in this case affected teachers' and parents' perceptions and consequently teachers did not pay much attention to the in-built evaluation in the system. Interviews with policy makers however reveal that reviews are conducted periodically and visits made to school to ensure that everything goes well though there are negative criticisms from certain quarters (described on page 196).

The policy change was a response by the Government to solve the educational problems that existed at the elementary level. Interviews with policy makers highlight that the policy changes were positive to a certain extent though weaknesses were acknowledged. The focus is to improve teaching and learning and to eradicate the possibility of drop-outs as well as to enrich the syllabus. It was also a response by the Government to an overwhelming demand by parents who wanted their children to learn English but could not afford to send them to private English medium schools. The Policy note No.41 (2002-2003) (referred to on page 193) highlights this objective and the government tried to achieve this decentralized planning and managing through community participation. The policy achieved this aim partially as most of the school principals as well as the teachers acknowledge that the drop-out rates were lower. However there was a

different dilemma faced by the school principals in this regard. While all of them agreed that the drop-out rates were significantly lower the teachers and the principals were faced with the problem of adapting the policy to their local context.

The abolition of formal examinations policy left teachers confused and their claims that the assessment was in-built did not help the students achieve anything. The classroom observations and the interviews with teachers confirmed that students completed the assessment on their own as per the ladder chart and teachers did not make any judgments on student achievements. The evaluation of the policy implementation did not reflect the actual scenario in many of the schools (described on page 204, 207). Their only measure of success was that a few students were able to read and write. There was no provision for monitoring except for the occasional visits by the relevant authorities. Principals were appointed to their post based on their seniority and there is no proper training conducted for them. Just as the implementers at the grass-roots level must have the capacity and will to carry out the policy, middle managers must also be equipped with such qualities. (McLaughlin, 1987).

## **5.7 Factors that Impact ESL Implementation**

While the policy changes called for a more learner-centered approach the planning and the teaching of the curriculum was affected in many ways. The major themes that surfaced in the analysis of question 2 pertains to the teacher's perception of the syllabus, the activities and input in class, teachers' preference for using textbooks and regional languages and other social conditions impacting classroom change that pertains to learners' context and participation in class. The need for teacher professional development and teacher collaboration were also the themes that emerged in the discussion. McLaughlin (1987) asserts that local capacity is an important factor on which successful policy implementation depended. They lacked such capacity. McLaughlin (1987) suggested that, at the institutional level, teacher training should be offered, and human, financial, and

material support should be provided to teachers to facilitate their implementation. Interview data with teachers and principals revealed that the training was conducted in cascading model and therefore the information teachers received was diluted. Moreover the training covered general aspects and were not subject specific. Pedagogical issues of teaching multi-grade classrooms were not addressed and this has implications for the administrators. The training conducted did not cover many aspects of implementing curriculum in a multi-grade classroom. Reverting back to the use of textbook when students reach standard 5 raises concerns of students being confused and the teachers are equally dissatisfied with the practice. Teachers teaching standard 5 are to deal with students who are not ready to reach that level since there is no emphasis on completion of syllabus until standard 4. This raises quality concerns among teachers as well as principals and parents.

The change in this case involved change in the materials, pedagogy as well as assessment procedures. Therefore the magnitude of the change required for implementation was quite big owing to the complexity of change with the current practices. Ellis (2001b) argued that the success of an innovation also depends on what aspects of language pedagogy are involved in the change. Markee (1994, cited in Ellis, 2001a) suggested that innovation that involves the use of new teaching materials is likely to succeed compared to change in methodological practices. Programs or innovations that are dramatically different from teachers' current practices or that require teachers to make major revisions in the way they presently teach are unlikely to be implemented well, if at all (Doyle & Ponder, 1977). Therefore, staff development that requires new practices, must illustrate clearly how it can be implemented without too much disruption or extra work (Sparks, 1983). In discussing his proposal for a Procedural Syllabus in India in the language teaching innovations, Prabhu (1984, cited in Ellis, 2003) asserts that innovation is threatening to routines of the teachers. Teachers in the school said that they were faced with lot of challenges since they have to learn the new practices and although there were no exams they still had their weekly lesson plans which involved paper work (as described on page 221). Though the



program implementers did make provisions for mutual adaptations to take place by giving liberty to teachers to handle the program as per the context it led to vast discrepancies between the schools. Except for the occasional visits by the authorities for audit purposes there was no collaboration between the program developers and the teachers. Teaching and learning are influenced by many variables. Hence, an appropriate balance must be struck between program fidelity and mutual adaptation considerations (Berman, 1980; Fullan, 1981; Griffin & Barnes, 1984).

### **5.7.1 Failure to Match Pedagogy to Learning Objectives**

The instructional capacity of the teachers and teachers' knowledge of the content was clearly overlooked. The interviews with teachers revealed that the training they received was inadequate and the school provided little opportunity for professional collaboration to take place. Attending training sessions conducted in the cascading model was the only form of professional development and for the most part teachers relied on their experience and continued to teach in the same style they were used to for years. Classroom observations also revealed that teachers offered little support for students of different learning styles and they do not engage students of all ability levels during their lessons. This was evident in the group work whereby the group that completed work ahead of the class had nothing to do and the teachers could not engage them effectively. Teachers could not guide the students on peer learning and most of the teachers were concerned with the noise level in the class. The teachers reported that having to teach about 40 students of a multi-grade class they did not have time to concentrate on all the students (described on p. 216). They seldom discussed problems faced in implementing changes with the other teachers. There has been a historical tendency in India (as in many other countries) to create sound policy and then either not implement it effectively or to neglect to apply it at all (Dyer, 2000).

This finding corroborates studies conducted by Karavas-Doukas (1996) who examined teachers' attitudes towards the communicative learner-centered approach in Greek public secondary schools. She found that although most teachers held favorable attitudes towards innovations proposed by policy makers, the same teachers still conducted classroom teaching in the teacher-fronted and grammar-oriented manner, an apparent discrepancy between words and actions and between policy makers' intentions and teachers' execution. The realities of the classroom and the context account for the discrepancy. Multi-grade teaching was viewed negatively by almost all the teachers and their perceptions of multi-grade classrooms were associated with noisy classrooms, and not enough time for the teachers to concentrate on students. However there is growing evidence from around the globe that explicitly chosen and well-supported multi-grade techniques can result in positive educational experiences and outcomes (Aikmen & el Haj, 2006; Ames, 2006)

Within the Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) context, both pre-service and in-service teachers are not “empty vessels waiting to be filled with theoretical and pedagogical skills; they are individuals who enter teacher education programs with prior experiences, personal values, and beliefs that inform their knowledge about teaching and shape what they do in their classrooms” (Freeman & Johnson, 1998, p. 401). Researchers and policy makers have examined the concerns facing small, multi-grade schools across India since the mid- 1990s. A study conducted by the NCERT in 1996 highlighted the need for increased attention to multi-grade instruction materials, and to the need to incorporate multi-grade teaching into pre-service and in-service training courses (Gupta et al., 1996). The present study illustrates the problems synonymous with multiple grade classes and the findings corroborate the study by Muthayan (1999) which probed the difficulties surrounding multi-grade teaching, including the relative lack of official recognition of multi-grade teaching, limited academic and financial support for multi-grade teaching innovations, and little pre-service or in-service training on multi-grade teaching.

Qualitative work on multi-grade schools in Rajasthan conducted by Rashmi Diwan in (2006) outlines a number of key issues faced by primary schools across the country. The study identified issues that concern quality of classroom teaching in practice in terms of the need for effective multi-grade teaching and learning techniques, teachers, the recruitment process and the training they receive, the amount of time spent on non-teaching activities and insufficient support from administrators. Apart from the factors identified by the previous studies this study identified the school context and the social norm as one of the factors that had an impact on policy implementation.

### **5.7.2 Need for Professional Development**

The mismatch between policy objectives and classroom practice resulted from several factors such as the teachers' perception of the syllabus and their understanding of the policy and their response to policy change. The need for professional development and teacher collaboration emerged as a main theme. This study identified that most of the teachers and the schools ignored the aspect of professional development and teacher collaboration. The teachers worked in isolation and cited lack of time, administrative work and other personal concerns as reasons for being unable to take up professional development (described on page 250, 251, 256). Other factors that related to curriculum implementation involved the availability of resource materials, teachers' teaching experience, pedagogy and the context in which they were teaching. Law and Galton (2004) in discussing the impact of a school based curriculum project on teachers and students in a Hong Kong school also point to the need for collaboration among teachers participating in any curriculum innovation. The teachers' response in their study also showed that being drifted away from each other in their curriculum planning and practice minimized their chances of successful innovation. Hence the authors reiterate that collaborative spirit and the creation of a culture of learning and enquiry should be on the agenda of change and innovations.

The teachers also showed interest in taking up professional development if the conditions were favorable for them (as described on page 252). Staff development is generally seen as one of the most promising and most readily available routes to growth on the job (Fullan, 1982). Fullan (1982) asserted that not only is it a way to combat boredom and alienation, but it also presents a pathway to increased competence and greater professional satisfaction. McLaughlin and Marsh (1978) reported that, “A primary motivation for teachers to take on extra work and other personal costs of attempting change is the belief that they will become better teachers and their students will benefit” (p. 75). Richards and Farrell (2005) contended that the need for ongoing teacher education remains a recurring theme in the language teaching field in the new century. Fullan and Pomfret (1977) found that teachers who received in-service training had a higher degree of implementation than those who did not. Bailey (1992) found through surveys and interviews that teachers after training did change, but this change process was “slow, gradual, incomplete, partial, ongoing, evolutionary” (p. 276). Young and Lee (1987) found that teachers who attended in-service training revealed a slight change in their attitude by the end of the course, but the change was too small to be statistically significant.

### **5.7.3 Lack of Collaborative Culture**

True collaboration between teachers is one of the toughest issues within education. It takes time, effort, frequent communication and continual compromise. Rozenholtz (1989) stated that “collective commitment to student learning in collaborative settings directs the definition of leadership toward those colleagues who instructs as well as inspire awakening all sorts of teaching possibilities in others” (p. 68). Collaboration is directly linked with the opportunities for continuous improvement and career-long learning. The study revealed that the schools had no continuous occasions for teacher collaboration. Some of the teachers were unaware of the concept of teacher collaboration while the others cited that they have never attempted it and thought that the initiative should come from the principal (elaborated

on page 253). The teachers interviewed were of the opinion that schools should initiate teacher collaboration and they felt happy with the way they have been teaching. However they did acknowledge that professional development would benefit them in the long run but could not see how it could fit into their working hours. Hargreaves (1991) pointed out that true collaborative cultures are deep, personal, and enduring. This kind of collaboration is a full-time commitment with the joys of success and the stress that accompanies conflict and increased job demands.

The schools observed for this study did not encourage professional development nor collaborative teaching (described on page 252). Since the teachers taught all the subjects for a particular class team teaching could have yielded good results. Certain conditions seemed to stifle the idea of team teaching such as teachers' teaching experience, their comfort level working with another teacher and the similarity in teaching styles (described on page 254). Classroom observations revealed that almost all the teachers resorted to the same teaching style and therefore team teaching in this case would have been irrelevant to these teachers.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) affirmed that curriculum development is ultimately about teacher development, and it is teachers who decide whether implementation can be enacted as intended by policy makers. Teachers as the ones who must implement must be personally involved in formulating curriculum policies. Therefore the cascading training offered is found to be ineffective as the teachers revealed that it is too general and not content specific and the training given is very different from the realities of the classroom (described on page 255). Teachers carry with them to staff development programs a certain pragmatic orientation and they hope to adopt ideas that are specific and concrete, and practical ideas that can be related to their classroom teaching.

Studies have shown that staff development activities undertaken in isolation from teachers' ongoing classroom responsibilities seldom have much impact on teaching practices or student learning (Doyle & Ponder, 1977; Zigarmi, Betz, & Jensen, 1977). Therefore, an effective staff development program must offer teachers practical ideas that

can be efficiently used to directly enhance desired learning outcomes in students. Interviews with teachers revealed that the training conducted was very general in nature and did not address many aspects of implementing the new curriculum (described on page 255). As Griffin (1983) noted, staff development is a purposeful endeavor. It is a deliberate activity generally undertaken with specific purposes or goals in mind. The changes a staff developer wishes to bring about can usually be well-defined. However in this case the change processes were not addressed effectively and many of the teachers' concerns were not discussed. Like practitioners in many other fields, teachers are reluctant to adopt new practices or procedures unless they feel sure they can make them work (Lortie, 1975).

#### **5.7.4 Social Context of Language Teaching**

Some of the personal concerns of the teachers like their preference for the use of textbooks, administrative support, their sense of lack of ownership, the social environment of the class, organization of the classrooms as well as the objectives of the curriculum were not addressed sufficiently though they received some information pertaining to curriculum objectives (described on page 261, 262). As Hall and Loucks (1978) posited, the personal concerns of teachers must be addressed in a direct and sensitive manner. If teachers are to focus attention on how the new program or innovation might benefit their students, they must first resolve their concerns about how the new practices will affect them personally.

Though all the school principals attested to the fact that they give teachers the liberty to conduct activities in their classes according to the situational needs that support was insufficient for teachers who did not know what exactly they were supposed to do. Many teachers were not proficient enough with the pedagogy and their language proficiency was only slightly better than that of their students (described on page 218). In most cases, some time and experimentation are necessary for teachers to fit the new practices to their unique classroom conditions (Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; Joyce & Showers, 1980, 1982). No matter how much in advance staff development occurs, it is

when teachers actually try to implement a new approach that they have the most specific concerns and doubts (Fullan, 1982).

#### **5.7.5 ESL Teachers' Priorities**

Teachers' lives and their beliefs also impacted the curriculum planning and implementation. Teachers' revealed during the interviews that their feeling regarding the curriculum change was that it would not last. Most of them viewed it as temporary and something that is going to change anyway. Apart from that feeling of 'impermanence' they also felt 'skeptical' of the change and were uncertain about the many aspects of change (described on page 245). Patterson (1997) proposed that people who are the targets of change tend to question the trustworthiness of those proposing the change. Teachers had to deal with parents who viewed exams and grading as a necessary and important aspect of learning and with the drastic change teachers who were not convinced themselves of the change had to convince the other stakeholders (described on page 256). Resistance to change is likely if the innovation is incompatible with teachers' existing attitudes (Waugh & Punch, 1987). On how second language learners manage their learning in the Malaysian context the study conducted by Fatimah and Zarina (2007) reveals that the mandated change imposed on students on the use of a particular language of instruction (Malay or English) did not make any difference in the science in English classes or science in Malay classes. In the comparative study of both science classes (science in Malay and science in English) the use of avoidance behavior or avoidance of help-seeking was prominent regardless of which language of instruction was used.

Teaching itself has only recently been acknowledged by some as work in which emotions are central (Day, 1998; Fineman, 1993). Day and Leitch (2001) describe teachers as people who require courage to maintain their role in mediating knowledge rather than acting as subcontractors who simply implement externally imposed policies.

All the principals interviewed were of the opinion that they would lend support for teacher collaboration if teachers were to take initiative. However the teachers felt that

collaboration will not take place unless initiated by the school principal. They attested to the workload, teaching hours and other administrative responsibilities as hindering factors for teacher collaboration (as described on page 252). Almost all the teachers did their jobs in a routine way without much introspection and they did not take time to reflect on their practices in view of the changes that have taken place. Coles (1989) opined that though the process of engagement with narrative presents possibilities for change in ourselves, the extent and significance of such a change will depend upon a combination of personal and workplace conditions, a capacity for self-confrontation and provision of appropriate kinds of support in the process of changing (Day, 1993). Summarizing Day and Leitch (2001), collaborative research constitutes a relationship. Mere contact is acquaintance and not friendship. The idea of friendship implies a sharing, an interpenetration of two or more persons' spheres of experience. Collaborative research, they posited, requires such a close relationship akin to friendship.

Teachers were skeptical of the change and were not interested to take up further training (described on page 253). Patterson (1997) stated that systemic change happens only when the people inside the school critically examine their beliefs, and change their instructional practices to fit these revised precepts.

Implementation of a successful change also depends on how teachers feel or think and their values and beliefs. Teacher efficacy is defined as the confidence of the teachers in their own ability to affect student achievement (Ross, 1995; Sparks, 1988). Bandura (1993) stated that the teachers' belief in their efficacy to promote learning affects the types of learning environments that are created and the level of academic progress students achieve. Teachers who possess a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to have a high level of commitment and confidence in their teaching ability. They are usually willing to take risks and participate in the change process (Sparks, 1988). However in this study even the most experienced teachers who were confident with their teaching were not receptive of change. Markee (1993) contended that the actual participants in the implementation of any given



curriculum innovation vary from context to context. Under a specific context, participants “tend to assume certain social roles which define their relationships with other participants” (p. 230). Law (2000), in his study on evaluation of school based curriculum integration project posits that the changing conceptions of the relationships between students and teachers and the changing attitudes towards learning should be acknowledged. The authors points to the necessity of recognizing students’ voice that would benefit the collaboration and communal spirit among students and teachers. In this case the teachers in the Indian schools have not realized the importance of recognizing students’ voice as culturally they felt teachers are the only ones to have a say in the domain of curriculum innovations.

These teachers though capable of implementing change in view of their teaching experience were unwilling to accept and try new changes as they feared that the change is impermanent and viewed the previous policy as good as opposed to the current policy. They were not convinced of the benefits although some agreed that there are benefits to it but in their view it does not merit full support. Fullan (1990) proposed that teacher behavior may be changed through the use of staff development where new strategies and skills are introduced. He proffered that presentations, demonstrations, modeling and peer coaching may also be employed to change behaviors, or as figuratively suggested by Fullan (1982), “fixing the people.” These initiatives must be incorporated in a manner which encourages teachers to take risks for pedagogical growth. Those responsible for leading reform efforts must be aware of the stakeholders’ feelings and must attend to enhancing their self-esteem (Combs, 1991). Clearly then this study identifies that the change process did not focus on nor take into consideration all the aspects involved in policy changes. As participants of change teachers’ teaching style, pedagogical assumptions, and their values and beliefs need to be addressed.

The theoretical framework adopted in my study provides rich insights into the practices of the primary school teachers. When changes are made to some aspects of language policy it has implications for other aspects of the policy. In this case the changes

in the materials, evaluation and pedagogy were not met with adequate support in terms of teacher training, incentives for teachers as well as time to adapt and adopt the new policy. Problems faced by teachers are analyzed through the change frames mentioned in the theoretical framework of the study (p. 50). Borrowing Cornbleth's (2008) term "climates of opinion" the responses from the teachers to these changes were mostly negative as the proposed student-centered learning did not coincide with the teachers' own beliefs of teaching. This in turn affected their responses in terms of curriculum practice.

## 5.8 Impact of ~~ESL Educational~~ Policy Changes

Fullan (1991) argued that the circumstances of teaching ask a lot of teachers in terms of daily maintenance and student accountability, and give back little in the time needed for planning, constructive discussion, thinking and just plain reward and time for composure. The central tendency of these conditions is decidedly negative in its consequences.

External factors like access to materials, the number of students in the class, teachers' workload as well as the culture and socio-economic background of the school, and non-teaching task assigned to teachers (like taking voting list etc.) accounted for the uneven policy implementation (as described on pages 257).

The significant findings of this study are also related to the social context of schooling. Economic factors relating to cost, impact on enrolment and completion of schooling, socio-cultural factors like caste, socio-demographic factors like family size, birth order and so forth are some of the different factors that constitute this context (refer to discussion on p. 235). Social context in this study has relevance to access to schools and achievement levels of schools. All the three schools visited by the researcher were diverse due to the different geographical and social contexts in which they were located. Therefore the social and economic conditions of the students who came to this school were equally

diverse and it had a significant impact on their ability to learn, hence the resulting diverse patterns of implementation.

Location is an important context variable for ESL education policy. Access to amenities and resources and the disparity between the rural and the urban schools had an impact in the resulting policy implementation. Some schools were better resourced than others and the differences in the resources were significant as the schools were located within the same state. The unequal resources were against the goal of equal educational opportunities which the government was trying to achieve. The students from the disadvantaged background faced double disadvantage of coming from a poor family and having to attend a poorly resourced school. Teachers may not implement the policy as intended because of various constraints including lack of resources. This dichotomy between policy and implementation implies that curriculum policy shapes teachers' classroom practice through its execution, which may require teachers to change their teaching (Markee, 1997).

As Jean Dreze puts it aptly, "Literacy achievements in India depend crucially on the social context: the gender division of labour, kinship system, caste related norms, economic entitlements and so on. The statement is perhaps trivial, but it is worth noting that the overwhelming context dependence of literacy achievements conflicts with the notion of elementary education as a basic right of all citizens" (Dreze, 2003, p. 989).

Vast variations exist between states in their efforts to provide 8 years of elementary schooling. While in states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachel Pradesh, Mizoram and Maharashtra, nearly all children have reached school and are remaining there, in other states like Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh a very significant number continue to be out of school (Sinha Amarjeet, 2003). In this study it was found that disparities not only exist in terms of inter-state but also between rural and urban areas, with urban areas being at an advantage. To quote Jean Dreze, "educational disparities, which contribute a great deal to

the persistence of massive inequalities in Indian society, also largely derived from more fundamental inequalities such as those of class, caste and gender” (Dreze, 2003; p. 982).

Examining how policy and classroom practice interact, Skuja-Steele (2005) compared classroom practices and teachers’ statements of pedagogical rationales with governmental policies. They found out that teachers were aware of policy initiatives related to language education. Teachers, however, placed their emphasis on student learning, focusing on immediate classroom priorities that influenced daily lessons. The changes were mitigated by the contextual factors. The reasons for the failure of implementation in actual practice have been identified by researchers (Gross et al., 1971; Spillane et al., 2002) as teachers’ lack of clarity about the innovations, lack of knowledge and skills; unavailability of required resources, lack of staff motivation, as well as teachers’ prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences. While many researchers have conducted implementation studies my study explores the discrepancies at the different levels and the unique context in which the policy operates. Although the policy is national its implementation is intended to be local. The implementation of the policy is committed to the States with decentralized planning at the State and the district level. Though teachers are allowed by the individual schools to adapt the policy, teachers themselves are unaware of how it could be adopted and adapted to the local context. Moreover the policy is also linear with policy makers and administrators being the decision makers.

Operating under such circumstances my study helps stakeholders to understand and account for some of the specific practices in the school. It helps to further understand how policies and classroom practices interact when influenced by the social context of the school. Personal dimensions of the teachers also influence policy implementation in the classroom. The policy failed to take note of the challenges the participants faced and the practicality of the new system. The study is significant as it highlights the policy challenge to bridge the disequilibrium that exists not only between the rural and urban schools identified in literature but also the disparity that exists within schools in a similar location

and context. This has implications for policy development to ensure quality education where schools can analyze their success and develop a strategy for change.

### **5.8.1 Impact of Social Norms on ESL Change**

Deal and Kennedy (1982) asserted that beliefs are more visible than values. They affect daily business and tend to characterize organizational performance. Beliefs are what a culture defends and views as the guiding forces in their actions. The beliefs and the values of the teachers manifested in their teaching practices. Most of the teachers opined that communicative teaching tends to focus on the communicative aspects and neglected teaching grammar. They preferred the grammar-translation method which they said stressed on accuracy. Though they adhered to the curriculum they conducted their classes according to the way they have been taught. Teachers dominated the classroom though students were placed in groups to complete their work (described on page 252).

Fullan (1982) stated that if teachers truly resist change, no mandate will deter that resistance. Therefore, teachers must feel comfortable or willing to take a risk to change from the “old” to the “new”. It becomes the school’s leadership responsibility to foster confidence in teachers, to help them feel free to take risks for change, and to remind them that positive assistance is theirs for the asking. The findings revealed that the personal concerns of the teacher had an impact on the curriculum implementation. Apart from the above mentioned factors, the individualistic school cultures, the capacity of the school to implement the change and the context of the school in which change was attempted had an impact on the way curriculum was implemented. The role of the principal also had a major impact in policy implementation (described on page 254).

Deal (1987) noted that schools show remarkable consistency across time. Few seem to be able to explain why the cultural patterns exist or what we can do to make them different. He suggest first, to understand why the patterns are so stable and immune to change, and then set into motion ways to address the past, present, and future within individual schools. Schools are the symbols. The images and beliefs that arise from schools

are largely hidden from conscious view. Deal (1987) contended that the reason the frustration exists over efforts to improve, reform, or change schools and their practices is because those imposing the change are usually from the outside of the culture and do not pay attention to the existing cultural elements. He explained that culture is an all-encompassing tapestry of meaning. Culture is “the way we do things around here.” The ways are transmitted from generation to generation. Culture is learned. Since culture helps provide stability, certainty or predictability for its members, any kind of reform or change brings the feelings of a loss of control and havoc within the culture.

The school as a learning environment and the socio-economic environment of the school also affected curriculum implementation in context. The working culture in schools had an impact on the teachers’ perceptions of their professional roles and objectives. Most of the students come from a poor background; the teachers perceived them as slow learners with poor command in English and any marginal success that the students obtained was considered good enough by the teachers. The capacity of the school to implement changes effectively was hindered due to the bureaucratic system that they had to follow. Teachers acknowledged that their working culture did not promote mutual understanding and coordination which is very important for effective implementation (described on page 258-259).

#### **5.8.2 Individual Schools’ capacity to implement ESL changes Contextual Complexities**

The individual school’s capacity to implement change and maintain the momentum of change was diverse which related to the school’s culture. Hargreaves (1997) focused on successful school cultures. Characteristics of its members are composed of: openness, informality, care, attentiveness, lateral working relationships, reciprocal collaboration, candid and vibrant dialogue, and a willingness to face uncertainty together. He asserted that the emotional climate of a building is directly tied to the school’s culture.

The schools visited did not exhibit most of the traits identified by Hargreaves (1997) although the teachers and the principal cared for each other and shared good relationships. However the observations as well as the field notes and interviews with teachers confirmed that teachers did not relate to each other over professional matters. They seldom discussed work related matters or initiated dialogue or meetings to address professional concerns (as described on pages 270-271). The teachers expected all the initiatives from the principal as a directive while the principals had many administrative jobs to be done and they attested to the lack of time for such collaboration. The working culture of the school could be defined as predictable and slow and teachers only resorted to their tried and tested methods. Though all the teachers said their goal was to get their students to be competent in their studies the school's mission was not stated explicitly anywhere around the school building. The teachers worked individually and that also accounted for the diverse pattern of implementation.

Researchers such as Fullan (1991) and Rosenholtz (1989) are looking at the culture of schools to determine why some schools are progressive, welcoming, effective, and reform minded while others are not. They also correlate the culture of a school with the leadership of the building administrator(s). Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) used the concept of "culture" to refer to the guiding beliefs and expectations evident in the way a school operates, particularly in reference to how people relate (or fail to relate) to each other.

The teachers' cultural orientations acted as a key factor that shaped their performances. Interview data revealed that the culture was related to performance. The socio-economic environment shaped the teachers' attitude to a great extent. Hence culture and context were seen as interrelated and the teachers attested to their cultural constraints as a hindrance to pursuing professional development and getting engaged actively in teacher collaboration. Most of the teachers who worked in the schools were female teachers and they cited that the culture is to take care of their families and therefore they could not spend time apart from their working hours which posed a hindrance to further development. They

were so rooted in their belief that they never attempted any changes to their lifestyle. Their views on culture in relation to adapting to the changes underscore the complexity of educational change (described on page 283).

The literature on school culture is linked to how these cultures deal with change. Fullan hints at it in *The New Meaning of Educational Reform* (1991). He contended that “if reforms are to be successful, individuals and groups must find meaning concerning what should change as well as how to go about it” (p. xi). He makes a relationship between change and culture; “Reform is not putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, schools, districts, universities, and so on.” (p. xii). Shaw and Reyes (1992) saw no single “...comprehensive organizational theory that fully explains the complexity of the school as a social organization.” (p. 295). They sought to examine the aspects of the complexity of the school organization from a cultural perspective. They found differences in cultures across schools based on levels of commitment, value orientation, and the relationship between the two. The findings have implications for the policy makers as well as the administrators to proactively address the context before any actual implementation could take place. The teachers in the three schools exhibited varied levels of commitment in relation to the socio-economic context in which their schools were located. This could be attested to the teachers’ own perceptions of their learners as well as the expectations of the parents (described on pages 283-284).

The schools rarely had an identifiable beginning and end. The macro-context of the national policy and the micro-context of the individual school vary significantly and therefore implementation must be examined separately. The conflicts mirrored only at the operational level as the teachers interviewed opined that the training seemed easy but the realities of the classroom varied significantly. Although some changes had taken place since the new policy was introduced the quality of the change was of immediate concern with most of the teachers. The theoretical framework of the study will help us to understand the complex educational settings under which each school operates. The nature, amount and



the pace of change was a product of local factors which were beyond the control of policy makers. Though located in the same district the context and the ability of each school to carry out the changes were very different. The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in Fullan's theory of educational change and Hoban's complexity theory and views teachers as the main agents of educational change. The focus therefore is on implementation and not the outcome of the practice. This study argues that for effective and successful implementation, the support of the school principal is very crucial.

### 5.8.3 English language policy [Vs](#) India's aspirations

India's pluralism is represented in its linguistic diversity. English is a medium of communication and for students, progress with economic and social development depends on it. Therefore it is pertinent that they learn to use it in socially and culturally appropriate ways. Teachers tend to 'Indianize English language' due to the societal bilingualism and constant code-switching [\(described on page 192\)](#). -The communicative context in which it is expected to operate is in direct contrast to events in the classrooms. The uneven quality between the different schools within the States gives rise to low standards. Students' rights to education outside school was not considered and the cultural appropriateness of the setting in which the ESL changes were introduced was not considered [\(described on page 237\)](#). - Social norms were strongly prevalent with boys being taken away from school for labor while the girls were expected to do household work. This power sharing was reflected even with teachers expected to play their roles in the families. Social norms therefore played a significant role [\(described on page 242\)](#). -

The demands of the curriculum could not be met by some schools. The schools lack the right stimulus to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas. The success of the ABL policy rests with the fact that most of the students become literate compared to previously years before the ABL policy was implemented [\(described on page 228\)](#). - However English is bifocal existing at mass level and the elite level. English plays a role for political control

and social mobility. School is a public domain where use of language is an important factor. However there are not enough opportunities and therefore lack of English is used to 1.) discriminate groups, 2.) to restrict opportunities and 3.) to keep them out of bounds of power. English in India today is a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and fuller participation in national and international life...(NCERT, 2006, p.1).

On a positive note, language policy has been changed to adapted to the changing demands where English is an associate official language and a second language in 19 States. English in India has played a role in maintaining the diversity of India's language scene. English has been a part of our education system for more than a century, yet English is beyond the reach of most of our young people...Early action in this sphere would help us build an inclusive society and transform India into a knowledge society (GOI, 2007). With Bangladesh and China expressing interest in adopting the ABL policy ( **PM 1 line 76-77**) the policy could be a step in the right direction if the gaps are addressed. It would provide an opportunity for the disadvantaged students to match the magnitude of aspirations of India. [\(PM 1 line 76-78\).](#)

The need for language education arise from the multicultural nature of society. TLF did not explicitly state which language should be taught as first, second and third language. Some of the specific challenges in implementing the ABL curriculum was the cultural appropriateness of such a curriculum in India. Hence social norms played a significant role. Based on observations the strong social norms also existed among teachers as to their roles in the classrooms and the new ABL system was threatening their routines.

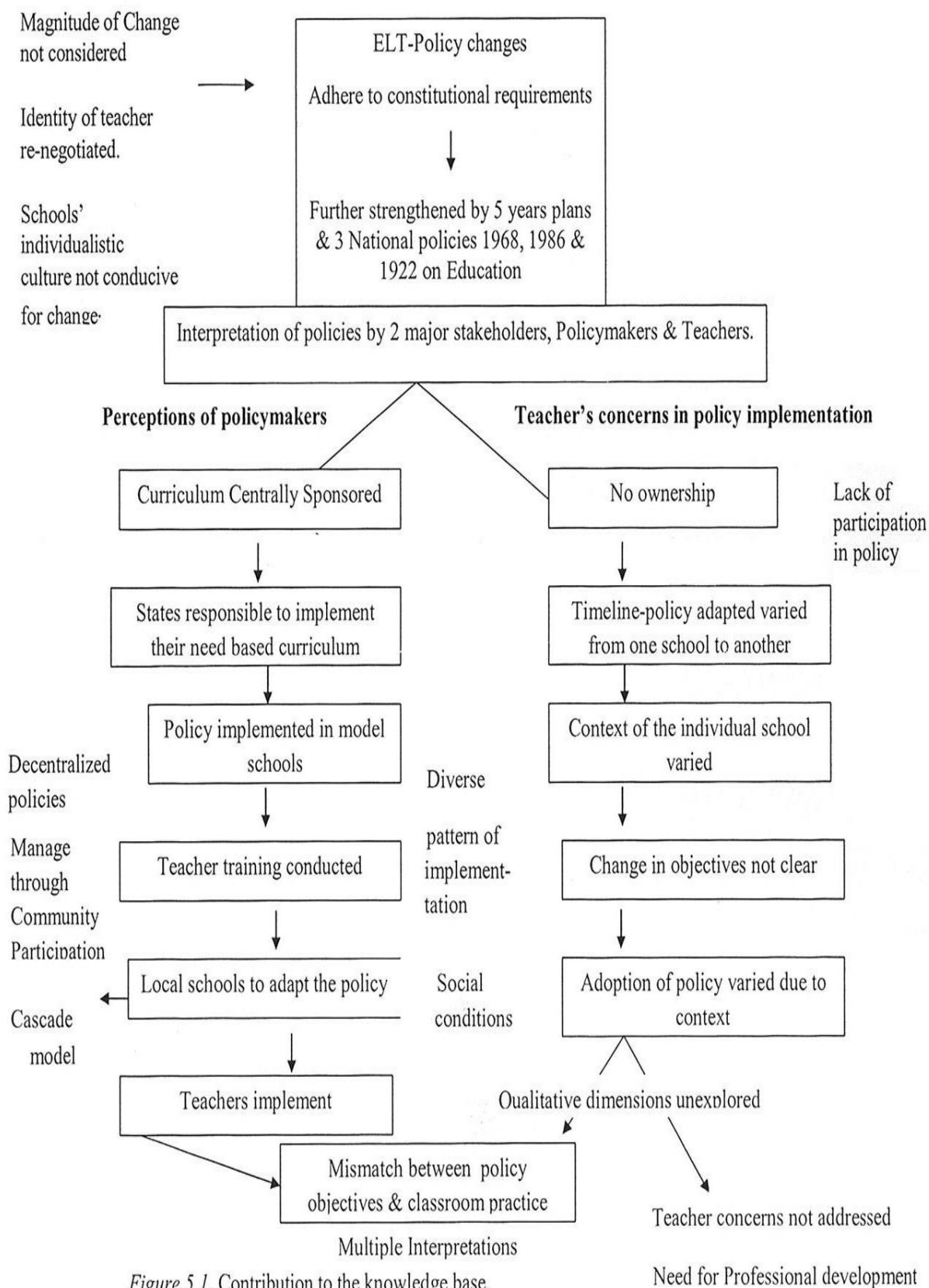
Another challenge was that the demands of the curriculum could not be met by some of the under resourced schools. Students do not directly learn from the syllabus and the teachers did not realize the potential of interaction among students. The rich language environment was missing from the schools and therefore the imposed change did not make any significant change. The quality of the in-service teacher training did not equip the teachers to handle the multi-grade classes. Most of the teachers not being specialized in

## **5.9 The Study's Contribution to the Knowledge Base**

The results demonstrated that the implementation of this policy was problematic in certain aspects and posed many challenges to teachers and administrators. The results discussed support the theoretical framework of the study drawn from Fullan's theory of educational change and Hoban's Complexity theory. The key findings relate to the curriculum changes that have taken place and the educational problems these policies were attempting to respond to. The factors affecting the planning and the teaching of the curriculum and the context of the school in curriculum implementation have been discussed. Key findings relate to teacher characteristics, their work ethics, teachers' common mode of instruction and teachers' perceptions of the curriculum change. Uncertainties surrounding how to implement are obvious and the areas of strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the different stakeholders are identified. Participation in policy development is a good thing, as it leads to a feeling of ownership. Furthermore, participation in policy development encourages implementation. There is a need then, for the creation of new culture in terms of participation in institutional issues (Elmore, 1995; Fullan, 1993). Policy implementation requires consensus building, participation of key stakeholders, conflict resolution, compromise, contingency planning, resource mobilization and adaptation (Sutton, 1999). Juma and Clark (1995) emphasized that the policymaking process is not a rational activity, as portrayed in the literature, but is messy, and the outcomes appear as a result of complicated political, social and institutional processes which are 'evolutionary'. The policy process should strive to make policy clear and simple, and should address the policy not just as a document, but as what happens on the ground. The results demonstrated that many factors had an impact in curriculum implementation and the factors are mostly related to teachers, administrators and policy makers. Therefore

they have to be taken into consideration in any policy planning. As Marsh (1986), said, “It cannot be expected that teachers will automatically implement a curriculum according to the intentions of the developer” (p. 19). Therefore, prior to implementation of any new curriculum policy, a detailed analysis of existing systems, especially the different cultures of organization and the contexts where teachers work should be conducted (White, 1988). The discussion of the findings that relate to the different interpretations by the policy makers and the teachers is represented in Figure 5.1.

Any coherent language curriculum will have to reconcile what is desirable-policy- and what is acceptable and possible- practice (Johnson, 1989). This study points to the discrepancies that arise in implementing language curriculum in a decentralized setting creating room for disparities in how it is implemented. Policy reforms should be instituted bearing in mind the role of language in education.



This study has explored and helped to gain insights into the implementation of language policy that will result in an inconsistent approach to the education of English language learners within the various schools in the State. The study is also important to and relevant to parallel cases to countries in which English is the second language in the school curriculum. While the study does not evaluate the effectiveness of the policy it helps to create understanding of the complexity of educational change through the change frames proposed in the theoretical framework.

This study used different approaches like interviews, focus group interviews with students, field notes and document analysis to solicit the views from different stakeholders on ESL policy implementation and its impact on practice in the primary schools of India. The study provides a better understanding of the issues involved in the implementation of a language policy and the key factors that shape the practice. In an attempt to understand the nature and the dynamics of the policy process the underlying values and beliefs that had an impact on practice has been identified. In any educational jurisdiction, failing to attend to possible barriers precludes classroom teachers from following the guidelines expected by policy makers (Elmore & Sykes, 1992).

India's national education policy, known as the "Three Language Formula, TLF," originated as a pressure from many fronts faced by the newly independent country such as: (1) to preserve its unique linguistic and cultural identity; (2) to maintain unity among various linguistic, religious, and ethnic groups; (3) to facilitate the development of regional languages which were severely neglected under colonial rule; (4) to grant equal access to education, especially by children from lower socioeconomic groups; and (5) to bring modernization and economic self-sufficiency to a poor country. Although TLF was implemented as a step to address the complexity of the language issues in Indian schools, Sonntag (2002), rightly points out, "With reportedly over 1500 mother tongues in India, language policy by necessity, is complex, multilayered, and frequently ambiguous" (p. 165). The TLF was further improved by The Education Commission, 1964-1966 (known as

the modified and graduated TLF) that recommended: (a) the mother tongue or the regional language of the state at the lower primary level (b) the official language of the union (Hindi) or the associated official language of the union, (English) at the upper primary level; and (c) a modern India or foreign language not covered under (a) and (b) and other than that used as the medium of instruction at the secondary level (Sridhar, 1996). The Program of Action document of the National Education Policy (Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, 1992) referred to the inconsistency in the stage/grade at which different languages were introduced, the order and duration of the study of each of the languages, and the lack of clarity regarding the expected competency level to be achieved by students in the three (and sometimes four) languages. Primary education in India is divided into two levels; the lower primary (standards 1-5) and the upper primary (6-8 standards). The words, ‘standard’ and ‘class’, are used in the place of ‘grade’ while referring to the level of education, such as standard or class V (or V) in reference to the fifth grade. This study only focused on the lower primary standards (1-5) and in analyzing the implementation of language policy and its impact on practice both the strengths and the weaknesses of the policies are identified.

### **5.9.1 Implications for Second Language Teaching**

The Annual Survey of Education Report (ASER) states the low learning levels in primary schools as exemplified by children’s inability to read. The study aims to understand the implementation of the ESL policy and its impact on practice and does not aim to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation. Various approaches like interviews with the key stakeholders, interviews with students, document analysis, field notes and classroom observations helped to generate understanding of the salient features of the policy and its impact on instructional practices. The study has implications for language studies in India as well as in other contexts where language teaching is concerned. Gaps were identified between what is envisioned and what happened in reality and teachers

operated under different paradigms and did not totally agree with the policy. Clearly most of them viewed it as compulsory or mandatory and something that would not last. All the major stakeholders felt strongly about being involved in the policy process. The teachers saw their roles differently and adapted parts of the policy. Since teachers were passive implementers a mismatch between intention and execution in policy was identified. Factors that affected implementation mostly related to the context of the school, culture, resource materials, teaching experience, pedagogy, professional development and goals of the policy and the other factors discussed in chapter 5. The effectiveness and efficiency is not the concern as the study did not deal with the issue of evaluation although the issues of exams are dealt with in relation to the context of the issue discussed.

### **5.9.2 Challenges in Implementing the Language Curriculum**

The importance of the social context in which learning and development takes place cannot be underestimated. In this case the social context in which the language learning took place had an impact on children's learning. Though the policy called for 'child-centered learning' and 'joyful learning' the teachers emphasized rote memory and chorus practice and most of them associated this with their own method of learning and most of the classes are taught with the teacher dominating the classroom. Rogoff (1990) makes the same point in *Apprenticeship in Thinking*. She argues that the social context is inseparable from the child and the social partners: "The roles of the individual and the social world are mutual and not separable, as humans by nature engage in social activity with their contemporaries and learn from their predecessors" (p. viii). Researchers find that cognitive skills vary according to the social situation in which they are practiced- e.g., the same tasks performed poorly in laboratory settings are executed with great success in the social world. For example, White and Siegel conclude that: "to understand cognitive development across time and space requires seeing it deeply embedded in a social world of occasions, formalities, etiquettes and dramaturgy" (1984, p. 239).



The teachers being used to the teacher-centered method perceived as the ‘correct method’ of teaching by most teachers and parents could not revert to the new system. Moreover the professional development that teachers received was restricted in scope as it failed to provide teachers with the relevant professional skills in handling a multi-grade task as well as one that involved peer learning. The cascading method of professional development that teachers received was not consistent with the need to manage the multi-grade classroom where teachers were entrusted to teach students of all grades and the teachers taught all the subjects to the same group. The teachers who received training were expected to impart their knowledge to the others. Dong (2004) calls attention to the increase in ELLs and the “...urgent need for all teachers to develop culturally sensitive and language appropriate instruction so that all students can succeed” (p. 202). Thus, a connection between theory and practice can strengthen professional development, if professional development is also in-depth, sustained and collaborative in nature (Spaulding et al., 2004).

This form of professional development, Bell (1991) argued, assumed that change in schools could be brought about by changing or randomly self-selected individuals within those schools, who would be expected to successfully generate change in others to such an extent that the school itself would be transformed. Another issue observed was that peer learning did not take place in the classroom and as per the teachers’ account the clever students were not willing to help the weaker ones and the group work did not achieve its objective. The teachers were also of the opinion that they have to intervene and that the children were too young to take up peer learning. Their own conception of how language learning should take place coupled with the realities of the classroom made peer learning impossible. Thus the policy makers’ view of reducing teachers’ workload were viewed differently by teachers who claimed they were too busy handling multi-grade classes and the no exam policy had little impact on their workload. Many studies focus on interactional routines that support learning and development in the learning setting. The study of adult-

child interaction by Petitto (1988) demonstrates how the zone of proximal development is applied to support the acquisition of procedural knowledge, in this case, the hierarchy of goals and sub-goals that characterize remainder division. His findings suggest a type of teaching and teacher expertise that pays close attention to changes “in the specifics of a plan while retaining the plan’s overall goal structure” (p. 235). Interestingly, Petitto finds that teachers differentially assist children according to their achievement levels. However the teachers in this study failed to assist the students who were at the different ladder as per their progress chart. This finding suggests that the teachers need to understand the situational context in which they teach. Elliott (1993) argued that wise professional judgments and decisions rest on the quality of the situational understandings they manifest. Situational understanding involved discriminating and then synthesizing the practical significant elements to a situation into a unified and coherent picture of the whole.

Ricento (2007) outlines the importance of looking at the following elements when considering language planning:

- policies concerned with language and social integration need to be sensitive to the local needs and culture;
- the kinds of support provided by government should be negotiated in partnership with local community organizations, schools and other stakeholders
- policy framework must be evaluated on an ongoing basis; including periodic assessment of how the original goals are being met (or not being met);
- all stakeholders must feel a sense of investment in the process, evaluation and reassessment of public policy related to the learning and use of languages.

The teachers must be able to examine the peer-peer interaction in their classrooms and offer valuable insights as and when necessary. Although much research highlights the value of adult-child interaction, Tudge (1990) argued that peer-peer collaboration can also be beneficial given certain conditions—that is, when the partner is more competent and

confident and the materials provide feedback. Without these conditions, the possibility that the children regress in their development is high. He argued that the effect of feedback “overshadows any effects of discussion with a partner” (p. 167) and demonstrated again that it is insufficient to think that the zone of proximal development can be achieved on its own; the teacher must remain vigilant of the development process and intervene whenever necessary. The findings revealed that the learners were not confident themselves and they were not mature to lead the discussion. There was no feedback with the materials given and the teachers claimed that they could not attend to all the groups even though most of them were of the opinion that they should intervene to provide feedback. The cultural norms certainly contributed to the complexity of the language learning in this case.

The discussions and findings stated above affirm the complexity of change and that the life of the classroom in itself is full of complexity, intrinsically dialogic (Gutierrez & Stone, 2000), socially constructed and negotiated (Putney, Green, Dixon, Duran, & Yeager, 2000) and the complexity has critical implications for language and literacy development (John-Steiner & Mann, 1996; Gutierrez & Stone, 2000; Mercer, 1995; Wells, 1999), cultural mediation in teaching (Moll, 2002), and context development (Vasquez, 2003, 2006).

### **5.9.3 Implications for Policy Makers**

Presumably there have been differences in the implementation of the ESL policy in the three schools studied. Though not remarkably different the differences were due to the external and the internal factors and the school that compared well had conditions conducive for successful implementation. Though all the three schools faced constraints in implementing the policy there are many factors that accounted for the differences. Other dimensions include reasonable time frame for implementing policies, the school’s capacity to implement policies, infrastructure, school’s culture, socio-economic environment and other factors.

~~McLaughlin (1987) suggests that there are different phases or periods of policy implementation. In the first phase, the challenge lies in the uncertain relationship between policies and implementation programs in broad parameters. The second phase is characterized by unpacking of the implementation process and looking at the relations between policy and practice. The third phase is an attempt to integrate the micro-world of individual implementations. He concluded by making the following points:~~

- ~~• Individual incentives and beliefs are central to local responses;~~
- ~~• Policy cannot always mandate what matters to outcomes at the local level;~~
- ~~• Effective implementation requires a strategic balance of pressure and support; and~~

~~Policy directed change is ultimately a problem of the smallest unit~~ The interview data supports the above mentioned ideas. Sutton (1999) argued that the linear model of policy making is characterized by the objective analysis of options, and that the separation of policy development from implementation is inadequate. She advised that policy implementation is best understood as a chaos of purposes and accidents.

Policy makers should be clear about the following: How they reach decisions about curriculum; how effectively the evaluation is conducted; and defining the goals and the objectives clearly.

It is important to see the official policy as something flexible and open to change, since in every school the socio-linguistic context is dynamic (Corson, 1999). Jennings (1996) stated that the “measure of the teacher doing the policy depends on how open they are to learning, reflection and change.” (p. 108).

The implementation or the lack of implementation related to how the major stakeholders saw their roles in the policy process. The implementation was characterized with different people in different directions with no common consensus on the goals and the objectives. Partly due to the policy statements which had no clearly stated outcomes, teachers set their own goals to be achieved which resulted in varied practices. There was no common consensus on how the policy could be implemented. There was no realistic

framework and therefore the administrators did not communicate effectively with the teachers and the principals. Focusing on the context in which the policy is implemented is very important. The administrators have to conduct needs analysis for different schools and teachers so that policies could be adapted to the individual context of the school. Bekalo and Welford (2000) found an inverse relationship between stated policy objectives and the teaching and learning activities prescribed in the textbooks, and between policy makers' intentions and the assessment practices. Their results revealed that the link between policy and practice was, at best, tenuous. Just as implementers at the grass-roots level must have the capacity and will to carry out the policy, middle managers must also be equipped with such qualities (McLaughlin, 1987). Therefore administrators must be rigorous in delivering the policies. There should be periodic evaluation and decision making should be based on evaluation. The study revealed that there were no provisions for monitoring except for the visits by the authorities. Teachers revealed that the visits by the officials were to ensure teacher compliance with policy process and offered very little support mechanisms for teachers.

#### **5.9.4 5-Implications for Practice**

*Teacher Professional Development* The reforms teachers were faced with involved different kind of changes such as teaching and learning, changes in the materials, and changes in the assessment format. Apart from factors like teacher-student ratio, the learners' proficiency in the language and other factors teachers were found be lacking in the following aspects:

- The teachers taught all the subjects to the students; however they had no integrated skills across classes.
- Culture was not conducive for change
- Teachers lacked positive morale
- No increased accountability from teachers due to the absence of formal exams

- Teachers were lacking in pedagogy resorting to rote memorization and drilling.
- Teachers did not receive adequate training to teach multi-grade classes.
- Teachers had little direction on how to implement policy
- Cultural constraints posed a hindrance to teacher professional development

These factors suggest a serious need for teacher professional development. The study is significant in that it explored how teachers tried to come to terms with the planning and the teaching of the new curriculum with the restrictions they faced and what factors hindered implementation. Their attitudes to innovation were not positive. When an innovation is incompatible with teachers' attitudes, some form of resistance or negotiation of the innovation is likely to occur (Young & Lee, 1987).

Blasé and Blasé (2000) advocated six strategies for effective instructional leaders to promote professional development of teachers in the schools:

- emphasizing the study of teaching and learning
- supporting collaboration efforts among educators
- developing coaching relationships among educators
- encouraging and supporting the redesign of programs
- applying the principles of adult learning, growth and development at all phases of staff development .
- Implementing action research to inform instructional decision making.

In order for teachers to change, they must be afforded opportunities to learn. Professional development is a necessity in order for true reform to occur (Darling – Hammond, 1999; Little, 1997).

The study revealed that teachers' cultural orientation and other personal concerns posed a hindrance for further professional development. The school's culture was also related to the school's performance. The schools with principals who exhibited strong

leadership quality and those located in urban areas fared well compared to those in rural areas where the teachers were laid back and did not care to take up professional training. Teachers then have to redefine themselves as learners and professionals. Teachers who consider themselves as learners develop new understandings and are likely to improve their practices (Peterson, McCarthy, & Elmore, 1997).

It is also important to recognize that no new program or innovation will be implemented uniformly. Close collaboration between program developers/researchers and teachers can greatly facilitate this process and can be accomplished in a variety of ways (Ward & Tikinoff, 1982).

The teachers in this study did not have the benefit of feedback on student learning progress. Practices that are new and unfamiliar will be accepted or rejected when teachers perceive them as successful with their students. With no formal evaluation except for the inbuilt evaluation in the system the teachers have no solid foundations to base their conclusions about the new curriculum except for their informal observations of students in the classrooms and assessments conducted verbally. The routine they follow had created formidable obstacles for change. Respect for tradition and force of habit can be insurmountable hurdles to modification of practice. Certainly, this has been the experience with school reform (Sarason, 1982). This has important policy consideration for policy makers where specific procedures should be included as evidence of the effectiveness. Formative tests can also be used to guide instructional revisions, when necessary, so that still other improvements can be attained (Guskey, 1985).

#### **5.9.56 Role of the Principal**

All the school principals expressed a dire need for their roles to be redefined. The principals did not have enough power and most of the times acted as mediators in implementing the policy. They had to perform the dual role of administrative as well as academic services and therefore the principals stated that they have no time for school wide

reform initiatives. Joyce and Showers (1982) suggested that the support can take the form of coaching: providing teachers with technical feedback, guiding them in adapting the new practices to the needs of their students, and helping them to analyze the effects on students. Spillane et al. (2002) maintained that the position of administrators in the organizational hierarchy empowered them to focus their work in two directions. One direction is that they are enactors themselves responsible for implementation. The other is to depend on other enactors like teachers for the successful policy implementation. Though the authors identified the administrators as empowered principals in schools who had to focus on both administrative and academic aspects, the principals preferred to concentrate on just administration so that they could devote time and energy to what they are supposed to do.

The theoretical framework highlights the complexity of the change process. Attention to resources and support for facilitating change is crucial for both the principals and the teachers since principals are also required to teach; they also are in need of this. In commenting on the role of the principals Fullan (1997c) noted that effective principals express their values and extend them to others. They enable the teachers to collaborate to find solutions, and they support the teachers in their reform commitments and capacities.

### **5.10 Limitations of the Study**

India is a big country and the diversity means the findings cannot be generalized to all the other schools. Although the study has gained an understanding and insight on the ESL policy implementation and its impact on practice, the study did not focus on the effectiveness or the outcome of the policy as it is not an evaluation of the new policy.

Another limitation is that though the interviews were done with key stakeholders, teachers, parents and students, their views and insights are limited and only related to the particular context. Their views cannot be held true in other settings or contexts and therefore the results cannot be generalized.



The study only focused on the lower primary grades (standard 1 to 5) and did not examine the upper primary (6-8). Therefore the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the whole of the primary school system in India.

Considering that there are various types of schooling in India and different schools follow different syllabus this study is confined only to the three schools identified in the Madurai district. Three schools were selected due to the demographic considerations of the schools. It should be mentioned in this context that only the government schools in that locality carried out the new ABL policy change. Sample was determined by informational considerations. Key informants of the study were subjects with special expertise. Moreover no claims are made in generalizing the findings as representing the standards of primary education to the whole State. School A in a predominantly rural area, school B with a mix of rural and urban children and school C in a urban area. The prerogative of the principals and teachers to be interviewed was taken into consideration. There was difficulty in gaining access as some schools viewed this as a study evaluating ABL change.

### **5.11 Implications for Future Research**

The study is significant in contributing to the change frame of the theoretical framework. Apart from the internal and external factors identified cultural constraints as a hindrance and the issue of gender as factor that shapes practice is identified. The importance of the social context and a preference for routine in teacher characteristics and personal concerns of the teacher are identified as important aspects in curriculum implementation. The study has also contributed in terms of the methodology employed. Khaparde (2002) pointed out that surveys provide information about rural habitations, number of schools, pupil-teacher ratio, type of management of schools, enrolment, facilities for non-formal and pre-primary education, education of disadvantaged population groups, buildings and other facilities. The information obtained from this survey is used in policy

formulation both at national and state levels. However, relative to the size of the country the variations in educational contexts and size of investment on education, the incidence of research based policy formulation is relatively low. Thus the research is significant in focusing on issues of immediate concern having implications for policy and practice. A number of conclusions can be made and several implications have been suggested.

- \* The current study only focused on the lower grades of the primary schools and the students revert back to the use of textbook in standard 5 which continues until they complete standard 8 which is the end of the primary schooling. The effects of this policy could be strongly felt in the upper primary classes as the students revert back to the textbook system. Future research therefore could focus on the impact of the policy in upper primary schools.
- \* Further research on the effectiveness of the policy based on the evaluation of the exams in the upper primary classes could reveal useful insights on how the policy was perceived by the various stakeholders.
- \* A future research could involve a large number of schools following the same policy that could help in making comparisons.
- \* A future research on the professional training program offered to teachers could reveal insights on what type of help teachers need to implement the policy successfully.

## **5.12 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study in reinforcing a number of elements impacting educational change also raises many significant issues to further understand the implementation of ESL policy in the Indian context. Any curriculum change has to be implemented in view of the local contextual conditions and change processes have to be built on existing values and understandings and the views of the stakeholders who will be in charge of implementation. Careful attention should be paid to the change process not only to facilitate change but also the endurance of change. Though the change process varies widely in context they share a

common purpose and therefore the issues dealt with in this study are applicable to change processes in any other country. A new curriculum will often require specific goals for student learning, professional autonomy as well as allowing time for teachers to collaborate and learn together. Schools must secure the needed resources and determine the pace and scope of change. These essential ingredients for change should be strengthened to effect meaningful change. The implementation of language curriculum requires the commitment of all the stakeholders involved in the implementation. Changes in the language curriculum should encourage teachers to be responsive and reflective practitioners and it should be relevant to the cultural and social context in which the changes take place. The limitations in instituting changes should be acknowledged.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Lead questions to the Indian Primary school teachers.**

1. What are the approaches adopted to determine the curriculum policy?
2. What emerging trends were incorporated into the curriculum development?
3. What is the primary goal in teaching English to the school children?
4. How does the peculiar situation of having two sets of teachers ‘regular’ and ‘para-teachers’ affect the primary education in India?
5. What predominant ideologies contributed to the curriculum development?
6. What are the policy constraints faced by the policy makers?
7. What are the pragmatic constraints faced by the policy makers?
8. What provisions are made to monitor the outcomes of policy implementation in terms of its suitability, feasibility and acceptability?
9. What are the approaches adopted in the selection of the content?
10. What issues arises in the implementation of the ESL curriculum policy in practice?

## **Appendix B**

### **Interview questions for Policy Makers**

1. What roles are teachers expected to play in the classroom? Just transmit knowledge or facilitator etc.
2. What kind of professional development are the teachers given to adapt to the new curriculum?
3. Are the para-teachers also given the same kind of professional development?
4. If there is no training for para-teachers then there is a gap between trained and un-trained teachers. How is this gap addressed?
5. What is done to compensate for this difference?
6. How long did it take to implement this new policy?
7. Was it implemented in stages?
8. Who were the people involved in the decision making?
9. What were the expected glitches in implementing this policy?
10. How were those addressed before the policy was implemented?
11. Are there any follow-up training conducted for the teachers?
12. Were there any revisions made to the initial materials since its first implementation?
13. What provisions are made to monitor the outcomes of policy implementation in terms of its suitability, feasibility and acceptability?
14. Are the goals and objectives derived from needs analyses? If not, from where were they derived?
15. What are the policy constraints faced by the policy makers?
16. What are the pragmatic constraints faced by the policy makers?
17. What are the approaches adopted to determine the curriculum policy? Specialist approach or learner-centered approach?



## **Appendix C**

### **Interview questions (School Principals)**

1. How much of funds are allocated for the materials and training yearly?
2. How is the fund used?
3. Who decides on the staff development activity?
4. Was there openness in change when the system was first introduced?
5. On what basis are the staff selected for the courses?
6. How often do they get to attend the training?
7. How is professional collaboration encouraged at school level?
8. Why did they decide to introduce English at primary school? What influenced the decision?
9. How far have the objectives of the 3-Language formula been achieved?
10. What evidence can you provide for that achievement?
11. What are the constraints or obstacles in trying to achieve the aims? Give some examples.
12. What are the main issues that still need to be resolved in your opinion?

## **Appendix D**

### **Interview questions (students)**

1. Do you like to use the ABL cards to learn English?
2. How often do you use the words you learnt in class?
3. How fast do you learn English? How many times do you have to listen to a word before you can use it in your conversation?
4. Do you discuss with your friends?
5. What aspects of the card system interest you the most? Vocabulary, words, color, arrangement, size, pictures etc.
6. Do you clarify your doubts in class?
7. Do you read English books?
8. If some of your group members are slow do you help your friends to finish their work?
9. When you have completed all your cards what do you do in class?
10. Do your parents check your report card every month?
11. Which activity do you like to do often? (reading, rhymes, vocabulary games, ladder activity, or writing).