

**EXPLORING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING  
AND LEARNING AMONG LINGUISTIC  
MINORITY LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY**

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of*

**Doctor of Philosophy in Arts**

Submitted by

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## CERTIFICATE

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And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere / elsewhere.

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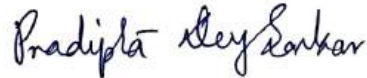


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## DECLARATION

I, Pradipta Dey Sarkar, hereby declare that this thesis entitled *Exploring English Language Teaching and Learning among Linguistic Minority Learners: A Case Study* represents my original work that has been done after registration for the degree of PhD at Jadavpur University, Kolkata and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, obtained the relevant ethical and/or safety approval (where applicable), and acknowledged my obligations and the rights of the participants.

November, 2025

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**DEDICATED TO MY BELOVED PARENTS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Learning English as a second language or a foreign language becomes quite challenging for various reasons. It becomes challenging especially for those living in socio-economically disadvantaged areas or for those originating from diverse linguistic backgrounds. India being a multilingual and multicultural country, in most of the regions people can speak multiple languages. In case of tribal population, it includes tribal languages as well. In the Indian state of West Bengal, there are several areas where multilingualism operates behind learning English as a second/foreign language. There are several schools where teachers (who may or may not belong to any linguistic minority group) have to teach English to linguistic minority learners along with other learners. Often the contrast between the mother tongue of the linguistic minority learners and English creates difficulty in learning English with regard to grammar, pronunciation and basic sentence structure.

The present study incorporated three primary objectives. The first objective was to explore strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India. The second objective was to identify the challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and the challenges faced by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India. The third objective was to study the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English. The study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design for delving deep into the phenomena and for gaining deeper insights from the participants. Data, required for the study, were collected through different methods, namely interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations and document analysis. Incorporating a triangulation

method using various sources of data, while investigating the phenomena, the study validated its findings.

The data collected for this study were analyzed qualitatively using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach. However, from the analysis of data five major themes were generated under which a number of sub-themes were placed. The generated themes are – teaching strategies, challenges, perceptions, discrimination and lack of initiatives. The findings of the study explore that teachers of English (EFL/ESL teachers) employed various teaching strategies for teaching English to the linguistic minority learners. Some of the strategies were pedagogical translanguaging, integration of technology, use of textbook and various teaching-learning materials, bridging previous and new knowledge, and promoting bilingualism and multilingualism. At the same time the study investigated the challenges faced by both teachers and learners, especially during teaching and learning English. The findings of the study identified several challenges related to poverty, infrastructure, evaluation process, teachers' knowledge and skills, learners' problems in learning English and lack of parental support. The study also explored the perceptions of teachers, linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

**ATR** – Assistant Teacher Respondent

**B. Ed** – Bachelor of Education

**B. Sc** – Bachelor of Science

**BA** – Bachelor of Arts

**D. El. Ed.** – Diploma in Elementary Education

**EFL** – English as a Foreign Language

**ERIC** – Education Resources Information Centre

**ESL** – English as a Second Language

**FGD** – Focus Group Discussion

**Govt.** – Government

**HDD** – Hard Disk Drive

**HS** – Higher Secondary

**HTR** – Head Teacher Respondent

**ICDS** – Integrated Child Development Services

**LSRW** – Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing

**MA** – Master of Arts

**PC** – Personal Computer

**PR** – Parent Respondent

**SC** – Scheduled Caste

**SI** – Sub-Inspector (of school)

**SLA** – Second Language Acquisition

**ST** – Scheduled Tribe

**TIC** – Teacher-in-Charge

**TLM** – Teaching Learning Material

Chapter - 1

# INTRODUCTION

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Overview**

This chapter has introduced the ground on which the study was conducted. The chapter thus mentioned the background behind realizing the need for conducting the study. Besides, the chapter also introduced the purpose, statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study. Moreover, the most important components, that is, the objectives as well as the research questions which further led to initiate the study were also included in this chapter.

### **1.2 Background of the Study**

India is a land of diversity. It is inhabited by people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. That is why India is considered a multilingual and multicultural country. People in India can communicate in more than one language or dialect. As per Census, 2011 documents, there are around 121 languages in India, spoken as first languages or mother tongues. The Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India recognizes 22 languages as the official languages of the states in India. Of the 22 scheduled languages, Hindi occupies a significant position with almost 528 million speakers, which is 44 % of India's total population (Chandras, 2020). However, the importance of learning English in today's world is beyond explanation because it is used as a 'lingua franca' across the globe. Learning English broadens the scope for communication. But in a multilingual country like India, English language teaching does not mean promoting English culture. Rather the main objective behind English language teaching, as it is quite similar in the

case of any other languages, is to promote multilingualism along with encouraging critical thinking skills. The purpose of the entire English language programme is to encourage effortless speaking ability, patient listening and understanding ability, comprehensible and sensitive reading ability, confident and precise writing ability and learning to respect other languages (Agnihotri, 2010). So, while teaching English in diverse regions of India, the paramount importance should be given on multilingualism. Teaching English through English often curbs the effectiveness of learning among learners who are from tribal communities or linguistic minority backgrounds. Addressing the linguistic diversities in a multilingual classroom is considered a very effective and prospective approach to teaching English. Instead of resisting a learner to use his/her mother tongue, encouraging them to use it for learning English proves to be an effective method. As per National Education Policy 2020:

.....research clearly shows that children pick up languages extremely quickly between the ages of 2 and 8 and that multilingualism has great cognitive benefits to young students, children will be exposed to different languages early on (but with a particular emphasis on the mother tongue), starting from the Foundational Stage onwards. (Government of India, 2020, p.13).

So, teaching English in an Indian classroom can be effective if the learning needs of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds can be addressed by encouraging multilingualism, by identifying challenges of teaching and learning and by adopting innovative strategies for teaching.

### **1.3 Rationale of the Study**

The rationale behind the present study was initiated while exploring various studies conducted on English language teaching and learning in connection to tribal learners and

also learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. Since it is often evident that the tribal learners have first languages, distinct from the language which is usually spoken by majority of the population in any region, they often have to face difficulties in learning English. ESL/EFL teachers are not often accustomed to the tribal languages. As a result, teachers have to employ the languages spoken by the majority of the people for teaching English. The purpose of the study was to explore the strategies employed by teachers for teaching linguistic minority learners, especially those belonging to the tribal communities. Besides, the study also aimed at exploring the challenges faced by both teachers and linguistic minority learners at government-run primary schools during English language teaching and learning. Furthermore, the present study attempted to explore the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents concerning the need and importance of learning English.

#### **1.4 Need of the Study**

The present study was designed in order to explore insights into the strategies employed by the teachers while teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government-run primary schools. Besides, the study also delves deep into the challenges faced by both teachers who teach English to linguistic minority learners and the learners from linguistic minority groups during English language teaching and learning. By interviewing a few teachers of English (ESL/EFL teachers) and head teachers of the select govt. primary schools along with observing English language classes, I attempted to explore the strategies for teaching English and to identify challenges faced by both teachers and linguistic minority learners. Besides, by conducting focus group discussions with linguistic minority learners and interviewing their parents, I tried to know their perceptions towards English. The need of the study lies in the expectation that it may set an example for diverse scholars to conduct research on diverse aspects concerning issues

related to English language teaching and learning and multilingual aspects of the linguistic minority learners, learners from various tribal communities and learners from disadvantaged classes in the Indian context.

### **1.5 Statement of the Problem**

In Indian context, learning English as a second language or a foreign language becomes quite challenging often for several reasons. It becomes challenging especially for those living in the socio-economically disadvantaged areas or for those who are originating from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The linguistic varieties in India include tribal languages as well. In the Indian state of West Bengal, there are several areas where multilingualism operates behind learning English as a foreign language. There are several schools where teachers (who may or may not belong to any linguistic minority group) have to teach English to linguistic minority learners along with other learners. Often the contrast between the mother tongue of the linguistic minority learners and English creates difficulty in learning English with regard to grammar, pronunciation and basic sentence structure. But it is necessary to strengthen the foundation of English language for each and every learner at the primary stage of schooling so that it can develop various basic skills like listening, speaking, reading and writing. The strong foundation of English will lead to develop critical and creative thinking skills along with expression of thoughts. Such skills can be developed by the appropriate teaching skills of the teachers as well as the supports and initiatives from the parents and guardians. While it is important to explore the strategies employed by ESL/EFL teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners, it is also equally important to investigate the challenges faced by both the teachers as well as the learners because analysis of challenges will help to explore innovative and modern strategies for teaching English,

prioritizing multilingual aspects. Besides, it is also essential to explore the perceptions of the linguistic minority learners and their parents towards learning English.

Therefore, the primary objectives of this research are to explore the strategies used by EFL/ESL teachers while teaching English to linguistic minority learners, challenges faced by both teachers and students, and perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English. Hence, the title of the present study is “Exploring English Language Teaching and Learning among Linguistic Minority Learners: A Case Study”.

### **1.6 Research Objectives**

The main objectives of the study, after a thorough review of literature, are as follows:

1. To explore the strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India.
2. To identify the challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and the challenges faced by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India.
3. To study the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

The study will try to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the major strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?

2. What are the major challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?
3. What are the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English?

### **1.8 Definitions of Key Terms**

- **English Language Teaching and Learning:** The phrase ‘English Language Teaching and Learning’ is a combination of two terms – English Language Teaching (ELT) and English Language Learning. English language teaching refers to, especially in Britain, teaching of English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) to non-native speakers employing various teaching methodologies. The term ‘learning’ here refers to the learning of English as a second or foreign language by the non-native speakers of English.
- **Linguistic Minority Learners:** The term ‘linguistic minority’ refers to those groups of people who have different mother tongue or native language with regard to the language, used by majority of the people in a particular region or state. The linguistic minority communities form separate groups within a larger population, having different language and/or script.
- **Case Study:** It is one of the popular types of research design that explores a phenomenon with in-depth analysis. Case study designs are adopted mainly to deal with real-world phenomena and seek to answer ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. In this type of design, a single case or multiple cases may be analyzed. Case studies consider persons, organizations, families and institutions as their subjects of study (Flick, 2014).

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

- The present study would explore the status of English language teaching and learning among linguistic minority learners in the government-run primary schools, located in the Sundarbans regions of West Bengal, India.
- The study would also focus on the strategies employed by teachers as well as the challenges that they face while teaching English to the linguistic minority learners in the government-run primary schools in the Sundarbans of West Bengal, India. In addition, the study would explore the challenges faced by linguistic minority learners while learning English.
- This study would add knowledge to the corpus of research concerning teaching English as a second or foreign language in a multilingual setting.
- This would also explore the perceptions of parents and young learners from linguistic minority community towards the need and importance of learning English.
- The present study would also highlight various recommendations and suggestions in relation to teaching English as a second language to the learners belonging to diverse linguistic backgrounds.

### **1.10 Delimitations of the Study**

The following delimitations were identified for the purpose of the study:

- The study area was delimited to the 5 blocks out of 19 blocks from the North and South 24 Parganas of the Sundarbans in India – Hingalganj, Sandeshkhali-II, Basanti, Patharpratima and Gosaba.
- The study area was delimited to a number of 9 government-run primary schools in 5 blocks of the Sundarbans in India.

- The teacher search for this study was delimited to teachers with multiple years of experience in teaching English in classrooms with linguistic minority learners of Grades III, IV and V at the government-run primary schools as well as the head teachers of the respective schools, located in the Sundarbans of India.
- The learner search was delimited to young linguistic minority learners, studying in Grades III, IV and V at government-run primary schools, located in the Sundarbans of India during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic years.
- The parental search included parents of the linguistic minority learners who were studying at government-run primary schools of the Sundarbans in India.
- Only those participants who volunteered to provide data were included in the study. Besides, the number of observed classrooms was delimited in the study.

### **1.11 Organization of the Study**

The thesis is organized into seven chapters as stated below:

#### **Chapter One: Introduction**

The first chapter introduces the background, rationale and need of the study. Again this chapter incorporates statement of the problem, research objectives along with research questions. Besides, the chapter also includes the definitions of the key terms related to the study. In the end of this chapter the delimitations are also included.

#### **Chapter Two: Context of the Study**

The second chapter deals with the context of the present study. In this chapter a brief global scenario of English is included. Development of English education in India during the Pre and Post-Independence India along with the structure of Education system in India has been dealt with in this chapter. Again, a brief account of the development of

English in West Bengal along with the structure of education system in West Bengal has also been added. In addition to this, in this chapter a brief profile of the study area of the Indian Sundarbans has been given. Moreover, a precise description of the linguistic minority communities has also been incorporated in this chapter.

### **Chapter Three: Literature Review**

The third chapter discusses the theories relevant to this study and simultaneously examines the relevant literature with reference to teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language. This chapter includes reviews of literature related to various popular methods and approaches to teaching English. Besides, various studies conducted on the pedagogical approaches to teaching English have been reviewed. Again, studies conducted on the perceptions of teachers, students and parents towards English have also been reviewed. Furthermore, in this chapter, various studies related to the challenges faced by teachers and students in English language teaching and learning as well as factors affecting English language teaching and learning have also been reviewed.

### **Chapter Four: Methodology**

This chapter describes in detail the methodology of the present study. It provides justifications for choosing qualitative research approach, the appropriate paradigm for research and the suitable case study design. Again, this chapter also adds details of the participants, data collection methods, procedure for data analysis, criteria for trustworthiness, descriptions of the pilot study and ethical issues considered in the study.

### **Chapter Five: Data Analysis & Findings**

In this chapter the data collected for the study have been presented with analysis. It describes in detail the codes, themes and sub-themes generated after analyzing the data through thematic analysis method. The findings of the study are reported in this chapter.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion**

In this chapter, the discussions in relation to the findings formulated from the data analysis process are presented. This chapter includes in-depth discussions concerning the results of the study.

## **Chapter Seven: Conclusion**

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and also presents implications of the study. In this chapter limitations and recommendations have also been included. Besides, the chapter also incorporates areas for future research.

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## Chapter 2

# CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

## CHAPTER 2

# CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### **2.1 Overview**

This chapter delves deep into the historical development of the English education system in India as well as in West Bengal. This chapter also discusses the various educational policies that contribute to the shaping of English education in Indian context. Besides, the existing educational structure of West Bengal has been dealt with in detail. Subsequently, this chapter also discusses the profile of the Indian Sundarbans, which incorporates brief details of the location, selected for the present study. This chapter also provides a brief account of the linguistic minority communities with reference to those who are from the region of the Sundarbans in India.

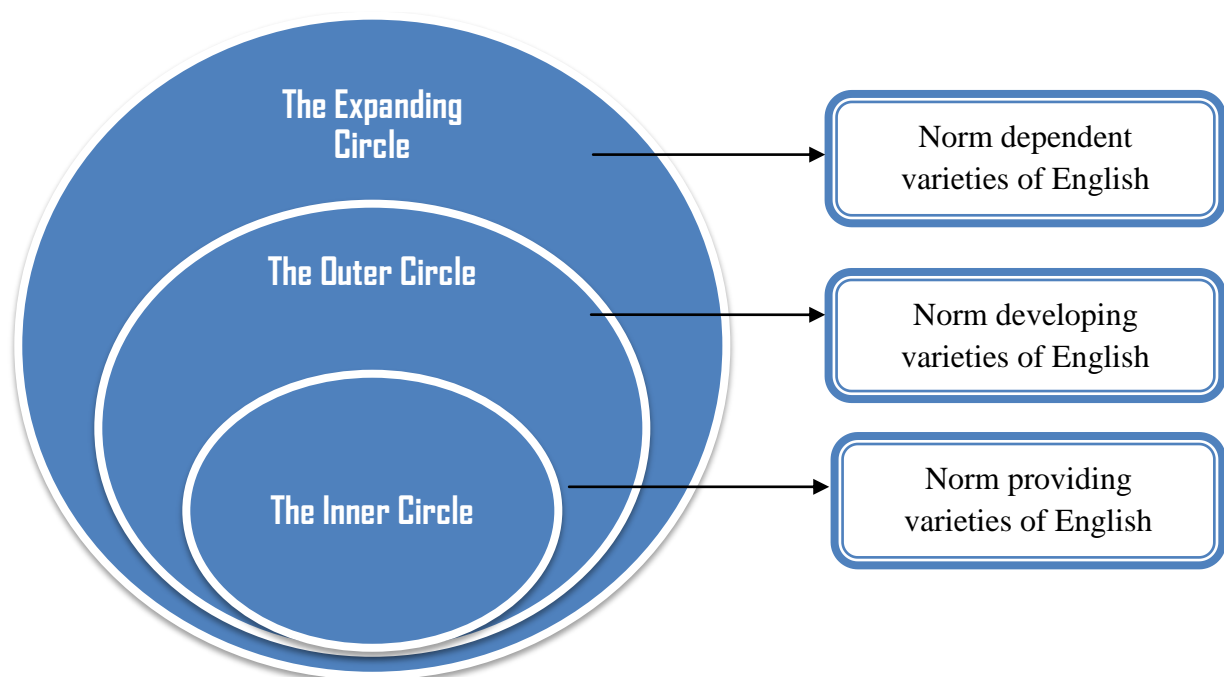
### **2.2 A Brief Global Scenario of English**

In the era of globalization English has gained much importance in different fields. The application of English is increasing everyday across diverse fields including education, business, technology and science. It has also become an essential medium of communication among the non-English speaking countries. So the importance of English is not only confined within the native speakers but it is equally important to the non-native speakers as a second language or foreign language. English is used as a lingua franca in many countries nowadays. Kachru (1985) describes three layers of English through concentric circles of world Englishes (Figure 2.1 ). The model delineates three circles under which speakers of different regions are classified. The ‘inner circle’

represents the traditional bases of English, i.e., the regions where English is the primary language. The regions in the inner circle incorporate the UK, Canada, the USA, New Zealand and Australia. The ‘outer or extended circle’ of the model refers to the spread of English at the initial stage and the regions where the non-native varieties of English were used and English came to be used as a result of colonization. What is more important is that in those regions that belong to the outer circle, English has gained adequate importance among the bilinguals or multilinguals and has gained notable status in language policies. The regions that come under the outer circle are India, Nigeria, Singapore and several other African and South Asian countries. In the ‘expanding circle’, English is considered as the international or universal language. English is taught in these areas as a foreign language. The regions of the expanding circle do not have any history of colonization. In this circle of the model countries like Brazil, Russia, China and Korea are considered.

**Figure 2.1**

*Kachru’s Three Concentric Circles in the Context of World Englishes*



## **2.3 Development of English Education during the Pre-Independence Period in India**

In the context of Indian sub-continent, English occupies a significant position because of the importance of English language in India itself (Crystal, 2003). The origin of South Asian English can be traced in Britain. The advent of the European missionaries in India marked a new phase in the history of the education system. After the formation of the British East India Company, a close contact was established with Indian subcontinent during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. After the advent of the East India Company in India for exploring business opportunities, the Company gradually spread its empire throughout the country. The Company, at the initial stage, was not in favour of educating the mass population. They preferred to educate a limited number of people in order to run the government affairs smoothly. Later, a few high officials of the East India Company were engrossed in the classical aspects of Indian education.

### **2.3.1 Charles Grant's *Observations* (1792)**

Charles Grant, popularly known as the 'father of modern education in India', played a significant role shaping English education in India. In 1792, the first blueprint on English education in India was prepared by the then director of the East India Company (Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy, 2018). After coming to India in 1767, Charles Grant wrote a treatise, entitled *Observations on the State of the Society among the Asiatic Subjects of Great Britain, particularly with respect to Morals and the Means of Improving it* in the year 1792. In this treatise, Charles Grant provided suggestions on policy formulations for bringing about social, moral and mental changes in Indian society with the help of the English language, Western education and Christianity. However, Charles Grant's major recommendations are as follows:

- Introducing English as the medium of instruction in Indian education system in a Western system of education that incorporated literature, natural sciences, mechanical inventions etc. in order to remove superstitions rooted among the heathens of India.
- Adopting English as the official language of the Government and the Company for smoother communication among all.

### **2.3.2 The Charter Act (1813)**

The Charter Act of 1813 marked a significant phase in the history of Indian education. Charles Grant's initiatives helped to publish the Act. The Act made a provision for allotting an annual grant of one lakh rupees in order to promote education in India. Though the Act did not directly mention about the progress of English education in India, it laid the foundation on which the subsequent framework for promoting English education was built.

### **2.3.3 Macaulay's Minutes on Education (1835)**

The minute, presented by Lord Macaulay to Lord William Bentinck in 1835, marked a significant event in the history of English education in India. It is popularly known as the Macaulay's Minutes on Education (1835). The foundation for English education in Indian was also laid by the minute. The document asserts the importance of English education:

To sum up what I have said. I think it clear that we are not fettered by the Act of Parliament of 1813, that we are not fettered by any pledge expressed or implied, that we are free to employ our funds as we choose, that we ought to employ them in teaching what is best worth knowing, that English is better worth knowing than Sanscrit or Arabic, that the natives are desirous to be taught

English, and are not desirous to be taught Sanscrit or Arabic, that neither as the languages of law nor as the languages of religion have the Sanscrit and Arabic any peculiar claim to our encouragement, that it is possible to make natives of this country thoroughly good English scholars, and that to this end our efforts ought to be directed. (Macaulay, 1835, p. 116)

Macaulay pointed out the urge among the Indian to learn English with the needs of the society. English began to play vital roles in official activities, acquiring jobs and moving with the western culture and practices. Macaulay also recommended that no heavy expenses should be incurred on behalf of the government for the maintenance of the Oriental institutions of learning that could be engaged for the promotion of English education in India (Ghosh, 2016). Macaulay followed the downward-filtration theory in which educating a few would eventually help to educate the masses. But in the long run this strategy of educating the masses exploited the common people of the country by neglecting primary education and the local learning system (Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy, 2023).

#### **2.3.4 Wood's Dispatch (1854)**

The next significant document that is considered one of the key landmarks in the history of English education in India is Wood's Despatch (1854), named after Sir Charles Wood. This is popularly known as 'the Magna Carta of English Education in India'. The Despatch recommended that since there was a shortage of books in Indian languages, English would be used as a medium of instruction. It further noted that English would be needed for those having proper knowledge and taste for knowing and exploring English. The Despatch laid much emphasis on the Oriental languages and recommended the study of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic in regular institutions. The Despatch suggested the establishment of some high schools in the country. However, there were already some

Anglo-vernacular and vernacular schools in the country. Education was imparted in the former type of schools through English and in the latter the vernacular language was used. However, the Despatch did not prefer the segregation and preferred the expansion of vernacular schools which would later be raised to the level of Anglo-vernacular schools (Dash, 2007). Another remarkable recommendation of the Despatch was the establishment of three universities in Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.

### **2.3.5 The Hunter Commission (1882)**

The Indian Education Commission, also popularly known as Hunter Commission, was appointed by Lord Ripon in February 1882 under the chairmanship of William Hunter. The Commission was formed in order to investigate how the recommendations of the Wood's Despatch were implemented. The committee also aimed at assessing the status of primary and secondary education in India. The report suggested the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction for imparting primary education. As for medium of instruction in the secondary level, the Commission suggested to use English. The Commission took initiatives in spreading knowledge of English in India.

### **2.3.6 The Indian Universities Commission (1902)**

Lord Curzon established The Indian Universities Commission, headed by Sir Thomas Raleigh, in 1902 in order to investigate the progress and status of the universities established in British India. The Commission aimed at improving the quality of education. The Indian Education Commission also gave much emphasis on the spread of English and simultaneously highlighted how students faced obstacles in acquiring efficiency in English:

The proper teaching of English must for this reason be regarded as the most important matter in the curriculum of the higher schools and of the

Universities. Notwithstanding the prominent position given to English throughout the course, the results are most discouraging. Students after matriculation are found to be unable to understand lectures in English when they join a college. In some cases the difficulty is said to disappear after a short time: but it appears to be the case that many students pass through the entire University course without acquiring anything approaching to a command of the language, and proceed to a degree without even learning to write a letter in English correctly and idiomatically. (Indian Universities Commission, 1902, p.24)

The Commission also questions the standard and lack of uniformity of the Entrance Examination in English at different universities. The report further emphasizes good teaching method and examination process over textbooks for learning English. The Commission recommended the introduction of vernacular languages along with English in higher education.

### **2.3.7 The Calcutta University Commission (1917-1919)**

The Calcutta University Commission was formed in 1917 by The Government of India under the chairmanship of Dr. Michael Sadler. Therefore, the Commission was also known as the Sadler Commission. The report of the Commission, submitted in 1919, emphasized the importance of mother tongue in detail and also suggested the use of vernacular languages as medium of instruction in secondary school education. It also threw light on the importance of teaching English, its practical applications and how it secured a noteworthy position in higher education. However, the report of the Commission suggests:

- Emphasis on the rational teaching of the mother tongue

- Reducing the use of English as a medium of instruction up to the matriculation stage
- Adopting modified methods for teaching English
- Recruiting highly qualified teachers for teaching English both in the secondary schools and intermediate colleges
- More rigorous assessments of all practical knowledge in English

### **2.3.8 Abbot-Wood Report (1936-1937)**

Abbot and Wood were engaged by the Government to analyze the existing problems of Indian education system, especially related to the problems of vocational education in 1936-1937. Along with discussing vocational education system in India, the Abbot-Wood report also focuses on general education and administration. Some of the suggestions of the report are as follows:

- The medium of instructions should be vernacular languages in the Higher Secondary Schools.
- English should be considered a compulsory language for all students in Higher Secondary Schools.
- English instruction should be more domestic, and the average students should pay less attention to studying English "poetry and prose." Arrangements should be made to meet the needs of the boys who are uniquely qualified to pursue more advanced English studies.
- In the rural Middle or Lower Secondary Schools, the curriculum needs to be related to the children's environment. If English is taught to children of "middle school" age, it should not occupy an inordinate amount of their time on language studies.

However, immediately after that, another report was prepared regarding the progress of education in India during the period 1938-1939 and was published in 1941. The report gives a positive feedback regarding the improvement of teaching in secondary schools. But with regard to English, it requires improvement because there is still deficiency in the skills of teachers as well as methods of instruction employed by them. The report further adds that some provinces have taken satisfactory measures for teaching English by adopting intensive teaching method which incorporates increasing periods of study, and giving emphasis on conversation practice and writing practice.

### **2.3.9 Sargent Report (1944)**

The first comprehensive educational plan, prepared by the Central Advisory Board of Education in 1944, is popularly known as Sargent Report, named after John Sargent, the then educational Adviser to the Government of India. A number of suggestions on pre-primary education, primary education, high school education, university education, technical education, vocational education and also other aspects of education were mentioned in the report. The report suggests that mother-tongue of the students should be the medium of instruction in all high schools and English should be a compulsory second language.

## **2.4 Development of English Education during the Post-Independence Period in India**

### **2.4.1 The University Education Commission (1948-49)**

In the Post-Independence era the first commission that played significant role in shaping Indian education system was the University Education Commission or Radhakrishnan Commission, formulated under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Commission exclusively focused on the higher education system

in India. However, the Commission report gave importance on the various aspects of English. The report mentions that one of the pivotal factors behind developing unity in the country is English. Even the concepts of nationality and nationalism are the outcome of English in India. It has become integrally related to our national sentiment. Apart from this English is an international language. It has provided us with the key to the fundamental ideas of the modern civilization and philosophy. But simultaneously, the report does not encourage English to be considered as the language of the state as it earlier used to be. The report, in this context, mentions:

Use of English as such divides the people into two nations, the few who govern and the many who are governed, the one unable to talk the language of other, and mutually uncomprehending. This is negation of democracy.

(University Education Commission, 1950, p. 216)

However, with regard to the medium of instruction in higher education, the report of the Radhakrishnan Commission proposed to replace English by some other Indian languages. At the higher secondary and university levels, students should be acquainted with the three languages – the regional language, the federal language and English. The Commission also recommended that in order to keep the students in touch with the growing knowledge, English would continue to be studied in high schools and universities. In case of technical terms and scientific terminologies, English terms need to be followed.

#### **2.4.2 The Secondary Education Commission (1952-53)**

The Secondary Education Commission or Mudaliar Commission, formed under the chairmanship of Dr. A.L. Mudaliar, submitted its report in 1953, analyzing the report of the University Education Commission as well as considering the existing education

system. The primary aim of the Commission was to examine and reform the secondary education in India. However, some of the major recommendations of the Commission are as follows:

- Development of democratic citizenship
- Development of personality
- Increasing vocational skills
- Imparting Education for leadership
- Developing technical and vocational education
- Need for diversification of courses
- Introducing agricultural education in schools
- Reformation of the examination as well as evaluation system

As for languages to be used as a medium of instructions in school, the Secondary Education Commission recommended the use of mother tongue or the regional language as a medium of instruction throughout the school stage. This Commission proposed to make special provisions and facilities for the linguistic minorities, as it was earlier suggested by the Central Advisory Board of Education. The Secondary Education Commission further recommended that during the Middle School stage, every child should be taught at least two languages and at the end of the Junior Basic stage English and Hindi should be introduced.

### **2.4.3 The Official Language Commission (1955)**

The Official Language Commission was established in 1955 under the chairmanship of B.G. Kher. The Commission that submitted its report in 1956 recommended the use of Hindi for official purposes and also considered the use of English. The Commission also

suggested the replacement of English with Hindi gradually. The Commission focused on standardizing terminologies in Hindi for official and administrative purposes. Along with a transition towards Hindi, the Commission emphasized protection on regional languages.

#### **2.4.4 The Official Language Act (1963)**

The Official Language Act (1963) focused on the languages to be used for official purposes. The Act proposed to continue English language in addition to Hindi for the purpose of official activities of the Union.

#### **2.4.5 The Kothari Commission (1964-66)**

The Kothari Commission (1964-66), formed under the chairmanship of Dr. D.S. Kothari, played significant role in the history of Indian education. The Kothari Commission was the third education commission constituted in the independent India as well as the sixth commission to submit its report on the various aspects of the education system in India at different levels. It is noteworthy to mention that the existing 10+2+3 pattern of education prior to NEP-2020, was proposed by the Kothari Commission. The Commission put emphasis on several aspects of the education system, viz., free education, teachers' salary hike, curriculum, social service, vocationalisation of education, education for the backward children, and education for the handicapped. What is significantly important in the recommendation of the Kothari Commission is the reiteration of the 'three-language formula', devised by The Central Advisory Board of Education in 1956 and subsequently approved by the Conference of Chief Ministers in 1961. The Commission report emphasized the adoption of 'three-language formula' in the following three contexts:

- (a) study of the regional language, or the mother tongue where it is different from the regional language.
- (b) study of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states or any other Indian language in Hindi—speaking states.
- (c) study of English or any other modern European language

The main purpose behind adopting ‘the three-language formula’ was to lighten the load of learning languages and to distribute the load equally to the different parts of the country for establishing national integration. Certainly, the three-language formula was not uniformly adopted in the areas where it was required most because in some states it turned out to two-language formula and in some other it became one-language formula (Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy, 2023). The Commission suggested using regional languages in writing books for children as well as for university level. As for implementation of the three-language formula, the Kothari Commission mentioned that only the regional language should be taught from Class I to IV, two languages should be studied from Class V to VII (one being the mother tongue or the regional language and the other being the official or associate official language of the union i.e., Hindi or English.), and three languages need to be studied from Class VIII to X (i.e. the regional language, Hindi and English). However, a student may choose to study English for three years. The Commission also suggests two plans for the teaching of English – one is from Class V and another is from Class VII (which is particularly in the rural areas). According to the report of the Kothari Commission (1966), since English would continue to be required as a ‘library language’ for long in the field of higher education, there was the need of building a strong foundation of the language at the school level. The report further suggested that adequate command over mother tongue is certainly necessary before

learning a foreign language like English and there is scarcity of efficient teachers for teaching English at the primary level.

#### **2.4.6 National Policy on Education (1968)**

In order to restructure the education system, the Govt. of India published the first National Policy on Education with a view to implement the recommendations of the Kothari Commission Report. The National Policy on Education of 1968 took ample initiatives to promote development of education in India with an emphasis on a number of principles some of which are as follows:

- Promoting free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, as per the Directive Principle under Article 45 of the Constitution of India
- Status of appropriate emoluments and education of teachers
- Promoting equalization of educational opportunities
- Focus on science education and research
- Emphasis on education for agriculture and industry
- Reformation of the examination system
- Focus on secondary and university education
- Spread of literacy and adult education

The Policy gave ample emphasis on the development and selection of languages as a medium of instruction. The Policy promoted the use of regional languages, though already in use, as media of education at the primary and secondary stages. In this context it is worth mentioning that the observation of the NPE-1968 regarding the use of regional languages as the media of instruction at the primary and secondary stage proved to be partially true because of the flourish of the private English medium schools with greater prestige in comparison to govt.-run regional language

schools (Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy, 2023). Moreover, the Policy recommended undertaking urgent initiatives to adopt the regional languages as media of education at the university stage as well. The NPE, 1968 recommended the implementation of the three-language formula. The Policy gave special emphasis on the study of English and other international languages. The NPE, 1986 also states the growing importance of English and so it needs to be strengthened because in the field of science and technology world knowledge is growing.

#### **2.4.7 The Study Group Report on the Teaching of English (1969-1971)**

The Study Group Report on the Teaching of English is one of the most detailed reports on the status of teaching English in Indian context. The committee was appointed in 1969 by the Ministry of Education and Youth Services, Government of India under the chairmanship of Prof. V.K. Gokak, former Director of the Central Institute of English and the then Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University. The committee submitted its report in 1971. The report deals with in detail the status of English, which includes teaching methods, materials, courses of study in English and also spoken English that would meet the needs of students of different stages. The report of the committee mentions why the major recommendations of the previous committees have not been successfully implemented. The reasons are as follows:

- There was shortage of well-trained and qualified teachers of English at almost every stage of the education system.
- There were frequent changes in the government policies related to teaching and learning of English in several states.
- The education departments of various states have not been fast enough to take decisions. Besides, in some cases where initiatives have been taken, there was scarcity of resources to carry them out.

- In schools the supervision of English teaching was neglected for long.

#### **2.4.8 National Policy on Education (1986)**

Again, the National Policy on Education and Programme of Action, adopted by the Parliament of India in 1986 marked another significant phase in the history of Indian education. After the National Policy on Education was declared in 1986, a follow-up programme was prepared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Formerly named as Ministry of Education) under the title of Programme of Action. For the first time in the history of educational development in independent India, such initiative was adopted. However, the 1986 document mostly reiterates the 1968 documents and emphasizes the implementation of the 1968 documents more energetically. The 1986 policy does not talk about any medium of instruction but mentions major efforts, required to be taken towards the transformation of teaching methods. As for the structure of the education system, the National Policy on Education (1986) mentions “perhaps the most notable development has been the acceptance of a common structure of education throughout the country and the introduction of the 10+2+3 system by most States” (Government of India, 1986, p. 2).

#### **2.4.9 Ramamurti Review Committee (1990)**

To review the National Policy on Education of 1986, a committee was formed by the Government of India in 1990 under the chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti. The committee suggests that special emphasis should be given on the study of English and other international languages. It suggests that the study of English should be specially strengthened with the growing needs of the society. The report also reaffirmed the implementation of ‘three-language formula’, as supported by the NPE-1968, at the secondary level. The committee also recommends the publication of university level books in Indian languages.

#### **2.4.10 National Education Policy (2020)**

In order to reform the education system in India, the Government of India formulated a new education policy replacing the National Policy on Education of 1986. A committee led by the former ISRO chief K. Kasturirangan submitted the draft NEP in 2019. The Policy recommends the replacement of the earlier 10+2+3 structure of education by 5+3+3+4 structure. The Policy promotes mother tongue as the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5 and also recommends its further continuation till Grade 8 and beyond. The Policy also puts emphasis on the continuation of three-language formula along with promoting multilingualism. It encourages preparing bilingual textbooks for science and mathematics so that students acquire enough proficiency in those two subjects with the help of both mother tongue/ home language as well as English. Along with offerings in Indian languages and English, various foreign languages like Korean, French, German, Russian and Portuguese will also be incorporated at the secondary level. The Policy recommends offering legal education in both the language of the state and English.

#### **2.5 Structure of Education System in India**

In 2020 the Government of India launched a new education policy, known as National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP-2020) with an aim to reform the school education system as well as higher education system. Prior to this policy, the Indian education system followed the National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE-1986), which was later revised and modified in 1992 as Programme of Action (PoA). However, the earlier structure of education in India followed 10+2+3 pattern which was recommended by the Kothari Commission (1964-66). This pattern incorporates 10 years of primary and secondary education. It is followed by 2 years of higher secondary education. This is further followed by 3 years of bachelor's degree. The

first 10 years is further sub-divided into 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary education.

## **2.6 Development of English Education in West Bengal**

In August 1947, the Bengal Presidency was divided into two parts – the western part came to be known as West Bengal (in India) and the eastern part was known as East Pakistan (now known as Bangladesh). However, in the post-Independence era several committees were formed in West Bengal in order to assess the education system. Some of the committees emphasized English education and some other focused on mother tongue-based instruction at the primary schools in West Bengal. The Rai Harendranath Choudhury Committee was formed in 1949 by the Government of West Bengal. The Committee preferred the adoption of Shantiniketan model of education. Though the committee recommended the adoption of the mother tongue at the primary level as the medium of instruction, the recommendation could not be implemented successfully for receiving adverse reaction from a specific class of the society. Himangshu Bimal Mazumdar Committee was formed in 1975 in order to review the education system of West Bengal and submitted its report in 1978. The Committee exclusively focused on the education system at the secondary level. The Committee mentioned that teaching English and Bengali together to children until Class VI would be burdensome for them. The Committee further focused on teaching English through communicative method instead of the traditional grammar-translation method. The Ashok Mitra Education Committee was formed by the Government of West Bengal in 1991. On reviewing various aspects of the curriculum, the Committee suggested introduction of English instruction in schools not before Class V. In 1990, the State Govt. formed a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Pabitra Sarkar and the Committee submitted its report in 1998 under the title “Report of the One-Man Committee on English in Primary Education: West Bengal”. The Committee recommended the commencement of teaching English from Class III

with aptly chosen text in the government primary schools from the year 2000 onwards. The Committee further suggested the creation of informal environment for teaching English through the introduction of alphabets, monosyllabic words etc. In 2001, 'School Education Committee' was formed under the chairmanship of Prof. Ranju Gopal Mukherjee in order to assess the school education system. The Committee suggested the use of mother tongue only till class IV and the teaching of English should start from Class V as a compulsory second language. Setting aside the recommendations of the Ranju Gopal Mukherjee Committee, English was reintroduced in Class I.

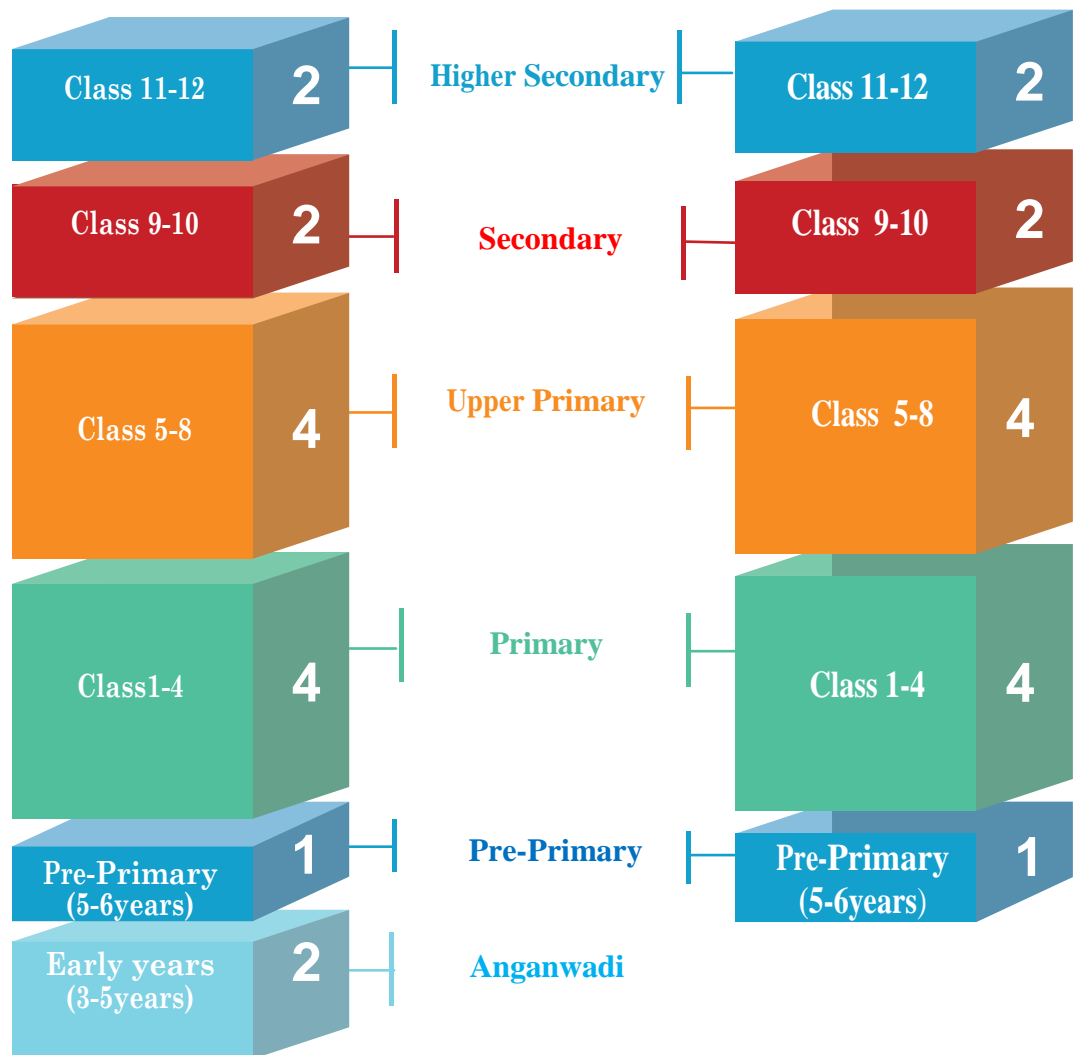
### **2.7 Structure of Education System in West Bengal**

The Government of West Bengal launched a new State Education Policy (SEP) in 2023. In this policy the proposal is given to follow the earlier structure of education, followed in West Bengal. However, the pattern follows 5+4+2+2 structure. In this structure the first five years consist of one year of pre-primary education and four years of primary education till class 4. The next four years of the structure comprise upper primary, the next two years comprise secondary section and the last two years are allotted for higher secondary section.

The same structure has been suggested to follow in the State Education Policy, 2023 of West Bengal, except a slight modification in the structure. The modification incorporates addition of two-year early education phase at the Anganwadi centre. This phase will be followed by 1 year of pre-primary education and the subsequent phases of primary, upper primary secondary and higher secondary would remain unchanged.

**Figure 2.2**

*A Comparative Overview of the Structure of Education System in West Bengal*



*Note:* The first division of structure (left) represents the present educational structure, as mentioned in the SEP-2023 of West Bengal and the second division of structure (right) presents the earlier structure of education followed in West Bengal. The left one is adapted from *State Education Policy* (p.69), 2023, by the Government of West Bengal, Higher Education Department, 2023 (<https://banglarshiksha.wb.gov.in/readwrite/WBSEP%202023.pdf>). In the public domain.

### **2.7.1 Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)**

The early phase of childhood is a very critical period since in this phase the social, emotional and cognitive development of a child begins gradually and it is at this phase that the child should be nurtured properly for ensuring a resilient future. This stage prepares a child for the upcoming school life. The Anganwadi system, developed under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), works to assure a safe and healthy environment for growing up. Families get much benefitted from high-quality education since the parents can spare a significant part of the day in work without interfering much in their children's care. As a result, from the progress of the child, the families get benefitted and subsequently the community also gets benefitted.

### **2.7.2 Primary Education**

For the phase of primary education, the school years range between Class 1 and 4. This phase is very important in the life of children since this period is crucial for the social, emotional, mental and academic development. At this stage, the aim of education should be all-round development. Teachers should encourage children to explore various domains of learning and should also encourage them to develop interest in learning different areas and accumulate diverse knowledge. For academic development, children are encouraged to develop creative and scientific thinking skills along with literacy and numeracy skills. At this stage, emotional development of the children requires proper nurturing from the teachers at school. The children should feel safe and comfortable at school. They should be given emotional support so that they can develop positive relationships with peers and others and they can express their feelings unhesitatingly. As for social development, the children should learn to respect and to co-operate people at primary schools. Besides, they are also encouraged to develop their communication

skills. The primary education in West Bengal is governed by West Bengal Board of Primary Education (WBBPE).

### **2.7.3 Upper Primary Education**

The upper primary stage incorporates four years of education starting from class 5 to class 8 in West Bengal. In this phase, children develop awareness of the world around them. They develop more complex thinking skills and start exploring themselves as individuals. Children develop opinions on social and political issues. The curriculum engages the learners in diverse levels of activities. Students are introduced to mathematics, science, history and the arts. Besides, reading and writing skills are also emphasized. During this phase, the 'Three-Language formula' is suggested to follow. As for medium of instruction, the first language or the mother tongue is recommended to use, for example, Santhali in Santhali medium schools, Urdu in Urdu medium schools etc. Depending upon the choice of the learner, the second language may be chosen as English (in non-English medium) or any language other than the first language. The third language will be different from the first and the second languages. The 'Three-Language formula' is applicable only at the upper primary stage because at the primary stage language should not be a burden for the learners. At this phase preference is given on interactive and hands-on modes of classroom instruction. Besides, teachers, at this stage, should encourage critical thinking skills, creativity, writing skills and strong research orientation. Moreover, collaborative work among the students is also encouraged. In addition to this, extracurricular activities and field-trips can also develop learners' knowledge and skills. For developing scientific temperament among students, teachers involve them among activities related to science, mathematics etc. The upper primary education in West Bengal is governed by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE).

#### **2.7.4 Secondary Education**

The secondary education comprises two years of education starting from class 9 to class 10 in West Bengal. Learners, aged between 14 and 16, study in secondary school with an aim to build their future for the sake of the society. In high schools, the foundation of the students for developing skills and knowledge for pursuing higher studies is developed. At this stage, learners undergo personal and social developments. They learn to socialize by interacting with others in the society. While receiving secondary education, learners develop critical thinking skills and problem solving skills. Students get the opportunity to learn diverse subjects like English, History, Science, Mathematics etc. Self-directed learning is encouraged at this stage. Teachers always motivate learners for expanding their knowledge. The secondary education in West Bengal is governed by West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBBSE).

#### **2.7.5 Higher Secondary Education**

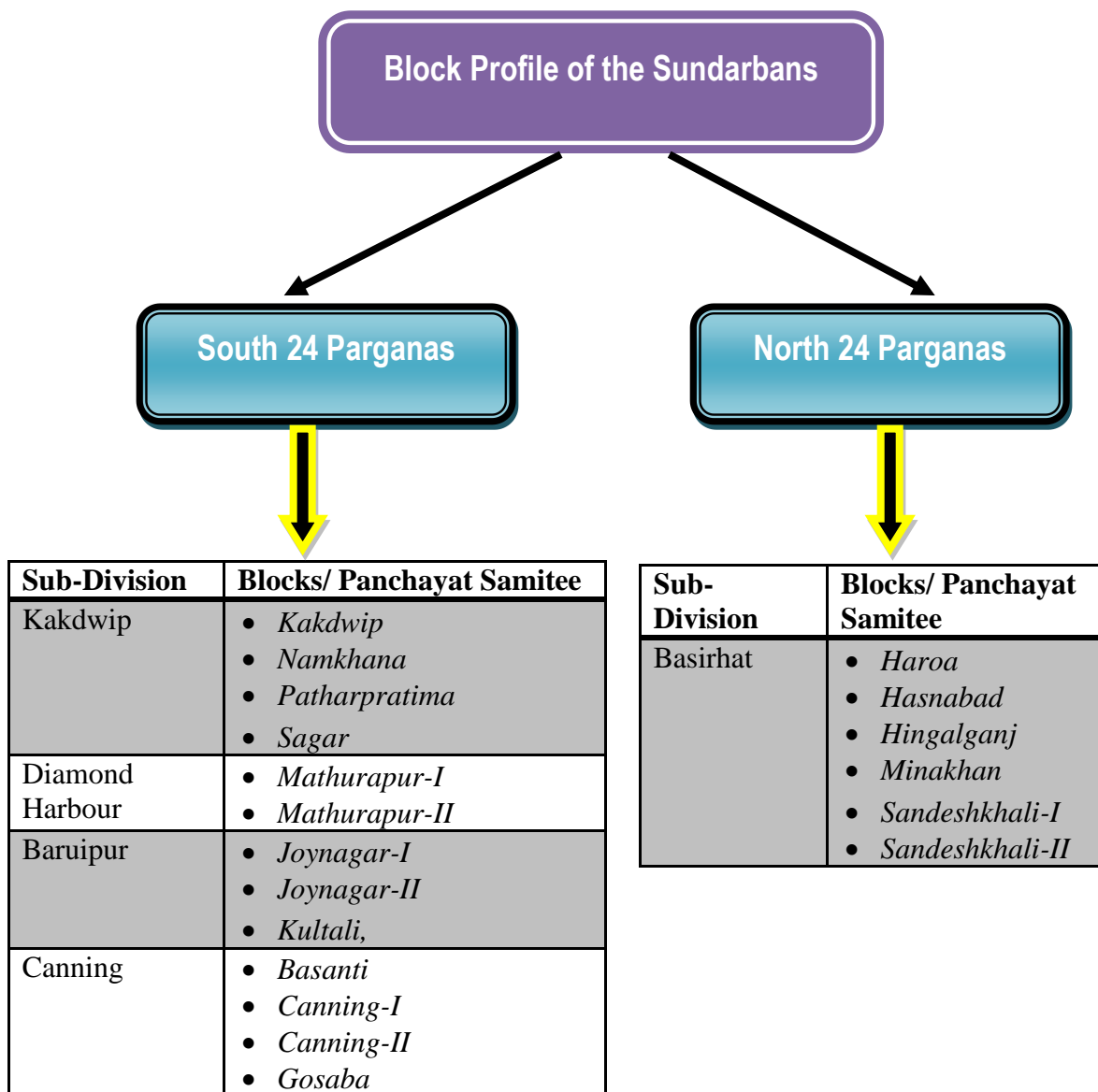
The higher secondary education comprises two years of education, i.e. classes 11 and 12. At this stage students are given the opportunity for choosing a combination of subjects as per their preference in order to fulfill their career goals. At this stage, teachers in schools help students to develop the foundational stage for enhancing skills and knowledge. It would help them to become successful in building career in future. Besides, schools help students in personal, social and moral developments. Development of knowledge and skills at this stage opens different career options before the students. Besides, they engage themselves in various extra-curricular activities. In West Bengal, West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education (WBCHSE) undertakes the responsibilities of higher secondary education.

## **2.8 A Glance at the Profile of the Sundarbans in India**

Since the location of the present study is the Sundarbans region, located in West Bengal of India, a glance at the profile of the Sundarbans will render a clearer picture. Literally, the term ‘Sundarban’ means beautiful forests and it is often said that the name of the region comes from the name of a species of mangrove tree, known as ‘Sundari’ (*Heritiera fomes*). The Sundarbans region covers a major part of India and Bangladesh. It is a region of diversity with its social, historical, geographic, environmental and cultural characteristics. The diversities of this region have often inspired litterateurs to portray its several aspects and sometimes to incorporate as a major theme of their literary works. The region is also unique for its wider mangrove forests and carries universal importance for the Royal Bengal Tiger and several other endangered species. The mangrove forests are found on the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers, located on the Bay of Bengal. The area of the Indian Sundarbans incorporates two districts- North and South 24 Parganas and these two districts cover 19 blocks.

**Figure 2.3**

*Profile of the Blocks in the Sundarbans*



*Note:* Adapted from the Department of Sundarban Affairs, Government of West Bengal ([https://www.sundarbanaffairswb.in/home/page/block\\_profile](https://www.sundarbanaffairswb.in/home/page/block_profile))

In the Sundarbans region, people earn their living chiefly on the basis of fishing, agriculture, honey collection, crab hunting and forest resources. A larger part of the population has to face economic challenges. A number of people work as migrant

labourer in different states of India. However, the diversity of this region also lies in the co-existence of several tribal communities because it is the abode of the Munda, Oraon, Bhumij and Santhal tribal populations. Besides, there are other people belonging to different Schedule Caste communities. A larger part of the population belongs to the socially and economically disadvantaged categories. An in-depth exploration of the root of the tribes shows that most of the tribal communities, especially the Santhals migrated to the Sundarbans from their homelands Chota Nagpur a few centuries ago and started cultivation clearing forested lands (Hembrom et al., 2022). In the earlier stage, there were heterogeneous cultural practices among the tribal communities. But, with the passage of time, they adopted the local cultures. Even the languages are not exception to this because due to migration from the homelands and the settlement in a new region, the mother tongues of most of the communities have been affected and have lost their originality.

**Figure 2.4**

*Location Map of the Sundarbans*

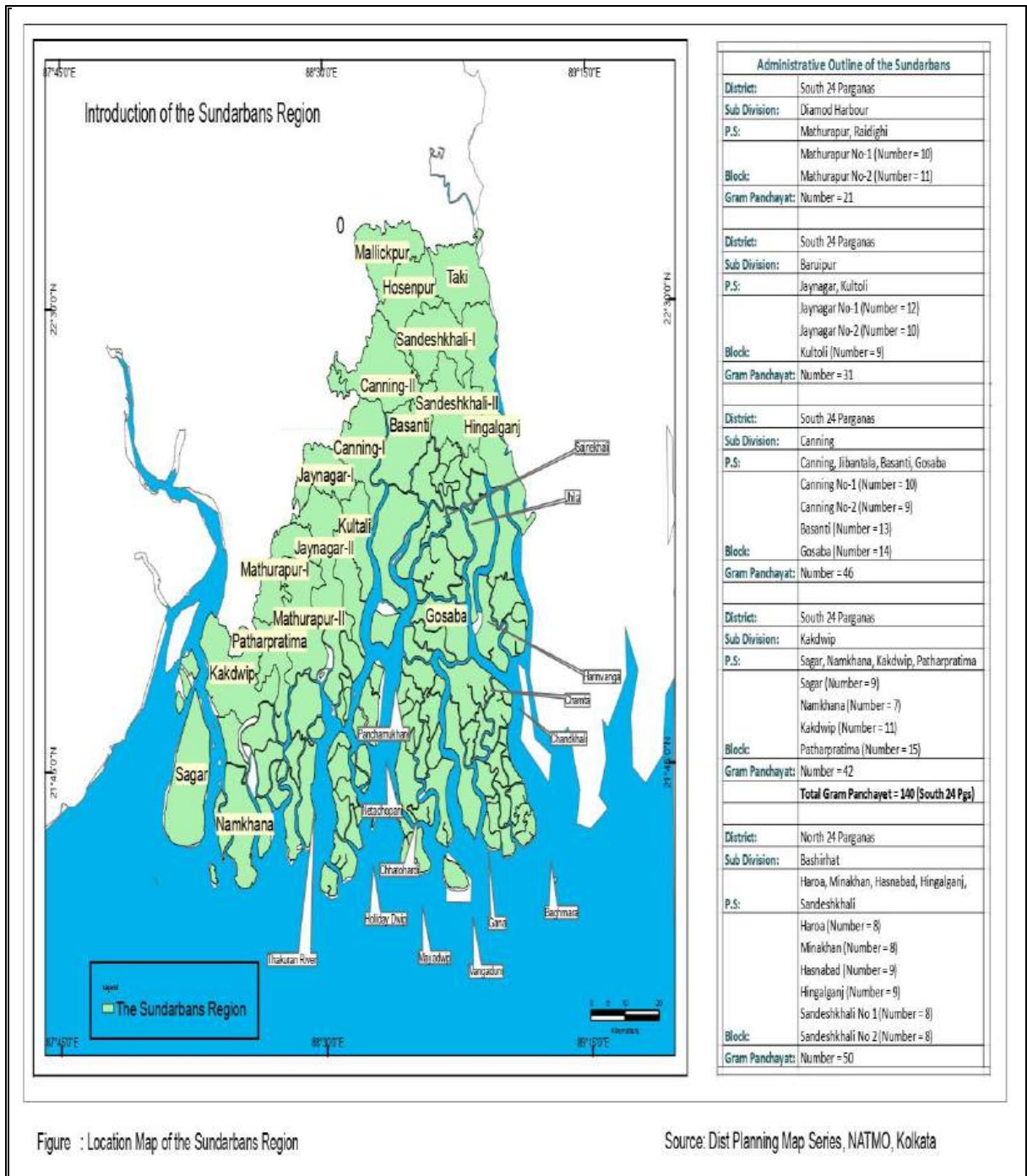


Figure : Location Map of the Sundarbans Region

Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

## 2.9 Who are Linguistic Minorities?

The phrase 'linguistic minority' is applicable to those groups of people who have different mother tongue or native language with regard to the language, used by majority of the people in a particular region or state. The linguistic minority communities form separate groups within a larger population, having different language and/or script. The phrase 'linguistic minorities' has not been defined in the Constitution of India. However, it is not mandatory that the language of the linguistic minority groups should belong to the group of twenty two languages, mentioned in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India (Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities, 2016). The Constitution of India provides safeguards for preserving the rights of the linguistic minorities.

- Article 29, titled 'Protection of interests of minorities' protects the rights of the minorities, residing in India, to preserve their own culture, distinct language and scripts. The Article also ensures that no citizen will be denied admission to state-run or state-aided institution on the basis of caste, religion, race or language.
- Article 30 grants the rights to linguistic and religious minorities to establish their own educational institutions in order to preserve their culture. It also prohibits the state from discriminating them on the basis of grants allotment.
- Article 350B, titled 'Special officer for linguistic minorities', ensures the appointment of a Special Officer by the President. The duty of the Officer will investigate various issues relating to the safeguards, mentioned in the Constitution for the linguistic minorities.

Though the Sundarbans in West Bengal is inhabited by different tribal communities with distinct mother tongues, due to contacts with local and outside people for a long period, those tribal languages have much been affected. In most of the regions of the Sundarbans the dominant language is Bengali. But the tribal languages are experiencing

shift in Sadri (also known as Sadani), a language belonging to the Indo-Aryan language family. The Sadri language is primarily spoken in the Chota Nagpur plateau of India, especially in Jharkhand. Sadri is often referred to as the spoken as well as non-literary form. The linguistic minorities in the Sundarbans primarily refer to diverse tribal communities, namely the Santhals, Munda, Oraon, Bhumij, Ho and Bedia.

## **2.10 Summary**

In this chapter the context of the study has been clearly presented. In the era of globalization, English plays a significant role, especially in Indian context. However, for developing strong communicative and written skills in English, it is necessary to build a strong foundation at the elementary level. So, learners should be taught English properly from the primary stage. Though English is taught from the primary stage as per the structure of Indian education system, in the various parts of the country inhabited by the disadvantaged classes, adequate development is required at the primary level. The similar scenario is found in case of a majority of the govt. primary schools in West Bengal. The situation becomes often crucial when it is considered with regard to the linguistic minority learners since they have different mother tongues. However, I took utmost interest in exploring various issues related to English language teaching and learning with reference to the linguistic minority learners at the primary school. The next chapter will present reviews of related literature on the present study.

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## Chapter 3

# LITERATURE REVIEW

## CHAPTER 3

# LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Overview

This chapter will present an extensive and thorough review related to literature on the research topic, spanning from the analysis of classroom strategies used by teachers for teaching English in rural areas for disadvantaged groups, tribal learners or marginalized communities to various persisting challenges in teaching and learning English along with the perception of parents regarding English language learning for their children. This chapter will incorporate thorough analysis of the literature studies conducted not only in India but also across the world in the given context.

The study of related literature in any research plays a crucial role since it helps the researcher to choose the correct direction towards a specified goal while searching for the research gap. With the help of related literature, the researcher can prove the importance of one's investigation. The term 'literature' in 'literature review' refers to the knowledge of a particular area of investigation of any discipline that may include theoretical, practical and other related studies. The term 'review' means organizing the knowledge of the specific area of research to show that the study would add new knowledge to this field of existing knowledge. The basic purpose behind conducting the review of related literature is to find out the research gap in the field. It further helps the researcher to work on the research gap in order to fill a part of it at least. Besides, this

process also helps to have an in-depth study into the research works that have been conducted earlier in the domains pertinent to that of the researcher.

### **3.1.1 Methods of Searching**

Review of research related studies requires extensive and systematic way of searching. This process ultimately guides a researcher to find the research gap. So, in order to find the articles related to the present study, extensive search was done on Google Scholar, Research Gate, ERIC, Academia, ProQuest etc. For PhD theses, extensive search was done on Google, Shodhganga (Reservoir of Indian Theses) and the websites of various top-ranked universities across the globe. The search for literature was conducted using key terms related to language education, ESL education, tribes, disadvantaged communities and teaching strategies. The combination of terms, used to search topics related to my research, are for instance “classroom strategies for teaching English language”, “ELT and tribes”, “ELT and disadvantaged communities”, “challenges and opportunities of teaching English”, “challenges in learning English”, “linguistic minority and ELT”, “parental perception towards English language teaching and learning”, “young learners’ perception towards English” etc. These terms were searched for as per the consulted database to find out the most relevant type of research. Once the search for generic research terms is over, search for more in-depth connected keywords like “LSRW skills”, “socio-economic problems” and “instructional strategies” was done. Again, for searching relevant resources for reviews, bibliography mining was also done. Bibliography mining is usually used in order to find correlated information and it falls under the purview of data mining, consisting of analysis of the bibliography of scholarly articles to search for other relevant and similar articles on the research related topics (Caturegli, 2021). Thus, while looking for literature of related studies, I put much emphasis on the research work conducted in last ten years in different areas relevant to

my research study. Apart from this, I reviewed the significant research work as well conducted earlier and also threw light on several relevant theoretical studies.

### **3.2 A Brief Outline of the Approaches and Methods of Teaching English**

While discussing teaching English as a second language/ foreign language, it is necessary to throw light on the various approaches and methods employed by language educators, especially in the classroom context. However, this is quite evident that the methods of teaching English as a second language/ foreign language across the globe varies. Though the terms ‘approaches’, ‘methods’ and ‘techniques’ are used interchangeably, the American applied linguist Edward Anthony (1963) attempted to clarify the differences between the terms. According to him,

The trio of terms which I am attempting to re-locate in the scheme of definitions are approach, method, and technique. The arrangement is hierarchical. The organizational key is that techniques carry out a method which is consistent with an approach. (pp. 63-66)

Anthony (1963) defines the term ‘approach’ as

...a set of correlative assumptions dealing with the nature of language and the nature of language teaching and learning. An approach is axiomatic. It describes the nature of the subject matter to be taught. It states a point of view, a philosophy, an article of faith something which one believes but cannot necessarily prove. (pp. 63-66)

While defining the term ‘method’, he argues,

Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected

approach. An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural.....Within one approach, there can be many methods. (Anthony, 1963, pp. 63-66)

Again, while defining the term ‘technique’, he opines,

A technique is implementational-that which actually takes place in a class-room. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well.....Techniques depend on the teacher, his individual artistry, and on the composition of the class. Particular problems can be tackled equally successfully by the use of different techniques. (Anthony, 1963, pp. 63-66)

### **3.2.1 Popular Methods of Teaching English**

#### **3.2.1.1 The Grammar-Translation Method**

The grammar-translation Method (also known as GTM) is an age-old method, used by language teachers for teaching a second language, especially English to non-English speakers. Its earlier use can be traced back in the teaching of the classical languages like Greek and Latin (Chastain, 1988, as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The European and foreign language teaching was immensely influenced by grammar-translation method from 1840s to the 1940s and gradually it continued to be used in several parts of the world today (Richards and Rodgers, 2001). While tracing the root of grammar-translation method, it is found that this method originated from German scholarship. Since this method had its origin in Germany, especially in Prussia, it is known as the ‘Prussian method’ (Nagaraj, 2021). The earliest book for grammar-translation method was written by J.C. Fick in 1793 and was published in Erlangen in South Germany. This was modelled on an early work for the teaching of French by Johann Valentin

Meidinger. The grammar-translation method has two main purposes – firstly, scope for practices and secondly, more concentrated and clearer form of grammar than the texts (Howatt, 1997). Richards and Rodgers (2014) have focused on the main features of the grammar-translation method:

- Grammar-translation method focuses on studying a language through detailed description of grammatical rules and structure, followed by its application in the process of translating sentences and text from the target language. Here, language learning is accomplished through memorizing rules and its application in the process of translation.
- This method focuses more on reading and writing in comparison to listening or speaking. In fact, listening and speaking are almost ignored in this method of language teaching.
- Bilingual method is used for teaching words. As for vocabulary selection, emphasis is given on reading texts.
- Much emphasis is given on the translation of sentences into and out of the target language. Emphasis on translating sentences is the distinct feature of this method.
- This method emphasizes high level of accuracy since the purpose is to gain high standards in translation.
- Grammar-translation method follows a deductive approach in which the grammatical rules are presented at first and these rules are practiced for translating sentences and texts.
- Here the native language or  $L_1$  is used as a medium of instruction. For making a comparison between the foreign language and the native language, the native language is used.

Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy (2023) mention several techniques that learners have to follow in grammar-translation method, which are as follows:

- Translation of a passage from the target language (i.e. L<sub>2</sub>) into the mother tongue (i.e. native language or L<sub>1</sub>).
- Giving answers to questions from the comprehension in order to test the understanding of the given passage.
- Finding out synonyms/ antonyms from the comprehension passage.
- Presentation of the grammar rules along with examples as well as the exceptions. Besides, solving exercises by applying the rules is also encouraged.
- Memorization of several grammatical rules for applying them in sentences.
- Writing a piece of composition like a précis based on the passage.
- Focusing on teaching learners more about the target language rather than the process of its use.

### **3.2.1.2 The Direct Method**

Another method that became popular with the grammar-translation method is known as the direct method. While applying grammar-translation method for teaching a second language, it was found that this method was not very effective in preparing learners for using a target language for the purpose of communication and thus the direct method was popularized (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The root of this method can be traced back to 19<sup>th</sup> century when in 1880 Francois Gouin published a book, entitled, *The Art of Learning of Languages*. The book described in detail how a foreign language could be taught with the help of a series of simple, consecutive events. In this method the teacher would describe each event in the foreign language, using complete sentences and set some

activities including reading and writing tasks on those lessons. The method strictly avoided translation (Nagaraj, 2021). The aim of this method is to engage learners think in the target language (hence English) without involving words or sentences from the native language of the learner (Tickoo, 2020). Richards and Rodgers (2014) mention some principles and procedures for direct method, which are as follows:

- The target language is used exclusively as classroom instruction.
- Mainly, words and vocabularies used in daily life are taught.
- Oral communication skills are enhanced through systematic practice and question-answer sessions between teachers and students.
- For teaching grammar, inductive method is followed.
- Using demonstration methods, objects and pictures concrete vocabulary is taught and on the other hand through the association of ideas abstract vocabulary is taught.
- More emphasis is given on listening and speaking skills along with proper pronunciation and grammar.

### **3.2.1.3 The Audio-lingual Method**

The audio-lingual method has close resemblance with the direct method as it is an oral-based approach. But the difference between the audio-lingual approach and the direct method lies in the fact that the former emphasizes drilling learners in the application of grammatical sentence pattern rather than merely focusing on vocabulary acquisition in relation to its use in various situations (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The audio-lingual method emerged in the United States during the 1950s when there was much importance given to foreign language teaching. With the launch of the first Russian satellite in the year 1957, the foreign language teaching methodology was emphasized in order to keep

up with scientific advancement made in other countries (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). According to Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy (2023) and Nagaraj, (2021), some of the notable features of the audio-lingual method are as follows:

- Focus on the four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing individually.
- Language teaching begins with the target language in the classroom.
- The native language of the learner is not used.
- Primary focus in this teaching method is listening and speaking.
- Vocabulary is selected on the basis of the essential day-to-day activities.
- Language laboratory plays an important role in this method since it helps learners follow and memorize language patterns.

However, the audio-lingual method employs some important techniques which are almost similar to those used in the direct method. Krishnaswamy & Krishnaswamy (2023) mention some of the methods:

- **Dialogue memorization:** emphasizing short pieces of conversation between two learners in order to memorize the dialogue through mimicry.
- **Repetition drill:** encouraging the learners to repeat the teacher's model with utmost accuracy.
- **Chain drill:** the chain of question and answer session is initiated by the teacher and continues from one student to the other and thus it continues.
- **Substitution drill:** engaging the learner to fill a gap with cues, presented from the dialogue taught by the teacher.

- **Question-and-answer drill, transformation drill, etc:** learners are encouraged to answer some questions or practice sentence transformation
- **Grammar games:** encouraging learners to play with grammar from the context taught.

#### **3.2.1.4 Other Methods**

Apart from the popular methods mentioned, there are several other methods, used for teaching a second language, especially English in the classroom context. One such method is known as Dr. Michael West's New Method which aims to make learners fluent readers on the basis of comprehension rather than reproduction. Dr. West was of the opinion that for Indians, it was more important to acquire the ability to read fluently in English than speaking in English (Nagaraj, 2021). Proposed by C.J. Dodson, the bilingual method is the culmination of the several aspects of the grammar-translation method as well as the direct method. The use of mother tongue is allowed in this method in a more controlled way (Nagaraj, 2021). The bilingual method can be compared to Michael West's New Method since both methods deal with bilingual teaching and learning situations – the New Method in India and the Bilingual Method in the United Kingdom (Tickoo, 2020).

### **3.2.2 Popular Approaches to Teaching English**

#### **3.2.2.1 Structural Approach**

The Structural Approach is closely associated with the oral method, which posits that the most effective way to learn a new language is through listening and speaking practice, even if our primary objective is reading or writing it. Students initially listen to the new language content provided by the teacher and then engage in practice before advancing to reading or writing skills. Even during reading or writing in a language, we are

essentially internalizing the spoken form; thus, our reading or writing proficiency is inherently linked to our speaking ability (Srivastava, 1968). The structural approach puts much emphasis on sentence patterns and various structures related to grammar. It focuses on the proper arrangement of words to form correct sentences.

### **3.2.2.2 Situational Approach**

The origin of Situational Language Teaching (SLT), as developed by the British applied linguists, can be traced during 1920s and continued till 1960s. The emphasis of SLT lies on the role of those situations that contribute to the language teaching and learning. However, in SLT, the term ‘situation’ refers to the contexts in which grammatical forms and structures are employed for teaching language in the most natural way (Smith and Loewen, 2018). Some of the major characteristics of SLT, as mentioned by Richards and Rodgers, (2014), are as follows:

- The spoken language is used for language teaching and before presenting any part in written form, materials are taught orally.
- The target language is used in the classroom for delivering any lesson.
- Grammar is taught following a simple to complex approach.
- Emphasis on vocabulary selection is given.
- Once sufficient basis for lexical and grammatical skill is achieved, emphasis is given on reading and writing skills.

### **3.2.2.3 Functional-Notional Approach**

The functional-notional approach is one of the language teaching methods, emphasizing the functions of language along with the situations in which it is used. Its main focus is on the appropriate use of language for communication. Laine (1985) mentions seven

categories for developing notional-functional syllabus: Notion, Function, Situation, Sample Sentences, Grammatical Structures, Vocabulary/Idiom and Culture. Guntermann and Phillips (1982) point out several advantages of the functional-notional syllabus. First, learners can experience language study in relation to specific purposes in real life. Second, this approach engages learners in functional communication from the very early stage. Third, this approach offers an effective solution to the challenge of integrating language study with cultural understanding.

#### **3.2.2.4 Communicative Language Teaching Approach**

The Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT) is often considered an extended form of the functional-notional approach (Skehan, 2006). The aim of the CLT is to emphasize communicative competence in the process of language teaching. This also acknowledges the interdependence of language and communication (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). The emphasis on CLT approach lies on the processes of communication rather than on the mere mastery of language forms. The activities selected for teaching learners through this approach include exercises that would engage learners in the communication process and enhance abilities through interaction (Richards and Rodgers, 2014). Some of the characteristic features of the CLT approach, as mentioned by Nagaraj (2021) are as follows:

- The main focus is on the learner in CLT approach. The role of the teacher is like a facilitator who helps the learners to gain autonomy.
- Helping learners to gain communicative competence is the prime importance in order to use language with sufficient accuracy.
- It focuses on the functions of language rather than prescribing rules.

### **3.2.2.5 Task-based Language Teaching Approach**

The pedagogical task in Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT) approach engages learners in the activities of understanding and interacting in the target language along with enhancing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning (Nunan, 2004). The aim of TBLT is to provide learners with a natural environment for the use of language. Since this approach encourages completion of a task, there is scope for interaction among the learners, which enhances the process of language acquisition. Through interaction with each other, learners have to express their feelings and thoughts, which is required for clarifying their views (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

### **3.2.2.6 Other Approaches**

There are some other approaches to teaching English which include eclectic approach, Total Physical Response (TPR), the silent way and suggestopaedia.

## **3.3 A Glance at the Theoretical Studies**

### **3.3.1 Theories on Second Language Acquisition**

There are several theories of Second Language Acquisition that deal with various aspects of the language acquisition process. Most of the theories on Second Language Acquisition deal with various aspects of language acquisition in different contexts. Some of the major theories include Behaviourism, Cognitivism and Socio-cultural theories.

#### **3.3.1.1 Behaviourism**

The Behaviourist theory was developed as a powerful theory of second language teaching between 1940s and 1970s, especially in the United States. The major exponent of this theory was B.F. Skinner. According to traditional behaviourists, children's attempts to imitate and reproduce the language that they heard around them were positively reinforced. This might be a praise or simply effective communication.

Children would thus be encouraged by their surroundings to imitate and practice these sounds and patterns till they developed ‘habits’ of using language correctly (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). The concept of behaviourism is rooted in the notion that language is mainly a habit or a behaviour that can be operated through general principles of learning. Such principles represent imitation, reinforcement and punishment. The main focus of the behaviourists is on observable behaviours instead of internal processes. Thus they consider children as “interested bystanders”, having no innate mechanism to operate the process of language acquisition (King, 2006). Behaviourism considers all kinds of learning including language learning as the acquisition of new behaviour for which the environment plays the most important role. Environmental stimuli help to develop responses in learning. On receiving positive reinforcement, these responses are repeated. On the other hand, on receiving punishment, these responses are abandoned. By imitating patterns and sound, a child is able to learn a language. The child is more likely to repeat a sound if it elicits a positive response. Repetition is less likely if there is absence of response or negative response. Language acquisition is therefore viewed as being comparable to all other forms of learning. Though behaviourism contributed much to the domain of language learning and teaching, it has close connection to structural linguistics. Behaviourism offers many notable constructs like *reinforcement*, *punishment* and *conditioning* (VanPatten and Williams, 2015).

In the 1980s, Noam Chomsky’s the Universal Grammar Theory (UG) performed a significant role in field of SLA. The theory emerged from the perspectives of the Innatists who hold the view that human beings are born with some innate knowledge and ideas. According to the Universal Grammar, every human being is born with language ability that helps to determine the possible forms and structures of all languages. It

consists of a set of principles, rules and conditions forming significant properties of human languages.

### **3.3.1.2 Cognitivism**

Research on the development of second languages has increasingly relied on psychological theories since the 1990s. Some of these ideas compare language acquisition to computers' ability to store, integrate and retrieve information, using the computer as a metaphor for the mind. Some use neurobiology to try to connect observed behaviour to brain activity as closely as possible (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Cognitivism includes three models: *Information Processing Model*, *Connectionism* and the *Competition Model*.

*Information processing model* or approaches explore how various types of memory (i.e. Short-Term memory, Long-Term Memory, declarative memory and procedural memory) are concerned with information related to L2. They also deal with how L2 related information is processed and how repeated activation automates and restructures this information (Myles, 2013). According to Lightbown and Spada (2006), before becoming fluent speakers, students have to undergo several stages, moving from declarative to procedural understanding. This method enables proficient speakers to focus on the overall meaning of their utterances rather than just their structure.

*Connectionism* considers learning as setting up the strengths between large numbers of connections within one's mind and asserts that language processing does not follow a step-by-step process. There are many processes that function simultaneously. Research studies related to connectionism incorporates computer-based simulated learning (Cook, 2016).

The *competition model* has close resemblance with the connectionist viewpoint. In addition, it is predicated on the idea that language acquisition takes place without the need for a learner's focused attention or an innate language-specific brain module (Lightbown and Spada, 2006).

### **3.3.1.3 Socio-cultural Theory**

The root of the Socio-cultural Theory can initially be traced in Lev S. Vygotsky's concepts. According to Vygotsky's theory, social interactions lead to cognitive development, including language development. Individual interactions are the most important of them. Socio-cultural theory considers speaking and thinking as closely intertwined, in contrast to psychological theories that consider them as connected but independent processes (Lightbown and Spada, 2006). Vygotsky thinks that the development of the brain's higher-order functions is influenced by peers, caregivers, parents, and society as a whole. Vygotsky mentions that since human development focuses on social interaction, cultural differences may exist. The importance of social interaction in psychological development is emphasized by socio-cultural theory. It implies that human learning is mostly a social process and that our interactions with people who are "more skilled" around us shape our cognitive abilities (Cherry, 2025). According to Vygotsky, there are two related mechanisms that work behind the emergence of psychological processes from social activity. The first mechanism is imitation and the second one is the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Imitation helps learners to form repertoires of resources for performing in future but at the same time it cannot be taken as the exact replicas of the primary model. In case of ZPD, teachers or capable peers guide learners to perform various activities that they cannot do independently. Through this, learners can form ideas about their knowledge and ability, allowing them to perform any task independently (Lantolf, 2013).

### **3.3.2 Krashen's Monitor Model**

One of the most impactful theories in the field of Second Language Learning (SLA) is the one developed by Stephen Krashen. In a series of articles in the 1970s and 1980s, Krashen discussed his popular theory, known as Monitor Theory. The monitor theory proposes language-specific model of learning a second language. Krashen mentions two distinct systems that he considers to be used by language learners: subconscious acquisition (in order to use language fluently) and conscious learning (for modified output). The driving force that works behind any kind of acquisition, as per Monitor theory, is the understanding of meaningful messages and the interaction of those messages conveying linguistic information with the innate language acquisition faculty. Monitor theory can explain, as Krashen mentions, why something that is taught is not always learned and also why something that is learned might not have been taught (VanPatten and Williams, 2015). There are five interrelated hypotheses under Monitor model.

#### **3.3.2.1 The Acquisition Learning Hypothesis**

In the Monitor Theory, the Acquisition Learning Hypothesis is often considered the most important hypothesis. In Krashen's opinion the two separate paths of gaining knowledge are acquisition and learning. Acquisition occurs naturally and without conscious awareness; it arises naturally when learners are involved in regular interactions in the second language, concentrating on meaning. Instruction and a deliberate intention to learn are not required. Learning, on the other hand, includes gaining external knowledge about language focusing on its rules and patterns. Learning takes place when L2 plays the role of the object, though it may not be the means of instruction (VanPatten and Williams, 2015).

### **3.3.2.2 The Monitor Hypothesis**

Learned knowledge is not useful in Monitor theory and its primary function is to modify acquired knowledge (VanPatten and Williams, 2015). It is the accountability of the acquired system to initiate speech. The learned system performs the role of serving as a Monitor. There are three conditions, according to Krashen, in order to activate the 'Monitor' (learned rules of grammar), which are – time, focus on form and knowing the rule. In order to think about and use the rules, learners need time; a learner must have knowledge as to how something is said, not just what is being said; a learner must have knowledge as to how one has to gain knowledge before applying a rule (Gass and Selinker, 2001)

### **3.3.2.3 The Natural Order Hypothesis**

According to this hypothesis, language rules or elements of language follow a predictable order for acquisition. Irrespective of instruction being involved or not, the order remains same (Gass and Selinker, 2001). According to VanPatten and Williams (2015), in case of acquisition of specific forms like morphemic structures (i.e. *-ing*, *-ed*, *-s* etc.), a specific sequence is followed by learners. Moreover, they seem to go through predictable phases in their understanding of grammatical structures, such as negation, relative clauses etc. In Natural Order Hypothesis, these evidences are collectively considered.

### **3.3.2.4 The Input Hypothesis**

Krashen thinks that human beings usually acquire language by comprehending messages in the L2 or by gaining 'comprehensible input'. This aspect of Monitor Theory is known as the Input Hypothesis (VanPatten and Williams, 2015).

### **3.3.2.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis**

Krashen introduces another construct, known as the Affective Filter, in order to characterize learners' ease and receptivity in the learning environment (VanPatten and Williams, 2015). Input cannot flow through if the filter is up; if it does, acquisition is impossible. If the filter is low or down, however, and the input is understandable, it will reach the acquisition device and acquisition will occur (Gass and Selinker, 2001).

## **3.4 Pedagogical Approaches to Teaching EFL/ESL**

### **3.4.1 Translanguaging as a Pedagogical Approach**

Teaching methods that incorporate two or more languages with the goal of fostering multilingual repertoire development as well as metalinguistic and language awareness are referred to as 'pedagogical translanguaging.' Pedagogical translanguaging views students as emerging multilinguals who, depending on the social situation, can utilize both English and other languages. Their linguistic assets are respected and students are viewed as multilingual speakers rather than as poor English users (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). A systematic literature review conducted by Huang and Chalmers (2023) shows that pedagogical translanguaging is frequently used to teach mainly the domains of reading and writing. The study concludes with the note that pedagogical translanguaging may be considered fruitful for teaching in specific circumstances, but lack of well-researched methodological quality of the literature makes it quite hard to draw concrete inferences. In another study, conducted by Cenoz & Santos (2020), a group of educators from various trilingual institutions was informed of both theoretical and practical insights regarding translanguaging. They were subsequently encouraged to apply pedagogical translanguaging within their classrooms. A set of guidelines was provided to assist in this implementation, and the teachers were tasked with developing a lesson plan that

incorporated activities utilizing two or more languages for educational purposes. Following this, the participating teachers employed translanguaging in at least one lesson, gathered feedback from their students, and engaged in reflective practices concerning the implementation. The findings of this study indicate that pedagogical translanguaging can create new paths for language acquisition and enhance language awareness within the framework of multilingual education. Yilmaz (2019) in a study elucidates the evolution of translanguaging as an instructional approach within educational settings along with the connections between translanguaging as a pedagogical instrument and the principles of critical pedagogy. Initially, the paper examines monoglossic and heteroglossic language ideologies and their interpretations of bilingualism. It further provides a definition of translanguaging and distinguishes it from code-switching. Lastly, the discussion focuses on translanguaging as a transformative educational practice aimed at fostering equity in classrooms that serve linguistic minority students. While the concept of translanguaging holds global significance, this particular study is delimited to the context of the United States only. Galante (2020) in an article presents findings from a study focused on the application of translanguaging within an English language programme at a Canadian university. The research involved seven educators and 79 students, with data gathered using four distinct methods: researcher's field notes, classroom observations, student diaries, and teacher interviews. The findings indicate that although teachers expressed their willingness to adopt pedagogical translanguaging, they required additional time to become acquainted with the methodology. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that students were engaged in spontaneous translanguaging outside the classroom without hesitation. The article concludes by addressing the specific challenges associated with pedagogical

translanguaging in multilingual environments, outlining pedagogical implications and suggesting pathways for future research.

### **3.4.2 Textbooks for Teaching English**

Textbooks prepared for teaching English as a second/foreign language to learners play important roles. But at the same time the incorporation of contents and proper use of the textbooks are very essential. Aryan and Pavlova (2019) in their study mention some primary issues concerning the foreign language textbook, which include the features and importance, functions, proper use, role played in the social development of learners and areas that need modifications. An English language textbook provides the course syllabus, functions as a model of the real educational system, instills confidence and a sense of accomplishment in pupils, and implements the fundamental principles of language education. Learners have different learning styles and attitudes, nevertheless, limited opportunities to establish favourable conditions for students' overall development make foreign language instruction engaging, motivating and learner-centered. Various studies have shown that Russian English language textbooks need to be improved in the following areas: subject matter, language content, techniques, balanced skills, cultural and dynamic contents in compliance with the educational objectives and teaching/learning environments, authenticity of texts and other language-related materials, diversity of exercises and activities etc. The study also mentions that the primary goal of modern theory of language education is to focus on learners' holistic development that incorporates social, cultural, cognitive and emotional characteristics, ensuring successful socialization of learners. What is more important is to organize the contents and methods of the textbooks in compliance with the interests and necessities of the learners in the specific teaching-learning environment. Nnamdi-Eruchalu's (2012)

study on the role of textbooks in teaching and learning English in the setting of Nigerian schools points out that since Nigeria is multilingual and multicultural country, tribal and other people of the country communicate in English with the people from different countries across the world, belonging to the fields of science, technology, business, education etc. The study mentions that since the main objective of language teaching is to instill good command of the target language, there are some important qualities that an English textbook should possess and such qualities include good content that treats listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in detail, experience and qualities of the authors, contents in compliance with learners' cultural backgrounds etc. The study also points out several difficulties related to the English textbooks in Nigerian schools. One of the major problems that the study highlights is the disparity between the interests and needs of the learners and the selection of the contents in the textbooks because promoting effective learning should be the prime importance. Boruah (2022) in her study, conducted in Indian context, mentions that cultural and ethnic representations of non-dominant cultures are often superficially presented or almost absent in English textbooks. As a result learners from linguistically disadvantaged groups have to learn through the unfamiliar contexts of the dominant cultures. The study suggests incorporating culture specific representations in textbooks by identifying the deficits of cultural-specific representations using apt self-check rubrics. Ahmadi and Derakhshan's (2016) study shows that textbooks assist teachers to improve their knowledge in the EFL classroom. So the study recommends curriculum and syllabus designers, EFL teachers and other educational stakeholders to evaluate newly-published and prescribed textbooks continuously in order to check and improve the quality of the contents and revise accordingly so as to meet the needs of the learners.

### **3.4.3 Multilingualism and English Language Teaching**

Encouraging multilingualism in ESL/EFL classroom makes teaching-learning activities interesting and smoother. In a multilingual classroom setting, learners come from different linguistic backgrounds. Presenting instances from diverse linguistic contexts and encouraging learners to use their own linguistic repertoire for learning English are effective strategies for English language teaching and learning. Encouraging the non-native speakers of English to use their mother tongues at the time of learning English proves an effective method. Mahanand and Duria (2023) mention in their study that the use of mother tongue, in case of tribal learners, plays a significant role when it is concerned with English language learning. They also state that in many contexts the mother tongues of the tribal learners are often ignored. The researchers conducted their study on the select tribal students of the Koraput region of Odisha on the perceptions towards the use of their mother tongue in English classrooms as well as on the effectiveness of the mother tongue in the target language learning. The study, conducted using a qualitative approach, presents its findings reflecting on the negative attitude towards the use of the mother tongue on account of the prevalent social stigma. The study also shows that teachers' motivation to use mother tongue for learning English plays an effective role. Illman and Pietilä (2018) conducted a study on how multilingualism proves to be a resource in the foreign language classroom. The study addresses three research questions: how learners of immigrant background take advantage of their multilingual backgrounds in English classroom, how the immigrant learners' L1 (native languages) are considered while teaching English and the perceptions of the teachers towards supporting the learning process of the immigrant children. Data for this study were collected using a questionnaire, containing close and open ended questions. The results of the study indicate that learners find learning English

easier when they are allowed to use L1, especially when it is the case with vocabulary learning. The result also shows that majority of the teachers have no proper training for teaching students of immigrant backgrounds but they employ various strategies that incorporate encouraging students' multilingual aspects in order to benefit their learning of English. Pitkänen-Huhta & Mäntylä (2021) conducted a study on the teachers' views of teaching migrant students, having multilingual backgrounds in a regular classroom. The study was conducted following a qualitative approach and collecting data from 7 English teaching through interviews. The results of the study indicate a controversial viewpoint regarding the teachers' perceptions of the multilingual learners since most of the teachers do not want to throw light on the linguistic background of the learners. The teachers' perceptions reveal that multilingual learners possess greater language awareness than the mainstream learners. The study also reveals that despite not being fully aware of the potentials of multilingualism and the linguistic resources of the learners in EFL teaching, the teachers employ several strategies like translanguaging to support the multilingual learners. Haukås' (2016) study reveals beliefs of Norwegian language teachers regarding multilingualism and the use of a multilingual pedagogical approach in the third language (L3) classroom. Using focus group discussions data were collected in this study. Conducting qualitative content analysis, the findings of the study reveal that teachers express a positive attitude towards multilingualism. The results also reveal that multilingualism contributes to the teachers' own language learning and simultaneously it does not contribute automatically to the students' learning.

#### **3.4.4 Technology Integration**

Panyasi et al. (2025) mentioned in their study how integration of technology would directly impact the teaching-learning process in the EFL classroom. The study conducted on the backdrop of Covid-19 pandemic on students and teachers revealed that the

integration of technology for teaching English enhanced the teaching-learning process in every aspect. However, the findings of the study revealed three main elements, leading to the successful implementation of technology in English classrooms, which were requirement of technology-oriented professional development, allocation of suitable classroom, and a value-oriented incentive. Almalki's (2020) study conducted on the EFL teachers in the Saudi context recommended providing teachers with better professional development and support in order to integrate technology in the EFL classroom along with providing resources like computers and smart boards for effective teaching-learning. Marsevani et al. (2024) investigated effective teaching strategies for young learners in ELT classrooms. One of the strategies that the study mentioned was to integrate technology in the ELT classroom for effective teaching and learning. However, the study further recommended integrating flexible approach by fostering autonomous, active and independent learning along with continuous professional development of EFL teachers. Another study conducted by Hol and Aydın (2020) indicates that teachers' attitude towards the use of digital technology in the EFL classroom is positive while considering in terms of need, expertise and importance. The study further indicates that age, gender and teachers' experience do not impact teachers' beliefs.

#### **3.4.5 Miscellaneous Strategies for Teaching English**

There are many other approaches, preferred by teachers in English classes depending on various situations, contexts and backgrounds of the learners. However, prior knowledge of the learners helps to learn newer concepts easily. It is also helpful in the context of learning a second or foreign language, especially English. According to Shulman (1999), learners' prior understanding helps learners to construct meaning and a learner's new knowledge links what they have already gained in the form of knowledge. The teaching process becomes challenging if the prior knowledge of the learner is not checked

properly and carefully. It is important for a teacher to consider seriously what students have already learnt. A learner can learn better when they focus on their prior knowledge and this is applicable to improve skills of the English language learners. Reviving prior knowledge of the students involves two things: finding out what they have already learnt and helping them build the basic understanding that they require to grasp new content (Ferlazzo & Sypniewski, 2018). English language learners from diverse backgrounds have to struggle for grasping any content. So, linking with learners' background knowledge can be considered a fruitful way to make the content accessible by bridging the gap (Robertson, 2008).

### **3.5 Perceptions towards English**

'Perception' refers to the way something is considered or interpreted. Perception towards something helps to explore how the issue is viewed or considered. Studies have shown how perceptions of teachers, learners and parents towards EFL/ESL play pivotal roles in understanding the importance of learning from different perspectives. Perceptions also help to explore how teaching EFL/ESL varies in different classroom settings on the basis of various factors.

#### **3.5.1 Teachers' Perceptions towards English**

Kim (2002) in a study conducted on the teachers' diverse perceptions of teaching English through English on account of various factors like school, teaching experiences and the amount of English used in the classroom. The findings of the study, drawn from the responses of 53 in-service teachers, are obtained through administering questionnaire which contains both close and open-ended questions. The findings suggest using various useful strategies for teaching English through English. Another study conducted by Hsing and Adnan (2022) focuses on the opinion of the teachers of English regarding

engagement of parents for encouraging students to learn English as a second language. Through interviews data were gathered from a number of six English language teachers who were from diverse backgrounds, majoring in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The data collected using interviews were analyzed using a descriptive method. The findings of the study imply that some major issues should be considered by students, teachers and parents regarding the importance of English. The study reveals that students should be informed of the importance of English by getting themselves involved in the practice of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills every day for improving their skills. Practice on regular basis helps to increase their self-confidence, too. The study also presents how teachers should encourage learning English by creating a suitable environment, by avoiding punishment, by allowing students to use his language without rendering any negative reinforcement for committing any mistakes, and by treating the mistake of the learners with utmost politeness. Moreover, the study shows that parents play a pivotal role in encouraging their children to learn English. Parents' positive attitude towards the importance of learning English will grow interests among students. Nanda et al. (2024) investigated perceptions of EFL teachers in Indonesian senior high school towards using first language (L1) while teaching English. In their study, they mentioned that a large number of Indonesian teachers had negative attitude towards the use of L1 while teaching English. But in case of students having limited skills in English, using L1 is the best method for teaching English. The findings of the study elucidate that though teachers expressed different opinions towards using L1 while teaching English, use of L1 for specific reasons would be considered effective, considering the English language abilities of both the teachers and the students. The use of L1 in English classes would play the role of scaffolding, especially while teaching grammar, vocabulary and giving instructions.

### **3.5.2 Learners' Perceptions towards English**

Çetinkaya (2009) conducted a study on the learners' perceptions and attitude towards learning English. The study, conducted using a qualitative approach, explores language learners' perceptions towards English language. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews. The findings of the study indicate that the learners perceive English as an international language and also as a language of power. Besides, they want to have an access to this power by mastering it. At the same time, they question its dominance by showing negative attitude towards learning English. Getie's (2020) study on the factors affecting the attitude of grade 10 students towards learning English was conducted on 103 randomly selected students in Ethiopia by collecting data using a questionnaire. The findings of the study indicate that the attitude of the students towards EFL is positive and this attitude is affected by several social factors like peer groups and parents of learners. On the other hand, several other factors like English language teachers and learning situations have negative impacts on students' attitude. However, the findings also show that the attitude of the target language learners is positive towards the other educational factors like the textbook. Again, another study was conducted by Irham (2022) on the students' perceptions towards English (es) in Indonesian multilingual contexts. Data in this study were collected through semi-structured interviews from five students majoring Arabic language and literature at the Islamic study in East Java, Indonesia. The findings of the study imply that native English always tries to maintain its superiority. English offers scope for international participation such as working in various multinational companies and studying overseas. In most of the cases students' teaching-learning activities are conducted in native English. Ortega-Aquilla et al. (2025) conducted their study on the essential motivating factors for English language learning among university students in Ecuador. Adopting an

explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the researchers collected data from 2077 students and 109 English instructors through administering questionnaires. The study in the primary phase followed a quantitative approach and in the subsequent phase the quantitative results were analyzed with the support of a qualitative approach. The findings of the study showed that students were motivated to learn English because it was the means of communication across the globe and thus it would allow them to fulfil personal, professional and academic goals. Besides, the findings also suggest that students were highly interested in interacting with people worldwide for their educational progress. Wallace and Leong (2020) in their study investigated several factors that contributed to exploring the motivation of primary EFL learners behind learning English. The study was conducted on 23 grade six students who studied at a primary school in China using an open-ended questionnaire. The findings of the study revealed positive attitude towards EFL teachers. The participants reported that they prefer learning through games and activities.

### **3.5.3 Parental Perceptions towards English**

A study conducted by Khatri (2016) on the perceptions of secondary students and teachers towards the importance of teaching and learning English. Using non-random judgemental sampling procedure, a number of 20 secondary level students and 20 parents from 2 secondary schools were chosen. The findings of the study, after analyzing the data collected using questionnaire and interviews, present that the prospects of learning English is immense since it offers good career opportunities. It opens various opportunities in the fields of medicine, business, tourism and teaching profession. The findings also show that parents expressed their interests towards the importance of English because English works as a language of communication across the globe in almost every field, especially in tourism. Lim's (2022) research on the perceptions of

parents towards early English education in South Korea explores the how parents perceive English language learning for their children at an early stage in private English kindergarten schools. Data for this study were collected from 30 participants using a questionnaire and from 8 participants conducting interviews, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The findings of the study suggest that parents from wealthy backgrounds want their children's early English education. The study recommends integrating English education into the national kindergarten curriculum.

#### **3.5.4 Perceptions towards Linguistic Diversities**

In a study conducted by Gul and Khanum (2021), the researchers investigated teachers' perceptions towards diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the students in Baluchistan. The findings of the study addressed that majority of the teachers were interested in the learning needs of the students having linguistic and cultural diversities but the teachers were less supportive to entertain the diversities. Chatterjee et al. (2023) elucidate that though India's language education policy promotes mother tongue-based multilingual education in primary school, children from linguistic minority communities or tribal language backgrounds are not usually taught in their mother tongues; rather the official languages of India are followed. Consequently, the perspectives and preferences of individuals from tribal and minority language communities stand among the various intricate factors contributing to the disparity between policy and practice.

#### **3.6 Challenges in Teaching and Learning English**

There are several methods of teaching and learning English. When such strategies are applied in different contexts for teaching English, various challenges emerge on behalf of the teachers and students. In Indian context, challenges in teaching and learning English are diverse. Jeyaraj (2017) mentions that the challenges in Indian context are related to

methods of teaching, learning style, professional development, motivation of the learners, diverse socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds of the learners, medium of instructions used in schools, training of the teachers, and amount of exposure to English. Another study conducted by Nath (2016) on the challenges faced in teaching English to secondary schools in North Tripura district focuses on several challenges in teaching and learning of English. Since most of the students in this region are multilingual, their native languages affect English language learning by impacting their pronunciation and syntax. Majority of the students express fear for English as a second language. Some other challenges incorporate poor teaching, inappropriate English text books and lack of skills among teachers. Moreover, the curriculum, traditional grammar and avoiding communication in English by teachers in the classroom are also contributing factors to the challenges.

### **3.6.1 Challenges Faced by Teachers**

Halik and Nusrath (2020) conducted a research in which the researchers addressed their observations on the challenges of teaching English as a second language in rural schools of Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. The study was conducted following a survey research method. The study contained 15 English teachers and 50 students as samples. A survey method was adopted in order to conduct the study and both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used for data collection. Data were collected from five rural schools in the Kinniya Education Zone. As for instruments for data collection, questionnaire and interview were used. On the basis of the analysis of the data collected, the findings show the participant teachers' challenges in teaching English to the students in rural schools. One of the notable challenges was students' negative attitude towards learning English. Moreover, other factors like poor parental support, lack of students' support, lack of teaching-learning materials at schools, parents' negative attitude towards learning

English, lack of motivation and proper guidance, poor learning environment, poor family background and lower level of basic knowledge in English contribute to the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching English at rural schools. The study also suggests some possible remedies to overcome such challenges and difficulties by giving focus on the students at primary stage to gain basic knowledge in English Language. Besides, several workshops, training programmes and motivational programmes about the importance of English for both parents and teachers will also be beneficial. Furthermore, each and every school in rural setting should be equipped with modern learning environment. Endriyati et al. (2019) discussed in their article the challenges faced by teachers in teaching English at various rural and urban schools along with possible solutions to it. The research is mainly qualitative in nature. The sample size contains four teachers, selected using purposive sampling technique. All the samples had long background of teaching in schools. The instruments used for data collection were semi-structured interview, questionnaire and sometimes checklist as well. The findings of the study presented various challenges with regard to teaching English. But the challenges are different in the context of rural and urban settings. The challenges are predominantly related to the students, teachers and facilities available at the school. The challenges related to the students are mainly regarding vocabulary mastery, motivation, parents' supports and students' activeness. On the other hand the challenges associated with the teachers are mainly regarding familiarity of IT, mastery of teaching method and teachers' training. Last but not least, there is crisis in infrastructural facilities since there is inadequate availability of computer devices. Febriana et al. (2018) conducted a study that aims at finding out the challenges faced by teachers, especially English language teachers while performing teaching and learning activities in rural schools, located in Indonesia. The approach for research in this study was qualitative. The method followed

up for the study was narrative case study. Such narratives were collected from seventeen teachers from each major island of Indonesia, namely Sumatera, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Papua, and Nusa Tenggara. Those seventeen teachers were employed at seventeen different Junior High Schools, located in the rural areas. The techniques used for data collection were open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. After data collection, the research data were analyzed by using Constant Comparative Method (CCM). The result of the study brought out several challenges faced by teachers during their teaching, especially at the time of English language teaching. Major challenges are related to infrastructure, source of learning, language barrier, parental mindset, inadequacy of teachers, student competence, and student mindset. Masturi et al. (2022) in their study attempted to explore the complexities encountered by rural-area preschool teachers in teaching and learning English skills. The researchers adopted a qualitative approach. The samples of the research were six rural teachers from preschools in the Air Tawar Zone, Johor Bahru, Malaysia. Data were collected employing semi-structure interviews. A thematic analysis technique was done for analyzing the data. Three primary themes were identified: (i) preschoolers' low English proficiency, (ii) the teachers' challenges (classroom and home-based situations), (iii) the intricacies posed by the Ministry of Education (MOE) curriculum. The findings of the research emphasized problems related to preschoolers' low English proficiency. The second problem is regarding challenges in teaching English, which incorporate challenges faced by teachers, challenges rooted at home, other challenges at school etc. The third problem is regarding curriculum, as faced by the teachers while teaching English to the students. Oktavia et al. (2022) in their study, conducted in Indonesian context, investigate the strategies employed and challenges faced by teachers in teaching English skills to young learners. The challenged addressed in the study are chiefly associated with listening, speaking, reading and

writing skills and as for strategies the study addresses that teachers reported games, songs and memorization to be effective strategies. Imran et al. (2024) in their study which was conducted adopting a phenomenological approach along with a mixed-method design on the instructional practices and teachers' challenges in elementary schools in Pakistan, address several issues related to the challenges which especially highlight lack of skills, training and professional qualifications. The study highlights that in rural areas, elementary teachers received insufficient training. Apart from these, the study also addresses scarcity of resources and lack of technology-driven instructional practices.

### **3.6.2 Challenges Faced by Learners**

Hibatullah's (2019) study, conducted on the challenges faced by EFL students while learning English in a non-English speaking country, focuses on the issues related to learning of English in an Indonesia based private university where students came from China, Thailand and Taiwan. Following a descriptive case study method, the study adopted the qualitative approach. The findings of the study focus on challenges related to productive skills, receptive skills, lack of resources from the teachers, ineffective teaching strategies, vocabulary mastery, lack of motivation, and also several challenges related to exposure as well as culture. Again, Rahayu and Rosa (2020) conducted their study on the challenges faced by learners during learning of English at elementary schools in Indonesia using a descriptive method and collecting data using questionnaires and interviews. The findings of the study, after analyzing data quantitatively, indicate that the challenges faced by learners in learning English are associated with insufficient vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, unsuitable learning atmosphere and lack of motivation. The study further recommends the need of more tech-savvy and student-friendly teachers. Nayak (2019) in her doctoral dissertation investigated the challenges

faced while teaching English to rural high school students in the state of Odisha, India. The findings of the study suggest that EFL/ESL teachers should adopt suitable teaching methods on the basis of the needs and abilities of the students. Besides, a motivating environment is also necessary for the students for effective learning. Furthermore, the study also provides suggestions for creating student-centric environment in the classroom, leading to focus on real-life experiences and also on story-telling and writing. The most important requisite is the training of teachers for rendering effective teaching to students for learning English. The teachers should seek feedback from students once their classes are over every time regarding their teaching strategies. Yesmin and Singh (2025) in their research Communicative English Language Learning (CELL) among higher secondary tribal students in the select region of Bangladesh was impacted by socio-cultural barriers, linguistics diversities, lack of congruities between real-life situations and English textbooks and the intervention of native tongues.

### **3.7 Factors Affecting Teaching and Learning English**

The teaching and learning of English is influenced by several factors. Various studies have shown that the major factor that affect teaching and learning English incorporate – age, gender, curriculum, skill of the teachers, motivation etc. Ellis (2015) has mentioned three main traditionally considered psychological factors that have contributed to second language acquisition: cognitive, affective and conative. The cognitive factors include intelligence, language aptitude and beliefs of learners; the affective factors include language anxiety; the conative factors include motivation and willingness to communicate; the mixed factors incorporate personality and learning style. Lakshmi (2021) in the doctoral study, conducted on the factors affecting teaching-learning process in English classes collecting data from teachers and students using questionnaire, interviews and classroom observations, focuses on the contributing factors that affect

teaching and learning English in high schools. The findings of the study indicate that despite updated curriculum and teacher training there was no change in the classroom teaching because of lack of infrastructure, large size of the classroom, preconceived notions of the teachers about students and backdated evaluation process. The findings further indicate that the LSRW skills were not given equal importance despite the focus being on language teaching. Nawaz et al. (2015) in their study on factors that affect the motivation level of students to learn English as a second language in the context of Pakistani university draw attention to the factors like English anxiety, attitudes towards learning English, influence of the teachers and family that are responsible for affecting the motivation level of students to learn English as a second language. Sangay et al. (2023) investigated factors affecting secondary school students' attitudes toward learning English in Southern Bhutan. The researchers conducted the study adopting a mixed method approach and collecting data using questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. The findings of the study address the following key factors affecting teaching and learning English: strategies used in the classroom for teaching, classroom environment, teaching-learning resources, peer impact, and home as well as community environment. Sevy-Biloon et al. (2020) investigated in their study some major factors that affect English language teaching in public schools in Ecuador. Adopting a qualitative approach and conducting round table discussions, data were collected from 40 EFL teachers. The findings of the study identify several factors that influence English language teaching. Such factors incorporate: pedagogical approaches employed in the classroom, excessive use of L1 (Spanish) instead of English, lack of infrastructural facilities required for conducting English language teaching classes and educational policies. Even there were diverse opinion on the selection and application of textbooks in the EFL classrooms. Wallace and Leong (2020) in their study investigated several factors

that contributed to exploring the motivation of primary EFL learners behind learning English. The study, conducted on 23 grade six students who studied at a primary school in China after collecting data using an open-ended questionnaire, reveal that factors like social support from teachers, family and peers, and learning environment consisting of various classroom-based tasks and activities are contributing factors for motivating learners towards learning English. The findings of the study also highlight that positive relationship with the teacher and various engaging activities in the EFL classroom help to grow interest among learners.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter has presented in detail various studies that concentrate on various teaching strategies, employed in the English language classrooms, consisting of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in both Indian context and contexts across the globe. The studies reviewed deal with how various teaching strategies can cater to the needs of the EFL/ESL learners whose L1 or mother tongue is not English and may use more than one language to communicate, as in the case of tribal speakers or linguistic minority speakers. This chapter, further, deals with various studies related to the challenges faced by both teachers and students while teaching and learning English. Furthermore, the literature reviewed in this chapter argues for perceptions of students, teachers and parents towards English as well as factors affecting teaching and learning English. This chapter also discusses various relevant theories related to second language acquisition.

Most of the research studies conducted, as mentioned above, are either from different regions of West Bengal or from other states in India or from countries abroad. Some studies focused simply on the problems related to L2 (English) learning, some studies focused on the challenges related to L2 (English) teaching and some studies

focused on both in several contexts along with issues related to multilingualism. Several discussions take place regarding constructivist teaching-learning situations in which there is a paradigm shift from teacher centism to student centism in classroom contexts. But there are not ample studies conducted on the teaching strategies, challenges and perceptions related to the linguistic minority learners. The reviews of literature further identify that no study has been conducted on the linguistic minority learners of the Sundarbans in West Bengal, India so far. So, the present study attempts to focus on several integrated emerging pedagogic approaches along with challenges in the English language classroom that consists of learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds through in-depth analysis of language teaching and learning issues among linguistic minorities. The study further attempts to explore the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English. Thus the present study attempts to fill the gap identified from the reviews of literature on the select areas.

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## Chapter 4

# METHODOLOGY

## CHAPTER 4

# METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Overview

The primary aim of this chapter is to present suitable justifications behind choosing the appropriate research design for conducting the present study. This chapter describes in detail the philosophical approach and research methodology that have been adopted to explore the phenomena addressed in this research. Descriptions of the institutions visited for data collection have been provided with much detail in this chapter. Furthermore, this chapter provides details of the samples, the sample selection method, instruments used for data collection and description of the natural settings. Again, this chapter will address the ethical issues, considered for conducting the study. This will also highlight how validity and reliability of data have been strictly maintained while conducting the research adopting a qualitative approach. The main research questions of the present study are as follows:

1. What are the major strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?
2. What are the major challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?

3. What are the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English?

#### **4.2 Justification for the Present Research**

The main interest lying behind conducting the current research was to analyze the teaching strategies employed by the teachers as well as the challenges faced by the teachers of English (i.e., EFL/ESL teachers) and linguistic minority learners during teaching and learning English at primary schools, located in the Indian Sundarbans. Besides, I intended to explore the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English. Since the linguistic minority learners have different linguistic backgrounds apart from Bengali, the present study intended to focus on the role of teachers in minimizing challenges faced by the learners in learning English. It is therefore important to understand the teachers' notions in emphasizing the importance of the languages of the linguistic minority learners while teaching English. Besides, parents play an important role in shaping learners' future. So, the parents' understanding of the importance of learning English is also a major factor, addressed in the present study. It is, therefore, necessary to understand the subjective viewpoints of the individuals involved in the study. Through the analysis of the suitable paradigm, the subjective perceptions and experiences of the individuals are discussed in the next section.

#### **4.3 Overview of the Key Research Paradigms in Social Sciences**

In educational research, the term 'paradigm' is widely used nowadays. Since the use of the term 'paradigm' by Thomas Kuhn in his seminal work *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1971, the term occupies a noteworthy place in social science. Thomas Kuhn highlighted the role of paradigms in the history of natural sciences. Paradigms can be defined as, "...models, perspectives or conceptual frameworks that help us to

organize our thoughts, beliefs, views and practices into a logical whole and consequently inform our research design” (Basit, 2010, p. 14). As per another definition, paradigms can be a “.....model or framework for observation and understanding which shapes both what we see and how we understand it” (Babbie, 2017, p.31).

For understanding social behavior of individuals or groups, social scientists have developed several paradigms. Social science paradigms offer diverse notions, each of which offers insights that the others miss out and simultaneously discards several aspects of social life that others explore (Babbie, 2017). The importance of research paradigms influences the strategies the researcher employs in interpreting the meaning of the reality. Every research paradigm has a robust philosophical foundation. However, in social science research, especially in educational context, there are two major paradigms: (i) positivist paradigm and (ii) interpretive paradigm. Apart from these two, there is another paradigm in educational research, known as critical theory.

The positivist paradigm, also known as the normative paradigm, is followed mainly in quantitative approach to research. The positivist paradigm represents a very traditional view of research. During the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the philosophical approach of positivism was developed by August Comte in sociology. Comte emphasized observation and reason as means of understanding and exploring human behavior. He opined that the basis of true knowledge is the experience of senses and can be obtained through experimentation and observation (Li et al., 2018). Positivism has close resemblance with natural sciences where observation, experimentation and interrogation of a large number of subjects are responsible for discovering truth. Positivists believe that the findings of a study can be statistically analyzed and can be generalized. The positivists consider social reality as a phenomenon that can be

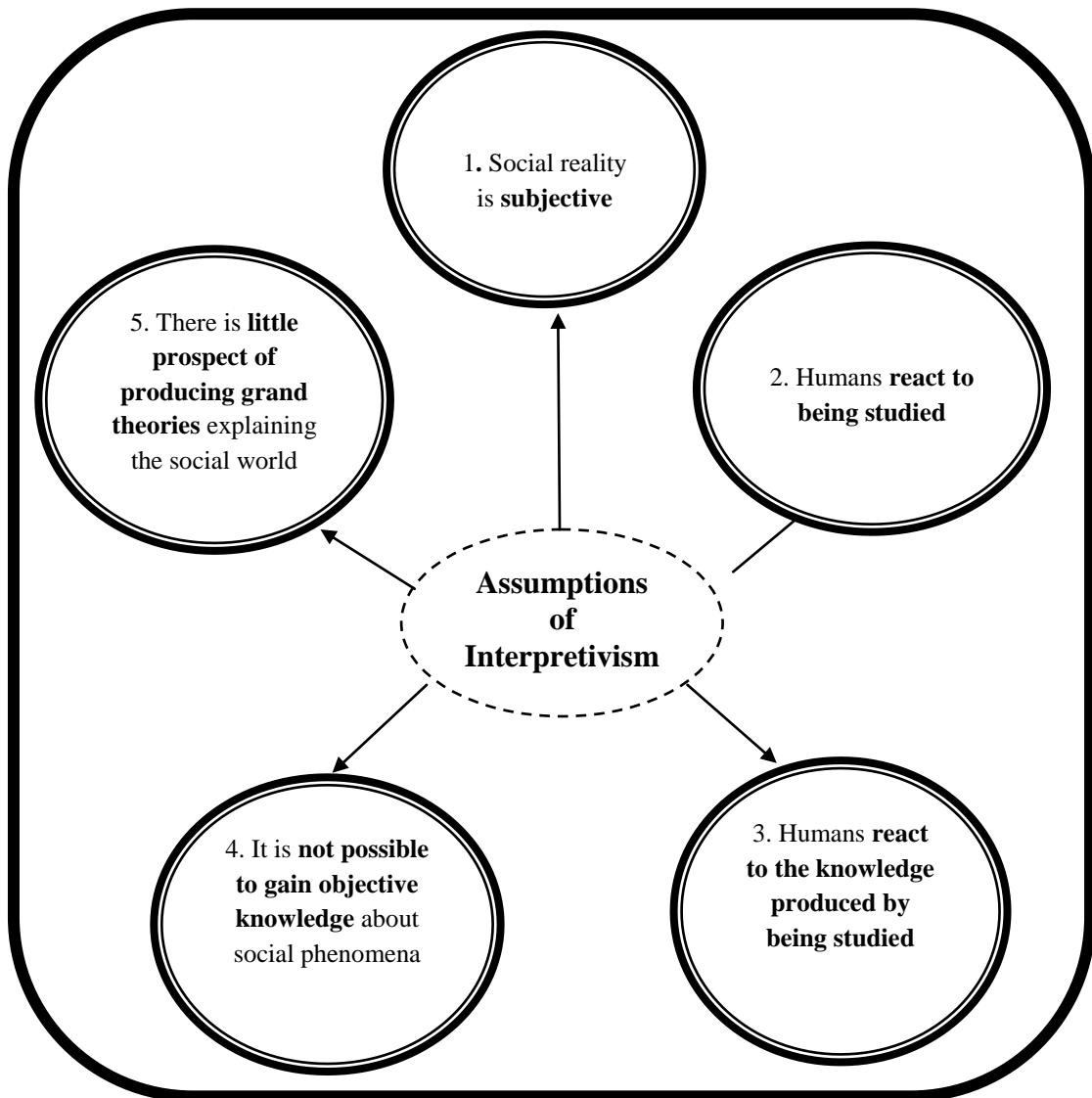
observed, controlled and measured with specific patterns. The foundation of positivism is built on empiricism which relies on verified data received from senses, known as empirical evidence.

The interpretive paradigm, also known as naturalistic paradigm, originated in educational research in the 1970s. This paradigm subscribes to qualitative approach mainly. The interpretive paradigm is strongly influenced by anthropology and the aim of the paradigm is to comprehend and explore the culture of others from inside (Li et al., 2018). For gaining authentic knowledge of any culture and for forming a sound and trustworthy account of the culture, this paradigm often employs ethnographic methods in which interviews, participants' observation and building ethically sound relationship are key components. The foundation of this paradigm is built on the formation of subjective knowledge, especially when methods, validity and scope are considered. Researchers who follow interpretive paradigm do not go for generalizing findings; instead they consider social reality from the research participants' perspectives (Basit, 2010).

The critical theory paradigm is more concerned with the aspects of prescribing what a society consists of and how the individuals in the society should behave. Common examples of critical theory are Feminist theories, Critical race theories etc. The critical theory is not merely concerned with the issues in the society; rather it focuses on changing the challenging issues for the benefits of the society. The aim of critical research theory is to drive away discrimination and inequality from the society and to empower the powerless.

**Figure 4.1**

*Various Assumptions of Interpretivism*



*Note.* Adapted from *Ground Rules for Good Research* (pp. 18-20), by M. Denscombe, 2002, Open University Press. As cited in *Mixed Methods in Criminology* (p. 85), by V. Heap & J. Waters, 2019, Routledge.

#### **4.3.1 Suitable Paradigm for the Current study: Interpretivism**

On considering the nature of the present study, I decided to choose the interpretive paradigm on several grounds. Cohen et al. (2018) outline several distinguishing features of interpretive paradigm that have been considered in the present study while opting for the suitable paradigm. First, people act as per their will and make meaning through their activities. They construct their world through their activities. So, I also intended to explore meanings from the deliberate activities and interaction of the students and teachers in specific social setting which includes the classroom context mainly. Second, interpretive paradigm considers that situations, events and behaviour are dynamic and unique. They cannot be generalized. Similarly, the present study deals with the analysis of specific cases and through analysis I tried to explore the strategies, challenges and perceptions in the context of teaching and learning of English with reference to linguistic minority learners. So, here the study is conducted on the specified sample and thus the results are non-generalizable. Third, reality is multi-layered so there are multiple interpretations and perspectives of a single situation or event. In the current study, I valued the perspectives of the participants however diverse those may be. I also interpreted the data paying adequate importance to the multiple interpretations of the phenomenon under study. Fourth, the interpretive paradigm believes that researchers should analyze situations through the viewpoints of the participants rather than the lens of the research. The interviews, observations, focus group discussions and contextual documents enable me to explore and analyze the participants' points of view regarding the situations that form the central part of the study.

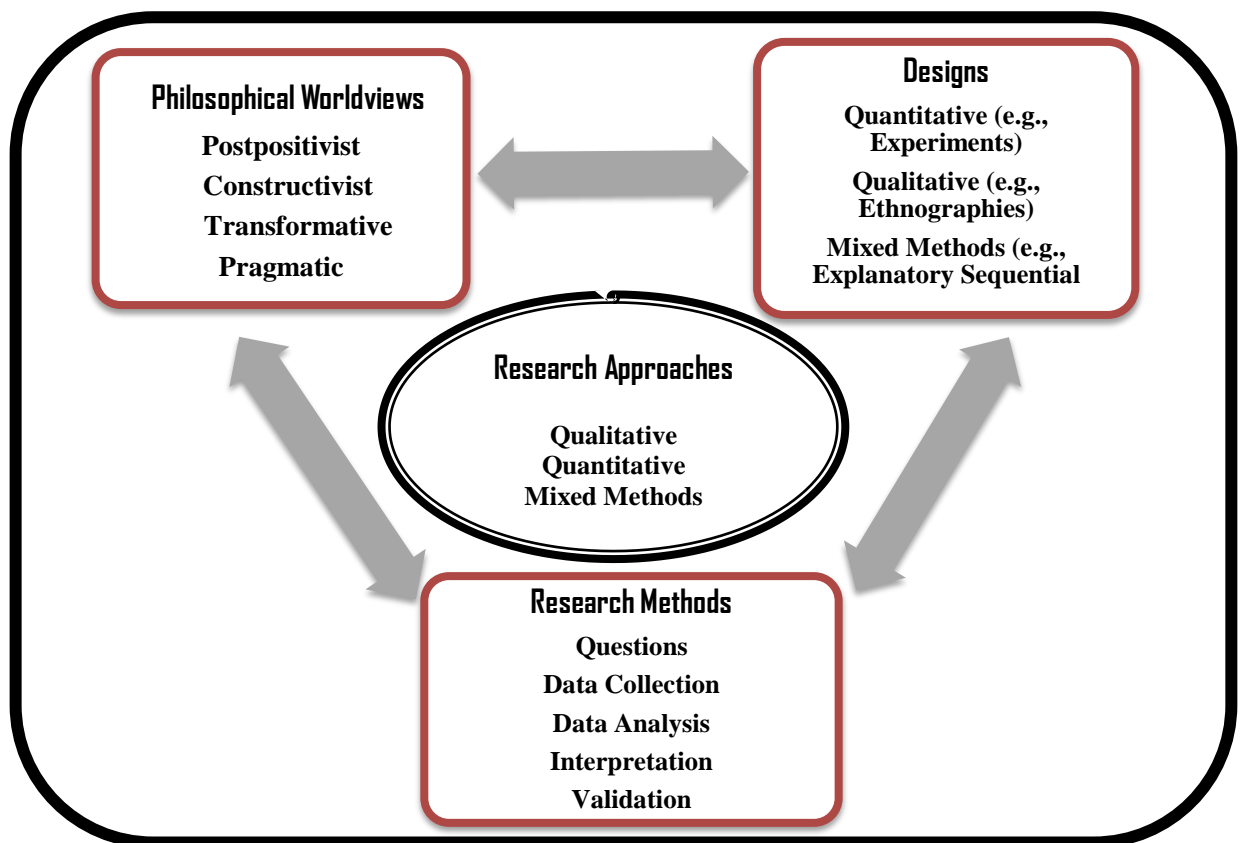
#### **4.4 Research Approach**

Creswell (2014) defines research approaches as plans and procedures followed in the process of conducting a research that incorporates from comprehensive assumptions to

the systematic steps of data collection, analysis and interpretations. However, there are mainly three approaches to research: (i) qualitative, (ii) quantitative, and (iii) mixed method. In any planning for research, a researcher needs to consider three interconnected components: (i) philosophical worldview related to the study, (ii) the research design, and (iii) the specific methods or procedure followed in the study (Creswell, 2014).

**Figure 4.2**

*A Framework for Research*



*Note.* From *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed., p. 5), by J. W. Creswell, 2014, Sage. Copyright 2014 by Sage.

While planning for a proper research strategy to be adopted for conducting the present research, the primary goal was to choose a suitable research approach that would best answer the research questions with in-depth exploration. Besides, the focus was also on

determining appropriate methods and design that would help to delve deep to explore real-life issues related to classroom strategies used by teachers for English language teaching as well as complexities related to teaching and learning English language among the linguistic minority learners in the Sundarbans of West Bengal. On considering the issues mentioned, qualitative approach was the best one to be adopted for the present study. Flick (2015) mentions three major issues, addressed by the qualitative research approach: (i) consideration of the subjective viewpoints of the participants, (ii) focus on underlying issues that address the meanings of a situation, and (iii) depiction of the life of the participants as well as the social practices. So, I planned to undertake a qualitative research approach to explore and investigate the issues, addressed through my research questions. I took the decision of studying the raised phenomena in natural setting by observing teaching-learning process in the classroom and also through conversation with teachers, students and parents. The present study is purely qualitative in nature, conducted on the basis of several aspects followed in qualitative research approach.

#### **4.5 Characteristics of Qualitative Research**

Bogdan and Biklen (2016) have mentioned five essential features pertaining to qualitative research. However, they also added that not all the types which are categorized under qualitative research will follow those characteristics to an equal extent.

**Figure 4.3**

*Major Characteristics of Qualitative Research*



**4.5.1 Qualitative research is naturalistic**

The most important feature of qualitative research is its naturalistic way of enquiry. It means that this type of study occurs in natural setting. For collecting data, qualitative researchers have to go directly to the field and observe the phenomenon under study. They realize that any action can be best understood if it is observed in the actual setting, i.e. where it occurs. Qualitative researchers enter the field and spend considerable time in observing incidents, activities and processes along with recording them. They are more interested in observing human behaviour in the natural setting, as opposed to observing in a mechanical or artificial context. For example, if any researcher wants to observe the challenges faced by teachers in teaching learners from socio-economically disadvantaged background, then he/she has to go to the specified schools, observe the teaching learning processes and challenges faced by both teachers and students and has to interview teachers for collecting data from the real setting.

#### **4.5.2 Qualitative research is descriptive**

The nature of qualitative research is descriptive. Data collected for qualitative research often take the form of words or pictures instead of being considered as numbers. The results of qualitative research are often represented with the support of quotations drawn from the responses of respondents. Forms of data in this type of research include interview transcripts, recorded audio, video data, memos, observation-based data, photographs, field notes and other documentary evidences. For example, a research which tries to explore perceptions of unemployed youth would require in-depth interviews of the respondents as data for investigating the phenomenon.

#### **4.5.3 Qualitative research is concerned with process**

In qualitative research, researchers prioritize the process more. It means they are concerned with *how* and *why* something happens. They are concerned with both the result and the process that leads the phenomenon to reach the result. For example, a participant observation study in a school setting, dealing with how a teacher is motivating students, would elaborately focus on the process.

#### **4.5.4 Qualitative research is concerned with inductive data analysis**

In most of the qualitative studies, researchers analyze data inductively. As opposed to quantitative research in which researchers generate hypothesis and then collect data for testing the hypothesis for proving or disproving it – a process known as deductive reasoning. But in qualitative researches collected data are synthesized into an interconnected form through inductive reasoning – a process that further leads to form theories following a bottom-up approach. Bogdan and Biklen (2016) compare the process of data analysis in qualitative research with a funnel in which things are open at the beginning, and gradually narrow down and become specific at the bottom. For

example, a study which attempts to explore the perceptions of individuals towards the impact of social media on mental health would require collecting in-depth data and then analyzing inductively in order to reach a synthesized conclusion.

#### 4.5.5 Qualitative research is concerned with meaning

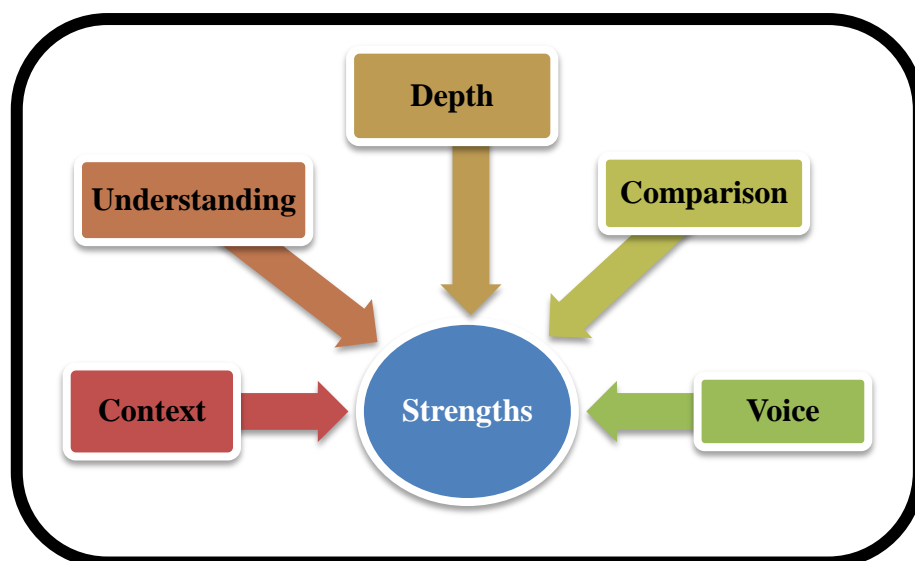
The primary concern of qualitative research is how people make sense and seek meanings out of their lives. Qualitative researchers deal with individual perspectives of people and how individuals perceive the world. They are typically interested in individual thoughts, experiences and behaviour of people.

#### 4.6 Strengths of Qualitative Research

While discussing the strengths of qualitative research approach, i.e., the contexts in which qualitative research will be best suited, Tierney and Clemens (2011) mention some important specifications that qualitative research can provide.

**Figure 4.4**

*Strengths of Qualitative Research*



#### **4.6.1 Qualitative research is suitable for providing context**

One of the strengths of employing qualitative research is that it provides suitable contexts for the study. It often considers historical or cultural contexts of a phenomenon for a better understanding. For conducting studies, qualitative researchers prefer considering natural contexts in which the behaviour of the individual or the group can be observed properly. The context for the study also renders an insight into the real-world problems.

#### **4.6.2 Qualitative research renders an understanding**

Developing proper understanding of the phenomenon in the research along with the findings of the study is another key strength of qualitative research. Qualitative research develops in the readers an understanding of both how the design has been formulated and the epistemological understanding on behalf of the researchers (Tierney and Clemens, 2011). The process that the researcher develops as a part of the study along with the analysis of the study depends on the background as well as the understanding of the researcher. In order to create an understanding of the research, the readers also have to develop an understanding of the background of qualitative research. So the researcher's understanding of a phenomenon along with the process of treating several issues related to the study is very important for the readers to form an understanding of the study.

#### **4.6.3 Qualitative research describes a phenomenon with depth**

As opposed to quantitative studies which mainly deal with numbers and quantifications of data, qualitative research treats the phenomenon with depth. Instead of answering to questions asked with *what*, qualitative researchers attempt to answer *how* and *why* a phenomenon occurs. The strength of qualitative research lies in the point that the findings of a specific study will form grounds for future studies or looking at a specific

study from different viewpoints. For example, a study which wants to explore the perceptions of unemployed youths following a qualitative approach would invite multiple viewpoints of the respondents for treating the issue deeply rather than gathering fixed responses, as it is usually followed in quantitative studies.

#### **4.6.4 Qualitative research emphasizes comparison**

Qualitative researchers often shed significant lights on comparison while conducting a study. This type of comparison may be done with other studies or sometimes within the study itself. Studies like case studies, ethnographic studies, phenomenological analysis and historical studies often take resort to comparison for exploring a specific phenomenon. Thus for a specific purpose when any data collection method like interview is consistently employed at a similar period of time, this renders multiple viewpoints for the reader for conducting comparison and reaching a productive conclusion. Qualitative research does not deal with the relationship between variables. Rather it tries to analyze the intricacies and complexities that exist within a context through comparison.

#### **4.6.5 Qualitative research renders voice**

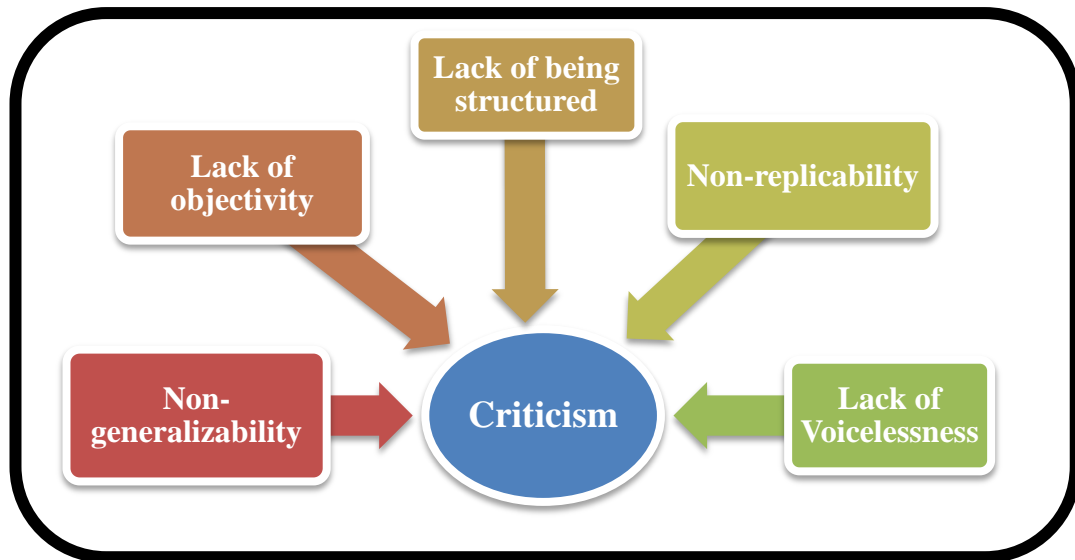
Qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative studies, provides the reader with a voice. The entire reporting is presented in such a way that it keeps the reader engaged. Tierney and Clemens (2011) observe that in qualitative research the researcher does not have to employ particular voice. Instead, the understanding and analysis of the problem create a social and emotional bond with the reader.

#### **4.7 Criticisms of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is often criticized for several characteristics. Tierney and Clemens (2011) mention that there are several areas where qualitative research cannot be considered suitable.

**Figure 4.5**

*Criticisms of Qualitative Research*



**4.7.1 Qualitative research does not consider generalizability**

The primary concern in quantitative research is generalization. The aim of quantitative generalization is to determine the relationship between the population from which the researcher draws the sample and the sample from which the researcher collects data (Scott and Morrison, 2005). But qualitative research does not usually incorporate generalizations of findings since it deals with a small number of samples and delves deep into the phenomenon. It is also true that the term ‘qualitative generalizations’ is sometimes used, but the intention of this form of inquiry is not to generalize findings but to emphasize particular descriptions and themes developed in the context of the study (Creswell, 2014).

**4.7.2 Qualitative research lacks objectivity**

In quantitative research, one of the notable features is objectivity. It means that the objective reality is always represented. Here, experience or perceptions of the subject is not valued. Whatever result the test produces through experiments is reported. But

qualitative research is more concerned with the subjectivity of the researcher. The researcher incorporates his subjective viewpoints, experiences and perceptions on the basis of analyzing the data. Therefore, there are possibilities that two individuals have separate viewpoints on the same phenomenon.

#### **4.7.3 Qualitative research is not structured**

Qualitative research does not follow strict structure, as followed by quantitative studies. Quantitative studies, especially experimental studies, often strictly adhere to structured conditions. But people's perceptions cannot be uniform like scientific laws. It may differ on the basis of day-to-day activities and also for diverse perceptions and reactions of individuals to a specific phenomenon.

#### **4.7.4 Qualitative research cannot be replicated**

Researchers often mention the non-replicable nature of qualitative research. Replicability, in quantitative research, refers to getting same results through repeating a study using the same instrument or method but on different subjects. This feature is very crucial to experimental studies. But replicability cannot be maintained in qualitative research since it does not have provisions for replicability because of the absence of the similar conditions for experiments.

#### **4.7.5 Qualitative research never becomes unvoiced**

In quantitative studies, researchers often tend to report the research findings through passive voice. But in qualitative research, the voice of the researcher plays a significant role. Using first person narratives, qualitative researchers often express their views and experiences, creating a bonding with the readers. The qualitative researcher's attachment to the study gets strengthened through the use his/her voice prominently.

#### **4.8 Research Design: Case Study Design**

Yin (2011) defines research design as *logical blueprint* that interconnects the research questions, data to be collected and data analysis processes in order to properly answer the research questions. Creswell (2014) considers research designs as types of inquiry under three types of research approaches (i.e., qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches) that show the specific paths for conducting the processes in a research design. It is already explained why qualitative approach has been adopted in the present study. However, in qualitative research several research designs are followed, some of which are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnographies and case study.

Since the present study is exploratory in nature, a case study design has been considered the most suitable design. Creswell (2014) defines case studies as a design which the researcher chooses when there is requirement of in-depth analysis of a case that may include a program, process, activity, or one or many individuals. Flick (2014) mentions that case studies consider persons, organizations, families and institutions as their subjects of study. Henn et al. (2009) assert case study design is specifically concerned with qualitative orientation though there are some exceptions and the case study design often incorporates detailed, in-depth and intensive studies conducted on a smaller number of samples or on a single case. The main purpose behind selecting a case study design in any research is to explore the complexities, intricacies and critical issues with regard to the samples or cases selected for the study. Gray (2014) points out that the case study design suits most appropriately when a ‘how’ and ‘why’ question is required answering in the context of a series of events that is beyond the researcher’s control.

There are several types of case study designs. On the basis of the nature, pattern and context of the study, the appropriate type is adopted. Yin (2003), primarily classifies

two types of case study designs – i) single case designs, and ii) multiple-case designs. However, each of the two types is further sub-divided into holistic and embedded designs. When two or several cases are explored within the same study, the study may be defined as a multiple-case design. It has become very popular in recent years. One typical example is a study of school innovations, wherein individual schools implement new educational technologies, reorganized school schedules, or new curricula. Although each school is the focus of a separate case study, the study as a whole encompasses numerous schools and so employs a multiple-case design (Yin, 2003). Since the present research deals with a specific study related to multiple cases conducted in nine schools, I have adopted the multiple-case designs. In the single study multiples cases are incorporated.

#### **4.9 Data Collection**

The data required for conducting the present study were, therefore, gathered from the following sources:

- Interviews of Head Teachers
- Interviews of Assistant Teachers who taught English (i.e., EFL/ESL Teachers)
- Interviews of linguistic minority learners' parents
- Observations of Assistant Teachers' (i.e., EFL/ESL Teachers') English language classes
- Focus group discussions of linguistic minority learners
- Contextual documents collected from the sites of research

## **4.9.1 Instruments for Data Collection**

### **4.9.1.1 Interviews**

Although interviewing for research was considered a marginalized practice in many disciplines of social science for many years in the past, it is now considered one of the most widespread knowledge-producing practices nowadays across social science disciplines (Brinkmann, 2008). Interview in research is actually a form of conversation practice between the interviewer and the interviewee/s or the respondent/s from which knowledge or ideas are generated. There are different types of interview procedure. Lune and Berg (2018) has mentioned three basic types which are: the standardized/ formal/ highly structured interview, the unstandardized/ informal/ non-directive/unstructured interview and the semistandardized/ guided-semistructured/ focused interview. These three types are differentiated chiefly on the basis of degree of rigidity in relation to how they are presented. The structured or standardized interviews are used when there is a vast area of knowledge on a given topic and the dimensions are known and thus this type of interview is popularly used in quantitative research designs (Olson, 2011). In this type of interviews, a formally structured interview questions or schedule is used for data collection. The interviewers ask interviewees those pre-determined questions only. While using structured interview technique, it is assumed by the researchers that the questions set in the interview schedule are sufficient enough to elicit data from the respondents related to the study. The unstructured or unstandardized interviews, in contrast to structured or standardized interviews, are less rigidly conducted. No predetermined questions are required in this. Instead of using an interview schedule, the researcher chooses a set of topics or issues for discussion, following a specific order or sequence. The unstructured interview resembles regular conversation in which there is a free flow

of conversation between the interviewer and the informant. In this type of interviews, along with generating questions, the interviewers must incorporate follow-up probes.

The third type of interview, known as the semi-standardized or semi-structured interview, involves application of a set of predetermined questions on the chosen topics. However, what is different in this type of interview method is that the interviewers enjoy sufficient freedom to probe far beyond the predetermined questions in order to delve deeper for more insights. Li et al. (2018) mention some of the characteristics of semi-structured interviews which are as follows:

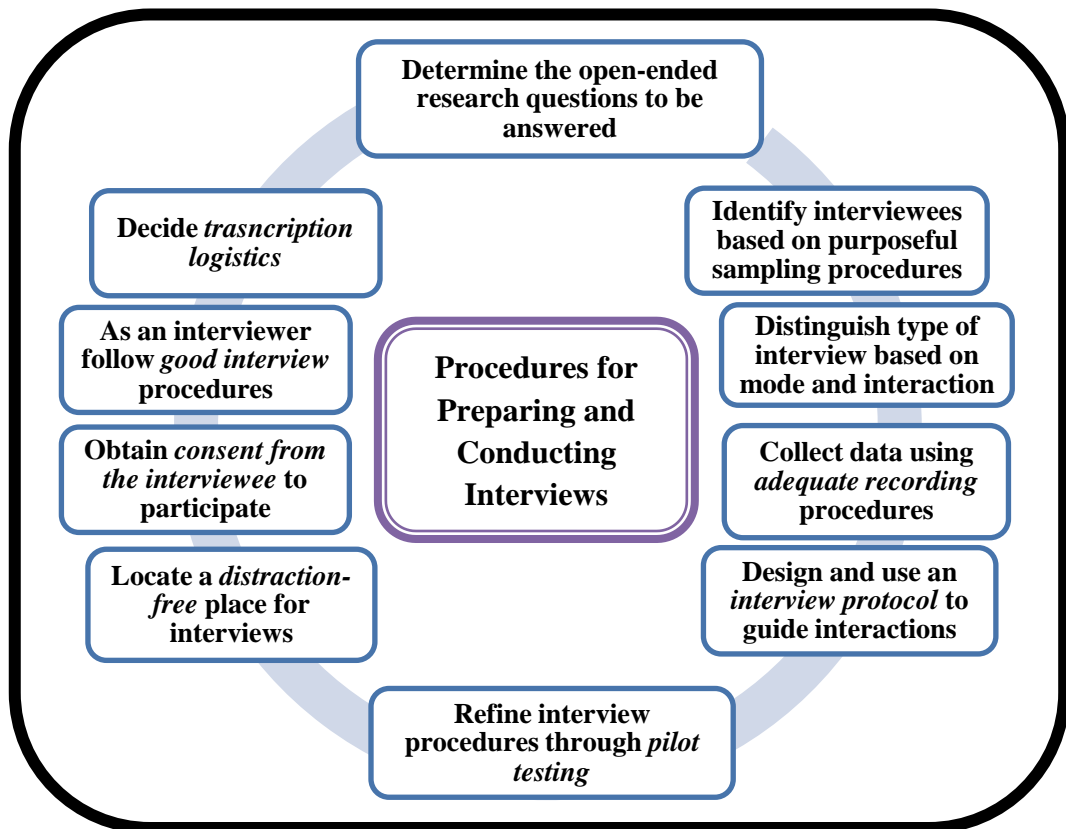
- Both the interviewer and the interviewees take part in a formal interview.
- The interviewer takes the help of an ‘interview guide’.
- During the interview process, the interviewer may adopt ‘topical trajectories’ going beyond the interview guide.

#### **4.9.1.1.1 Interview Procedure in the Current Study**

In the present study, I followed a semi-structured interview technique for collecting data. While conducting interviews with participants, the stages should properly be maintained for successful accomplishment of the process. However, I maintained the following stages while conducting interviews with the participants.

**Figure 4.6**

*Procedures for Preparing and Conducting Interviews*



*Note.* From *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed., p. 166), by J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, 2018, Sage. Copyright 2018 by Sage.

After receiving consent from the appropriate authority related to school education, I contacted the head teachers or teachers-in-charge of the selected schools over phone for receiving cooperation during the process of data collection from the participants. However, before going to each of the primary school, I asked the respective head of the institutions for suitable date and time. Once they confirmed I visited the schools on separate days. I gave a brief idea to all the head teachers regarding my study and also asked them to invite some of the parents from linguistic minority communities for taking

their interviews. However, the head teachers did that accordingly. Besides, the head teachers gave prior intimation to the other staffs and the students of the respective schools. Before conducting the interviews with the head teachers, assistant teachers of English and parents, they were given a plain language statement (Appendix 9) explaining the purpose behind the study and a consent form (Appendix 10) for maintaining research ethics. Besides, I explained to each of the participants verbally the purpose behind interviewing them as well as the nature of the study. I informed all the participants that the participation in this study was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study at any point of time. The interview was conducted in Bengali because the interviewees were Bengali language speakers. For maintaining uniformity during all the interviews, I used separate interview schedules for head teachers (Appendix 4), for assistant teachers who taught English to the linguistic minority learners (Appendix 5) and for parents of the linguistic minority learners (Appendix 6) following the nature of the study. I asked for consent for recording the interviews from each of the participants. Once they gave permission, I started recording the conversation using my Vivo V27 mobile phone. However, in one school the head mistress did not give me permission to record her interview. In that case, I had to take note of her responses. However, before taking interviews from the participants, I focused on rapport building with them for making them feel comfortable with me. Keeping in mind the nature of the study, I conducted face-to-face interviews since it increases the response rate as well as helps to collect in-depth data. Besides, the body language and gesture also enabled me to interpret both verbal and non-verbal messages.

#### **4.9.1.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

Focus group discussion or focus group interview has got a prominent position as a major research tool in order to explore people's feelings and thoughts because it enables the

researcher to get an insight into how people think of the phenomenon under study (Li et al., 2018). Historically, focus groups have been employed in the marketing field in order to receive feedback on various products but nowadays this method is being popularly used in qualitative research (Olson, 2011). It is a type of interview in which a group is formed typically consisting of 6-8 people who participate in the interview in order to share their views on a specific topic. The interviewer plays the role of a moderator by ensuring that all the participants of the group are interacting with each other on the chosen topic. Usually the discussion is conducted in a quiet place and a relaxed environment is created for making the participants feel comfortable. Creswell (2015) defines focus group interview as a process of data collection through interviews with a group, typically consisting of 4-6 participants and also suggests that at the time of conducting focus group interviews all the participants should be encouraged to talk so that everyone gets sufficient opportunity of expressing his/her views. Focus groups can be used as both primary and supplementary sources of data. Besides, in multi-method studies which combine various data-gathering methods, focus group can be effectively used. Li et al. (2018) suggest preparing an outline of questions addressing the key points of the study in order to encourage a productive conversation with the participants and they have provided further suggestions in this regard:

- Asking open-ended questions which do not produce ‘yes/no’ answers or a single word.
- Comparing the interviewer’s understanding by repeating the participants’ responses.
- For collecting added information about the participants’ responses, follow-up questions need to be asked.

Li et al. (2018) have described very clearly the strengths and limitations of focus group discussion method. As for strengths, they have mentioned:

- FGDs help to generate qualitative data from open-ended questions.
- The respondent feels free to express his/her views in detail.
- The interviewer gets an idea of the person’s understanding of the phenomenon.
- Since the participants are in groups, they comfortably express their views for being in a natural environment.

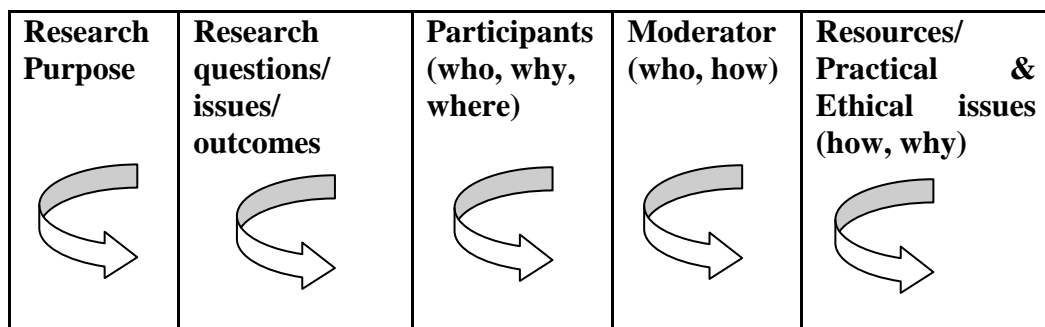
Again, there are a few limitations, too, with regard to focus group discussions. These are as follows:

- The confidentiality is not often guaranteed by the researcher.
- Often the reliability issue is questioned since the questions are open-ended.
- There is the issue related to lack of validity since the possibility of giving false information for impressing other group members is there.

Litosseliti (2003) presents the steps for conducting focus group research through diagram in which the steps start from pointing out clearly the research aims and purposes and continues till considering practical and ethical issues.

**Figure 4.7**

*Steps for Conducting FGDs*

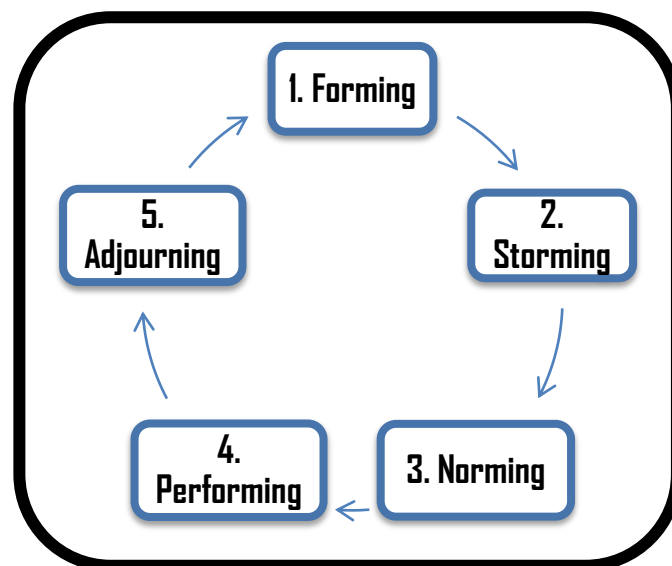


*Note.* From *Using Focus Groups in Research* (p. 29), by L. Litosseliti, 2003, Bloomsbury. Copyright 2003 by Bloomsbury.

While discussing the stages of conducting focus group discussions, Litosseliti (2003) mentions a 5-stage cycle which is adapted from the research of Tuckman (1965). The stages include forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning. The *forming* stage is for knowing each other. At this stage the moderator or the interviewer creates a friendly environment. The introductory questions are posed once a friendly atmosphere is created. In the *storming* stage the moderator begins to focus on the topic more specifically by typically moving from more general to particular questions. In the *norming* stage the discussion moves towards problem-solving stage. The group members become more active and effective. In the *performing* stage the group works in a more productive and interactive way for redefining the issue. Probes and follow-up questions are very important at this stage for collecting additional information. The last stage, known as adjourning stage, is for wrapping up the discussion and getting disengaged from relationships. At this stage, some ending questions allow the participants to reflect.

**Figure 4.8**

*Procedures for Preparing and Conducting FGDs*



#### **4.9.1.2.1 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in the Present Study**

In the present study, I used focus group discussion technique for collecting data from the linguistic minority learners for knowing their perceptions towards English language. I tried to adhere to the 5-stage cycle of Tuckman (1965), mentioned above. However, it should be a matter of concern for any researcher to conduct studies on children since they are considered vulnerable participants. So, the ethical guidelines should be maintained properly. O Reilly et al. (2014) point out that the nature of vulnerability in the context of children means that even if a researcher is observing the behaviour of the children in the playground, asking some basic questions about whereabouts or giving some problem-solving tasks, the researcher needs to consider ethical guidelines. I followed the necessary ethical guidelines for conducting the study. I asked for consent from the parents as well as the teachers (Appendix 10) in the concerned schools. I used a *guide* consisting of a set of questions (Appendix 7) for asking the children in order to elicit their perceptions concerning the topic of the present study. However, before starting the focus group discussion in every school, I informed the head of the institutions of the purpose of my study and requested to arrange a sitting for 4-6 young learners from linguistic minority background. Once the requirements were fulfilled, I started discussing with the learners making them feel relaxed and comfortable so that they would express their views in an unbiased way. At the initial phase, it was quite tough to make them feel relaxed but after a few minutes' conversation, rapport was built with them, which led me to collect data successfully from the young participants. Since none of the school allowed to take videos, I voice-recorded the conversations in my Vivo V27 mobile phone.

### **4.9.1.3 Observations**

In social science research, observation is a very effective instrument for data collection. Just like the skills of speaking and listening used in interviews, observation is a day-to-day skill, methodologically and systematically employed in qualitative research because observation incorporates all the senses, viz., feeling, smelling, seeing and hearing, into observations (Flick, 2014). As a means of collecting qualitative data, observation method incorporates careful watching and systematic recording of what one sees and hears in a particular setting. There are certain situations in which observations can be extremely useful instead of other data collection methods.

Li et al. (2018) classifies observation in different ways – overt observations, covert observation, direct observation, indirect observation, structured observation and non-structured observation. In overt observation everyone knows that they are under observation. Since the researcher remains honest with the participants in the process of this type of observation, crucial ethical issues like deception or absence of informed consent can be avoided. In covert observation the observer remains hidden and those who are being observed remain completely unaware of the observation. Even the researcher does not inform anything about the observation process and keeps his/her intentions secret, raising serious ethical issues. Again, in direct observation the researcher watches any phenomenon just as it occurs. It means this method emphasizes observation of any behaviour or processes in a natural environment. In indirect observation, the researcher observes and analyzes the result of behaviours and processes. Here the emphasis lies on the reported observations. In structured observation systematic observation of any phenomenon is implemented with the help of a checklist or coding system. In non-structured observation there is no predetermined plan to follow during the

observation. Here, an open-ended, flexible enquiry into the phenomenon is emphasized. Sometimes, a semi-structured observation is also an effective method since it combines both predetermined set of questions and a flexible enquiry leading towards exploring emerging themes during the process of observation. Another most demanding category of observation is known as participant observation in which the participant becomes an active part of the phenomenon, context or culture being observed and the role of the research is of an active participant.

#### **4.9.1.3.1 Observation Procedure in the Current Study**

Classroom observations can be structured, semi-structured and unstructured depending on the intensity of its flexibility. For collecting data in the present study, classroom observation was another major method because it enabled me to explore diverse areas related to the teaching and learning process of English, which further helped me to triangulate the data sources in this study. I took prior preparation for conducting classroom observation successfully. I took formal consent (Appendix 10) from the head teachers of the institutions and subsequently from the concerned English teachers whose classes I planned to observe. The learners were also informed of my visits beforehand. Before observing classrooms, I explained the purpose of my visit to the teachers as well as the students. I explained that the classroom observation would not focus on individuals; rather it would focus on the teaching strategies employed by teachers while teaching English in the classroom, responses of the learners (especially that of the linguistic minority learners), the interaction between teachers and students and the level of engagement during teaching and learning. For systematically conducting the classroom observations, I used an observation protocol (Appendix 8) that addresses

different domains related to the present study. A schedule of the observation is give below:

**Table 4.1**

*Outline of the Schedule for Observations*

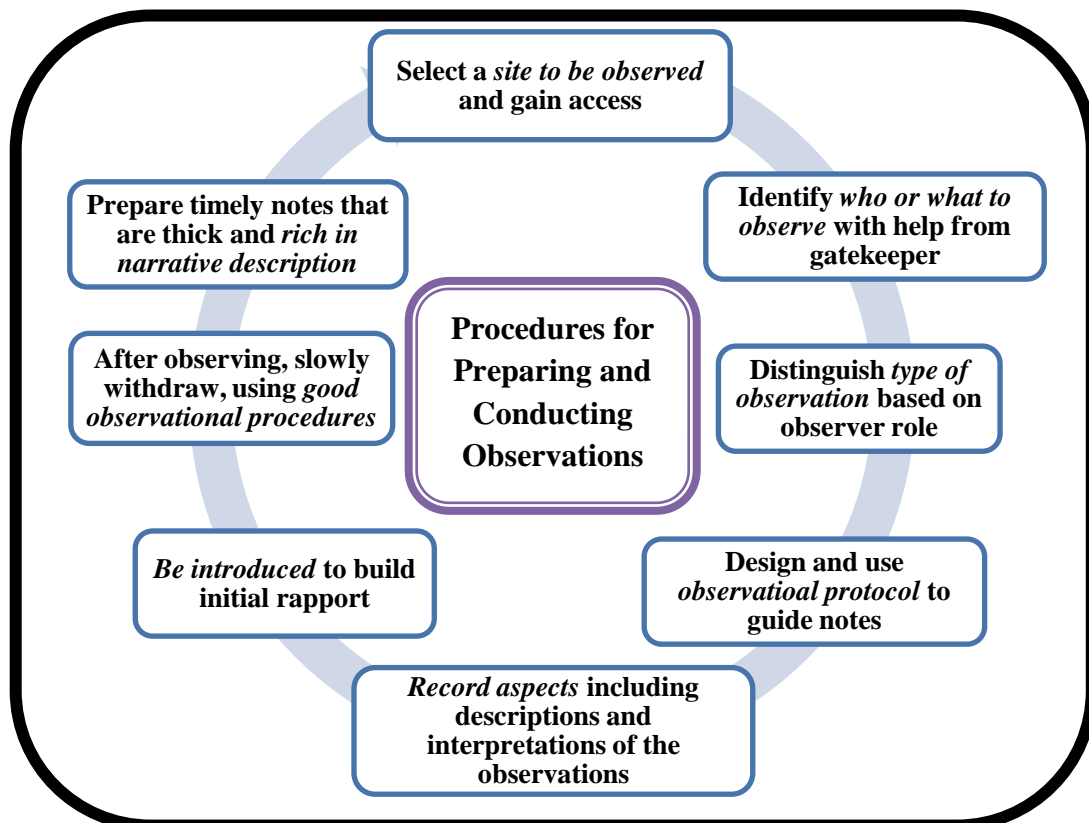
Sl. No	Classroom Observations	Date	Class Duration	Name of the School
1.	Observation 1	26.07.2023	40 mins	School A
2.	Observation 2	02.08.2023	40 mins	School B
3.	Observation 3	07.08.2023	40 mins	School C
4.	Observation 4	08.08.2023	40 mins	School D
5.	Observation 5	14.09.2023	40 mins	School E
6.	Observation 6	10.10.2023	40 mins	School F
7.	Observation 7	22.08.2024	40 mins	School G
8.	Observation 8	12.09.2024	40 mins	School H
9.	Observation 9	24.09.2024	40 mins	School I

Initially, I tried to place a video recorder in the corner of the classroom in order to record the teaching-learning process in the English classroom but the permission was not granted from the school authorities. So, I audio-recorded the English language classes and interactions between the teachers and the students during every observation. It was a semi-structured form of observation that I followed. Classroom observations can be effectively conducted if field notes are recorded. Field notes refer to written observations of what is found taking place in a particular setting (Mertler & Charles, 2012). So, I took field notes of both verbal and non-verbal behaviours of the teachers and the students. I tried to take an unobtrusive part in all the observations so that the attention of the teachers and the students would not get diverted although it was not every time possible for me to maintain because of the lack of infrastructural facilities in the classroom. Unobtrusive measures are often chosen as a method of data collection in which there is

no issue of interference in the respondents' lives and in most of the cases the respondent remains unaware of being observed (Trochim et al., 2016). I observed 9 English language teaching classes in total, which incorporated learners from classes 3, 4 and 5. Each classroom observation lasted for 40 minutes approximately. The environment in the classroom differed because in some schools students behaved energetically but in some other classes students remained less active and unwilling to participate in discussions. But it was evident that the engagement and active participation of the students depended on the skills of the teachers. However, the procedure for the observation of classrooms adhered to the following steps:

**Figure 4.9**

*Procedures for Preparing and Conducting Observations*



*Note.* From *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (4th ed., p. 169), by J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, 2018, Sage. Copyright 2018 by Sage.

There should be a smooth and positive relationship between the observer and the participants in classroom in order to make the observation process successful. So, rapport building with the participants is essential in this regard. However, I attempted to create trust with the teachers beforehand through various informal conversations. Besides, unstructured observation also played a major role in collecting data from the research setting and the surroundings.

#### **4.9.1.4 Contextual Documents from the Research Sites**

Collecting contextual documents from the research site may be considered a valuable source of information in qualitative research. Contextual data are considered pivotal to the data interpretation process and such this type of data can easily and routinely be collected when data collection is done in person (Olson, 2011). Creswell (2015) categorizes two types of contextual documents – public documents and private documents. Public documents include minutes of meetings, official records, various archival materials etc. Private documents include diaries, personal journals, letters, personal notes etc. Such contextual documents help to explore diverse dimensions and work as supplementary information. Like other approaches in qualitative research, contextual documents and their analysis act as complementary strategy or it can be used as a stand-alone method (Flick, 2014). There are many procedures for collecting contextual documents in qualitative study. Creswell (2015) mentions the following guidelines for collecting documents in qualitative research:

- Identification of the types of documents useful for providing information to the research questions.
- Considering both public and private documents as sources of information.
- Seeking permission from the appropriate authority for using the documents.

- Giving proper guidelines to the participants if they are asked to maintain any document like diary, journals etc.
- Checking accuracy and compactness of the documents once permission is granted.
- Recording relevant information from the documents which may take several forms like noting down necessary information from relevant documents, taking pictures of documents, scanning in mobile phones etc.

In the present study, I collected various contextual documents from the research sites. These documents play an important role and work as complementary source of information to the present study. I collected various documents like official records of student enrolment, pictures of TLM, signs on the walls of the school premises, sample pages from the learners' English notebooks, images of the pages from the learners' English textbooks in which they have noted down something etc.

#### **4.10 Participants**

##### **4.10.1 Sampling Technique**

Sampling is the method of selecting units (i.e. mostly people, groups etc. and sometimes graphic images, texts, internet discussion and so on) from a larger population so that the results, produced after studying the sample can be generalized to the population from which the sample has been drawn (Trochim et al., 2016). While conducting a research-related study, we cannot collect data from each and every individual of a population; neither can we observe them individually. In that case we need to choose a subset of the population, known as the sample. By analyzing the subset we usually draw inferences about the entirety of the population. However, broadly, there are two categories of sampling – probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling technique, each and every member of the population has an equal chance of being

selected and to be included in the sample but in non-probability sampling, a researcher uses his or her personal and subjective judgement to select the samples.

The present study adopts a qualitative approach. Qualitative approach explores a problem in order to develop a detailed understanding of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2015). People's understanding of the environment around them must be analyzed first by the qualitative researcher since this analysis often enables us to understand their actions and behaviour. Thus the focus of qualitative researchers lies on their research that incorporates the viewpoints of the individuals or groups that they are interested in along with their beliefs, intentions, attitude and goals (Henn et al, 2009). The study being qualitative in approach, I have adopted a sub-type of non-probability sampling technique, known as purposive sampling technique. A purposive sample, a non-representative subset of a larger population, is chosen by the researcher for serving a specific purpose. As part of the sample, the researcher, in this type of sampling, chooses units (e.g., people, cases etc.) considering a specific purpose to be served for the study (Li et al., 2018). Creswell, (2015) considers purposeful sampling as a technique in which the researcher selects participants as per his/her own choice in order to understand and explore the phenomenon. Babbie (2017) defines purposive sampling, also known as judgemental sampling, as a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher's judgement is the basis of selecting the units to be observed. The main population considered for this study incorporates those primary schools, located in the North and South 24 Parganas districts of the Sundarbans in West Bengal, India, where mostly linguistic minority learners were the students of Grades III, IV and V. In addition to the learners, the population included the head teachers of those institutions, ESL/EFL teachers (teachers who taught English to the linguistic minority learners), and the parents of the linguistic minority learners. However, considering the inclusion criteria suitable

for the present study, 9 schools were chosen out of which 6 schools were from the North 24 Parganas district and 3 schools were from South 24 Parganas district. 8 head teachers and 8 assistant teachers who taught English participated in the study voluntarily. Besides, 17 parents volunteered to participate along with 39 linguistic minority learners who formed 9 focus groups took active part in the present study.

**Table 4.2**

*An Outline of the Samples*

Schools	Head Teachers/TICs	Assistant Teachers [EFL/ESL Teachers]	Parents	Focus Groups [Number of Participants]
School A	Nil	1	3	FGD 1 [4]
School B	1	1	3	FGD 2 [6]
School C	1	1	2	FGD 3 [5]
School D	1	1	2	FGD 4 [4]
School E	1	Nil	2	FGD 5 [4]
School F	1	1	4	FGD 6 [4]
School G	1	1	Nil	FGD 7 [4]
School H	1	1	Nil	FGD 8 [4]
School I	1	1	1	FGD 9 [4]
Number of Schools = 9	Number of Head teachers/TICs = 8	Number of Assistant Teachers [EFL/ESL teachers] = 8	Number of Parents = 17	Total FGDs = 9 Number of Learners = 39

**4.10.2 Criteria for Inclusion of the Participants**

The criteria for selecting the participants for the current study were fixed on the basis of several points. First, the head teachers and the assistant teachers (i.e. EFL/ESL teachers) had to be from those primary schools where young learners were mostly from linguistic minority communities. Second, only those teachers who were accustomed to teaching English to young learners regularly were included. Third, only those young learners who

were studying in Grades III, IV and V and were from linguistic minority communities were included. Fourth, those parents who belonged to linguistic minority communities and had the experience of speaking and understanding the minority languages more or less were considered for inclusion.

#### **4.10.3 Justifying the Number of the Participants**

The number of samples to be selected in qualitative studies varies. In typical qualitative research, usually a few individuals or a few cases are studied because if the number of samples is increased, the scope for providing an in-depth exploration or picture is decreased. So, depending upon the nature of study, the number of samples in qualitative studies may be a single individual or a single site. Sometimes it may range from 1 or 2 to 30 or 40 (Creswell, 2015). I chose a limited number of samples so that I would be able to delve deep into the phenomenon and explore it through interviews, observations, focus group discussions and contextual documents from the research sites. In the present study, as mentioned before, I chose 9 schools, 8 head teachers and 8 assistant teachers who taught English to linguistic minority learners at primary schools. Besides, 17 parents were also a part of the entire sample. In addition to them, 39 linguistic minority learners who formed 9 focus groups were included in the sample for the present study.

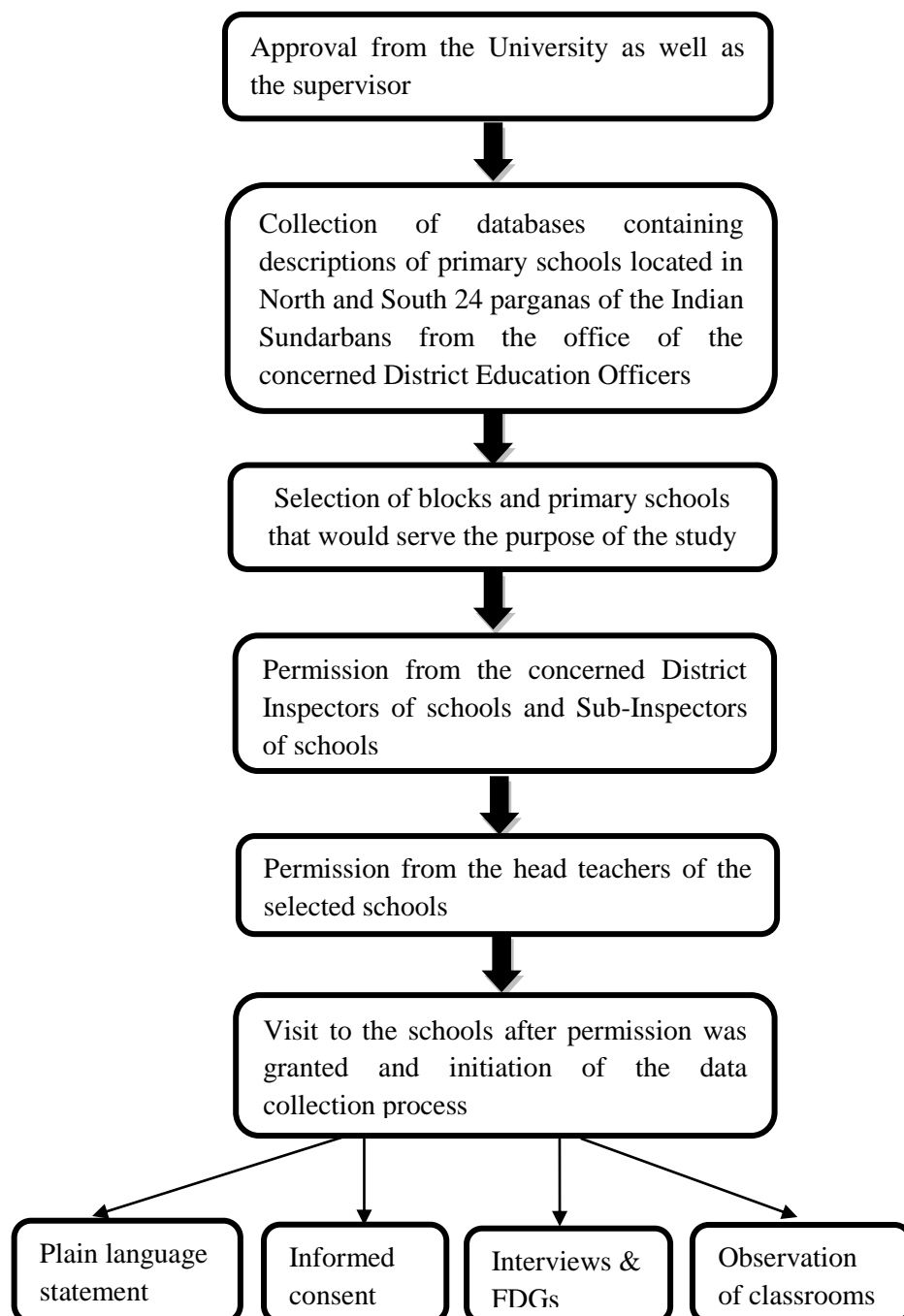
#### **4.10.4 Procedure for Gaining Access to the Participants**

Once the research problem is identified and the targeted sites and samples have been chosen, a crucial issue raises as to gain access to the research site as well as the samples. In most of the cases, the researcher requires disclosing the purpose of visit to the sites very clearly. It is not always easy to get access to the samples that we require for conducting the study because the participants may not be free or may be uninterested (Basit, 2010). Flick (2014) mentions two levels associated with the regulation of access -

-- first, level of the people who are involved in authorizing the research with utmost responsibilities and second, level of those who will spare their time voluntarily for being interviewed or observed. However, the following steps have been taken in order to gain access to the research sites and the participants:

**Figure 4.10**

*Steps for Gaining Access to the Research Sites and the Participants*



#### 4.10.4.1 Establishing Rapport with the Participants

A good relationship with people can make any task smoother. Before the data collection process in a study, building a good relationship with the participants makes the task of data collection easier. Through rapport building, the participants feel comfortable with the interviewer and the overall environment becomes very healthy.

#### 4.10.5 Description of the Participants

##### 4.10.5.1 Head Teacher/ TIC (Teacher-in-Charge) Respondents (HTR)

**Table 4.3**

*Profiles of the Head Teachers Selected for the Study*

Sl. No	Head Teacher/ TIC Respondents (HTR)	Gender	Age	Educational Qualifications	Interview Time	School
1.	Head Teacher 1	Male	55	BA	38.31 mins	School B
2.	Head Teacher 2	Male	45	Higher Secondary, D. El. Ed	23.76 mins	School C
3.	Head Teacher 3	Male	59	Higher Secondary, PTT	51.11 mins	School D
4.	Head Teacher 4	Female	37	M.Sc. in Geography, B.Ed.	46.43 mins	School E
5.	Head Teacher 5	Male	48	B. Sc., D. El. Ed	30.31 mins	School F
6.	Head Teacher 6	Female	54	Higher Secondary	35.46 mins	School G
7.	Head Teacher 7	Female	42	Higher Secondary	30.22 mins	School H
8.	Head Teacher 8	Male	52	Higher Secondary	17.46 mins	School I

### **Head Teacher 1**

He is a middle-age teacher of around 55 from School B. Since he is a retired staff of Indian Army, he maintains strict discipline in his lifestyle as well as in each and every matter of his school. He has done BA. In School B there is no permanent Head Teacher. So he has to undertake the responsibility of TIC. He has teaching experience of more than a decade (around 14 years). He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi.

### **Head Teacher 2**

This teacher is from School C and is middle-aged. He has passed Higher Secondary exam and thereafter he did D. El. Ed. He has teaching experience of 13 years. He is not that much enthusiastic and energetic in the field of teaching and encouraging young learners. He knows Bengali and English. He sometimes teaches English in the classroom. Since there is no permanent Head Teacher in School C, he is acting as TIC in this institution.

### **Head Teacher 3**

This respondent is from School D and he is on the verge of retirement. He has only two months left before retirement. His educational qualifications include Higher Secondary and Primary Teachers' Training (PTT). He is an experienced teacher, having a teaching experience of more than 24 years. He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi. He travels a long distance to reach his school. He does not take English classes regularly. Whenever there is absence of any teacher, he has to take the English language classes. Otherwise, he takes classes for lower Grades like Grade 1 and Grade 2. Unlike other schools mentioned above, he is the permanent Headmaster in this school. He has no knowledge of tribal languages spoken by the ST learners in his school.

#### **Head Teacher 4**

This respondent is from School E and she is a young and enthusiastic teacher of around 37. She belongs to the ST category and she is from the Munda community. She has got married to a person from the Oraon community. Her family members are very highly educated. She has done M.Sc. in Geography and B.Ed. She can speak Bengali and English well. What is notable is that she is well-versed in the minority language. She has the teaching experience of more than a decade. She expresses utter interest in preserving the tribal languages and teaching learners from various tribal communities using their mother tongues. Since there is no permanent Head Teacher in this school, she is performing the responsibilities of the school as the TIC.

#### **Head Teacher 5**

He is from School F and his age is around 48. His educational qualifications include B.Sc. and D. El. Ed. He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi. He has a teaching experience of more than 14 years in primary school. Since there is no permanent Head Teacher in this school, the respondent has to perform the responsibilities of the TIC. He usually takes English language classes for class 5. He is a very enthusiastic teacher.

#### **Head Teacher 6**

She is from School G and is aged 54. She has passed Higher Secondary. She is from the ST community with a teaching experience of more than 24 years. She can speak Bengali and a little bit English as well. She can understand the tribal language spoken by the ST students in her school but she cannot speak it fluently. She never had any professional training in her academic career of teaching. She is the permanent Head Mistress of the

school. She refuses to share details of her school. She did not even allow me to take pictures of our conversation during interview.

### **Head Teacher 7**

This respondent is from School H. She is about 42 years. She has teaching experience of 18 years. She is presently the permanent Head Mistress of the school. She can speak Bengali, English and to some extent Hindi. She has passed Higher Secondary. She has no professional teaching experience. However, she is very enthusiastic about sharing various experiences related to teaching. She frankly shares the pros and cons of the various issues related to teaching, infrastructure and learners in her school.

### **Head Teacher 8**

He is from School I and is aged about 52 years. He has teaching experience of more than 18 years. He can speak Bengali and English. As for educational qualifications, he has passed Higher Secondary exam. This respondent is very responsible in performing his duties for the progress of his school as well as for his students. He is a very encouraging personality and always motivates the students to express and explore their creativity. He encourages the learners to write and draw various items for the wall magazine. Apart from this, there is a well-organized library in the school, maintained under his supervision very carefully for the sake of the learners.

#### 4.10.5.2 Assistant Teacher Respondents (ATR)

**Table 4.4**

*Profiles of the Assistant Teachers of English Selected for the Study*

Sl. No	Assistant Teacher Respondents (ATR)	Gender	Age	Interview Time	Educational Qualifications	School
1.	Assistant Teacher 1	Male	30 years	36.01 mins	BA (Hons.) in English, D. El. Ed	School A
2.	Assistant Teacher 2	Male	32 years	15.07 mins	M.A. (Bengali)	School B
3.	Assistant Teacher 3	Male	34 years	32.03 mins	Higher Secondary	School C
4.	Assistant Teacher 4	Male	44 years	28.04 mins	Higher Secondary, D. El. Ed.	School D
5.	Assistant Teacher 5	Male	28 years	17.08 mins	Higher Secondary	School F
6.	Assistant Teacher 6	Male	43 years	23.04 mins	MA (Environmental Studies).	School G
7.	Assistant Teacher 7	Male	40 years	18.33 mins	B.A (Honours) in English, M.A.	School H
8.	Assistant Teacher 8	Male	42 years	16.39 mins	M.A. (Bengali), B.Ed.	School I

#### **Assistant Teacher 1**

He is a young teacher of 30 from School A. Since there is no permanent Head Teacher in his school, he is the Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) there. He belongs to Scheduled Caste category. He has a BA (Hons.) in English and D. El. Ed. He has teaching experience of 6 years. Since there is scarcity of adequate teachers in his school, he has to teach almost all subjects from Pre-primary to Grade 4. He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi. He can

understand the language of the ST learners in his school to some extent but he cannot speak that language.

### **Assistant Teacher 2**

He is from School B and is aged 32 years. He is a very passionate and enthusiastic teacher who longs for acquiring higher education. He has teaching experience of 2 years. He has done MA in Bengali and has also qualified West Bengal State Eligibility Test (WBSET) which is the basic eligibility for being Assistant Professor in colleges and universities. He can speak both Bengali and English well. He does not have any knowledge about the languages spoken by the linguistic minority learners of his school. However, he prefers to teach English using multilingual instructions. He also encourages the linguistic minority learners to use their minority languages for better learning of English.

### **Assistant Teacher 3**

He is from School C and is 34 years old. He has passed Higher Secondary exam. He does not have any professional qualifications, required for teaching at primary school. He has teaching experience of two years. He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi. He teaches English to the learners of various classes of his school. He personally does not have any knowledge of the languages spoken by the people of the linguistic minority community. He has no first-hand experience of his learners speaking the tribal languages. But he prefers teaching English using bilingual instructions.

### **Assistant Teacher 4**

He is from School D and is 44 years old. His educational qualifications include H.S. and D.El.Ed. He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi languages. He has teaching experience of 12 years. He is from linguistic minority background and is from the ST community. He teaches English mainly for Class 4. He can speak the tribal language

little bit. His forefathers frequently communicate in their tribal language at home. He prefers to teach English using bilingual instructions.

#### **Assistant Teacher 5**

He is a young teacher from School F. He is 28 years old. His educational qualifications include Higher Secondary. He is very new in the teaching field. He has 2 years of teaching experience. He does not have any professional training for teaching at primary schools. He is from the ST community (Bhumij tribe) and thus having a linguistic minority background. Although he lacks confidence while teaching English to learners, he seems very passionate and enthusiastic about teaching. He can speak Bengali and English languages. But he is not fluent in the tribal language of his community. But some of his family members use the tribal language for communicating with each other.

#### **Assistant Teacher 6**

He is from School G and is 43 years old. His educational qualifications include MA in Environmental Studies. He does not have any professional qualifications. He usually teaches all the subjects. He has teaching experience of 13 years. He is a very enthusiastic and energetic teacher. He can speak Bengali, Hindi and English languages. He prefers teaching English using bilingual instructions.

#### **Assistant Teacher 7**

He is from School H and is 40 years old. He has teaching experience of 12 years almost. Prior to the field of teaching he was associated with a different sector. His educational qualifications include B.A (Honours) in English and MA. He can speak Bengali, English and Hindi. He has no first-hand experience of speaking or listening to the languages of the linguistic minority learners. But he is very passionate about teaching learners English by encouraging them to use their linguistic repertoire.

### Assistant Teacher 8

He is from School I and is 42 years old. His educational qualifications include MA (Bengali) and B.Ed. He is a very energetic and motivating teacher. He always tries to motivate learners for learning English in order to explore the world. He uses both Bengali and English while teaching English. He has teaching experience of 3 years. He can speak both Bengali and English.

#### 4.10.5.3 Parent Respondents

**Table 4.5**

*Profiles of the Parents Selected for the Study*

Sl.No	Parent Respondents (PR)	Gender (M/F)	Age	Category/ Caste/ Sub-caste	Interview Duration	Schools in which their children study
1.	Parent Respondent 1	Female	30	ST (Bedia)	11.32 mins	
2.	Parent Respondent 2	Female	32	ST (Bedia)	10.02 mins	School A
3.	Parent Respondent 3	Female	29	ST (Bedia)	18.13 mins	
4.	Parent Respondent 4	Female	30	ST (Bedia)	7.30 mins	
5.	Parent Respondent 5	Male	34	ST (Bedia)	13.52 mins	School B
6.	Parent Respondent 6	Male	32	ST (Munda)	7.55 mins	
7.	Parent Respondent 7	Female	30	ST (Munda)	7.15 mins	School C
8.	Parent Respondent 8	Female	31	ST (Munda)	9.27 mins	
9.	Parent Respondent 9	Female	29	ST (Bedia)	8.45 mins	School D
10.	Parent Respondent 10	Female	29	ST (Bedia)	11.13 mins	
11.	Parent Respondent 11	Male	33	ST (Bedia)	19.38 mins	School E
12.	Parent Respondent 12	Male	37	ST (Bedia)	8.35 mins	
13.	Parent Respondent 13	Male	32	ST (Bedia)	10.28 mins	School F
14.	Parent Respondent 14	Female	28	ST (Oraon)	9.25 mins	
15.	Parent Respondent 15	Male	37	ST (Bhumij)	7.23 mins	
16.	Parent Respondent 16	Male	31	ST (Oraon)	8.15 mins	
17.	Parent Respondent 17	Female	29	ST (Munda)	11.45 mins	School I

### **Parent Respondent 1**

She is a woman of 30. She got the opportunity to study till class 8. She belongs to the ST (Bedia) community. She has a small grocery shop and earns her living from farming. Though she communicates with her family members in Bengali mainly, she can communicate using the tribal language of her community.

### **Parent Respondent 2**

She is 32 years old and is a worker of ICDS. She has passed BA honours in Geography. Though she belongs to the ST (Bedia) community, she is not much fluent in using their tribal language. But she can understand a little bit. Senior members of her family use the tribal language. Her son studies in class 4 of School A.

### **Parent Respondent 3**

This respondent is 29 years old. Her son studies in class 4 of School A. She is a home maker. She belongs to the ST (Bedia) community. But she cannot speak the tribal language well. Though she uses Bengali for communication, she has heard many of her family members using tribal language for communication. She had her formal schooling till class 8.

### **Parent Respondent 4**

She is 30 years old. She belongs to the ST (Bedia) community. She has two sons. The elder one studies in class 7 and the younger one is in class 4. The younger son studies in school B. She continued her schooling till class 8. Her family earns living from farming and also by working as a daily wager. She is from lower socio-economic class. Since their family lives in an area, surrounded by Bengali speaking people (mostly from the SC communities), the practice of using their tribal language within the family is almost obsolete.

### **Parent Respondent 5**

He is 34 years old and belongs to the ST (Bedia) community. He has two daughters and one son. His son studies in class 4 and is from School B. He is financially very weak. He has studied till class 5 and earns his living from farming. He uses the tribal language of their community for communicating with the family members.

### **Parent Respondent 6**

She is a woman of 32 years and is from the ST (Munda) community. She has two daughters and one son. She studied till class 8 after which she could not continue study due to her mother's accident. She works in the field as a daily wager. Her husband works as the helper of a mason. Her son studies in class 4 of School B.

### **Parent Respondent 7**

She is a hard-working woman of 30. She works in the field as a daily wager for sowing paddy seeds. She belongs to the ST (Munda) community and is from a very poor socio-economic background. She could continue her study till class two. She has one son and one daughter. Her son studies in School C in class 3. Her family members usually use Bengali to communicate with each other. But some of the members can speak the tribal language.

### **Parent Respondent 8**

She is 31 years old and has never had the opportunity to get formal education from schools. She earns her living working in the field as a daily wager by sowing paddy seeds. She is from the ST (Munda) community. Her daughter studies in School C in class 3. For the purpose of communication they often use Bengali, but they are well-versed in their tribal language and they frequently use it for communication.

### **Parent Respondent 9**

This respondent is a woman of 29. She is from the ST (Bedia) community. She has never had any formal education. Her husband works in Kolkata as a helper of a mason. Her profession is to work as a daily wager in the field for sowing paddy seeds. She has three children. Her elder child studies in School D in class 5. The family members in this family use Bengali as a medium of communication. The respondent has neither used tribal language nor heard anyone to use tribal language in her family.

### **Parent Respondent 10**

She is a woman of 29 years. She is also from the ST (Bedia) community. She had her schooling till class 8. She works as an ICDS assistant. Her son studies in class 5 of School D. In her family, the members mainly use Bengali for communication. But they have their tribal language.

### **Parent Respondent 11**

He is a young man of 33. He is from the ST (Bedia) community. He is an academically qualified person. He has completed BA. He earns his living working as a daily wager in the field for growing crops. Besides, he is an engine van puller. Though he uses Bengali as a language of communication, he knows their tribal language and often uses for communicating with his friends and other members of the family.

### **Parent Respondent 12**

He is a person of 37. He belongs to the ST (Bedia) community. He studied till class 4. He has two sons. His younger son studies in class 3 of School E. His financial condition is very poor. He earns his living working as a daily wager in the field. While conversing with the family members, he uses Bengali. In his childhood days, he used to converse

with his family members using tribal language. But nowadays, it becomes obsolete in his family.

### **Parent Respondent 13**

This respondent, who is aged 32, is from the ST (Bedia) community. He is academically qualified enough. He has done BA. His daughter studies in class 4 of School F. He earns his living as a daily-wager in the field of crops. He and his family members usually communicate in Bengali. But earlier the elderly members of the family would use tribal language for communication.

### **Parent Respondent 14**

She is a woman of 28. She belongs to the ST (Oraon) community. She had her education till class 8. She earns her living as a daily wager. Their earning comes mainly from farming. The family members of this respondent are Sadri speakers. They use this tribal language along with Bengali for communicating with the members. Her daughter studies in class 5 of School F.

### **Parent Respondent 15**

He is a person of 37. He is from the ST (Bhumij) community. He had formal schooling till class 9. He earns his living from carpentry. His daughter studies in class 5 of School F. He and his family members use Bengali for communication. He has never heard his family members using tribal language.

### **Parent Respondent 16**

He is a person of 31 years. He is from the ST (Oraon) community. He could continue his study till class 7. He earns his living as a daily wager during the season of growing and harvesting crops. Besides, he also works as a migrant labourer in the states like Kerala

and Tamil Nadu. His daughter studies in class 3 of School F. At home, they use both their tribal language and Bengali for communication.

### Parent Respondent 17

She is a woman of 29. She belongs to the ST (Munda) community. She had her education till Higher Secondary (HS). She works as a temporary staff in the panchayet. Her works is to spread awareness on inclusive education, education for the disabled, and campaign for prohibition of child marriage. She has two sons. The younger one is 4 years old. The elder one studies in class 3 of School I. She and her family members use their tribal language while communicating at home. But at the time of communicating outside home they use Bengali.

#### 4.10.5.4 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

**Table 4.6**

*Profiles of the Learners Selected for the FGDs*

Sl. No.	FGD	Date and Duration	Participants	Age, Gender (M/F)	Grade	Name of the School
1.	FGD 1	26.07.2023 (23.10 mins)	P 1	10, M	IV	School A
			P 2	10, M	IV	
			P 3	10, M	IV	
			P 4	10, M	IV	
2.	FGD 2	02.08.2023 (27.25 mins)	P 5	11, M	V	School B
			P 6	11, F	V	
			P 7	11, F	V	
			P 8	10, F	IV	
			P 9	10, F	IV	
			P 10	10, M	IV	
3.	FGD 3	07.08.2023 (23.01 mins)	P 11	9, F	III	School C
			P 12	9, M	III	
			P 13	9, M	III	
			P 14	9, F	III	
			P 15	9, F	III	
4.	FGD 4	08.08.2023 (21.58 mins)	P 16	12, M	V	School D
			P 17	11, M	V	
			P 18	10, M	IV	
			P 19	9, M	IV	

Sl. No.	FGD	Date and Duration	Participants	Age, Gender (M/F)	Grade	Name of the School
5.	FGD 5	14.09.2023 (17.00 mins)	P 20	9, M	III	School E
			P 21	9, F	III	
			P 22	10, M	IV	
			P 23	10, F	IV	
6.	FGD 6	10.10.2023 (16.46 mins)	P 24	11, M	V	School F
			P 25	11, F	V	
			P 26	11, F	V	
			P 27	11, F	V	
7.	FGD 7	22.08.2024 (19.26 mins)	P 28	10, M	IV	School G
			P 29	10, F	IV	
			P 30	10, F	IV	
			P 31	10, F	IV	
8.	FGD 8	12.09.2024 (13.59 mins)	P 32	10, F	V	School H
			P 33	10, F	IV	
			P 34	11, F	V	
			P 35	11, M	V	
9.	FGD 9	24.09.2024 (19.34 mins)	P 36	11, M	V	School I
			P 37	10, M	IV	
			P 38	10, M	IV	
			P 39	11, F	V	

### Focus Group Discussion 1

The first focus group discussion was conducted on 26.07.2023 in School A. In this FGD, four participants (anonymized as P 1, P 2, P 3 and P 4) took part. All of them belonged to ST (Bedia) community. They are all from class 4 and aged 10. However, initially they were quite confused and surprised to take part in the FGD with me. But gradually they started to behave with a very friendly manner. They very enthusiastically interacted with me and expressed their views regarding English and also their attitude towards their tribal languages. As for supports and guidance from family members in studying English, participant 1 (P 1) replies that mainly his elder sister, a college student, guides him in his study along with his father, participant 2 (P 2) receives guidance from his mother in his study, participant 3 (P 3) mentions his father guides him to study English at

home and participant 4 (P 4) also informs that his father helps him in his study at home at free time.

### **Focus Group Discussion 2**

The second focus group discussion was conducted on 02.08.2023 in School B. In this FGD, six participants (anonymized as P 5, P 6, P 7, P 8, P 9 and p 10) take part. They are from the ST (Bedia) community. Participants 5, 6 and 7 are in class 5 and participants 8, 9 and 10 are in class 4. They are aged between 10 and 11 years. All of them very enthusiastically responded to my questions and interacted joyfully. Participant 5 lives in a joint family with grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and parents. His parents work in the field of crops. Participant 6 also lives in the joint family with grandparents, sister and parents. Her mother is associated with tailoring and her father is a teacher in a primary school. Participant 7 lives with her parents, uncles, a sister, a brother and grandmother. Due to head injury, her father cannot work properly and remains confined in the house for taking rest and her mother goes to work in the paddy field. Participant 8 lives with her parents, uncles, aunts, a sister and an elder brother. Both of her parents are engaged with farming. Participant 9 also lives in a joint family with her parents, grandparents and elder sister. Her father is a service holder and her mother is an educated person but does not work in any organization. She does the work of tailoring. Participant 10 lives with his parents and a brother. His parents work in the field of crops.

### **Focus Group Discussion 3**

The third focus group discussion was conducted 07.08.2023 in School C. In this FGD, five participants (anonymized as P 11, P 12, P 13, P 14 and P 15), all aged 9, took part. They are students of class 3 and belong to the ST (Munda) community. Out of the 5 participants, 3 participants are female and two are male students. All of them interacted with me cheerfully. However, participant 11 lives with her parents, an elder brother and

an elder sister. Her father is a migrant labourer and works in Odisha. Participant 12 lives with his parents and grandparents. His father works as a migrant labourer in Andhra Pradesh and his mother works in the field. Participant 13 lives with his parents, a sister and grandfather. His father works as a migrant labourer in Odisha and his mother works in the field of crops. Participant 14 lives with her parents, an elder sister, an elder brother and an uncle. Her parents work the brick kiln. Participant 15 lives with her parents and an elder brother. Her father works as a daily wager and her mother does domestic works at home.

#### **Focus Group Discussion 4**

The fourth focus group discussion was conducted on 08.08.2023 in School D. In this FGD four participants (anonymized as P 16, P 17, P 18 and P 19), aged between 9 and 12, took part. They all belong to the ST community. Three of them are from the Bedia community and one of them is from the Oraon community. Two of the participants study in class 4 and the other two participants study in class 5. Participant 16 lives with his parents and an elder brother. His mother works in a primary school as a cook in the mid-day meal scheme and his father is the helper of a mason. Participant 17 stays with his parents and his elder sister. His father works as a migrant labourer in Bangalore. Participant 18 lives with his parents, an elder brother, a younger brother and an elder sister. His father works as a migrant labourer in Andhra Pradesh and sometimes goes to Kolkata for earning money by singing kirtan songs. His mother stays at home for looking after her youngest child. Participant 19 does not stay with his parents. He lives with his aunt (his father's sister) and his parents stay at some other place. On various occasions he goes to his parents. His father suffers from some ailments and sometimes goes to other states as a migrant labourer for works. His mother performs domestic activities.

### **Focus Group Discussion 5**

The fifth focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 14.09.2023 in School E. In this FGD, four participants take part (anonymized as P 20, P 21, P 22 and P 23). All of them belong to the ST (Bedia) community. Two participants, aged 9, study in class 3 and the other two participants, aged 10, study in class 4. They interacted with me very energetically. Participant 20 stays with his parents, grandmother, an uncle, and an elder brother. Both his parents work in the brick kiln. Participant 21 stays with her grandmother, a younger brother and parents. Her father catches fish to earn living and her mother does domestic activities. Participant 22 lives with his grandparents, parents, an elder brother, a younger brother and other relatives. But most of the time he stays with his maternal uncle and aunt. However, his father works in a medicine shop and his mother performs domestic tasks. Participant 23 lives with her parents. Her father works in a phone shop and her mother works as a maid servant in people's houses.

### **Focus Group Discussion 6**

The sixth focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 10.10.2023 in School F. In this FGD, four participants (anonymized as P 24, P 25, P 26 and P 27) take part. All of them, aged 11, read in class 5. All of them belong to the ST (Bedia) community. Participant 24 lives with his parents and grandparents. His father does the work of welding professionally and his mother performs domestic activities. Participant 25 lives with her maternal uncle and aunt. Both of her parents work as migrant labourers in Kerala. Participant 26 also stays with her maternal uncle and aunt, and grandparents. However, both of her parents are associated with small businesses. Participant 27 lives with her parents and grandparents. Her father works as a migrant labourer in Kerala and her mother performs domestic activities.

### **Focus Group Discussion 7**

The seventh focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 22.08.2024 in School G. In this FGD, four participants (anonymized as P 28, P 29, P 30 and P 31) take part. All the participants, aged 10, study in class 5. They belong to the ST (Bedia) community. Participant 28 lives with his grandparents, parents, a younger brother and a younger sister. His father works as a migrant labourer in Kerala. Participant 29 lives with her parents, an elder brother and an elder sister. Her father works a migrant labourer in Mumbai. Participant 30 stays with her grandparents and parents. He works in Kerala as a migrant labourer. Participant 31 lives with her parents, grandmother and an elder sister. Her father works as a migrant labourer in Chennai.

### **Focus Group Discussion 8**

The eighth focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 12.09.2024 in School H. In this FGD, four participants (anonymized as P 32, P 33, P 34 and P 35) take part. Three of them study in class 5 and one of them is in class 4. They are aged between 10 and 11. All the four participants belong to the ST community. All the participants are hostel boarders since this school has its own hostel. Participant 32 has her parents, an uncle, a younger brother and an elder sister. Both of her parents work in the field of crops. Her father sometimes goes to other states as a migrant labourer. He sometimes guides her in her study. Participant 33 has her parents, brothers and sisters. Since she is a hostel boarder, she goes home during the vacation and festivals. Her father works as a daily wager and her mother performs domestic activities. Participant 34 has her parents at home only. Her father is a daily wager and her mother is a home maker. Participant 35 has parents, brothers and sisters at home. His parents work in the field of crops.

## Focus Group Discussion 9

The ninth focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted on 24.09.2024 in School I. In this FGD, four participants (anonymized as P 36, P 37, P 38 and P 39) take part. Two of them study in class 5 and the other two participants study in class 4. They are aged between 10 and 11. They all belong to the ST (Bedia) community. Participant 36 lives with his parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts. His father works in the fields of crop and his mother is a home maker. Participant 37 lives with his parents, grandparents, aunt, younger sister, uncle and aunt. Both of his parents work in the field of crops. Participant 38 lives with his parents and works in the field of crops. They often go to Andhra Pradesh as migrant labourers. Participant 39 stays with her parents in a joint family. Her parents also work in the field of crops and sometimes go to Andhra Pradesh as a migrant labourer.

### 4.11 Sites of Investigation

**Table 4.7**

*An Outline of the Sites of Investigation*

Sl No.	Name of the Schools (Anonymized)	Date of Visit	Location
1.	School A	26.07.2023	<b>Block:</b> Hingalganj, <b>District:</b> North 24 Parganas
2.	School B	02.08.2023	<b>Block:</b> Sandeshkhali-II, <b>District:</b> North 24 Parganas
3.	School C	07.08.2023	<b>Block:</b> Hingalganj, <b>District:</b> North 24 Parganas
4.	School D	08.08.2023	<b>Block:</b> Sandeshkhali-II, <b>District:</b> North 24 Parganas
5.	School E	14.09.2023	<b>Block:</b> Sandeshkhali-II, <b>District:</b> North 24 Parganas
6.	School F	10.10.2023	<b>Block:</b> Sandeshkhali-II, <b>District:</b> North 24 Parganas
7.	School G	22.08.2024	<b>Block:</b> Basanti, <b>District:</b> South 24 Parganas
8.	School H	12.09.2024	<b>Block:</b> Patharpratima, <b>District:</b> South 24 Parganas
9.	School I	24.09.2024	<b>Block:</b> Gosaba, <b>District:</b> South 24 Parganas

A total number of nine schools have been visited by me for conducting the present study adopting the multiple case study design and each of the schools may be considered as a single case for analysis, leading to a holistic analysis of all the cases.

### **School A**

The school is situated in the remote and rural part of the Hingalganj Block of the Sundarbans under North 24 Parganas district. I visited the school for collecting data on 26.07.2023. The school has a government building consisting of 4 functional classrooms and one staff room. The school has Grades from Pre-primary to 5. There are separate toilets for both boys and girls. Number of toilets in this school is 6. Total number of students during the 2023-2024 academic session is 66. The school consists of students predominantly from the various Scheduled Tribe communities. During the mentioned session, number of ST students enrolled in the school is 48. The rest of the students belong to other categories like OBC, SC and Unreserved categories. The school has inadequate number of teaching staffs which include 1 Teacher-in-Charge and 1 para teacher (one who is recruited on the basis of short-term contract). Besides, the school has a play ground. There is no smart classroom in this school.

### **School B**

This school is located in the remotest part of the Sandeshkhali-II Block of the Sundarbans under North 24 Parganas district. For the purpose of data collection, I visited the school on 02.08.2023. Established in 1959, this school is one of the renowned primary schools in this locality. The school was established in 1942. At that time the school did not have proper building. Later when the school began to receive grants from different persons, organizations as well as from the government, a concrete building was formed. Gradually with the help of government grants, the condition of the school developed. There are 7 functioning classrooms in this school. The school has separate

toilets for both girls and boys along with drinking water facilities. It has Grades from Pre-primary to V. But it still requires further repairing and maintenance. Around 200 students are there in this school along with 5 well-qualified, efficient and cooperative teachers. Almost 80% students of this school belong to the ST communities. Most of them are from Bedia, Bhumij, Munda and Oraon communities. There is no smart classroom in this school.

### **School C**

The third school is located in the rural part of the Hingalganj Block of the Sunderbans under North 24 Parganas district. Data were collected from this school on 07.08.2023. The school building is in a dilapidated condition. The building has only 2 functioning classrooms which are used for instructional purposes. Apart from this there is 1 staffroom. There are separate toilets for boys and girls. It is a co-educational school with a number of 54 students during 2023-2024 academic session. Of those around 20 students are from the ST communities. They are mostly from the Bedia and the Munda communities. The school has classes from Pre-primary to IV. There is no permanent Head teacher in this school. One Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) is there for taking the charge. Number of teachers in this school is inadequate. There is no facility for computerized system in this school.

### **School D**

The fourth school that I visited on 08.08.2023 is located in the remote part of the Sandeshkhali II Block of the Sundarbans, North 24 Parganas district. The school contains Grades from Pre-Primary to V. It is a co-educational school. There are 6 rooms functional in this school, used for instructional purposes. Besides, it has separate staff rooms. Also it has separate toilets for both male and female students. There are 4 permanent teachers and one permanent Head Master in this school along with 1 para

teacher. Total number of students in the school is 176 during 2023-24 academic session. Out of the total students, around 90 students are from the ST communities. Most of the ST learners are from the Orang, Munda, Santhal and Bedia communities. There is no computer aided system or lab in this school for teaching and learning purposes.

### **School E**

One of the remotest schools is the present school that I visited on 14.09.2023 for the purpose of data collection. It is located in the rural part of the Sandeshkhali-II Block of the Sundarbans under North 24 Parganas district. It was established in 1981. There is scarcity of various resources and also lack of infrastructural facilities. The school has inadequate number of teachers. There are only 3 teachers in this school including 1 Teacher-in-Charge. There are only two classrooms for instructional purposes. There is no specific staffroom in this school. They have to adjust within these two rooms. There is another room which is used for serving Midday meal to students. There are separate toilets for both boys and girls. There are 65 students in total during 2023-24 session. Out of the total students 61 students are from the ST communities. Most of them belong to the Munda, Oraon and Bedia communities. There is no computer aided system or lab in this school for teaching and learning purposes.

### **School F**

Located in a remote area of the Sandeshkhali-II Block of the Sundarbans under North 24 Parganas district, this school is somewhat in a better condition than the other schools. Data were collected from this school on 10.10.2023. The school has Grades from Pre-primary to class 5. There are 5 classrooms used for the instructional purposes in this school. Apart from this there is one room allotted for the teachers and the Head of the institution. However, there is crisis for teachers in the school since there are only 3 permanent teachers and 2 para teachers. There is no permanent Headmaster in this school

though there is a Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) who has undertaken the responsibility. Total number of students in this school during 2023-24 session is 169. Out of them, 69 students are STs. Most of the ST learners are from the Oraon, Bedia, Munda and Bhumij communities. There is no facility for smart classroom or computer-aided system in this school.

### **School G**

This school which I visited on 22.08.2024 is located in the remote part of the Basanti Block under South 24 Parganas, the Sundarbans region. The school was established in 1962 and consists of Grades from Pre-primary to IV. The school has better infrastructure. There are 3 classrooms in this school for instructional purposes along with 1 staffroom. Separate toilets are there for both boys and girls. There are 3 teachers in this school. There is no permanent Head teacher in this school, instead there is a TIC. Number of students in the school is 112 out of them 69 students are STs during 2024-25 session. Most of the ST learners are from the Munda communities. There is neither any smart classroom nor any computer-aided system.

### **School H**

Located in the rural and socio-economically disadvantaged part of the Patharpratima Block, South 24 Parganas of the Sundarbans, the school was established in 1974. I visited the school on 12.09.2024. It is also a free primary school, run by the state government just as the other schools mentioned above. Consisting of Grades from Pre-primary to 5, this school is co-educational with a student-strength of 165 in the 2024-2025 academic session. Out of them 75 students are from the ST communities. There are 5 classrooms in this school. Number of teachers is very inadequate here. There is no specific staffroom in the school. One classroom is used for the purpose of staff accommodation. There are separate toilets for both male and female students. What is

exclusive to this school is that it has a hostel attached to the school building, allotted mainly for the purpose of the ST students. Learners from various remote regions of the Sundarbans stay there for the purpose of studying in the school. Majority of the learners are from the Munda communities. Approximately 30-35 students are staying in the hostel. This hostel is run by an external institution. There are attendants for taking care of the children and also separate teachers are appointed there for teaching those ST learners during hostel hours.

### **School I**

The last school that I visited on 24.09.2024 is located in the remote part of the Gosaba Block in the district of South 24 Parganas, the Sundarbans. The school was established in 1967. This school consists of Grades from Pre-primary to 5. There are only 3 teachers in the school including the Headmaster. Number of rooms in the school is 4. Total student strength during 2024-25 session is 103 out of which 60 students are from the ST communities. There are separate toilets for both male and female students. There is no facility for computer-aided learning or smart classroom in this school.

### **4.12 Pilot Study**

A pilot is a small-scale implementation of a larger study or a part of the larger study. Pilot study usually involves small amount of time and a small number of participants. It is a procedure which helps a researcher to make changes in an instrument on the basis of feedback from a small number of individuals who take active part in evaluating the instrument (Creswell, 2015). Pilot studies are often called the mini versions of a full-scale study, along with specific pretesting of the research instruments, for example an interview schedule or a questionnaire. Traditionally, a pilot study is associated with quantitative research, especially with experimental studies for testing the instruments. But, as a whole, it can be conducted in several other types of research as well. A pilot

study helps to understand whether the instruments chosen for collecting data for a research can be properly employed in the main study. It also helps to determine the feasibility of time, procedure, cost, location and other issues, too. A pilot study is also known as the feasibility study since it determines whether or not a full length study on the selected area of the study can be properly accomplished. Pilot studies are not simply exploratory in nature. Schreiber (2008) mentions that a pilot study can answer i) how many time the researcher should interact with the participants, ii) how long such interactions will take if everything goes smoother or not, iii) how many interviews or observations may appear to be realistic, iv) what should be considerable issues related to research ethics like anonymity, confidentiality etc., v) if multiple data collectors are required and if they require proper training for data collection.

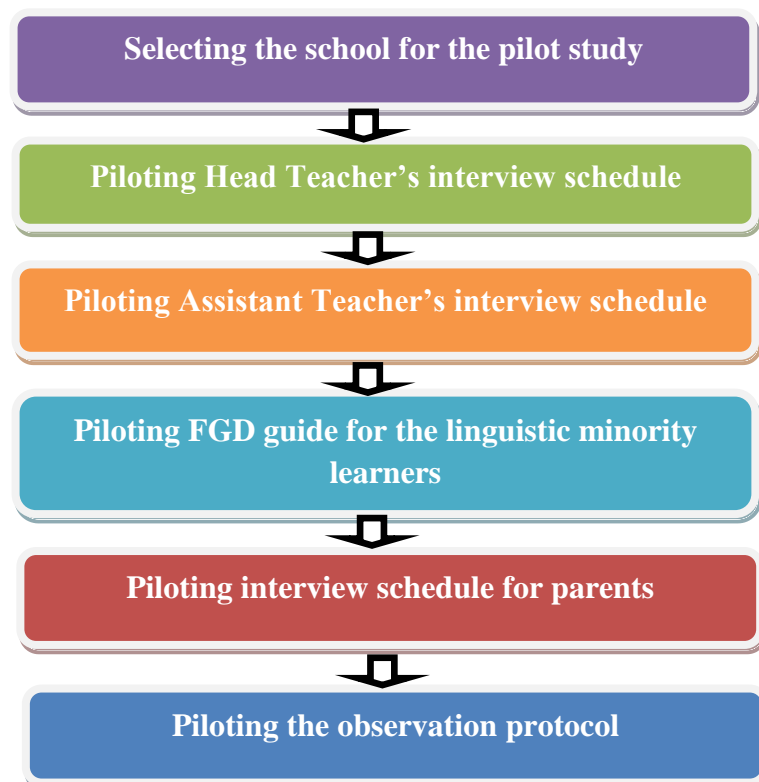
#### **4.12.1 Researcher's Reflections after Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted for the present research on 22.06.2023, which was approximately one month before the final data collection process started. I selected a primary school in the Hingaljanj block of North 24 Parganas, the Sundarbans, West Bengal. In that school, learners were mostly from the ST communities, having their own tribal languages other than Bengali. The participants for the pilot study were very carefully selected in order to collect data from the natural setting, which would contribute to the phenomena being studied for the main research. They were also from socio-economically disadvantaged background. Parents of most of the children were migrant labourers. The school contained only four teachers including the Head of the institution who was a Teacher-in-Charge. So, in order to know the perceptions of teachers, students and parents towards English language and also to know the teachers' views on challenges of teaching English to linguistic minority learners along with strategies employed by them for teaching, the pilot study was conducted on the members

of the relevant population. However, the members who participated in the pilot study were excluded from the main study. The interview schedules and the observation protocol that I prepared considering the research questions of the present study were employed for in-depth explorations of the phenomena under study. Through a diagrammatic representation the steps for piloting the instruments in the present study is given below:

**Figure 4.11**

*Steps for Conducting the Pilot Study*



#### **4.12.2 Head Teacher's Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule, prepared for the Headmasters/Headmistresses/Teachers-in-Charge of the institutions, consisted of several areas, focusing on the background information of the teachers, description of the concerned school, specification of tribal learners, basic information on the experiences of the teachers, challenges related to

teaching and possible strategies for advancement or improvement of the teaching learning process. During the pilot study, I asked questions from the interview schedule to the headmaster of the government primary school that I chose for piloting. I found that the head teacher was feeling somewhat hesitant to answer a few questions because of the terminologies used and the exploratory nature of the questions asked. So, I figured out those areas and later on posed the questions in a simplified and easily comprehensible language.

#### **4.12.3 Assistant Teacher's Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule, prepared for the teacher respondents, is somewhat different from that of the head teachers. The questions in this schedule were posed in such a way that these would explore challenges and possibilities related to teaching and learning English among linguistic minority learners. This interview schedule consisted of several segments focusing on background information of the teachers, teaching strategies employed by them for teaching English, challenges faced by the teachers and the learners in the English language classroom and finally suggestions for advancement or improvement in the teaching-learning process. During the piloting stage one assistant teacher from the selected school, who had to take the English classes regularly, was given the interview schedule. Initially, some of the questions were found repetitive and complex for them to answer. After pointing out those questions, the repetitive ones were removed and the complex ones were made easily comprehensible.

#### **4.12.4 FGD Guide for the Linguistic Minority Learners**

In order to learn the perceptions of the young learners, focus group discussion was a part of the current study. So I prepared an FGD guide consisting of questions, focusing on the perceptions of the young learners. The FGD guide is divided into four segments – i)

Background information, ii) Engagement questions, iii) Exploration questions and iv) Exit questions. However, the questions were piloted to a group of 4 learners of Grade IV, belonging to the linguistic minority communities. After rapport building with them, I asked them the questions to know their perceptions about how much they prefer learning English and what they think about the need and importance of learning English. The children could easily answer the questions asked.

#### **4.12.5 Parents' Interview Schedule**

The interview schedule meant for collecting data on the perceptions of parents of the linguistic minority learners is divided into two parts. The first part is on the background information of the parents and the second part contains questions relating to the perceptions towards the importance of learning English. However, for conducting the pilot study, three parents belonging to linguistic minority communities were selected. After initial pilot study, it was found that they were able to answer the questions by expressing their opinion regarding the importance of learning English for their children.

#### **4.12.6 Classroom Observation Protocol**

Classroom observation is another technique of data collection in the current study. For this purpose, I prepared a classroom observation protocol throwing light on several aspects of the teaching-learning process in classroom context. For piloting the observation schedule I chose an English language class of 40 minutes in the selected school where the piloting for the previous instruments was conducted. Initially, during the observation period it was found that the elements of observation were not properly arranged. Moreover, all the segments related to the current phenomena under study were not addressed. However, after initial piloting those components were rearranged and some were added and thus the observation schedule finally incorporates elements like

how the teacher begins interaction with the learners, how the teacher builds rapport with the learners, learners' reaction and compatibility with teachers, strategies employed by teachers while teaching English, learners' reaction to teachers' teaching strategies, teachers' strategies for various skill development, challenges encountered by both teachers and learners, teachers' use of scaffolding and other considerable aspects in the language classroom.

#### 4.13 Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is often criticized by researcher for being small-scale and biased and for lacking rigour. But if it is conducted properly following a systematic manner, it will produce a valid, reliable and credible result. However, qualitative studies are evaluated by researchers on the basis of some criteria, different from the terms used by quantitative researchers. Lincoln and Guba (1985) mention two criteria for evaluating qualitative studies: trustworthiness and authenticity. Four major criteria, suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) in order to maintain trustworthiness, are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

**Table 4.8**

*A Comparative Overview of the Terms*

Terms in Qualitative Research	Terms in Quantitative Research
Credibility	Internal validity
Transferability	Generalizability/ External Validity
Dependability	Reliability
Confirmability	Objectivity

##### 4.13.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the point that the results of qualitative studies are accepted or believed from the perspectives of the participants involved in the studies (Trochim et al.,

2016). Since the main purpose of qualitative studies is to understand and explore the phenomenon from the participants' point of view, here only the participants can evaluate the credibility of results. However, the notion of credibility is not limited to the participants only. Rather, the notion of credibility refers to the point that both the readers and the participants will be able to understand the research design properly. While considering credibility, the researcher must consider whether the participants have been selected aptly for the chosen topic, whether appropriate data collection methodology is used, and whether the responses of the participants are authentic (Jensen, 2008). For increasing credibility, the researcher can increase frequent contacts with the participants and the context in order to get detailed information, examine the data from various angles and perspectives to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the environment, use triangulation method as multiple data-gathering techniques and can use member-checks through involvement of the participants after the data analysis process in order to ensure that data analysis is consistent with the perceptions of the participants. However, in the present study, I have taken utmost care to maintain credibility. First, I have collected detailed information from the participants so that it can be contextualized properly. Second, I carefully chose the appropriate data collection methodology and cautiously chose the instruments for data collection. In this context, while setting the questions for interviews and focus group discussions, I have discussed with my supervisor and other experts in the concerned fields so that there would not be any discrepancy in the choice of words, sentences or entire questions. Third, for maintaining credibility I used triangulation and member-checking which I discussed later in this chapter.

### **4.13.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other settings or contexts. It is very close to generalizability or external validity. In qualitative studies, transferability is mainly the responsibility of the researcher who is involved in generalizing and the researcher can enhance transferability by describing the research context and laying emphasis on the main assumptions of the research (Trochim et al., 2016). Since qualitative research is more context and participant specific, it is not possible to generalize the findings to other situations just as it is done in quantitative studies. So, providing a complete understanding of the context under study and allowing the reader to determine whether the details can be transferable to their context are the concerns of transferability. With regard to the present study, various efforts have been made to present an in-depth description of the participants, setting and context in which the study was conducted so that the readers can determine the extent to which the results and findings of the study can be transferred to other settings and contexts.

### **4.13.3 Dependability**

Dependability in qualitative research has similarities with reliability in quantitative research. Dependability conveys the idea that the research environment can undergo several changes. So, the researcher needs to be aware of these changes and must monitor all the subtleties that deviate from the original design outlined in the proposal (Jensen, 2008). Dependability emphasizes the responsibility of the researcher while describing the ever-changing context of the research (Trochim et al., 2016). Dependability in a qualitative study acknowledges that the research environment is very dynamic. So it cannot be entirely decided beforehand as a fixed point in time. Such factors are addressed by dependability through the selection of appropriate methodologies. Lincoln

and Guba (1985) in this context propose the concept of 'inquiry audit' for maintaining dependability. This criterion requires maintaining audit trail of the entire process of research which includes formulation of the research problem, selecting participants, transcribing interview data, analysis of data and so on. An audit trail in qualitative research is a systematic documentation of the research, allowing an external reviewer to follow the progress of the study and evaluate the dependability and confirmability of the results. In the present study, the role of the external reviewer is played by my supervisor who thoroughly analyzed my study at every stage in order to maintain the quality. Besides, at many stages I consulted exhaustively with experts in the domain for checking.

#### **4.13.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is often equated with objectivity in quantitative research. In qualitative research, the researcher tries to present a unique perspective to the study. Confirmability denotes the extent to which the results of a study can be confirmed by others. As a matter of fact, confirmability indicates that the findings are rooted in the data collected and analyzed by the researcher rather than the subjective viewpoint of the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest implementing audit trail, triangulation and reflexive journal for ensuring confirmability in qualitative research. Bryman et al. (2022) suggest the use of respondent validation or member checking as a strategy for assessing qualitative research. In the present study, I used audit trail with the assistance of my supervisor to get confirmation on the exclusion of mere subjective viewpoints of the researcher. Besides, I incorporated triangulation method in a detailed manner, which is discussed later in this chapter, for strengthening confirmability of my study.

#### 4.13.5 Authenticity

Guba and Lincoln (1994), in addition to the four criteria of trustworthiness, mention the fifth criteria, i.e. authenticity. The balanced and organized presentation of all viewpoints, perspectives values, and beliefs pertaining to the inquiry may be referred to as authenticity. However, the authenticity criterion incorporates five characteristics which are as follows:

- **Fairness:** If the research fairly represents different viewpoints among members of the social setting.
- **Ontological authenticity:** If the research helps members to arrive at thoughtful understanding and analysis of their social environment. It determines how the participant's understanding of a phenomenon becomes more considerable and essential as an outcome of the study.
- **Educative authenticity:** If the research helps members appreciate the viewpoints of other members of their social setting.
- **Catalytic authenticity:** If the research has enthused members to engage in activity in order to change their circumstances.
- **Tactical authenticity:** If the research has empowered people to take necessary steps for engaging in action.

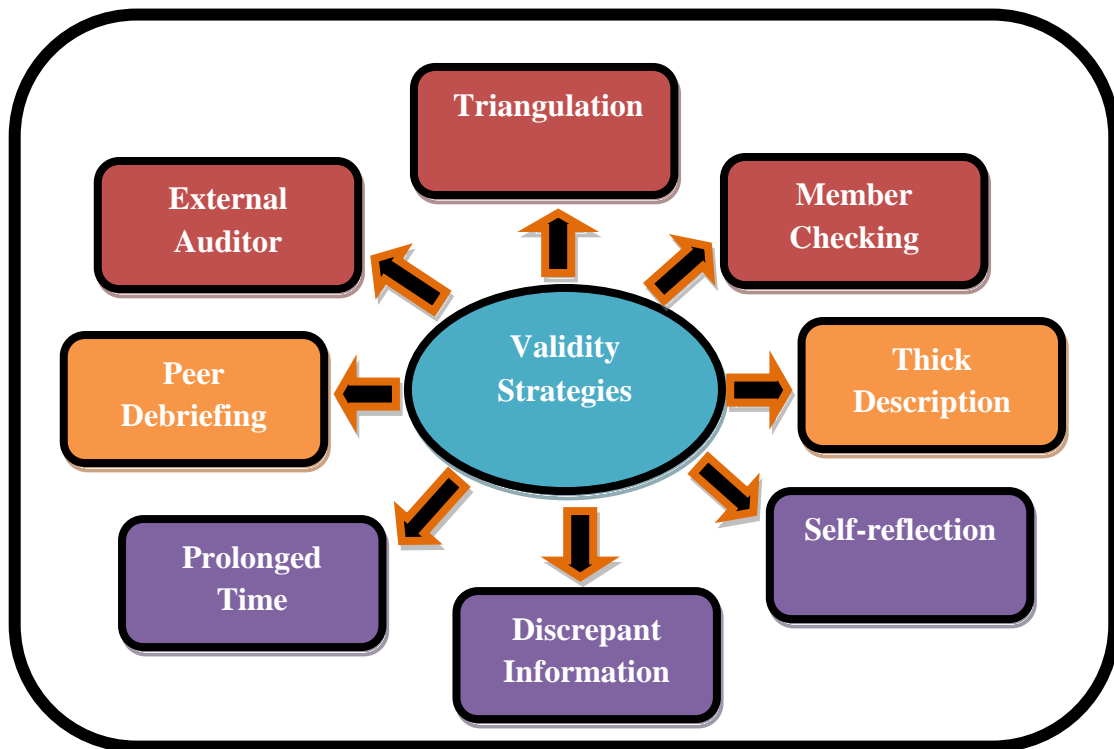
In order to maintain authenticity in my study, I presented diverse perspectives of the participant without being biased. I have given much emphasis on the participants' views and understanding of the phenomenon rather than my subjective experiences. Moreover, I have incorporated a systematic and balanced presentation of diverse perspectives of the participants in order to authenticate the study.

#### 4.13.6 Other Criteria

Creswell (2014) recommends incorporation of multiple approaches which would help the researcher to check the accuracy of findings and would also strengthen the research process by ensuring trustworthiness.

**Figure 4.12**

*Creswell's (2014) Criteria for Maintaining Validity*



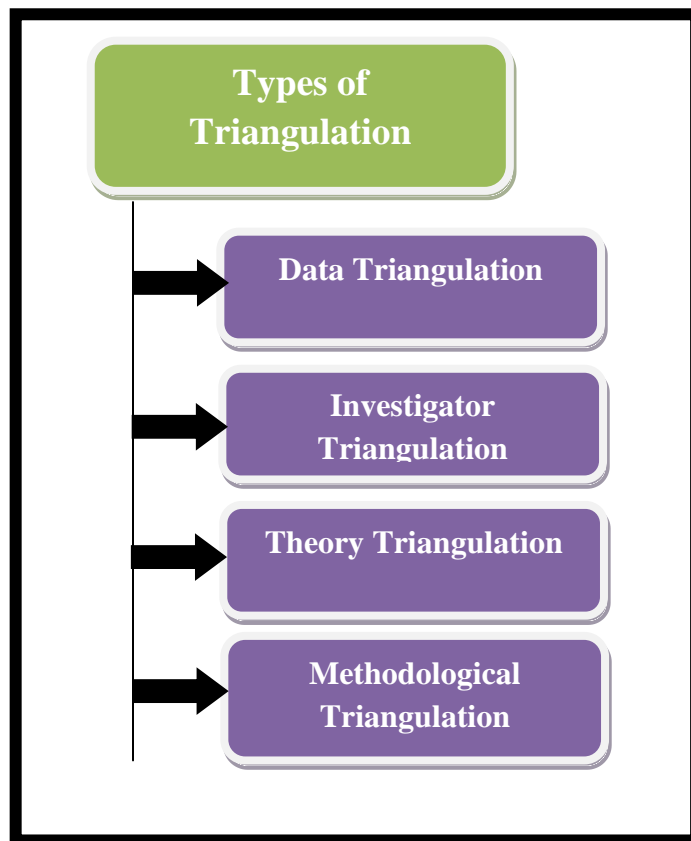
However, the strategies employed in the present study, for maintaining reliability and validity of data, have been discussed.

##### 4.13.6.1 Triangulation

Denzin (1978) considered triangulation method as a strategy for validation and categorized it into four different types.

**Figure 4.13**

*Types of Triangulation*



- **Data Triangulation**

This method of triangulation puts much emphasis on combining data from different sources. This may also include collecting data from different people and places and at different times. For example, while conducting a study, a researcher is employing interviews, document analysis and observations for collecting data and strengthening the authenticity.

- **Investigator Triangulation**

In this type of triangulation, perspectives of different interviewers and observers are prioritized in order to balance subjective experiences of the investigators. Sometimes in

researches the experiences and observations of a single researcher may produce biased data. Besides, lack of skill and inattentiveness during data collection may also cause restrictions to the nature of the study. In such cases, perspectives and experiences of multiple investigators help to reduce such limitations. For example, two investigators are observing how a group of children are interacting in the class with the teacher. In this case, the observations of the two investigators may vary from each other. Combining the perspectives of the two investigators may produce a holistic data of the several aspects of teacher-student interactions.

- **Theory Triangulation**

This refers to placing various theoretical viewpoints side by side. Each theoretical viewpoint has different assumptions. They perform the role of a lens through which the social world can be broadly viewed (Neuman & Tucker, 2022). For example, a researcher combines structuralism and symbolic interaction theory in order to explain a phenomenon.

- **Methodological Triangulation**

Methodological triangulation refers to combining different methods in order to strengthen the research process. In this type of triangulation, qualitative and quantitative research approaches are combined. In most researches, it is found that the researcher employs a single approach. But combining two approaches, i.e. both quantitative and qualitative renders a richer and comprehensive perspective to the study. For example in a study, the researcher at first incorporates quantitative research approach and collects data using a close-ended questionnaire and then uses qualitative approach by using open-

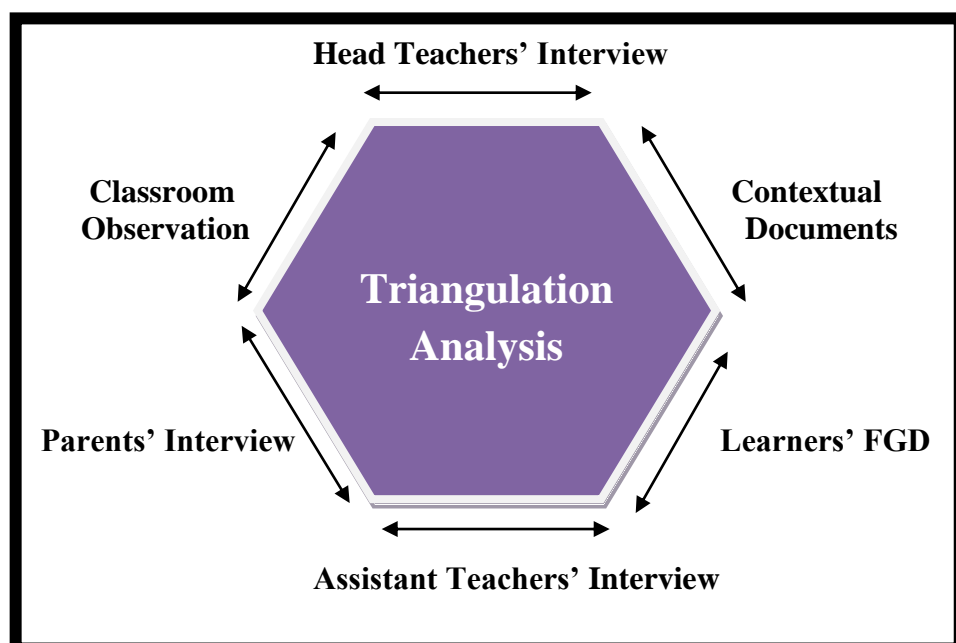
ended interviews to collect data addressing the same research questions, used for the former approach.

#### 4.13.7 Triangulation in the Present Study

In the present study, I have employed triangulation method in order to strengthen trustworthiness of the data. Since the objectives of the present study include various strategies and challenges related to teaching and learning English as a second/foreign language and also perceptions of parents and young learners of primary schools towards English, I have mainly focused on data triangulation which strengthened the evidences and intensified trustworthiness of the data. So, the data triangulation process was accomplished by collecting data from six different sources which include head teachers' interview, assistant teachers' interview, parents' interview, focus group discussion with learners, classroom observation data, and contextual documents collected from the sites of investigation. A diagrammatic representation on the triangulation method employed in the study has been presented below:

**Figure 4.14**

*Triangulation in the Present Study*



#### **4.13.7.1 Member Checking**

In order to determine the accuracy as well as to enhance trustworthiness of the findings in a study, member checking is another significant method. Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider member checking “the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (p. 314). It involves taking the final report or themes or specific descriptions to the participants for gathering their perceptions and feelings (Creswell, 2014). In this method, the raw transcripts of data are not taken back to the respondents, rather some findings or parts of the findings or themes are placed before the participants in order to check authenticity. In the present study, I followed the same technique by discussing with some of the respondents about my findings and interpretation through telephonic conversations.

#### **4.13.7.2 Thick Description**

Incorporating thick description renders an exhaustive account of the research setting along with social, historical and cultural context that contribute to the study. Providing a detailed description of the research setting adds credibility to the research. The more detailed descriptions of the setting the qualitative researchers provide, the more the result becomes realistic (Creswell, 2014). In the present study I have provided a rich description of the setting, i.e. the schools wherefrom I collected data, located in the North and South 24 Parganas of the Indian Sundarbans. Along with providing physical descriptions of the area of study, I have also incorporated socio-economic conditions of the local people, especially of the respondents of the study. Providing rich and thick descriptions renders credibility to my study.

#### **4.13.7.3 Self-Reflection**

Self-reflection or reflexivity is an essential component of qualitative research. Creswell (2014) opines, “self-reflection creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers” (p. 162). It helps to remove bias in the researcher’s mind. Qualitative researchers’ self-reflection is expressive of how the interpretations of the findings are shaped by various background issues like socio-economic status, gender, culture and history. Reflexivity encourages a constant examination of the qualitative researcher’s subjective viewpoint and how it contributes to the shaping of the entire study. Simultaneously, it makes the researcher aware of being extreme biased. While conducting the present study, I employed self-reflection at every phase in order to remove biasness as much as possible and to strengthen trustworthiness of my interpretation of the findings. I was cautious enough to check whether I was adding too much subjectivity. But my constant self-reflection on the different phases of data collection, data analysis and interpretation added credibility to my research.

#### **4.13.7.4 Discrepant Information**

Human life accumulates different perspectives which often pose contrary viewpoints to each other, adding credibility to the main issue (Creswell, 2014). In qualitative research, presentation of evidences contrary to the main issue contributes to the presentation of a more realistic account of the phenomenon. Similarly, whenever I found any inconsistencies or contradictory views in the responses provided by the respondents, or any contradictions in the themes emerged, I addressed and incorporated all the contradictions that I found in the responses of the respondents or in the themes generated during the data analysis process. Addressing both negative and positives views strengthened my interpretations.

#### **4.13.7.5 Prolonged Time**

Spending prolonged time in the field helps the qualitative researcher develop a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study along with providing a detailed account of the site, the participants and background information, rendering credibility to the study (Creswell, 2014). While conducting the present study, I had to spend 2 consecutive years for gaining access to the site and collecting data from the respondents. I collected data from 9 schools in total, each school taking a single day to complete the entire process of data collection, starting from building rapport to collecting data through interviews, observation, focus group discussion and various relevant documents. I myself visited every site along with some of my companions to assist me in the process of data collection. Spending long time in the sites, observing various phenomena and reporting those in the present study with minute details contribute to the enhancement of trustworthiness in the research.

#### **4.13.7.6 Peer Debriefing**

Peer debriefing is another process of ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research by enhancing accuracy. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) peer debriefing refers to the “process of exposing oneself to a disinterested peer in a manner paralleling an analytic session and for the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind” (p. 308). However, in my study, peer debriefing was accomplished by engaging peers in order to evaluate various phases of my study, especially data collection and analysis process. Besides, I shared various phases of my study which involve sampling, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, reporting the findings with my supervisors and other expert faculties along with peers who shared their valuable feedback in order to remove all sorts of discrepancies and

biases related to the present study. Such peer debriefing enhanced trustworthiness of my study.

#### **4.13.7.7 External Auditor**

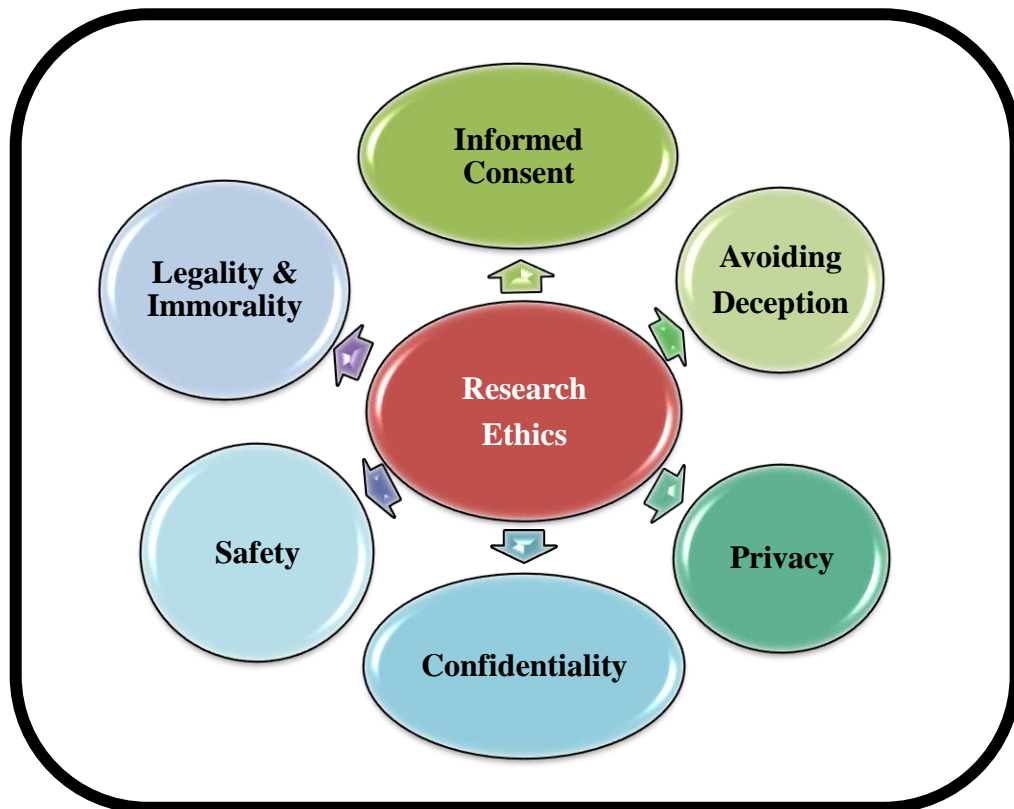
Engaging external auditor is another way of rendering credibility to qualitative research. The external auditor is distinct from a peer debriefer since the external auditor is not familiar with the research and thus can provide an objective assessment (Creswell, 2014). In my research, with due permission from my supervisor, I took the help of an external auditor to get involved in my study for an unbiased investigation. Engaging an external auditor intensified the validity of my research through sharing opinion regarding setting up of research questions, transcription, data analysis process and interpretation.

#### **4.14 Ethical Issues in the Research Process**

Maintaining research ethics is one of the significant features on behalf of the researcher. Research ethics provides guidelines for conducting the research in a responsible way. In addition, it guides researchers to conduct research to ensure a high ethical standard. A researcher should strictly adhere to ethical principles in order to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants. British sociologists have agreed over six broad ethical issues that play a pivotal role in underpinning all sociological research (Mcneill & Chapman, 2005). The major ethical issues considered in any research are as follows:

**Figure 4.15**

*Major Ethical Issues in Research*



*Informed consent* is the way through which participants are informed clearly of the study, including its objectives, process, benefits and potential risks so that the participants remain completely aware of it and participate voluntarily and can withdraw at any point of time for any reason. Researchers must not engage in deception unnecessarily. The subjects must be aware of the researcher's involvement in the study and the researcher should avoid lying about the purpose of the study. So, *avoiding deception* is an important ethical rule. However, there are cases where deception is required. But in such cases researcher must justify the reason for deception on scientific ground and will provide complete debriefing (i.e. providing complete information to the participants about the purpose of the study once the participation process is over) regarding the nature of the study after its completion (Trochim et al., 2016). *Privacy* in

research means protecting personal information of the participants acquired during the study. It denotes individuals' concern and right to have control over the accessibility of other people to themselves (Basit, 2010). Privacy specifies who will gain access to the data. So, maintaining privacy of data as well as the participants should be one of the major ethical concerns while conducting any research. *Confidentiality* refers to the assurance given to the participants, while conducting any study and collecting data from them, regarding not revealing any identifying information related to the participants, acquired through the study. *Safety* in research indicates protecting the participants from any physical or mental harm. So it is the responsibility of the researcher to maintain safety of the participants while collecting data from them. Finally, with regard to *legality and immorality* issues, researchers need to avoid getting involved in immoral acts or should not access those areas which may create serious issues related to immorality.

#### **4.14.1 Ethical Considerations in the Present Study**

With regard to the present study, I have always tried to adhere to the above-mentioned ethical issues like safety, confidentiality, privacy, legality and avoiding deception because these are key ethical principles in research. In the present study, the following ethical considerations have been given much importance:

##### **4.14.1.1 Informed Consent**

Before starting the data collection process, I had serious and in-depth discussion with my supervisor regarding various ethical issues that should be followed during the study. Following the discussion I began to maintain ethical guidelines. Official permissions were sought and were granted through proper channels of the university. Later on other official permissions were also sought wherever needed for gaining access to the sites of

the study. However, after gaining permission from different official levels like District Inspector (DI), School Inspector (SI) of schools and Head of the institutions facing a lot of obstacles, when I started preparation for my data collection I provided the Head Teachers, Assistant Teachers and the parents with the consent form in the form of written documents for their agreement for voluntary participation in the study. However, in case of the young learners of the primary school, permissions were sought from the parents as well as the Head of the institutions. However, along with the consent form a document was also given to the respondents (except the young learners) clearly stating the purpose behind conducting the study which helped me to explore in detail the answers to my research questions.

The consent form clearly stated that their participation was completely voluntary and there was no obligation on behalf of the respondents to participate in the study. They were allowed to withdraw themselves from the study at any point of time. In order to assure that all the aspects of the current study were clear to the respondents, the document detailing various aspects of the study was explained to those having less or no literacy. Besides, those who were unable to sign the consent form due to lack of literacy skills, thumb impressions were collected from them after explaining the purpose behind conducting the study. The respondents were also asked to connect me for clarifying further queries.

All the participants were treated with utmost dignity and respect so that no one had the feeling of being underestimated. Special care was taken for the young children so that they would not get scared. Initially, rapport was build with them just as it was done in case of the other respondents before collecting data. However, before collecting data

from the young children through focus group discussions, I sought permission from the Head Teachers of the concerned institutions and also from the parents of the concerned children. Once I got permission from both the authorities, I started collecting data from the young children. If any guardian or Head Teacher forbade me to include any specific child, I did not force to participate in my study.

Once the data collection process was over, I discussed with the participants regarding the data in order check whether any misconceptions prevailed. However, the participants were given opportunities for any change in their statements, if needed.

#### **4.14.1.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality**

In order to maintain anonymity the identities of the participants were not disclosed. Instead of using real names of the respondents, I used pseudonyms for each and every respondent in order to avoid all types of risks and harms. Moreover, the schools that I visited for collecting data were described under fictitious names so that neither administrative restrictions nor other obstructions would come down upon the personnel related to the schools. In order to maintain confidentiality, I requested the Head Teacher of each institution to arrange a separate room for the interview so that every participant could freely express their perceptions and experiences without keeping any hesitation in mind. Even when the focus group discussion was conducted, I requested the teachers to stay at a distance, unobserved by the young participants so that they would not hesitate to express their views.

#### **4.14.1.3 Security and Ownership of Data**

Once the data collection process was over, it was time for keeping all the data in a safe place, accessible only to me and my supervisor. However, I preserved the data in my PC

and HDD keeping them in password protected folders. Even after the data analysis was over, I kept all the files containing research-related data in a secure place. I was quite aware of not revealing the identities and personal information of the respondents at any cost.

#### **4.15 Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves data collected from several sources in any research. However, for the present study data analysis consisted of the following sources of data:

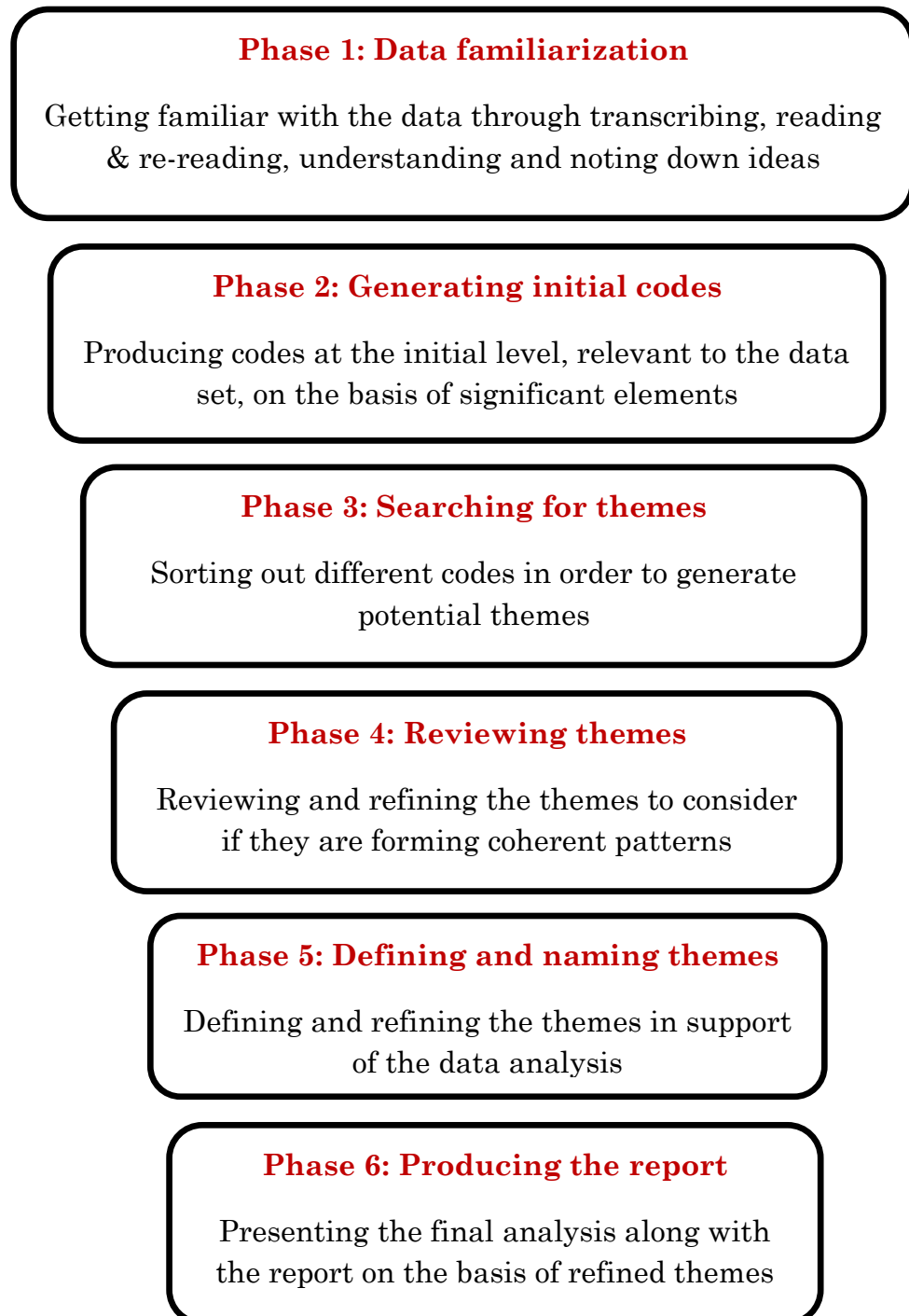
- Interview data from 8 Head Teachers
- Interview data from 8 Assistant Teachers who taught English (i.e., EFL/ESL Teachers)
- Interview data from 17 parents
- Observation based data from 8 Assistant Teachers' (i.e., EFL/ESL Teachers') English language classes
- Focus Group Discussion data from 9 groups of learners
- Contextual documents collected from the sites of research

For analyzing data, I have adopted thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a process that helps to generate themes from codes and categories within a dataset like transcripts of interview, observation and other documents.

#### 4.15.1 Phases of Data Analysis

Figure 4.16

*Braun and Clarke's (2006) Phases of Thematic Analysis*



## **4.15.2 Procedure for Data Analysis and Interpretation**

### **4.15.2.1 Phase 1: Data Familiarisation**

The first phase in the data analysis process is to get myself familiar with the collected data. Braun and Clarke (2006) considered it necessary to get immersed into the dataset in order to get acquainted with the profundity of the content. By immersion they meant reading the data multiple times in order to explore meanings and patterns. While working with verbal data like interviews or data collected from verbal interactions, the first step necessary for data analysis is to transcribe the data for proper understanding. During my data collection phase, I recorded the verbal data in my Vivo V27 mobile phone in the audio format. Since the data that I collected for the study through interviews and focus group discussions were in Bengali, during the first phase of data analysis, I transcribed all the verbal and non-verbal data (i.e. various expressions) myself and then translated into English and typed those in Microsoft Word documents. The process of translation is a skilful task because lack of skill produces translation devoid of the true sense. So, instead of doing word-for-word verbatim translation, I followed free translation, considering the different syntactic and morphological structure of the two languages (Bengali and English) and sometimes the tribal languages as well, used by the respondents. Free translation helps to provide the true sense embedded in the conversation. While translating the data, I took the help of multiple sources, especially bilingual (Bengali to English) dictionaries along with English to English dictionaries. In order to avoid discrepancy and to maintain uniformity in the translation and transcription process, I did it myself manually. I did not involve anyone else in this primary process of transcription and translation in order to maintain accuracy. But I got the translation checked by an expert in order to render authenticity to the process. Since the quantity of data was huge, it took a lot of time to do the transcription and further translation into

English. But the entire process of transcription helped me a lot to get familiarize with the dataset. It rendered me an in-depth understanding of the dataset. Once the transcription process was over, I listened to the audio-recorded data of interviews, focus group discussions, observations and field notes multiple times in order to check the accuracy of transcription.

#### **4.15.2.2 Phase 2: Generating Initial Codes**

The second phase in the process of data analysis is to generate codes at the initial stages after reading and understanding the dataset. One of the constraints in the process of data analysis in qualitative research is that the dataset generates a huge number of codes and thus it becomes time-consuming to manage properly. In this context I often took the help of Lumivero-Nvivo 15 software for generating initial codes. After uploading all the dataset translated into English, the software helped me to generate initial codes. However, in some cases, where I felt the need of codes from a different perspective, I generated manually. In this case, I had to pay careful attention to the objectives of my study because the process of coding should be aligned with the nature and scope of the study. So, at the time of generating codes, the researcher should be properly aware of the data. Sometimes, similar and redundant codes were generated multiple times. Hence, the redundant ones were removed. Besides, if any part of the transcript was left for generating codes, then further additional codes were generated on the basis of the need for the study.

#### **4.15.2.3 Phase 3: Searching for Themes**

The third phase of the thematic analysis method, suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) is one of the most important phases because in this stage themes are generated from the codes. The researcher has to be conscious enough in order to generate themes from the

codes because the number of themes becomes very limited in comparison to the codes generated earlier in the second phase. However, I went through the codes multiple times in order to find specific patterns that would help me generate themes and sub-themes. Since the number of codes generated from the dataset is numerous, after analyzing the codes, I merged the similar ones to generate categories and the categories helped to generate themes and subthemes. While generating themes and sub-themes, I had to take resort to Nvivo software. The themes were generated from the a) assistant teachers' interview, b) head teachers' interview, c) focus group discussions of the young learners, d) parents' interview, and e) observation data. The generated themes contributed to the emergence of thematic map, bringing the themes, subthemes and categories under the single umbrella.

#### **4.15.2.4 Phase 4: Reviewing Themes**

In this phase, the generated themes are reviewed for refinement because during the process, it will be explored that some themes do not fall under the category of themes and simultaneously two similar types of themes may be merged into a single theme (Braun and Clarke, 2006). I followed the same process while reviewing and refining themes. I found that some themes were not properly considered to be themes because of the similarity with others or lack of codes, required for generating a theme. At the same time, I found that some new themes need to be generated in order to create the thematic map. Braun and Clarke (2006) mentioned in this context two levels of reviewing and refining the themes, which I carefully maintained. At the first level, the extracts of the coded data should be reviewed to check if extracts are properly representing each and every theme through the formation of specific patterns. If the emerged themes form proper pattern, then we can proceed for the next stage. If the pattern fails to do so, then we should reconsider the themes for modification. The unfit or irrelevant themes will be

discarded. The second level is to consider the themes in relation to the entire dataset. We need to consider, at this level, each and every theme in connection to the entire dataset. We also need to look into the entire thematic map to check whether it truly reflects the meaning in connection to the entire dataset. Following these two levels of analysis, I checked at each and every phase of coding and generating themes to find their relevance in connection to the extracts as well as the entire datasets.

#### **4.15.2.5 Phase 5: Defining and Naming Themes**

This phase defines and refines themes with subtle details in order to ensure that each theme reflects the essence in its true sense. The phrase “define and refine” represents the aspects hidden behind each theme, highlighting what the themes are about as a whole (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thus I attempted to define individual theme by adding detailed analysis to them. I carefully described the stories behind every theme. Once the initial process is over I repeated it in order to check discrepancies in the presentation. I tried to ensure that every theme was meaningful enough to form a pattern along with the other themes. If I found any incongruity, I refined it and further proceeded for modification of themes. In the end of every phase I tried to define clearly what the themes were about. Before moving further, I verified all the names and descriptions of themes, sub-themes and categories that I gave at the early stage of analysis and wherever needed, I moved for final modifications.

#### **4.15.2.6 Phase 6: Producing the Report**

The final stage engages full-length report of the data analysis on the basis of the themes generated. It can only be done when the set of entire themes are ready. However, at this phase I presented the themes with relevant extracts from my dataset to support themes, subthemes and categories. I presented those extracts which vividly reflected the key

findings of the present study. However, it was not possible for me to incorporate all the extracts from the dataset. Instead, I chose the most relevant ones that sufficiently supported the themes to present my findings of this study.

#### **4.16 Challenges during Data Collection**

A number of crucial challenges I had to face during the data collection stage, which required a long interval of time to finish the entire process. Though all types of permission were granted on behalf of the university and the supervisor, I had to face many obstacles to seek permission from the school education departments of West Bengal initially. I started asking the high-ranked government officials for permission from one door to another but every official received my application without giving me any further intimation about granting of permission. However, gradually I came out of the trouble with the help of a number of kind-hearted and cooperative officials who showed me the path as to how to gain access to the fields. On enquiring of the reasons behind not granting permission for visiting the schools, it came to my knowledge that one of the reasons was severe corruption in the previous recruitment processes of primary school teacher which led the officials not to cooperate.

Again when I entered the field finally with permissions and cooperation from concerned authorities, a few of teachers refused to cooperate me in my data collection. They did not allow me to take pictures of the schools or record any conversation with them.

Besides, the research sites of the present study were located in the Sundarbans of India. It is a coastal region and so it is frequently affected by cyclones, heavy rainfall and land erosion, resulting in obstruction in the communication process. In order to reach the schools that I chose, I had to cross one or several rivers and had to use other modes of

transport. The natural calamities, especially heavy rainfall, often delayed my data collection process.

Apart from all these, summer vacations, holidays, formative and summative exams and various excuses from a few teaching staffs for non-cooperation created nuisance in the free-flow of my data collection stage.

#### **4.17 Summary**

The chapter has presented with adequate details the description of the methodology adopted in this study. These details include the research questions, the rationale behind the paradigm followed in the study, the appropriate research approach, the suitable research design and in-depth descriptions of the data collection process. The data collection process has been clearly depicted with the descriptions of the chosen samples, research sites, sampling techniques and the instruments used for data collection. The chapter also presents in detail how the pilot study was conducted. Moreover, a clear description is provided as to how trustworthiness has been maintained in order to ensure credibility and authenticity criteria for the study. Furthermore, the chapter also addresses the ethical issues that have been carefully considered while conducting the study.

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## Chapter 5

# DATA ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

# CHAPTER 5

# DATA ANALYSIS

# &

# FINDINGS

## **5.1 Overview**

This chapter will analyze the data derived from the interviews, focus group discussions, observations and contextual documents collected from the research sites. Since the data collected for the present study are qualitative, it requires in-depth presentation with proper organization. In accordance with the research questions, this chapter will address the themes emerged from the analysis of data in connection to the perceptions and experiences of the teachers who teach English to linguistic minority learners at the government-run primary schools, challenges faced by both teachers and learners during teaching and learning English and strategies employed by teachers while teaching English, as expressed by the respondents in the selected sites of investigation located in the Sundarbans of West Bengal, India. This chapter will also address the themes that have emerged from the interviews of the select parents as well as from the focus group discussions of the linguistic minority learners.

## **5.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the major strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?

2. What are the major challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?
3. What are the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English?

### **5.3 Emerging Themes**

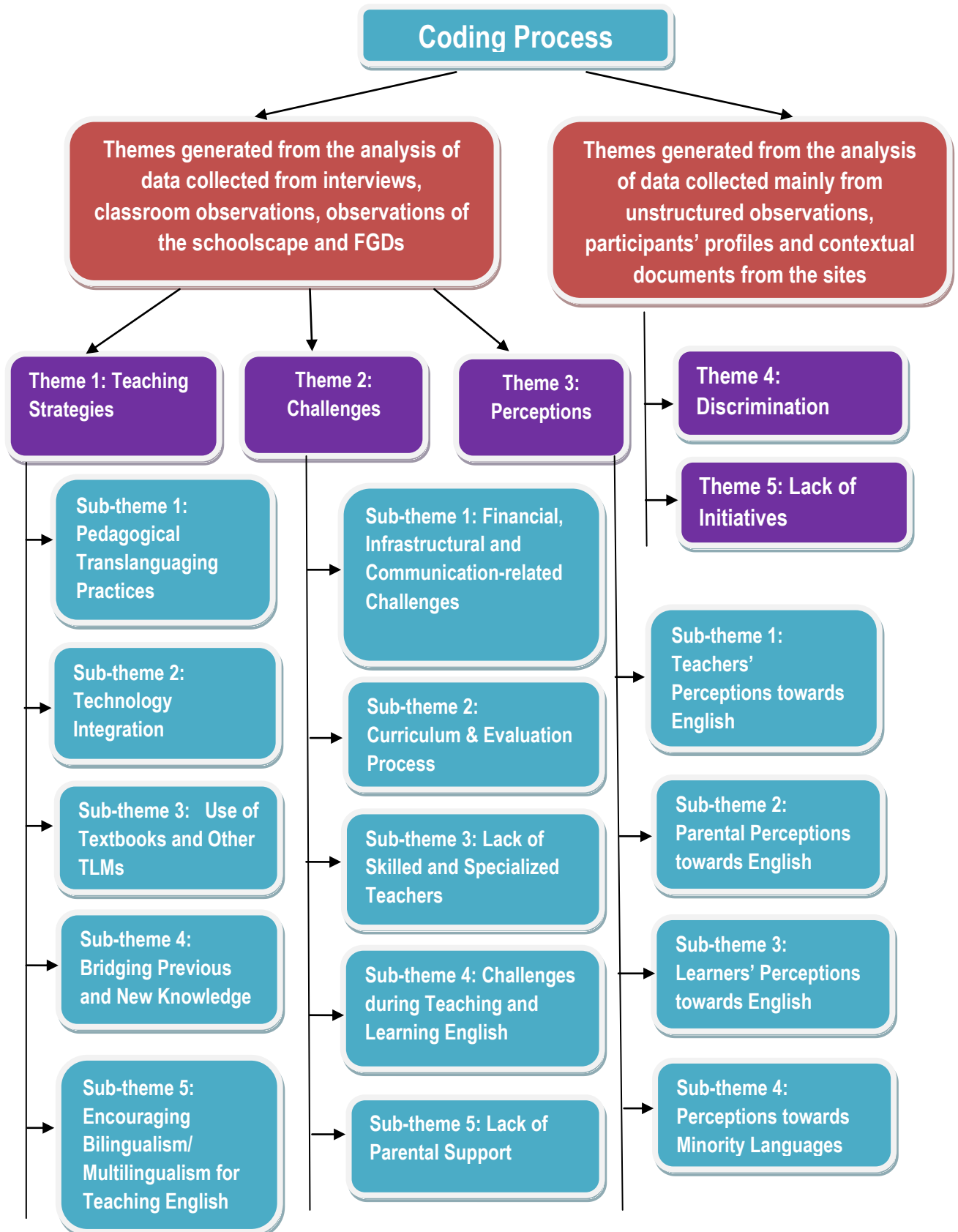
Once the process of data collection is over in qualitative study, the next phase is about transcribing the data after cleaning the redundant ones. Flick (2014) suggests that data analysis in qualitative research goes simultaneously with the other parts of the study that include data collection and writing about the findings. For example, when the researcher is conducting interviews with the participants, he/she may simultaneously be engaged in transcribing and analyzing some interviews collected earlier and will be added in the final report of the study. Qualitative research examines and analyzes various social settings and also the individuals or groups who are part of the settings. It attempts to explore patterns among cases by creating access to immeasurable knowledge about the settings and the people being studied (Lune and Berg, 2018). Therefore, once the data collection process is over, the interviews were transcribed for moving to the next phase of analysis. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, themes and sub-themes were generated in order to find patterns through merging the codes and subsequently generating categories. In this regard, the literature reviews contributed in many aspects to the formation of clear ideas about patterns and themes, closely related to this study. In order to search for patterns and relationship among the themes from the transcripts, I read and re-read the data collected from interviews of head teachers, teachers of English (EFL/ESL teachers) and parents, focus group discussions of the children, and classroom observations along with contextual documents from the sites of investigation multiple

times. Once multiple codes were generated on the basis of the objectives of the study, I tried to club the codes to generate relevant categories. These categories further led to generate themes which were further broken into specific sub-themes to focus on the diverse facets of the central ideas. Once the themes and sub-themes were generated, I looked into the quotes that can be fitted best under the themes and the sub-themes. Under the sub-themes I placed the quotes. For rendering specific structure to a larger theme, sub-themes were useful and necessary. Every time before placing a quote under a sub-theme, I asked myself if the quote properly represented the concept I wanted to address through the sub-theme. I checked for similarities and differences as well as repetitions before placing the quotes. I always tried to incorporate diverse thoughts emerged out of the quotes by focusing on both positive and negative opinions, shared by the participants.

On the basis of thematic analysis as popularized by Braun and Clarke (2006), multiple codes were generated out of which various themes emerged. The themes which are directly related to the research questions were considered as primary evidence in relation to the present study. The rest of the evidences were used as supporting materials for the present study. However, from multiple codes and categories, five major themes were generated under which a number of sub-themes were placed, where it was befitting. The five major themes generated from thematic analysis are – **teaching strategies, challenges, perceptions, discrimination and lack of initiatives.**

**Figure 5.1**

*Diagram Consisting of Themes and Sub-themes*



**Table 5.1***List of Themes and Sub-themes*

Themes and sub-themes emerged from the categories and codes in order to support data management for performing analysis					
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Theme 1: Teaching Strategies</b>	<b>Theme 2: Challenges</b>	<b>Theme 3: Perceptions</b>		
<b>Sub- themes</b>	Pedagogical Translanguaging Practices	Financial, Infrastructural and Communication- related Challenges	Teachers' Perceptions towards English	<b>Theme 4: Discrimination</b>	<b>Theme 5: Lack of Initiatives</b>
	Technology Integration	Curriculum and Evaluation Process	Parental Perceptions towards English		
	Use of Textbooks and Other TLMs	Lack of Skilled and Specialized Teachers	Learners' Perceptions towards English		
	Bridging Previous and New Knowledge	Challenges during Teaching and Learning English	Perceptions towards Minority Languages		
	Encouraging Bilingualism/ Multilingualism for Teaching English	Lack of Parental Support			

## **5.4 Teaching Strategies**

Teaching strategies play a significant role in the EFL/ESL classroom at the time of employing instructional methods since they determine how effectively learners will learn a new language. This is also applicable to minority learners or learners from tribal backgrounds. From the data collected from the research sites, especially from the interviews with teachers, the teaching strategies find exposure. These teaching strategies are considered a single theme under which several sub-themes indicating the individual strategies are placed in the data analysis process.

### **5.4.1 Pedagogical Translanguaging Practices**

Over the last twenty years, translanguaging has emerged as a significant concept within the field of applied linguistics, especially in multilingual settings. This concept has led to the generation of a substantial body of literature that examines both the theoretical and empirical aspects of translanguaging as a linguistically inclusive method for language instruction and acquisition (Prilutskaya, 2021). The origin of the term ‘translanguaging’ can be traced in bilingual education in Wales where Welsh and English are used as the languages of instruction (Cenoz & Gorter, 2023). Translanguaging is the ability to switch flexibly and comfortably between languages. It is a pedagogical approach to teaching in which teachers support this method and ability of switching, considering it an effective mode of teaching. In translanguaging, students are able to think in multiple languages simultaneously and use their home language as a vehicle to learn English. Translanguaging often promotes an in-depth understanding of the subject matter, by discussing in one language and writing in another. The classroom context is a vital place for promoting translanguaging pedagogy.

### 5.4.1.1 Translanguaging during Interactions in the Classroom

The first theme shows how translanguaging is taking place during the interaction between teachers and students in the classroom at the time of delivering a lesson. Here is an excerpt of the conversation when the teacher was teaching an English lesson on Kolkata from the English textbook:

**Teacher:** Have you ever gone to Kolkata?

**1<sup>st</sup> Group of Students:** (*In chorus*) Yes, sir. We've gone.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Group of Students:** (*In chorus*) No, sir.

**Teacher to 1<sup>st</sup> Group:** Can you name some famous places in Kolkata?

**1<sup>st</sup> Group:** (*They mention some names*) Sir, Victoria Memorial, Dakshineswar Temple, National Library, Jadughar (Indian Museum), Kolkata Zoo.

**Teacher:** (*Gives feedback in Bengali*) *Khub valo. Eito tomra onek jano. Ei jayga gulor moddhe ki kothao tomra gecho keu?* [Well done. You know many things. Have you ever visited any of the places that you mentioned?]

**Student** (*Replies in Bengali*): *Hyan sir, ami ekbar chiriakhana gechilam.* [Yes sir, once I went to visit the Kolkata Zoo].

**Teacher:** Very good.

**Students:** (*In chorus*): Thank you, sir.

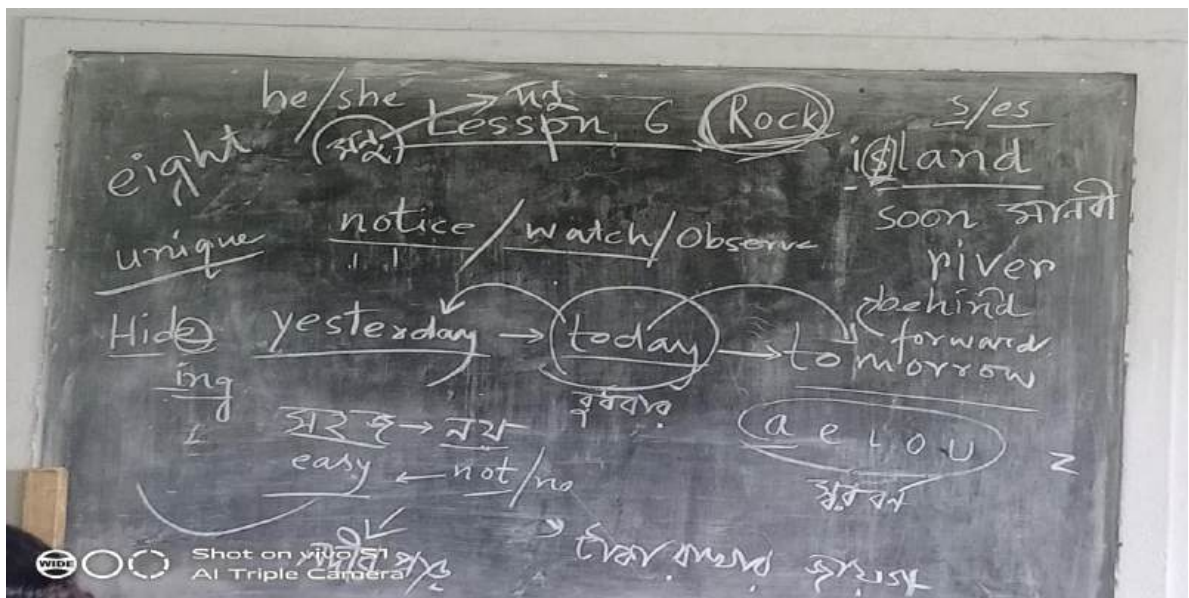
In the above conversation, it is evident that both the teacher and the students use Bengali and English interchangeably as per their convenience. The teacher also encourages the students to give their answers by using both English and the students' own linguistic repertoire.

### 5.4.1.2 Translanguaging during Teaching English

The second theme that is generated from the thematic analysis of a classroom observation shows how the teacher employed translanguaging while teaching English in the classroom and while using teaching-learning materials. Let's have a look at the following two signs:

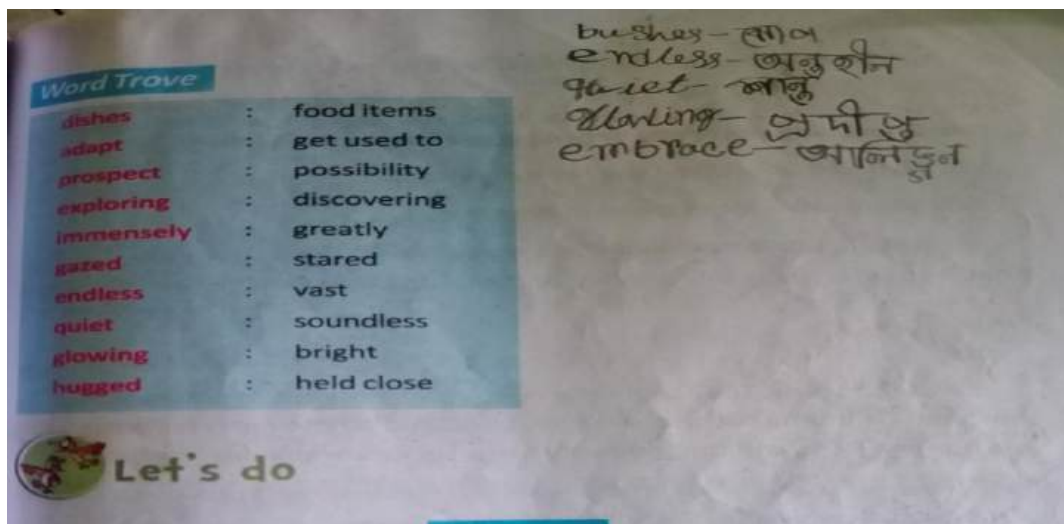
**Figure 5.2**

*Sign Representing Use of Black-board*



**Figure 5.3**

*An Image from a Learner's English Textbook*



In figure 5.2, it is evident that the teacher taught a lesson in the EFL/ESL class using bilingual instructions and was encouraging learners' own linguistic repertoire. So the teacher explained various concepts and meanings using both Bengali and English interchangeably. In figure 5.3, which is an image from a learner's English textbook, the teacher encouraged the learner to write the meanings of words in Bengali and thus encouraged the use of the learner's linguistic repertoire in order to render effective teaching and learning. This makes the teaching-learning process interesting to both the teacher and the students.

#### **5.4.1.3 Translanguaging from the Teacher's Narratives**

The third theme that emerges from the interviews of the teachers is about how the teachers experienced evidences of translanguaging from the learners' end. One head teacher (HTR 4) mentioned that one day while examining answer scripts of the students, one of her colleagues found that a student wrote the meaning of 'firefly' as '*bhhag-jugni*', a word not usually used in Bengali (in Bengali it is known as '*jonaki*'). The student possibly used the term from the repertoire of his/her minority language, spoken by some of the family members of the student. The teacher's narrative is as follows:

In our language firefly is referred to as '*bhaagjumni*'. In my neighbouring school when I worked as a deputed teacher, there was a question, "Which insect gives light at night?" One particular student wrote, '*Bhaagjumni*'. I told that '*bhaagjumni*' means firefly. Though he might write in another language but what he wrote is right and in that case no one could tell it incorrect. We can derive the meaning of a word from different languages. Similarly, what the student wrote is correct though he wrote in a different language.

Thus the practice of translanguaging can enhance the use of minority languages and protects it from being endangered as well.

#### 5.4.1.4 Translanguaging in Schoolscapes

The third theme that has emerged from the analysis of the data is how translanguaging becomes an integral part of the schoolscape. Let's consider the following examples:

**Figure 5.4**

*Sign Showing Bilingual Instructions*



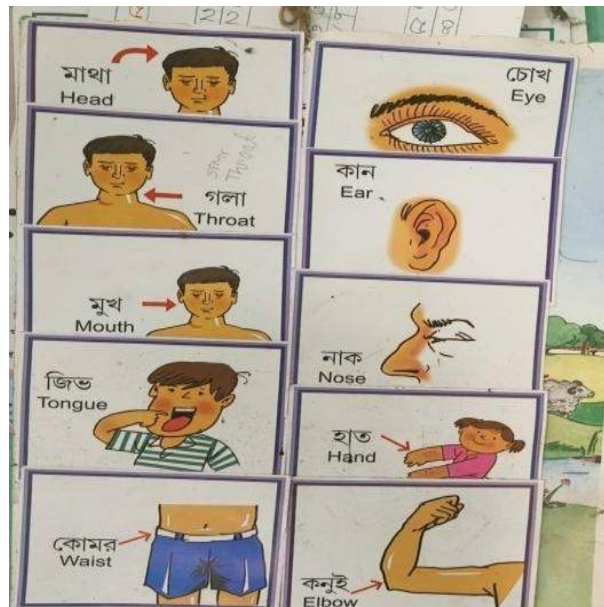
**Figure 5.5**

*Sign Showing Names of the Months in Bilingual Form*

১২টি মাসের বাংলা ও ইংরেজি নাম	
বৈশাখ	January (জানুয়ারি)
জ্যৈষ্ঠ	February (ফেব্রুয়ারি)
আষাঢ়	March (মার্চ)
শ্রাবণ	April (এপ্রিল)
ভাদ্র	May (মে)
আশ্বিন	June (জুন)
কার্তিক	July (জুলাই)
অগ্রহায়ণ	August (আগস্ট)
শ্রৌষ	September (সেপ্টেম্বর)
মাঘ	October (অক্টোবর)
ফাল্গুন	November (নভেম্বর)
	December (ডিসেম্বর)

**Figure 5.6**

*Sign Showing Names of the Body Parts in Bilingual Form*



In the above three signs (Figures 5.4, 5.5 & 5.6), collected from the walls of different school buildings, we can find that the terms are used both in English and Bengali. As a result, learners can easily learn the terms using their own linguistic repertoire. It shows the effectiveness of translanguaging upon the learners in the school-based environment.

#### **5.4.2 Technology Integration**

Integrating technology in the classroom for the purpose of teaching and learning, especially for teaching English to non-English speakers, is an effective strategy. There are several ways to incorporate technology or to teach using technology for making learning process effective and enabling better learning outcome. One of the efficacious ways in the context of technology integration is to introduce smart classroom to learners. The audio-visual aids and three-dimensional presentations make learning effective, joyful and prospective. But lack of infrastructural facilities and lack of expertise often hinder the opportunities for the implementation of technology-enhanced teaching and learning, especially in rural and resource constraint areas.

From the narratives of most the EFL/ESL teachers, it became evident that they were much interested in integrating technology in the classroom for teaching English for its prospective learning outcome. At the same time it should also be mentioned that since there were infrastructural deficits in most of the govt. primary schools, located in the Sundarbans of West Bengal, the schools had no provision for smart classrooms. As a result, enthusiastic teachers used mainly their mobile phones for showing videos or graphics and sometimes the computer, allotted for their official work. For examples, an EFL/ESL teacher (ATR 1) stated how he used technology for teaching English and what they felt regarding its importance:

I successfully use technology in my English classes. In our school there is no technology support. Usually, I show them downloaded pictures in my

phone. Besides, I show them necessary videos, though we have network issues. The students are very responsive. Audio-visual aids are very much required nowadays. That is why the private schools are growing quickly.

The students feel delighted to learn through audio-visual aids.

Similarly, another teacher (ATR 2) stated the importance of audio-visual aids for teaching English:

While teaching poems in the classroom, audio-visual aids are used. The videos are shown in the cell phones. The students are very much interested in the audio-visual media. They become much more interested in teachings on the basis of audios or videos rather than the use of blackboard.

Another teacher (ATR 7) narrated how he turned learning into a joyful and interesting activity with the help of mobiles and computer:

We use cell phones and computer. Computer is used only for students of class 4. Before beginning any chapter I show them photos related to that chapter in my cell phone. For example, when we start teaching any chapter related to any great personality, I show them the pictures of those persons. Again, there was a chapter on Kolkata. I showed them photos of metro railway and underwater metro along with various heritage buildings in Kolkata.

While struggling to understand any story in English, teachers showed videos of the particular story for better and quick understanding. Another teacher (ATR 6) reported his experience in this regard:

Sometimes the students face difficulties in understanding the story but when the story is shown in the cell phone it becomes convenient for them to

understand. They may not be able to read it out but they can understand the story well through videos.

Not all the teachers were well-acquainted with incorporating technology in the classroom. One teacher (ATR 3) stated that he had no clear guidelines as to when and which type of technological aids would be used in the classroom for teaching English. The teacher also shared his lack of knowledge regarding the govt. guidelines for using mobiles in the classroom and also admitted his lack of skills in using technology:

No, I haven't used technology to facilitate my teaching and learning for the learners. Since I don't have the professional training, I don't know which gadgets I should use. Besides, I don't show them mobile thinking that there might be some government restrictions for that. Once I receive the professional training, I will definitely use.

A similar opinion has been shared by another teacher (ATR 4) mentioning the effectiveness of using technology in the English classroom. But the teacher added that there was instruction from the government's end as to not to use mobile in the classroom:

I haven't used technology for the purpose of teaching and learning in the classroom. Instruction was given from the authorities not to use the mobile phone in the class. We keep the mobiles with us, but we don't show them. But it will be really helpful for them if we teach using mobile videos. But due to restrictions I don't use it.

### **5.4.3 Use of Textbooks and Other TLMs**

The role of teaching-learning materials (TLMs), especially textbooks is indispensable in the classroom context. In order to introduce any topic or to explain something in an easier way, the TLMs are used effectively. However, of different types of TLMs, textbooks have significant impact on learning English. It also helps to develop reading

and writing skills. But what is important here is that how aptly the contents of the textbooks are chosen in order to meet the needs of the target learners. Various studies have shown that while choosing the contents of the textbooks, the concerned authorities do not pay attention to culture and language-specific contents. Besides, the contents often do not meet the need of learners from diverse learning needs and backgrounds. As a result, it becomes quite difficult for weaker learners to learn. In the EFL/ESL class, if the contents of the textbooks are not chosen as per the diverse need of learners, it will only meet the needs of learners having strong educational backgrounds. Similarly, in classroom consisting of linguistic minority learners from weaker educational as well as family backgrounds, textbooks with relevant contents will meet their needs.

From the narratives of the teachers, I found that most of the teachers used textbooks for teaching English to the learners and helped learners to practice exercises from the textbooks for strengthening their grammatical skills and vocabulary stock. They expressed the importance of using textbooks for teaching English effectively. But at the same time, most of the teachers mentioned why they as well as the learners had to face difficulties in utilizing the textbooks for learning English. One of the teachers (ATR 1) explained what sort of difficulty he faced while using the textbook for teaching English to the learners:

The textbook should be simplified. Another prescribed book, named *Wings*, requires sufficient efficiency for a teacher to study and to teach in the classroom. Besides, at primary level there is scarcity of teachers and so teachers need to know all subjects proportionately and since there is no specialization here, the textbook requires simplification.

The statement of another teacher (ATR 7) revealed how the textbooks failed to meet the needs of students from rural areas:

I think that the book is tough for the rural children. The grammar is a bit difficult for them because they are not yet prepared for this text book. They learn English when they are in class 1 or 2. In the initial stage they don't have the level of maturity, required for learning grammar. In order to learn grammar the syllabus is not sufficient from the beginning and as a result it becomes tough for the students to understand. These books are rather befitting for the students of higher grades.

Similarly, ATR 6 pointed towards the discrepancies in the standards of textbooks, leading to face difficulties in learning English for the learners:

There is a huge difference in standards between the textbook of Grades 2 and 3. The English of Grade 3 is quite tough for them to understand.

A teacher (ATR 8) argued why the learners from linguistic minority communities in rural areas required more time in learning English in comparison to general learners from urban areas:

Since this area is very remotely located, underdeveloped and most of the parents are illiterate, the English textbook is a bit difficult for the students to understand. When the parents get their children admitted to school, the students are totally unprepared and don't have any previous knowledge. In urban areas parents are much aware of the students' education. It can be seen that the parents teach the basic things before admitting their children to school. Here we have to start afresh. So, the textbooks become quite tough for them.

Along with textbooks, other types of TLMs also play important role in teaching English to young learners, especially the linguistic minority learners. Instead of delivering lectures just as it is done in traditional, teacher-centric classrooms, TLMs help to present

any content in a more comprehensible way. According to the narratives of most of the teachers who were interviewed for the present study, they preferred using various TLMs like charts, visual aids, blackboards, flashcards etc. For example, one of the teachers (ATR 2) stated, “As for TLM, I use chart and blackboard for teaching English.” Another teacher (ATR 7) also expressed the same experience, “I use TLM for teaching English. For example, it includes flowcharts showing various fruits, flowers etc.” Some teachers reported that they used TLMs mainly in lower classes. In higher classes, selected TLMs were used as I found one teacher (ATR 5) state:

TLM is normally used in lower classes but not in higher classes. For example, flash cards of English alphabets are used so that the students could learn the capital letters and the small letters. For higher classes, textbooks and blackboard are used as TLMs.

Even the head teachers also agreed to the importance of using TLMs while teaching English to the linguistic minority learners. One of the head teachers (HTR 5) stated how effectively he used TLMs which became a rich source of knowledge for both the students and the teachers:

I use the blackboard mainly for teaching English or other subjects to the students. Usually, TLMs is not used all the time. Sometimes I use TLMs, provided by the govt. Apart from those, we sometimes prepare some TLMs for teaching in the classroom. For example, I was teaching a lesson some days ago in which there were examples of different flowers, fruits and leaves. For drawing a comparison I asked them if they knew the English names of the different types of flowers, fruits and trees at their home. From this I realized that even I did not know some of the English terminologies.

One head teacher (HTR 7) reported the crisis of funds for buying TLMs from the government's end, "Earlier we used to receive grants for buying TLM. But now we don't receive it. But we have a stock of TLMs."

#### **5.4.4 Bridging Previous and New Knowledge**

The next sub-theme that has emerged from the analysis of the data under the theme 'teaching strategies' focuses on connecting previous knowledge with the new knowledge. When a new content is taught to learners, it is necessary to check their previous knowledge so that learners can grasp new knowledge with ease. For strengthening the foundation of learners' knowledge, it is important for teachers to have clear ideas about the level of the learners' knowledge. This strategy is equally effective for learners from linguistic minority background in the English language classroom. If an EFL/ESL teacher starts teaching a new topic without considering how much the learners have learnt, the learners will face hurdles while learning a new topic. This strategy of connecting previous knowledge with the newer one is rooted in Vygotsky's concepts (1978, 2012). His socio-cultural theory emphasizes the process of learning through social interaction, being assisted by a teacher or more knowledgeable other (MKO) when required.

From the analysis of the teachers' narratives, it becomes evident that almost all the teachers followed the strategy of bridging between previous and new knowledge. One of the teachers (ATR 1) stated the importance of considering previous knowledge:

Often previous knowledge of the learners about the topic is verified. Often it is asked if they have any knowledge about the topic and asked to share their views. If the previous knowledge is not checked, then the new topic cannot be linked up with that.

A similar experience was shared by two other teachers (ATR 4 and ATR 7) regarding the importance of checking previous knowledge for connecting it with the new knowledge:

I check the previous knowledge of the learners in English while teaching. In my classroom there are students of different merits. Some are fast learners while majority are slow learners. Among them some could not read at all, others are average and a very few students can read properly.

According to the ATR 7:

Yes, I check the previous knowledge of the learners in English while teaching. For example, before beginning any grammatical topic first I discuss the basic grammar with them and then I proceed with the topic.

Once a topic is taught, it is required to check whether the learners have successfully learnt the topic. If the learner can respond to the questions properly, then it can be ensured that effective teaching and learning have occurred and the previous knowledge has been aptly connected with the new knowledge. But if the learner fails to answer, it will prove a gap in the teaching-learning process. Most of the teachers' narratives supported this view and they expressed that they always checked whether the linguistic minority learners have learnt properly. Assessment of their learning proves the effectiveness of teaching and learning. One teacher (ATR 2) states how he judged that the learners have learnt properly:

To check whether the learners have learnt their lessons, we give them class work, homework and ask questions orally. From their responses I come to know that they are able to understand. Usually, I get good response while teaching English to the learners. But some of them face problems in understanding.

But sometimes the learners failed to grasp new concepts properly because of several difficulties. Some of the teachers addressed these difficulties by describing why the learners had to face failure in learning properly. Sometimes they did not receive parental support for education at home since most of the parents were illiterate and financially poor or remained busy in earning money for running the family. For example ATR 6 narrated:

In order to find whether the learners have learnt what has been taught in the class I ask questions. Most of them don't give any response. Out of thirty students only five can answer properly. On the next day, only around fifteen students come prepared. They face difficulty because they don't have a supporting environment at home.

#### **5.4.5 Encouraging Bilingualism/ Multilingualism for Teaching English**

In a multilingual EFL/ESL classroom, the strategy for teaching considered to be most effective is to use bilingual or multilingual instructions instead of using only the target language through the use of communicative language teaching method. Encouraging learners to use mother tongue (L1) or any other language they are compatible and flexible with makes the learning effective.

The interview and observation based data revealed that the teachers preferred bilingual (in some contexts multilingual) instructions for teaching English. When the teachers taught English to the classes which contained linguistic minority learners, they mostly used Bengali as a medium of instruction and sometimes the target language English. For example, one teacher (ATR 1) stated:

Mainly in Bengali language mixed with formal and informal terms. If we teach using English only, then they will not be able to understand. So I have to use, partly Bengali and partly English.

Another teacher (ATR 2) stated that though he used Bengali and English, in some contexts he used other local languages as well:

While teaching English in the classroom mostly I communicate in Bengali with the students. If there is any need of using other languages in any context, then I use. Though I feel convenient in English, it becomes difficult for the students to understand.

When I asked one head teacher (HTR 5) of what type of instructions he preferred while taking English language classes, he mentioned bilingual instructions, emphasizing grammar translation method. He further narrated how he advised the teachers to teach English in the class:

I give another instruction that they should try to teach at least something beyond the syllabus so that the students can acquire writing ability. For example, how to make clear concept of tense by identifying differences between 'I go', 'I am going to school', 'I went to school', 'I am playing' or 'I was playing' etc. They should be taught clearly preliminary English translations. Besides, they should also learn how to ask for permission for entering and going out of a place or for going to toilet.

## **5.5 Challenges**

The second main theme that has emerged out of the analysis of data is 'challenges'. It throws light on the various challenges that both teachers and linguistic minority learners have to face, especially when it is concerned with teaching and learning English. The

challenges create hindrances in the path of English language learning of the linguistic minority learners. However, the main theme has been further divided into the following sub-themes: i) financial, infrastructural and communication-related challenges, ii) curriculum & evaluation process, iii) lack of skilled and specialized teachers, iv) challenges during teaching and learning English, and v) lack of parental support.

### **5.5.1 Financial, Infrastructural and Communication-related Challenges**

One of the major challenges faced by the parents of linguistic minority learners, emerged after data analysis is associated with poverty, leading them to face severe difficulties in running the families. From the data collected on the background information of the parents, I have found that since the area of the study was remotely located, most of the parents had lack of literary. Most of them were very poor and had to struggle hard for earning money. A majority of the parents were migrant labourers, working in the states like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha and Karnataka, staying far away from home and family. I found a large number of mothers working in the field of crops for earning money. Consequently, often the linguistic minority children had to stay with their relatives or grandparents. The financial challenges of the parents came to be a major barrier in the path of their children's education. One head teacher (HTR 4) reported how the learners' education was affected for staying at their relatives' or grandparents' house:

Most of the students don't stay with their parents. They stay at their relative's place (uncle, maternal uncles and aunt). In my school most of the students stay with their grandparents or at their maternal uncle's house because most of the parents went out to work at Tamil Nadu as migrant labourers. So, they don't have notebooks or pens. It is not possible for their grandparents to buy them notebooks until their parents send money.

Another teacher (ATR 4) expressed a similar opinion as to why the learners lacked supports from their parents:

Most of the parents are illiterate and go out to work in other states. This is the reason majority of the students don't get any guidance from their parents.

Only a handful of students are able to get proper guidance.

Some of the teachers also reported that sometimes parents took their children with them whenever they went to work in other states, which led to interrupt the learners' education severely because when they came back home, they forgot most of the things they learnt earlier. This also increased the number of school dropouts. One of the head teachers (HTR 1) stated this issue:

The parents get their children admitted in the school but then they go out to work along with their children. Though they have many aspirations for their children, owing to their poverty they have to work as migrant labourers in Kerala or Andhra Pradesh for years. More than 90% parents are migrant labourers. As a result, the child becomes a school dropout.

Poverty in the remote areas of the Sundarbans region was so intense that often the young children went to school without having meals. A majority of the students were dependent on midday meal provided at schools. Since the parents of the children had to go out for work early in the morning, the children had no one to look after them properly. So, if the basic requirements were not fulfilled, it would become tough for them to focus on education, especially learning English. The scenario of intense poverty was narrated by one head teacher (HTR 4):

As per our experience, there are some students who feel hungry at 12 o'clock which means he hasn't eaten at home. ....When asked, they

tell that they had eaten just one biscuit because no one cooked at home (their parents had gone out to work). So, we provide the midday meal at 1:00 pm though the rule is that midday meal should be provided from 1:15 pm or 1:20 pm. Here, hunger and poverty seem to be a barrier.

A similar experience was narrated by another head teacher (HTR 5) who at his own initiative provided some dry foods like biscuit, puffed rice etc. to the learners:

Most of the students come to school without having any food and when I ask them, they reply that there is no food at home. The reason is that their mothers go out early in the morning for work and their fathers also go out for work in other states. They get mid-day meal at the school during lunchtime. But they eat nothing at breakfast. ....In empty stomach, it is not possible for them to keep anything in brain.

Again, an important concern in this regard is that the children from the poverty-stricken families were losing interest in study because they could earn money from other sources easily. So, in the early morning they went for different work in order to earn money. What is alarming here is that even the parents took their children with them for earning money without paying importance to their children's education. One head teacher (HTR 7) stated her experience in this regard:

.....when the parents go to collect river snail, they take their children with them. If they keep them in hostels, then the children can have good food and education. We also tell them that if they keep the little ones along with the elder ones in the hostel then we have attendants here to take care of. But they don't do so. They think that if they can earn Rs. 1000/- and their children can earn Rs. 500/-, then why they would send their

children to school. So, their parents should be motivated at first explaining them the need of education as well as of English.

From the analysis of data which incorporate interviews with teachers and my observation of the schools, I found that there was a major challenge related to the infrastructure of most of the govt. primary schools. In most of the schools, the buildings were not in good condition and required adequate repairing and proper maintenance. The number of classrooms was also inadequate in most of the schools. In some schools, there was scarcity of benches for students, staff rooms for teachers and smart classroom as well. One head teacher (HTR 4) stated:

Our school has a poor infrastructure lacking classrooms..... In some cases it is seen that students take admission as per the infrastructure of the schools. Some parents think that since there are inadequate classrooms, no proper environment and no place for the children to sit, they get their children admitted to English medium schools.....So, they think that they should admit their children in a school which has a better infrastructure.

Another head teacher (HTR 6) expressed similar opinion regarding lack of infrastructure in their school:

There are various challenges related to infrastructural facilities. The school building is not properly maintained due to lack of funding. There is a scarcity of classrooms.

From the narratives of the teachers, another challenge that became evident is related to communication. Since the schools that I visited for data collection were located in remote areas of the Sundarbans, students had to face several challenges in order to commute to the schools. In some areas the muddy road would create much trouble during

the rainy season. Besides, there was crisis for the transport system as well. One of the head teachers (HTR 3) reported the problem of transport in detail:

Transportation is a major challenge in these areas. The children of pre-primary come 2 kms away from their home. It's very tough for them to cross such a long distance.....it's been only 3 months since the bridge has been constructed.....

Another head teacher (HTR 1) shared his experience regarding the challenges that the learners faced related to communication:

The geographical barrier is prominent. During heavy rain, in urban areas student can use toto for going to school. But it's not possible here. Thus the students can't attend the school properly. The concrete road was made recently. Earlier they could not attend school during rainy seasons. Earlier when there was no electricity the students couldn't study in the evening or at night. They could study only during daylight.

During the rainy seasons, as narrated by head teachers, the obstacles would become more severe as water got clogged in areas. This would make the communication system challenging for students. One head teacher (HTR 5) narrated an experience of this situation:

During the rainy season, water gets clogged in the building as well as in the streets. Consequently, students face troubles to come to school. Also there is fear of venomous snakes. Two weeks ago a student of class 5 died of snake-bite.

Another head teacher (HTR 8) shared similar experience regarding challenges faced by learners on their way to schools during rainy season:

During the rainy season the roads towards school become very muddy. The children cannot come to school. Although there are bricks fixed on the muddy road for making communication easier, that path, too, is becoming slippery. Besides, there are bushes on both sides of the paths, which make the path full of obstacles.

But what is optimistic here is that most of the head teachers reported that the govt. took initiative to make concrete roads and bridges were built over rivers for smoother communication. For example one head teacher (HTR 2) mentioned, “Presently the means of transportation is quite better. Earlier there were brick roads but now those are concrete.”

### **5.5.2 Curriculum and Evaluation Process**

The curriculum is a contributing factor in the teaching-learning process. The curriculum helps teacher and students to proceed towards goals. In the EFL/ESL classes also, the effective curriculum helps to achieve effective learning outcome. Proper selection of content and instructional methods in the English classroom makes the teaching-learning effective. The selection of the contents in the textbook and how these are presented before the learners lead teachers and students reach their goals by achieving better learning outcomes. From the narratives of the teachers, I came to know of the deficits in the curriculum structure. One of the teachers (ATR 5) stated:

The standard of the textbook is quite well but the exercises on grammar are not sufficient because English learning depends on grammar learning. The book should include more chapters on grammatical exercises. Besides, many words that the books include are very tough. Even we have to learn those before teaching.

Another teacher (ATR 7) also mentioned the deficits in the syllabus and mentioned that it did not meet the need of the linguistic minority learners sufficiently:

In order to learn grammar the syllabus is not sufficient from the beginning and as a result it becomes tough for the students to understand. These books are rather befitting for the students of higher grades.

Even from my observation of classroom and contextual documents I found that the English books did not contain culture specific examples. Most of the examples were very common. Besides, most of the teachers in the English classes did not pay much attention to the practice of communication skills of the students. Neither did they incorporate activity-based collaborative teaching-learning.

The process of evaluation is an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Once the lessons are delivered in the classroom, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process, which further helps to identify the inadequacies in the process. From the analysis of data, another challenge that became evident in relation to the curriculum-related issues was discrepancy in the evaluation process. As per the rules of the state government, students would be promoted to the higher classes without assigning ranks as per merit. As a result, there was no pass and fail system in the evaluation process, which led to failure in the proper evaluation process. One teacher (ATR 1) stated why mere examination was not the proper way to evaluate a learners' performance:

.....it is not possible to evaluate a student fairly through examination. No one can be judged through examination. Through an exam of 20 or 50 or 100 marks, it is not possible to evaluate a student's performance. It is also notable that those who get 2 or 3 marks less than those

who secure first position are also efficient enough to secure 1<sup>st</sup> position. It may be due to different examiners that they get different marks.

Another teacher (ATR 3) stated that the abolition of the pass and fail system was a major factor for which the proper assessment of the students could not be done:

The students are not so dull but due to the absence of 'pass-fail system', marks aren't given. If the 'pass-fail' system comes back again, the students will be benefited.

Again, ATR 8 stated that the evaluation system was conducted only for getting promotion to the higher classes. It did not properly assess a student's amount of learning or did not at all focus on the learning outcome:

The evaluation system at the primary level with regard to English language learning is not satisfactory at all because the students learn only for the sake of getting promotion to higher classes.

But one head teacher (HTR 4) expressed quite different opinion regarding the evaluation system. Though she expressed the need of reintroducing the pass-fail system, she was against comparing students with each other for the purpose of evaluation because it might hurt a child severely creating mental pressure and increasing anxiety:

Students should not be compared because comparison is not at all useful. In the present education system placing the student in first, second or third position is not at all encouraged. Even the result should not be publicly declared because other students would feel stressed. There are some students who, despite working hard, somehow cannot perform well. Now we use the grading system (for example A+, B+ etc.) but "pass-fail system" should come back.

### 5.5.3 Lack of Skilled and Specialized Teachers

In an EFL/ESL classroom, skilled teachers are always necessary. For teaching English, a teacher must have expertise in teaching LSRW skills along with various instructional methods in order to teach effectively and to make learning joyful. But in most of the govt. primary schools, there is no specialized teacher for teaching English. Most of the time, teachers have to teach various subjects alternatively. As a result, learners do not receive specialized teaching for English. From the data collected on teachers' educational qualifications, it was found that most of the teachers got job after they had passed class 12 exam (higher secondary). Some of the teachers did graduation and post graduation in subjects other than English. Only two teachers whom I interviewed had degrees in English language and literature. Besides, most of the teachers informed that they received no training for their skill development in English. When I was interviewing teachers, one teacher (ATR 3) stated:

No, I haven't attended any training or faculty development programme during the in-service period. I went to the SI office for training but I haven't got any response and later I didn't communicate again.

Only one teacher (ATR 4) stated that he attended a training programme on skill development in both Bengali and English:

Yes, I have attended training or faculty development programme during the in-service period. I have attended total two training programmes which were based on English and Bengali.

One of the head teachers (HTR 5) also stated that most of the teachers who taught English lacked proper skills of teaching English and they required training for their skill development:

Actually, there is no specialized teacher for teaching English. The teachers have to take classes for all the subjects as per their convenience and routine. So, I think that the teachers require proper training for teaching English to learners. Earlier there were arrangements for training. I am a trainer myself. I participated in training multiple times. Even I was also engaged in receiving training multiple times from Banipur and was also engaged as trainer for teachers when the earlier govt. was ruling. But now there is no scope for training. We were very much enriched following those trainings. But nowadays teachers join without any training. As a result, without training, the way of teaching is not upgraded. Teachers often don't understand the level of the learners.

HTR 7 also admitted that teachers required skill development for employing updated teaching strategies and also stated that before taking English classes, she sought guidance and suggestions from expert teachers since she did not have requisite qualifications and expertise in teaching English:

Obviously, there is the need of modifications in the teaching strategies employed by the teachers. I have been here since 2006. I have sufficient idea on the syllabi. There are huge differences between the earlier and the current English syllabi. When I go to classes 4 or 5 for taking English classes, I seek help from my teachers and learn from him, especially for English grammar.

#### **5.5.4 Challenges during Teaching and Learning English**

The next major sub-theme that emerged out of the data analysis as a part of the main theme 'challenges' was on various challenges faced by teachers while teaching English to linguistic minority learners along with the challenges faced by those learners while

learning English. It is already mentioned earlier that since there was lack of specialized and skilled teachers, the strategies that the teachers employed for teaching English to linguistic minority learners were not always effective. However, while I was interviewing teachers for figuring out several challenges that both the teachers and linguistic minority learners faced, various challenges were explored in this regard. One teacher (ATR 1) stated the challenge he faced due to individual differences:

The main problem that I face during teaching English is that if there are 15 students in the classroom, then all of the students are of different merits. Some are advanced and some others lag behind. Some students cannot pronounce or read properly. Again, there are some students who can read and pronounce words swiftly. The major challenge is in the upliftment of the backward children.

Again, another teacher (ATR 2) narrated the difficulties that he faced in teaching the slow learners. Keeping their condition in mind, he adopted a balanced approach to teaching:

There are some students who prepare very well for the classes but majority of them are slow-learners. For understanding any concept they face problems. Keeping that in mind, the standard of teaching has been kept average.

Some of the teacher addressed that the students, especially the backward and the ST students faced challenges in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and sentence construction.

Thus one teacher (ATR 4) stated:

Most of the students cannot learn from their previous class which creates a gap in their learning process, especially for the ST children. They lack in

their pronunciation, grammar and are unable to frame sentences. They also face trouble in learning English.

Another teacher (ATR 5) also shared his experience on the challenges faced by learners while learning English:

The challenges the learners face while they are learning English is mainly related to their pronunciation. They mispronounce 'e' instead of 'i' and 'a' instead of 'o'. Only a handful of them could make sentences others face difficulty in framing sentences.

In this context ATR 5 also shared those challenges that he faced while teaching English to the learners:

Sometimes while teaching English, I find some words whose meanings I don't know. So, I underline the words that are unknown, learn the meanings and I tell them those meanings on the next day.

ATR 6 mentioned the difficulties that students faced in reading English. Moreover, the teacher suggested the use of better TLM for making teaching-learning enjoyable and effective:

In case of reading activities only 20% of the students can read and the remaining 20%- 30% struggle in their reading. They also face difficulty in grammar and spelling. As for teaching related problems I can say that if better TLM could be used and I could prepare some materials or presentation for the students, it would help them to understand better. They will progress quickly.

Another challenge was explained in detail by a teacher (ATR 7) who mentioned why it was challenging for them to teach the linguistic minority learners whose foundation level of English learning was not very strong due to several obstacles:

We have to teach the students from very basic level. For example, it is difficult for them to learn preposition when they are in classes 1, 2 or 3. Besides, there are many appropriate prepositions that cannot be remembered always. Even we fail to remember those and commit mistakes. But when they are in Class 4 and studying the book, named *Wings*, they find some examples of prepositions. But the details of the prepositions are not given at all. Whatever time we get is insufficient for teaching them. If there are total twenty prepositions to be taught in class 4, it becomes very difficult for the learners to study all those at once. It would be easier for them if they learn gradually from the beginning by remembering 5 prepositions at intervals.

When the head teachers were asked of the challenges faced by the teachers in teaching and by the learners in learning English, one of the head teachers (HTR 1) stated that the learning of English along with the use of Bengali and the tribal languages interchangeably often created challenges:

When at the initial stages like pre-primary classes, if you teach a child who is five years old, a certain letter is called 'A' in English, then he/she will recognize the letter as 'A' only. At his/her age both the home language and the language used in school are same. But when a child is taking admission in class 4 or 5 after attending the lower classes in some other places and staying with parents for several years, then it becomes difficult for the child to communicate, understand and follow the language taught at school because at home the child speaks in his native tongue (adivasi/tribal

language). When he enters the school, he finds the language in use at school is different from the one used at home. It creates difficulties.

The fear of learning English and lack of practice at home were two other factors that affected the learning of English among the linguistic minority learners:

The most important problem is the students' fear of English. There is no one at home to guide them. Whatever they are learning, it is from the school only. This is the most alarming problem. Since they don't practice at home, their handwriting becomes very illegible. They even forget how to write the letters of the alphabets.

One of the head teachers (HTR 7) reported another issue that threw light on the current trend among learners for going to inexpert private tutors for learning English and leaning nothing much significant from them:

There are some families who send their children to private tutors. Without teaching them properly, the private tutors are saying that the children are studying and the parents are happy with that. As a result a student of Class 1 is gradually promoted to Class 4 without knowing anything. Even he/she cannot make sentences. ....To them English learning becomes very difficult in comparison to Bengali.

Despite several challenges in the teaching and learning of English, the teachers always tried their best to teach English to the linguistic minority learners. They always tried to motivate the learners explaining them the need and importance of learning English. For example, one teacher (ATR 6) stated how he motivated the learners:

In order to motivate the learners .....towards learning English, I give them examples from real life and tell them that English is a very important language for a job or an interview.

Again, another teacher (ATR 8) narrated how he motivated learners through sharing the lives and struggles of great personalities:

To motivate the learners..... towards learning English I give them the example of our President, Draupadi Murmu who is from the ST community. I tell them the story of her life and success. I encourage them that they have various opportunities and should utilise it by studying well. If they give a bit effort, they would secure a better position in life.

The teachers and head teachers also gave suggestions as to how to overcome the challenges of teaching and learning adopting various ways. One head teacher (HTR 5) mentioned the requirement of specialized ESL/EFL teachers for imparting skilled teaching to the learners along with smart classroom:

.....they need an additional ESL/ EFL teacher and also grammar book in which the grammar portion is presented easily. Besides, there will be scope for writing skill development. They will grip this very easily. Even in Banipur training centre I mentioned that the children should be taught using digital infrastructure. Smart classroom will attract the learners and keep them engaged for a long duration. But if they are taught verbally, then they won't be able to keep the lessons in their minds for long.

One of the head teachers (HTR 3) stated how, with the help of small phases and expressions, English would be easily taught to linguistic minority learners, reducing challenges of teaching and learning:

English is our second language. We don't practice it from the very beginning. First we learn the alphabets, capital letters, small letters and then we learn words such as 'cat' and 'mat' etc. We don't talk in English with the students and even if we speak with them they will not understand because now they are very young. They understand small phrases like 'stand up', 'come here' and 'sit down' when they are in class 4 or 5, but this is not possible when they are in lower classes.

The same head teacher (HTR 3) also expressed the requirement of EFL/ESL teachers from linguistic minority background as they would easily be able to understand the languages usually spoken by the learners from the same community, which would help learners to learn English quickly through culture and language specific terms:

English language teaching and learning can be improved for the learners who are from linguistic minority background if the teachers are from the ST community. If they belong to the same community it will be easier for them to teach because the teacher is already well-versed in that language. For the teachers who don't belong to adivasi community it is quite difficult for them to impart knowledge because the language is not known to them.

### **5.5.5 Lack of Parental Support**

The next sub-theme that has emerged as a part of the main theme, entitled 'challenges', is 'lack of parental support'. Every child requires parental support for achieving in life. For getting proper education, parents play significant roles. It is the parents who can show the path to their child to reach their goals. If parents are concerned about the importance of learning English, their children will prosper in life. If parents sincerely put

their effort for their children's academic prosperity, no child will lag behind. But often in disadvantaged areas parents fail to do so because of several difficulties that they face.

From the analysis of data collected from interviews of teachers and head teachers, multiple issues emerged in relation to lack of parental support. Most of the teachers stated that the parents of the linguistic minority learners were illiterate and thus were not very concerned about their children's need for learning English and also for gaining overall education. Most of the parents were migrant labourers and so they had to stay in other states for months, leaving their native place. As a result, they could not look after their children properly and often kept them with their relatives. In other cases, the analysis of the interview data revealed that once students go back home from schools, they had no one to guide. Most of the students spent their time hovering aimlessly or playing with friends. No one was there to explain them the importance of education, especially the importance of learning English in modern times. Even the mothers of the children went out early in the morning to work in the field. Besides, the children were often taken by their parents to the field for working in order to assist them. One teacher (ATR 2) stated how illiteracy of parents affected their children's education:

Most of the parents are illiterate. In that case the students solely depend on what is taught in the classroom. Our teaching is the only source of formal learning for them. In some cases their parents go out to work and the students have to get themselves ready to come to school without any assistance from the family members.

One head teacher (HTR 5) shared his experience as to how students got nurtured by his grandparents since their parents had to go out to other states as migrant labourers for work, which ultimately hindered the children's study:

There are 135 students in my schools and the maximum number of parents doesn't have any education. Most of them are illiterate. Out of the total students, 99% are from the SC/ST communities. Thus the parents of the ST children don't get any opportunity to guide their children. Besides, the parents most of the time stay in other states as migrant labourers. They go in search of work to Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Bangalore. As a result those children stay with their grandparents. They get nurtured and pampered by their grandparents but get deprived of proper educational guidance. If we force them, then they study a little bit. But this will not help at all. Very few parents have educational qualifications till classes 7 or 8.

Another head teacher (HTR 8) described why education of the children was hindered for getting involved in their parents' daily work without spending time in study:

The ST people in this locality are extremely poor. Most of them earn their living on catching fish and crab. A large number of parents work as migrant labourers in other states. They have to stay for 4-6 months out of West Bengal. So, they don't get much time to take care of their children.

ATR 5 stated that since most of the parents were illiterate, they could not even sign. So it was almost impossible for them to help their children in English learning:

In my school most of the parents can't even sign their names because of their illiteracy. They even face difficulty in Bengali and so teaching English is not at all possible for them.

One teacher (ATR 3) reported the role of the mother in children's education. He said that for educating a child properly, the mothers of the children should be aware of the importance of education. But some mothers in those areas often spent time watching

serials or other entertaining videos on their mobiles in the evening, which deprived the children of proper guidance from their mothers:

Mother is always the first teacher. ....90% of the mothers in this area don't look after their children's education. Rather they become engrossed in watching serials in their mobiles. Most of the fathers go out to work. Since the mothers stay at home they can ask their child to read aloud their lessons taught in their schools or at least the mothers should ask what has been taught in the schools and to revise their lessons. If the mothers become aware enough of their children's education and if they think that they would guide their children to educate so that they won't have to go to other states like their fathers, then these would be really good for the children.

## **5.6 Perceptions**

The third major theme that has emerged of the data analysis is 'perceptions'. Perceptions refer to the ways people view something and consider them. Perceptions also refer to the understanding of any phenomenon in terms of experiences, motivations and emotions. Under the third theme perceptions, there are four other sub-themes which are: teachers' perceptions towards English, parental perceptions towards English, learners' perceptions towards English and perceptions towards minority languages.

### **5.6.1 Teachers' Perceptions towards English**

From the analysis of data, the first sub-theme that arose was the perceptions of teachers towards English. In the ESL/EFL teaching programme the factor that plays an important role is the teachers' perceptions towards the importance of English. If teachers have clear ideas as to why students should learn English, they will be more active in teaching English by adopting effective strategies. Teachers will be able to explain the importance

of learning English to the learners. In case of linguistic minority learners, teachers should employ innovative instructional materials and strategies so that learners can make use of multiple languages.

#### **5.6.1.1 How Teachers Consider the Importance of English**

Most of the teachers expressed their views on the importance of English. They mentioned why English being an international language is used across the globe. With the help of an example one head teacher (HTR 1) explained why it was important to know English in order to communicate with the people of other states as well:

There is no disagreement that English is an international language. Whenever you are visiting any country or any other place, you have to know the mode of communication in order to express yourself. For example, if someone is visiting Odisha where people don't understand Bengali they have to communicate in English. English is not only a linking language but also an international language. So, it is very essential to know and learn English. Be it within your state or outside, you need to know English.

Another head teacher (HTR 2) stated how knowledge of English would open new opportunities in the path of career building within and outside our country:

Since English is an international language, it is very necessary to learn. For the students who are a little advanced, learning English is very much essential for them because later when they will go abroad for any purpose (for example, if they get chance in medical), English will be the medium of communication. Despite living in such a remote place, many of my students have become doctors, engineers though they didn't get many facilities except their own endeavour and consistency.

Again, one head teacher (HTR 7) stated how much it was important to know English in the age of internet and technology. The teacher also mentioned that for surviving in other states and for communicating with the people of other states for work, knowledge of English was mandatory:

This is the era of internet. Even a little child is able to understand the use of internet and can operate mobile phones. They learn the use of many words from the internet. Even through mobile, people learn the use of English. Children sometimes go by bus and train and learn English there. Parents of a major number of students go out of West Bengal to other places. There the children often accompany them and learn English names of flowers and fruits. Since English is an international language everyone should learn it. If one goes to other states or other countries, they need to learn English for communication. So, in case of job English is also required. In West Bengal the scope for work has decreased. So, people have to go out of West Bengal. In this locality there are many people who work as migrant labourers in Odisha, Kerala and Abu Dhabi. There English is required for communication.

Again, HTR 4 stated why it was important to learn English. The teacher mentioned that for cracking competitive exams it was necessary to learn English properly along with Bengali:

In the present scenario to qualify in any competitive exam knowing English is very necessary. Without knowing and learning English it is not possible to qualify in any examination. Bengali is also important but knowing English is mandatory to reach our goals and to achieve a good position in life.

### **5.6.1.2 How Teachers Motivate Learners**

Teachers' motivation plays a vital role in teaching effectively. A learner who is not interested in learning may feel eagerly interested if they are motivated by teachers. In those areas which are located in the remote parts of the Sundarbans, a majority of the students become school drop-outs at the initial stage without understanding the importance of education. At this phase if teachers motivate learners properly, students will be able to understand why education is important and also why it is important to learn English. From the analysis of the interview data it became evident that the teachers who taught English to the linguistic minority learners always motivated the learners explaining them about the importance of getting education and also of learning English. Both teachers of English (EFL/ESL teachers) and head teachers stated that they motivated the learners every time in order to enthuse them to learn English so that the learners would be able to build their future in a productive way. One of the teachers (ATR 1) stated that guardians should be motivated first regarding the importance of English. The teacher also mentioned the involvement of academic counsellors for explaining practically the importance of learning English:

.....we need to hire some academic counselors in order to motivate children the importance of learning English. Also the guardians need to be aware of this. If the guardians actively explain the importance of English then it will help to convince the learners to learn English with greater importance. There are many people from such backward localities, working in foreign countries and are able to communicate fluently through English though they were not fluent enough earlier. They may be asked to motivate learners to explain them the importance of English. Their initiatives will motivate the guardians as well.

Since most of the families were poverty-stricken, the parents went out to earn money to run their family. Sometimes they took their children, too, disrupting the flow of study. So, one head teacher (HTR 7) thought that it was necessary to convince the parents at first regarding the importance of education as well as that of learning English:

Before inspiring the children, we need to inspire the parents at first because they are irregular at school only for their parents. The reason is that when the parents go to collect river snail, they take their children with them.

Again, another teacher (ATR 4) stated how he explained in the classroom the importance of learning pronunciation as well as developing reading and writing skills while teaching English in a motivating way:

To motivate learners ..... towards learning English, pronunciation should be taught so that they can read, learn and write well. Along with that, emphasis should be given on grammar and tenses. In our time, we did not get much support from teachers. So, I always try to motivate them by encouraging why they should learn English.

### **5.6.2 Parental Perceptions towards English**

A child's home is the first place where his/her socialization begins. So, the role of parents in educating a child is immense and inexplicable. If parents are aware of their children's education, then the children can choose the right path to reach their goals. From the analysis of the data collected from the interviews of teachers and parents, it became evident that most of the parents of the linguistic minority learners were illiterate and extremely poor. Besides, as mentioned earlier, most of them worked as migrant labourers in other states. As a result, most of them could not spare much time for guiding their children. On the other hand those who were literate were aware of educating their

children properly. Even in some of the schools I found parents got their children admitted in both govt. primary school (for collecting educational certificates) and also in English medium schools (so that the children would learn English properly). In some places I found that parents (those who could afford) sent their children to private tutors, especially for learning English and science-based subjects. From the analysis of the interview data collected from the parents it became clear that whether the parents were literate or not, they all were aware of the importance of learning English and for that reason they always motivated their children to learn English attentively.

#### **5.6.2.1 How Parents Consider the Importance of English**

Though the teachers stated that most of the parents of the linguistic minority learners were not aware of their children's educational importance for being illiterate, analysis of the parents' interview data revealed that the parents seriously thought about their children's future. They had sufficient knowledge as to why it was necessary for one to know English and how knowledge of English would contribute to the future building of their children. For example, one of the parents (PR 2) stated about their children:

They should obviously learn English properly if they want to survive in the working field. Even for learning and doing work in computer, they need to learn English. We may use Bengali for conversation, but in our day-to-day life the need of English is extremely important.

Since a majority of the parents living in the remote areas of the Sundarbans had knowledge about the importance of English nowadays, they often preferred sending their children to English medium schools. One of the guardians (PR 3) mentioned:

It should be mentioned that in the Sundarbans, even an uneducated parent is aware of his/her children's necessity for studying and learning English. Most

of the guardians try to send their children to English medium schools along with government-run free primary schools. But only because of poverty many parents cannot get their children enrolled in such English medium schools.

Another parent (PR 4) expressed her concern for English and also mentioned how proper learning of English would help her child to prosper in future:

Learning to speak and write Bengali only will not work. In every pace of life English is required. Let's say dates, months and year are in English. For any work on the basis of calendar, one has to take resort to English months. So, English is mandatory. I don't know how far he would be able to proceed in future because of our financial instabilities, but if he learns English properly, he will be able to read and write the basic things. No parents want their children to get engaged in farming or work in the field. But poverty leads us to send our children at a certain point of time.

One of the parents (PR 14) explained in detail the importance of English in day-to-day life by mentioning that if someone wanted to read the prescription of a doctor, English was essential:

Learning English is very much required. Everywhere there is the need of English. In school, in streets and in other offices, there is the use of English. Even if I go to the chamber of a doctor for getting diagnosed, the prescription will be found in English. Apart from this, in future, if she wants to get a good job, English is mandatory. Further, in case of filling a form the language required is also English.

When the parents were asked whether they preferred the way teachers taught the learners English, almost all the parents gave positive response. Most of them shared that they were satisfied with the teaching methods of the teachers. Besides, they were also satisfied with the efforts given by teachers for the learners while teaching English. For example, one parent (PR 4) stated, “I’m satisfied with their methods of teaching.....the teacher who teaches English is also very responsible about teaching. He teaches English very well.” At the same time, the parents stated the crisis of teachers as well as specialized teachers in the govt. primary schools in the Sundarbans, which hindered the systematic teaching-learning process. As one of the parents (PR 12) stated, “Here is a crisis of good teachers. For teaching English, specialized teachers are required. But the teachers in this school try their level best to guide the students.” Another parent (PR 2) mentioned the same issue:

The main problem is that there is only one teacher in this school. He has to take the responsibility of everything. So, whatever is possible for him, he tries to do unhesitatingly. We never pressurize him for any reason. He has to take consecutive classes for different grades. Apart from this, he has to perform many official responsibilities. Even we have to run here and there for performing our daily duties. So we try to empathize with him. If we find that teacher is alone today, we request him to mark our children’s homework or class work. We try to prepare our children at home as much as possible.

Since most of the parents were aware of the importance of learning English for their children, they preferred better learning opportunities and supports. They realized that the facilities available for the children for learning English were not adequate. For examples, PR 1 stated, “I was longing for getting my child admitted to a better school where he

would be able to get better guidance for his study and also get better environment for learning English.” In the opinion of another parent (PR 3):

We want the full support from the school itself. Since number of teacher is very less, multiple classes are taken together. Students of grades 3, 4 and 5 attend the classes together. We also want interactive classroom and other equipments found in English medium schools.

Another parent (PR 10) stated the requirement specialized teacher for receiving exclusive guidance English:

We definitely want our child to progress in English well. For that purpose they require a specialized teacher in English who would exclusively focus on English. But we don't have much financial strength to afford it. Besides, an English medium private school would be helpful enough for them to learn better English. But here such schools are not available, as it is available in Kolkata.

One of the parents (PR 13) stated the need of special guidance for developing speaking ability, “I want her to develop her speaking ability. So if she receives support for that it will definitely develop her English skills.”

#### **5.6.2.2 How Parents Motivate Learners**

From the analysis of the data collected from the interviews with parents, one factor that became prominent was that the parents always tried their best to motivate their children for learning English. Realizing the importance of English in day-to-day life, the parents always attempted to convince their children for learning English attentively and also explained the advantages of learning English. A parent (PR 2) who was well-educated stated how she motivated her son for learning English:

I motivate him by telling him to practice the sentences used in conversation while watching cartoons or sports. For example, in a cartoon a cat utters *ami drum-er moddhe porechilam* which I tell them to translate into English. Sometimes, when he watches cricket matches and a player catches a ball, I ask him to tell this in English. He personally prefers to play football. So I ask him to tell the function of a goalkeeper in English or the other football players in different positions. I put much emphasis on learning English commentary.

Another guardian (PR 11) narrated that he was well-aware of the importance of learning English. So, he inspired his children to learn English properly from the early age and asked them to learn systematically beginning from individual words to sentences:

We always tell them that since your childhood you should start to learn the English meaning of Bengali words this will develop your skill. For example, Bengali *jol* is known as 'water' in English. So, if you don't know the individual words in English, you won't be able to translate a sentence. So learning English since childhood is very important following systematic steps.

### **5.6.3 Learners' Perceptions towards English**

Though the learners whom I interviewed through focus group discussions were very young, they joyfully replied to my questions. In some of the FGDs, the linguistic minority learners were very active to answer my questions, but in some other cases learners were not so frank enough to answer. However, many learners mentioned that they preferred learning English most. Again, when I asked those learners as to why they

should learn English, most of them gave thoughtful answers. For example, when I asked the participants in FGD 4, the learners replied:

**P 17:** If we learn English, we'll be able to go abroad and will easily be able to talk to other people in English.

**P 18:** In future if someone talks to us in English, we'll easily communicate with that person in English.

**P 19:** Sir, if we learn English, we'll be able to write down our names in English

Again, another excerpt from a discussion (FGD 6), conducted in School F, presents the young learners' perceptions towards English while answering my questions regarding the importance of learning English:

**P 24:** If we learn English well, then we'll fluently talk to any person in English.

**P 25:** We'll understand English and we'll converse in English.

**P 26:** We can read whatever is written on the milestones beside the roads.

**P 27:** It will help us to crack competitive exams and other exams.

While answering the same question a learner (P 4, FGD 2) replied "If we learn English, we will get good jobs and write letters to others." Another learner (P 1, FGD 1) interestingly stated, "During election lots of flags and hoardings are found with English writings like TMC, BJP, CPIM etc. If I know English I will be able to read those."

#### **5.6.4 Perceptions towards Minority Languages**

The final sub-theme that generated from the analysis of the interviews with the teachers, linguistic minority learners and parents under the main theme 'perceptions' was the 'perceptions towards minority languages'. In a multilingual classroom setting, it is

necessary to pay importance to all the learners having diverse linguistic backgrounds and their languages. So, it is equally important to preserve the languages of the tribal communities. Though most of the linguistic minority people in the Sundarbans are from different ST communities, in most of the cases their tribal languages are not in use in its original form. Rather, there is a shift towards Sadri language. Even during my interview I found that one teacher (ATR 5) who was from linguistic minority background (Bhumij tribe) could not speak the tribal language of his community properly. In this context one of the teachers of English (ATR 1) expressed his opinion as to why the tribal languages were becoming obsolete and how it could be preserved:

They cannot speak the language spoken by their grandparents. Their parents know a little bit. But the learners do not know and so they cannot speak properly. The predecessors of the ST people of the Sundarbans migrated from their original abode long back. They have now mingled with the people of the other communities. As a result, their languages are becoming obsolete in most of the areas. In comparison to the grandparents, the younger generations know the tribal language very little. Even the elderly people don't consider it important for their children to learn the language. Rather they use the colloquial Bengali that common people use here to communicate. They put less emphasis on their tribal language. But in my opinion, their native languages should be preserved. We should be taught their languages in order to protect. Since we don't know their tribal languages, we can't speak. We don't even understand their language. So we cannot use such languages to teach them. So a teacher from the tribal community with sufficient knowledge of the tribal languages should also be appointed in school.

From the analysis of the interviews with the parents, it was found that even a majority of the parents could not speak in the minority languages fluently. They admitted that they used Bengali for communicating with family members and neighbours but their parents and grandparents were heard using minority languages. One of the parents (PR 4) stated:

Mostly I use Bengali language. I cannot speak in the native language. But I have heard my parents speak in the language. Since we are based in an area where Scheduled Caste Bengali speaking population is there, we use our native language very rarely.

Sometimes, the parents used small expressions and sentences from the minority languages while communicating in Bengali. One of the parents (PR 1) said:

Usually, I speak in Bengali language. I don't use our native language. Sometimes we use some words or expression in the native language in our family. If I want to ask you 'where do you live?' in our native language then I'll say, "*Tor ghar kaha*"?

Again, another parent (PR 5) stated that he could use the tribal language fluently and often communicated using the tribal language:

Usually I converse with my children and other family members using our tribal language. I can speak using the language fluently. But my daughter is not much fluent in it. But she always tries and when she is stuck, I rectify and help her to overcome. I teach her how to speak a specific part of the language. For example, if I ask you in Bengali, "*Tumi kotha theke esechho?*" (Where do you come from?), then I will say in the tribal language, "*Tu kahake ahula?*", and if you say, "*Ami Kolkata theke esecchi*" (I have come from Kolkata), it will be in my language, "*Ame Kolkatale ahula*".

The analysis of the collated data collected from the focus group discussions with the linguistic minority learners reveal that most of the learners could not speak using their tribal or minority languages at home and at school as well. Although their languages got mixed with Bengali for living in areas, inhabited mostly by Bengali speaking people, learners from some specific regions communicated using the minority or tribal languages. In some cases, the learners used the minority languages while playing with peers. But in the classroom they tried to avoid using their languages.

### **5.7 Discrimination**

The fourth theme that emerged from the analysis of data collected mainly from unstructured observations, participants' profiles and contextual documents from the research sites was 'discrimination'. This has emerged from the exclusive case study of the School H, located in a very remote area of the Patharpratima Block, South 24 Parganas of the Sundarbans. What was special in this school was an attached hostel in the school premises, especially for the ST children. When I went to visit the school, I found that in one classroom many students were attending classes in a very natural classroom setting. On the other hand, in a vacant classroom inside the school building there were a few students attending classes sitting on the floor. When I asked the head teacher of the school about why the ST learners were not in the same classroom along with the other students, the teacher replied that the ST learners did not feel comfortable enough to study with the other learners and so they preferred to remain aloof from others. Now the question that arises from this case is related to equality and inclusivity. It is the responsibility of the teacher to expel any kind of discrimination from the minds of the innocent children instead of encouraging that.

**Figure 5.7**

*ST Learners in a Segregated Place in School H*



**Figure 5.8**

*Learners other than the STs in the Classroom*



## **5.8 Lack of Initiatives**

After the analysis of the data, collected mainly from unstructured observations, participants' profiles and contextual documents from the research sites, the final main theme that emerged was 'lack of initiatives' from different ends.

### **5.8.1 Lack of Initiatives from the State Government**

What I observed from my visit to the schools was that there was lack of initiatives on behalf of the state government for the development of the schools. Most of the schools that I visited had lack of infrastructural facilities. The government did not disburse regular funding for the maintenance of the school buildings. In most of the government-run primary schools there were insufficient classrooms and staff rooms. Besides, there were no smart classrooms or libraries. Even the schools did not receive any funding for purchasing TLMs. The government did not even organize any skill development programme for the teachers. As a result, there was scarcity for efficient teachers for teaching English. One major issue that should be mentioned in this regard is the corruption in the recruitment process by the government which led to the recruitment of a number of inefficient and unqualified teachers in the government primary schools.

### **5.8.2 Lack of Initiatives from the Teachers**

In some schools there were some teachers as well as head teachers who were not much interested in undertaking innovative initiatives for the betterment of English language teaching for the linguistic minority learners. In some of those schools, neither did the teachers undertake any initiative for developing their skills of teaching. In addition to this, since there was no subject specific teacher in the government-run primary schools, often a teacher of other subject had to teach English just to take the class as per routine and for completing the syllabus.

## 5.9 Summary

In this chapter the data collected from head teachers, EFL/ESL teachers and parents through interviews have been presented after analysis. Besides, the data collected using focus group discussions with linguistic minority learners and observations of classroom have also been presented here. The data have been analyzed using thematic analysis method. The findings of the study revealed different strategies, employed by teachers for teaching linguistic minority learners. The findings also revealed the challenges faced by both teachers and learners while teaching and learning English respectively. The findings further explored the perceptions of teachers, linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English.

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## Chapter - 6

# DISCUSSION

# CHAPTER 6

## DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Overview

This chapter presents the discussions on the findings in relation to the research questions of the present study. In this regard the primary importance is given on the research questions as well as the reviews on related literature pertinent to the study, presented in Chapter 3. Addressing the research questions of the study, I will discuss the findings in relation to the strategies employed by EFL/ESL teachers to teach English to the linguistic minority learners at the government-run primary schools in the Sundarbans region of West Bengal, challenges encountered by both teachers and learners and perceptions of the linguistic minority learners and their parents towards the need and importance of learning English.

However, this chapter, at first, addresses the following research questions of the present study:

1. What are the major strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?
2. What are the major the challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?

3. What are the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English?

A critical discussion of the themes that emerged in relation to these research questions, as presented in the previous chapter is placed in this chapter.

## **6.2 Research Question 1**

**What are the major strategies employed by teachers for teaching English to linguistic minority learners at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?**

Teaching English in a multilingual setting may often create challenges since learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds are there in the classroom. So, addressing the needs of individual learners having heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds is of prime importance because the ultimate goal of the teacher is to teach English effectively.

In relation to the first research question, the data collected from the interviews of the head teachers, the EFL/ESL teachers and observation of classroom teaching indicated that the teachers employ various strategies for teaching English to the linguistic minority learners. The first effective strategy is translanguaging practices that allow a learner to use his/her own linguistic repertoire while learning another language. This approach works effectively in the English language classroom since translanguaging encourages learners to use their mother tongue or native language while learning English. In order to address the heterogeneity of the minority learners' linguistic background, the EFL/ESL teacher employ translanguaging practices in the classroom, as the analysis of the data has revealed. As a result, the multilingual aspects are emphasized and valued by the teachers, which is supported by Cenoz and Gorter (2020) in their study. By applying this approach students can learn English easily, as the teachers mention, in comparison to other

methods like communicative approach to teaching. For this reason teachers prefer using bilingual or multilingual instructions in the classroom and this enable learners to feel confident and motivated to learn English. This idea is supported in Cenoz and Santos' (2020) study that elucidates the idea that translanguaging pedagogy increases language awareness and creates new paths for language acquisition. Consistent with the study conducted by Galante (2020), the findings of the present study reveal that learners feel comfortable to remain engaged in spontaneous translanguaging outside the classroom. Some teachers informed that the learners used their tribal languages, Bengali and English interchangeably outside the classroom while playing with their peers.

The second effective strategy that the teachers of English preferred using is the integration of technology in the classroom. The use of various aids that are readily available in the smart classroom conveys considerable impact upon the teaching-learning process, especially in the EFL/ESL classroom. Through the use of projectors, mobiles and other audio-visual aids, a teacher can effectively employ various instructional methods for better learning outcome. Analysis of the data reveals that most of the teachers prefer teaching English to the linguistic minority learners using audio-visual aids. But since the schools do not have the facility, they use their mobile phones to teach the learners English poems and different types of lessons from English textbooks along with pronunciation skills. All who chose to teach English using audio-visual units admit its effectiveness. This notion is supported in the study conducted by Marsevani et al. (2024). However, some of the teachers who do not incorporate technology in the classroom mentioned that they require training because without proper training and skill development, it is not very easy for them to use. The requirement of continuous professional development for effective use of technology in the EFL/ ESL classroom is very consistent with Almalki's (2020) study, conducted in the Saudi context.

The third strategy, employed by the teachers of English for effective teaching is the use of textbooks and TLMs. The teachers express that the English textbooks play an effective role in developing reading skills, grammar skills and reflective thinking power of the learners. Even they often take the help of the textbooks whenever they get stuck at any part while teaching. At the same time the standard of the textbooks is also questioned. The teachers think that the contents of the textbooks of classes 3, 4 and 5 are extremely tough for the students belonging to linguistic minority communities in the Sundarbans since most of them are from the disadvantaged class. Besides, their parents being illiterate, they do not get educational guidance at home. Due to their inconsistencies in regular studies as well as lack of guidance at home, most of them cannot even write correct sentences in English. So, the textbooks of English often fail to fulfil their needs. The effectiveness of an English textbook is justified if it addresses the needs of the learners and if it is organized keeping in mind the different learning styles and attitudes of learners so that it helps to make English language instruction motivating and engaging. This idea is supported in the study conducted by Aryan and Pavlova (2019). However, not only the textbooks but the use of other TLMs also renders effective language instructions in EFL/ESL classes. The findings show that the teachers prefer using various TLMs like chalk, blackboard and flash cards for better learning outcome.

The fourth strategy that has emerged from the analysis of data is connecting learners' previous knowledge with the new knowledge. The analysis presents that when the teacher begins any lesson at the time of teaching English, he/she always checks the previous knowledge of the learners. Realizing the level of the learners' knowledge, the teacher decides from where he/she should start. However, when the learners fail to learn or answer or perform any tasks independently, teachers render their guidance and support through interactions and activities. This idea is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) socio-

cultural theory which considers that social interactions lead to cognitive development as well as language development. Besides, the guidance and support provided by the teachers for developing English language skills among linguistic minority learners create an effective learning environment and this is consistent with Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) which represents a learners' potentials by indicating the space between what a learner can achieve independently and what he/she can achieve being guided by a more knowledgeable person.

The fifth strategy that emerges from the findings of the study is the use of bilingual and multilingual instructions in the EFL/ESL classes. In an EFL/ESL classroom, where learners are from diverse linguistic backgrounds, the use of bilingual and multilingual instructions becomes very effective. It encourages learners to use of own linguistic repertoire and also renders motivation to learners. The NEP-2020 promotes multilingualism as an instructional method:

It is well understood that young children learn and grasp nontrivial concepts more quickly in their home language/mother tongue. Home language is usually the same language as the mother tongue or that which is spoken by local communities. However, at times in multi-lingual families, there can be a home language spoken by other family members which may sometimes be different from mother tongue or local language. Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible. This will be followed by both public and private schools. High-quality textbooks, including in science, will be made

available in home languages/mother tongue. (Government of India, 2020, p.13)

The use of mother tongue creates an effective English language learning environment for the tribal learners or learners from linguistic minority communities. The findings of the study present that the teachers prefer using bilingual/ multilingual instructions in the EFL/ESL classes for the linguistic minority learners. Since the academic background of the learners are not so sound because of several reasons like poverty, parental illiteracy, lack of guidance and supports at home, lack of various resources and lack of awareness among the parents, instructions in English hinder effective teaching and learning. So, encouraging bilingual/ multilingual instructions would create effective environment for the learners, as supported by Mahanand and Duria's (2023) study, conducted on the tribal students of the select region in Odisha.

### **6.3 Research Question 2**

**What are the major challenges faced by teachers in English language teaching and by linguistic minority learners in English language learning at government primary schools in the Sundarbans of India?**

With regard to the second research question that attempts to address the major challenges faced by both teachers and learners in the English language classes, the findings of the study reveal various challenges some of which are related to common challenges and some others are directly related to teaching-learning of English. These are – i) financial, infrastructural and communication related challenges, ii) curriculum and evaluation related challenges, iii) lack of skilled and specialized teachers, iv) Challenges during English language teaching and learning and iv) lack of parental support.

Most of the schools located in the remote areas of the Sundarbans have some common challenges that create obstacles in the path of learning. The analysis of data reveals that most of the linguistic minority learners are from poor families. Their parents have to work as migrant labourers in other states for earning money. Often their mothers have to go out to work in the field early in the morning. Consequently, the learners face lack of guidance at home. Again, the infrastructural facilities of most of the schools are very poor. The students do not get proper environment for learning. In some schools there are no separate classrooms. In a single classroom learners from different classes are often accommodated for attending the classes, which leads to improper and insufficient learning. Another common challenge identified from the data analysis is related to communication. During the rainy seasons, water gets clogged everywhere. The learners have to face troublesome situations to come to schools. There are also some incidents of death of learners from snakebite. Such challenges hinder the overall education of the learners.

In relation to the challenges in teaching and learning English, the curriculum and the process of evaluation require adequate importance. The structure of the curriculum and contents of the textbooks are not supportive of the effective teaching and learning process in the EFL/ ESL classes. The syllabus often cannot fulfil the needs of the linguistic minority learners at primary schools. It is at this stage that the foundation of English can be strongly built. Again, the evaluation process is not very effective in primary education because there is no pass-fail system, which results in the promotion of students from one class to another without proper evaluation of their skills. In this connection another challenge that has emerged of the data analysis is lack of skilled and specialized teachers for teaching English. In the government primary schools of West Bengal, subject specific teachers are not recruited. They are appointed on the basis of

fulfilling some basic qualifications, followed by qualifying eligibility test and interview. So, subject specific and specialized teachers are not found in every school. As a result, in many schools there are no specialized teachers of English. Teachers of other subjects who are not at all skilled in teaching English have to teach English to the linguistic minority learners, which causes to build weak foundation of English language skills among linguistic minority learners. Moreover, the teachers lack professional upgradation. These challenges are consistent with the study conducted by Jeyaraj (2017) in which challenges related to professional development, diverse socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds, training of teachers and amount of exposure to English have been pointed out with adequate importance.

As for challenges regarding teaching and learning English to linguistic minority learners, teachers mention several issues. Since there is lack of guidance at home, most of the learners do not study at home. Often they come to the school irregularly, which sometimes creates inconsistencies in their learning. Students have to face challenges related to pronunciation skills, reading skills and grammatical knowledge. Some learners cannot form correct English sentences and fail to understand instructions given in English. In a multilingual classroom English language learning often becomes challenging because of the effects of native language as mentioned in the study conducted by Nath (2016) on the multilingual students in Tripura, India. In some schools, teachers report that some of the students go to unqualified private tutors, paying nominal fees for learning English, which causes ineffective learning. On the other hand, teachers also report that they sometimes face challenges in understanding poems or stories from the English textbooks which are not organized as per the standards of the learners. Besides, due to lack of practice of English grammar, teachers have to take help from expert teachers of English. Another challenge that has impact upon the learners'

learning of English is the lack of parental support. As already mentioned earlier that parents of most of the linguistic minority children being illiterate, the children do not get proper guidance at home for learning English. Parents sometimes send them to unskilled private tutors. Besides, most of the parents have to work as migrant labourers in other states. As a result, the parents cannot spend much time in guiding their children to learn English sincerely from childhood. Parental support is one of the most important factors to affect learners' English language learning and the same factor is reflected in the study conducted by Halik and Nusrath (2020) and by Endriyati et al. (2019). Both of the studies indicate the importance of parental literacy and support on learners for effective learning of English.

The theme of 'discrimination', as explored from the case study of School H, is a crucial concern for the society. It can be considered a social stigma. The concept of equality promotes equal rights to all. Similarly the concept of inclusivity refers to learning under the same umbrella, irrespective of any discrimination on the basis of class, caste, gender, religion, backgrounds, abilities and disabilities. The concept of equality and inclusivity can be effective in schools if teachers are aware of it. The tree of discrimination can be uprooted if teachers take initiatives. But if teachers express passive attitude towards discrimination, it will gradually destroy the society.

Again, the theme 'lack of initiatives' can be considered a part of the major challenges at the government-run primary schools, especially in the Sundarbans. The environment and the education system of an institution can be developed by the holistic initiatives of the stakeholders in education. The active initiatives of the government, head teachers, teachers, parents and learners together can make the teaching-learning activities joyful and free from challenges. At the same time, English language teaching and

learning can be improved only if the stakeholders of education can realize the importance of learning English in today's society.

#### **6.4 Research Question 3**

##### **What are the perceptions of linguistic minority learners and their parents towards English?**

While attempting to find answer to the third research question, the theme that has generated from the analysis of the data is 'perception' which incorporates perceptions of teachers, parents and linguistic minority learners towards English and simultaneously the perceptions towards linguistic minority learners. The teachers express their opinion regarding the need and importance of learning English in the present time and also express their views in favour of bilingual and multilingual instructions. However, Kim's (2002) study reflects a contrary view by presenting the effectiveness of teaching English through English rather than the use of bilingual or multilingual instructions.

As for parental perceptions, the findings reveal that though most of the parents are illiterate and fail to guide their children, they are well aware of the importance of English and express views as to how effective learning of English can open the path for diverse opportunities in the lives of their children, which is also supported in Khatri's (2016) study as it reveals that parents express their interests towards English because proper knowledge of English opens immense career opportunities.

As for perceptions of learners, the findings of the study present that the young linguistic minority learners express their interest in learning English. They have sound knowledge as to why they should learn English. They express their views that if they learn English well, they will be able to build their future by securing good job since

English in an international language. This finding shows consistency with previous literature, especially with Çetinkaya's (2009) study.

In connection with the perceptions towards minority languages, the findings of the study indicate that except a few teachers, most of them do not have knowledge of the minority languages. Some of them can understand the languages a little bit. But most of the teachers admit that they cannot speak the minority languages. But what is promising is that the teachers support the use of minority languages in the EFL/ESL classroom and also express the need of appointing teachers from the linguistic minority communities to save their languages. In case of the parents and the children, the analysis of data reveals the similar result because only some of them can speak the minority languages. Often the children who know the language hesitate to use it. Since the linguistic minority learners migrated to the Sundarbans long ago, the younger generations gradually became detached from the use of native languages or tribal languages. Besides, most of the areas were inhabited by Bengali and Sadri speaking communities. Consequently, regular communication with speakers from other languages led them to speak their tribal languages less in comparison to Bengali.

## **6.5 Summary**

This chapter has attempted to answer the research questions with the help of the findings of the data analysis. The research questions have been answered with critical insights. Along with this, the findings are discussed in the light of the literature reviewed in Chapter 3.

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## Chapter - 7

# CONCLUSION

## CHAPTER 7

# CONCLUSION

### **7.1 Overview**

The present chapter summarizes the major findings concerning teaching strategies employed and challenges encountered by teachers while teaching English to linguistic minority learners as well as challenges faced by the linguistic minority learners while learning English at the select government-run primary schools located in the Sundarban regions of West Bengal, India. In addition to these, the chapter summarizes the essential findings with regard to the perceptions of the linguistic minority learners as well as their parents towards the need and importance of learning English. This chapter also presents recommendations for further progress in the similar contexts and also the possible scope for further research.

### **7.2 Summary of the Findings**

#### **7.2.1 Teaching Strategies Employed by EFL/ESL Teachers**

From the analysis of the collected data for answering the first research question that deals with the strategies employed by teachers while teaching English to linguistic minority learners in govt. primary schools, located in the Sundarbans of India, it was found that considering the linguistic minority backgrounds of the learners, the teachers employed several teaching strategies for teaching English. One of the suitable strategies, employed by the teachers, as data analysis has revealed is pedagogical translanguaging through which learners can learn English using their own linguistic repertoire. It proves

to be a very effective teaching strategy in a multilingual setting. However, the analysis of the data reveals that the EFL/ESL teachers encouraged this pedagogical practice in the government-run primary schools, located mostly in the remote and disadvantaged areas of the Sundarbans. The other strategies that the teachers employed in the classroom for teaching English incorporated use of technology, textbooks and various teaching-learning materials. However, some of the teachers questioned the high standard of the textbooks for English, prescribed by the Department of School Education and West Bengal Board of Primary Education for the government-run primary schools in West Bengal. Again, some other strategies employed by teachers, as the analysis of the data revealed, included connecting previous knowledge with new knowledge and promoting bilingualism/ multilingualism while teaching English to linguistic minority learners.

### **7.2.2 Challenges Faced by Teachers and Students**

The second theme that emerged from the analysis of the data was the challenges encountered by the teachers while teaching English to the linguistic minority learners as well as the challenges faced by the learners while learning English. Analysis of the data reveals various challenges which were related not only to the teaching and learning of English but also to some other major issues. However, the major challenges that emerged as sub-themes under the main theme were related to i) poverty, infrastructure and communication, ii) curriculum and evaluation process, iii) lack of skilled and specialized teachers for teaching English and iv) parental support.

### **7.2.3 Perceptions of Linguistic Minority Learners and Their Parents**

The third theme that emerged from the analysis of the data was perceptions of the linguistic minority learners and their parents. The parents (though most of them were illiterate) expressed their concern for their children's need of learning English in the

present society. The focus group data also revealed the young linguistic minority learners' interest towards learning English and also their knowledge about the importance of learning English. In this connection, the perceptions of the teachers, parents and linguistic minority learners towards minority languages should also be mentioned. The findings revealed that though the teachers preferred preservation of the minority languages, they were not able to speak the languages. Some of the teachers stated that they could understand the languages a little bit. The experience was somewhat same in case of the parents and the children as well because of the growing communication with the Bengali people. Their native languages (or the tribal languages) were not found in their original forms and a shift was found towards the use of Sadri language.

### **7.3 Implications of the Study**

The implications of a research explain how the findings of this study impact various teaching practices, policies and theories. The implications of the present study are as follows:

#### **7.3.1 Pedagogical Implications**

Teachers and educators should consider integrating translanguaging pedagogy practically with adequate expertise in the EFL/ESL classroom, especially when there are multilingual learners. Instead of using the traditional pedagogical practices, this approach broadens the scope of learning a second or foreign language effectively.

#### **7.3.2 Policy Implications**

As NEP-2020 emphasizes mother tongue-based multilingual education at the initial stage of schooling, this should be more practically implemented, especially when the linguistic

minority learners, tribal learners and multilingual learners are concerned. Policy makers may consider promoting multilingual education with practical initiatives.

### **7.3.3 Methodological Implications**

Methodologically, the study emphasizes the importance of qualitative research approach that delves deep into any phenomenon in order to explore. However, a mixed method design can also be used to explore such phenomenon combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

### **7.4 Limitations of the Study**

- The purposive sampling technique may also be considered as one of the major limitations of the study. The study being qualitative in nature, purposive sampling was the best technique for getting sample. But the smaller size of the sample limits the scope for generalizing findings to a broader population.
- Getting access to the institutions was another limitation of the study. Most of the time it became very difficult to gain access to the schools, located in very remote places of the study area.
- During the observation process, the researcher's presence in the classroom might have affected the teaching-learning process because the teachers became more concerned about their teaching strategies, interaction with the learners, use of TLMS and motivating the learners. Besides, the attention of the learners also got distracted.

### **7.5 Recommendations**

The following areas can be addressed for the stakeholders who are associated with the process of English language teaching and learning, such as the teachers, the students, the parents and the policy makers.

1. There should be considerable focus on the specialization of the teachers at the primary schools run by the state govt. since it is at this level that the foundation of education can be strengthened. So, teachers having specific and necessary qualifications and expertise for teaching English should be appointed for rendering proper teaching to students for developing skills in English.
2. Teachers should focus on adopting innovative strategies for teaching English in order to make the teaching-learning process interesting. For this purpose there is sufficient need for modification of the curriculum and should be designed in an effective way in order to inculcate in the learners applied skills of language use in various contexts.
3. The EFL/ESL teachers should employ real-life and practical examples in the classroom so that the learners seek interest in the teaching methods. Besides, the instructional materials should be chosen so that they meet the requirements of the learners.
4. Teachers should give sufficient reinforcements for motivating the learners both intrinsically and extrinsically. In this connection, the teachers can reward the learners for their better performances.
5. Teachers should feel the urge for educating the learners along with teaching them English for their betterment and also for ensuring their future establishment. Teachers should not perform their duties only for the sake of job.
6. The evaluation system which was deferred should be brought back again so that the performance of the learners can be judged properly and they should be guided on the basis of individual requirements.

7. Focus on mother-tongue based education should be promoted in a planned way so that the learners learn English and other subjects in a simpler way. In this context, the mother tongue of the linguistic minority learners should also be given sufficient emphasis, which would, in turn, save the tribal languages from being endangered. Moreover, encouraging multilingualism would contribute to the effectiveness of the EFL/ESL learning.
8. There is considerable lack of professional training among teachers who are teaching at government-run primary schools in West Bengal. The effect is also visible in the teaching of English. So, there should be adequate training for professional development of the teachers. This would contribute to the skill development of the teachers, which would further contribute to the application of innovative strategies in the EFL/ESL classroom.
9. Instead of conducting teacher-centered and lecture-based classes, more emphasis should be given on interactions. Teachers should interact sometimes using the target language along with the mother tongue and should also encourage the students to utter small sentences and expressions in English. Such interactivity would definitely create an interesting environment for learning English.
10. There should be sufficient provisions for the use of the minority languages. Teachers should encourage learners from linguistic minority communities to use their own languages while teaching English. This would contribute to the preservation of endangered languages and also pay importance to tribal languages. In this connection, appointment of teachers from linguistic minority background with sufficient knowledge of the tribal language/s is required.

11. For making the EFL/ESL classroom interactive as well as interesting, arrangement for smart classroom should be done. This would create a practical and real-life environment for learning.
12. Adequate infrastructural facilities should be provided for the learners. There should be arrangement for separate classrooms. Physical facilities like chairs, tables, fans, lights, black/whiteboards and playground should be provided as per requirements.
13. Special emphasis should be given on TLMs. Government should provide various teaching aids to schools so that teaching-learning becomes effective and enjoyable.

### **7.6 Areas for Future Research**

Since the study was conducted adopting the qualitative approach, a small number of samples has been incorporated. So, it was not possible to incorporate all the linguistic minority learners. So, for conducting future research, linguistic minority learners from diverse regions can be chosen. Further studies can be conducted with large-scale data for a longer period of time in order to explore diverse issues related to the linguistic minority learners. Besides, further research can be done on the policies related to English language teaching in a multilingual context.

### **7.7 Summary**

In this chapter summary of the findings of the study is presented. Besides, how the findings of the study impact on the pedagogical approaches, methodology and policy has been incorporated under 'implications'. Moreover, the chapter also adds limitations, recommendations and areas for future research.

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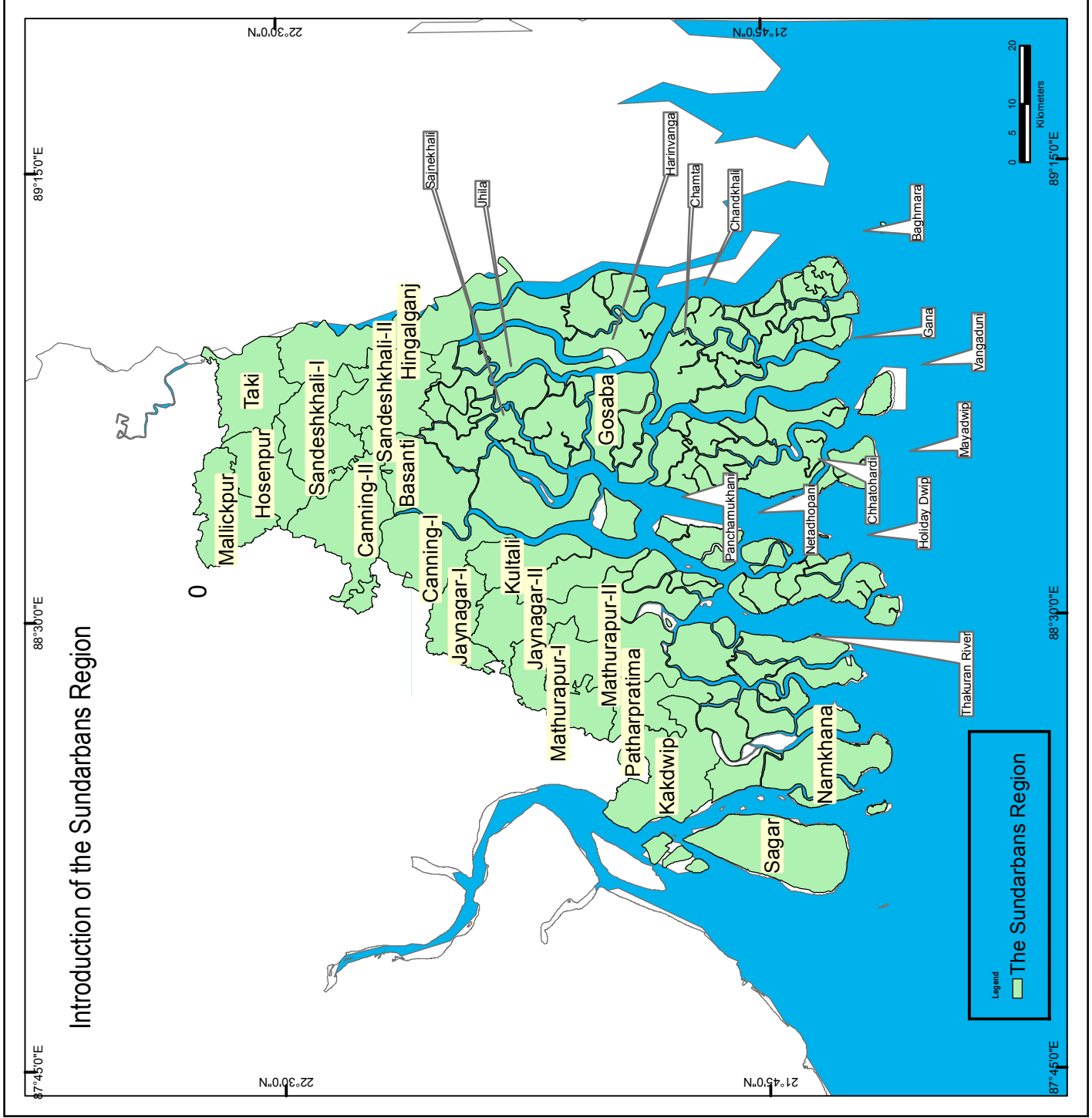
# APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Maps of the Study Area
- Appendix 2 Images of the Schools Visited
- Appendix 3 Sample Images of Data Collection from the Research Sites
- Appendix 4 Interview Schedule for Head Teachers
- Appendix 5 Interview Schedule for Assistant Teachers [EFL/ESL Teachers]
- Appendix 6 Interview Schedule for Parents
- Appendix 7 Focus Group Discussion Guide
- Appendix 8 Classroom Observation Protocol
- Appendix 9 Plain Language Statement
- Appendix 10 Participant Consent Form
- Appendix 11 Sample Coded Text
- Appendix 12 Sample Extracts from the Process of Theme Generation
- Appendix 13 Letter to the District Education Officer

## Appendix 1

### Maps of the Study Area

- Introduction of the Sundarbans Region
- The Sundarbans Region: North & South 24 Parganas in West Bengal
- Schools in Hingalganj Block of the Sundarbans Region
- Schools in Sandeshkhali-II Block of the Sundarbans Region
- School in Basanti Block of the Sundarbans Region
- School in Patharpratima Block of the Sundarbans Region
- School in Gosaba Block of the Sundarbans Region



Administrative Outline of the Sundarbans	
District:	South 24 Parganas
Sub Division:	Diamod Harbour
P.S:	Mathurapur, Raidighi
Block:	Mathurapur No-1 (Number = 10) Mathurapur No-2 (Number = 11)
Gram Panchayat:	Number = 21
District:	South 24 Parganas
Sub Division:	Baruipur
P.S:	Jaynagar, Kultoli
Block:	Jaynagar No-1 (Number = 12) Jaynagar No-2 (Number = 10) Kultoli (Number = 9)
Gram Panchayat:	Number = 31
District:	South 24 Parganas
Sub Division:	Canning
P.S:	Canning, Jibantala, Basanti, Gosaba
Block:	Canning No-1 (Number = 10) Canning No-2 (Number = 9) Basanti (Number = 13) Gosaba (Number = 14)
Gram Panchayat:	Number = 46
District:	South 24 Parganas
Sub Division:	Kakdwip
P.S:	Sagar, Namkhana, Kakdwip, Patharpratima
Block:	Sagar (Number = 9) Namkhana (Number = 7) Kakdwip (Number = 11) Patharpratima (Number = 15)
Gram Panchayat:	Number = 42
<b>Total Gram Panchayet = 140 (South 24 Pgs)</b>	
District:	North 24 Parganas
Sub Division:	Bashirhat
P.S:	Haroa, Minakhan, Hasnabad, Hingalganj, Sandeshkhali
Block:	Haroa (Number = 8) Minakhan (Number = 8) Hasnabad (Number = 9) Hingalganj (Number = 9) Sandeshkhali No 1 (Number = 8) Sandeshkhali No 2 (Number = 8)
Gram Panchayat:	Number = 50

Figure : Location Map of the Sundarbans Region

Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

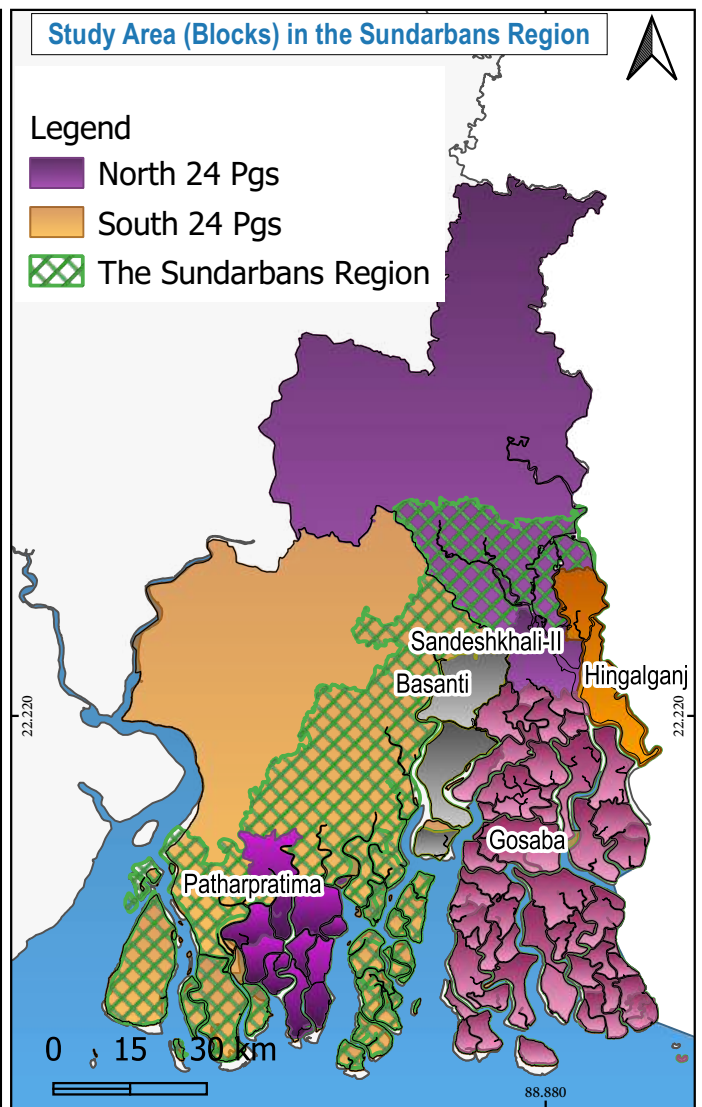
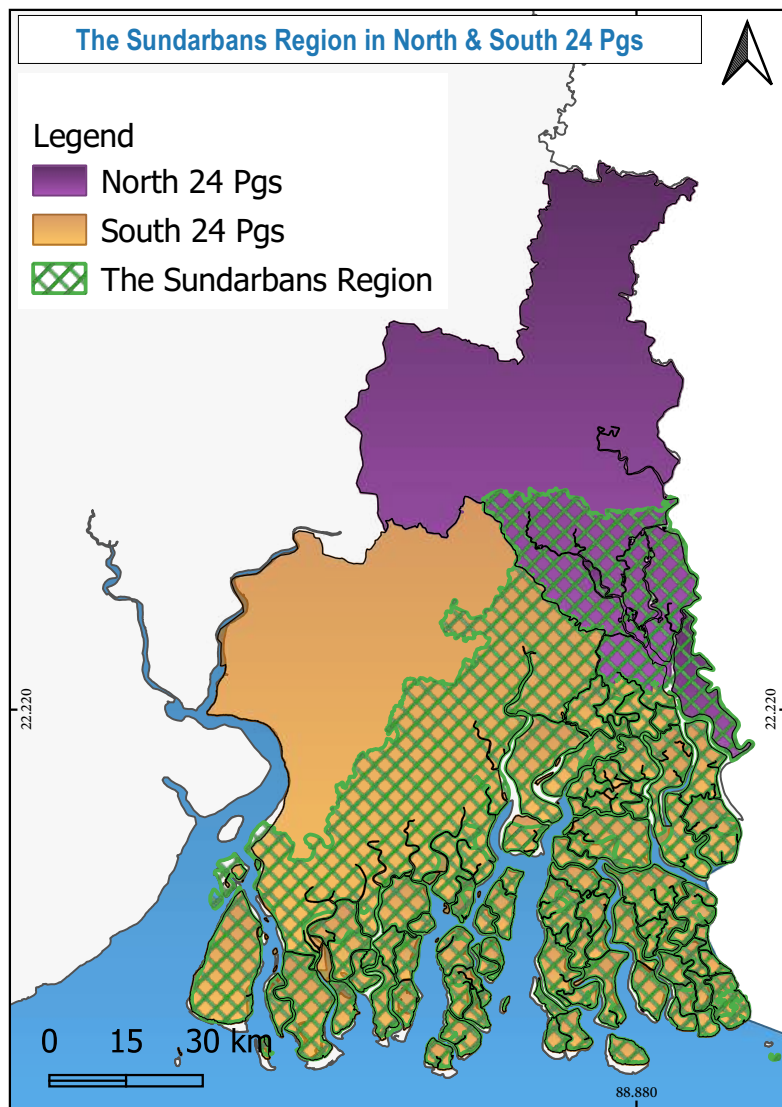
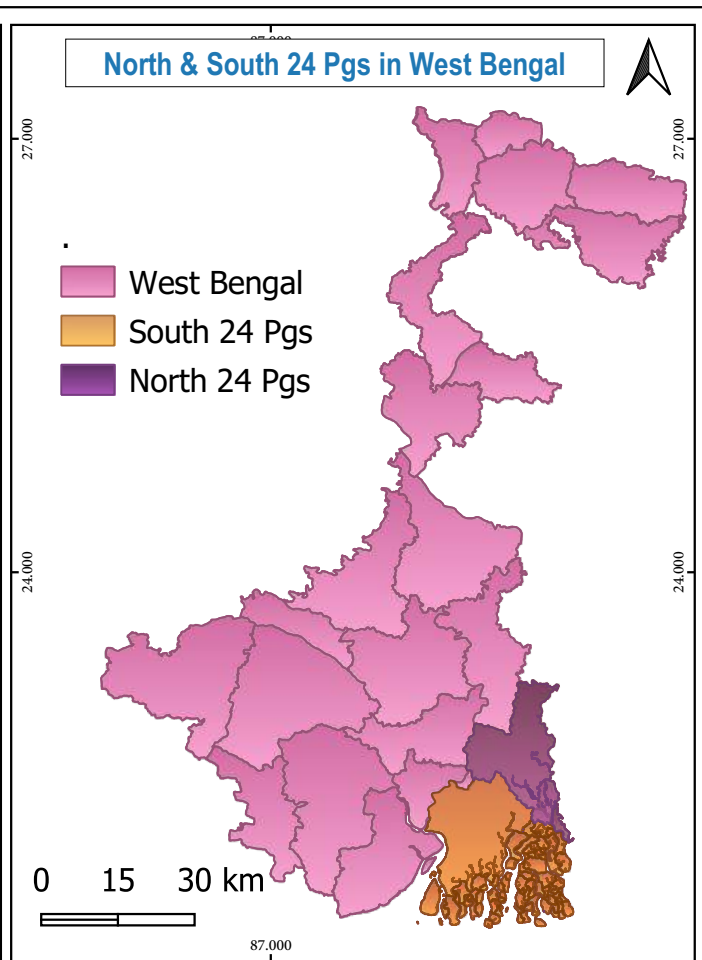
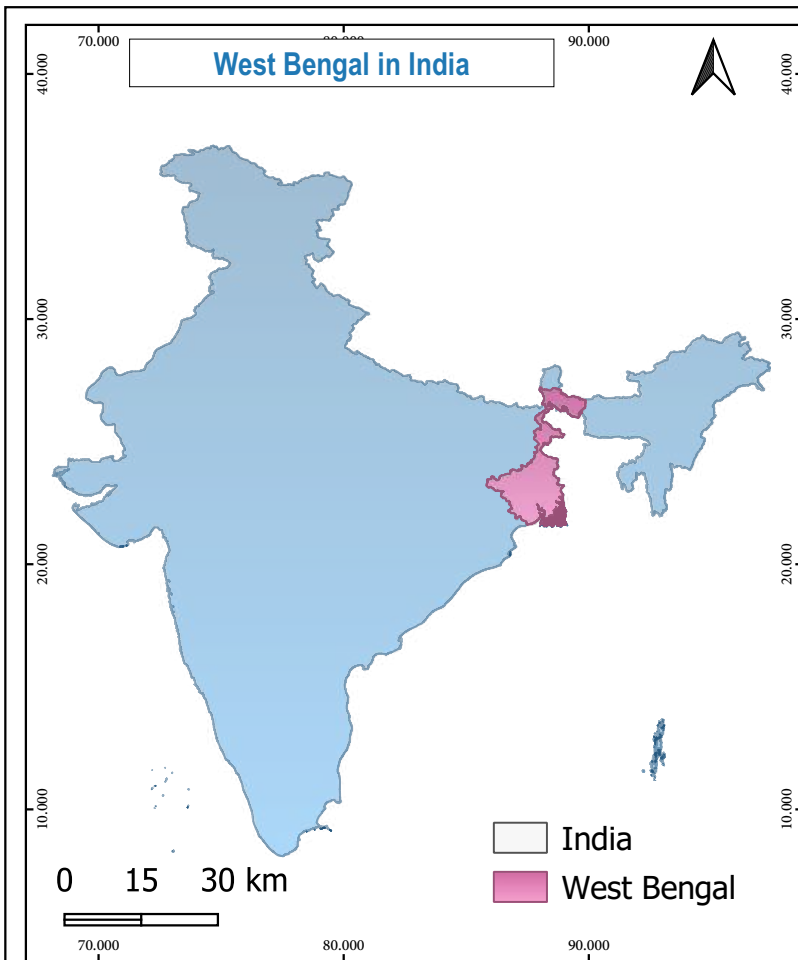


Figure : Location Map of the Sundarbans Region

Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

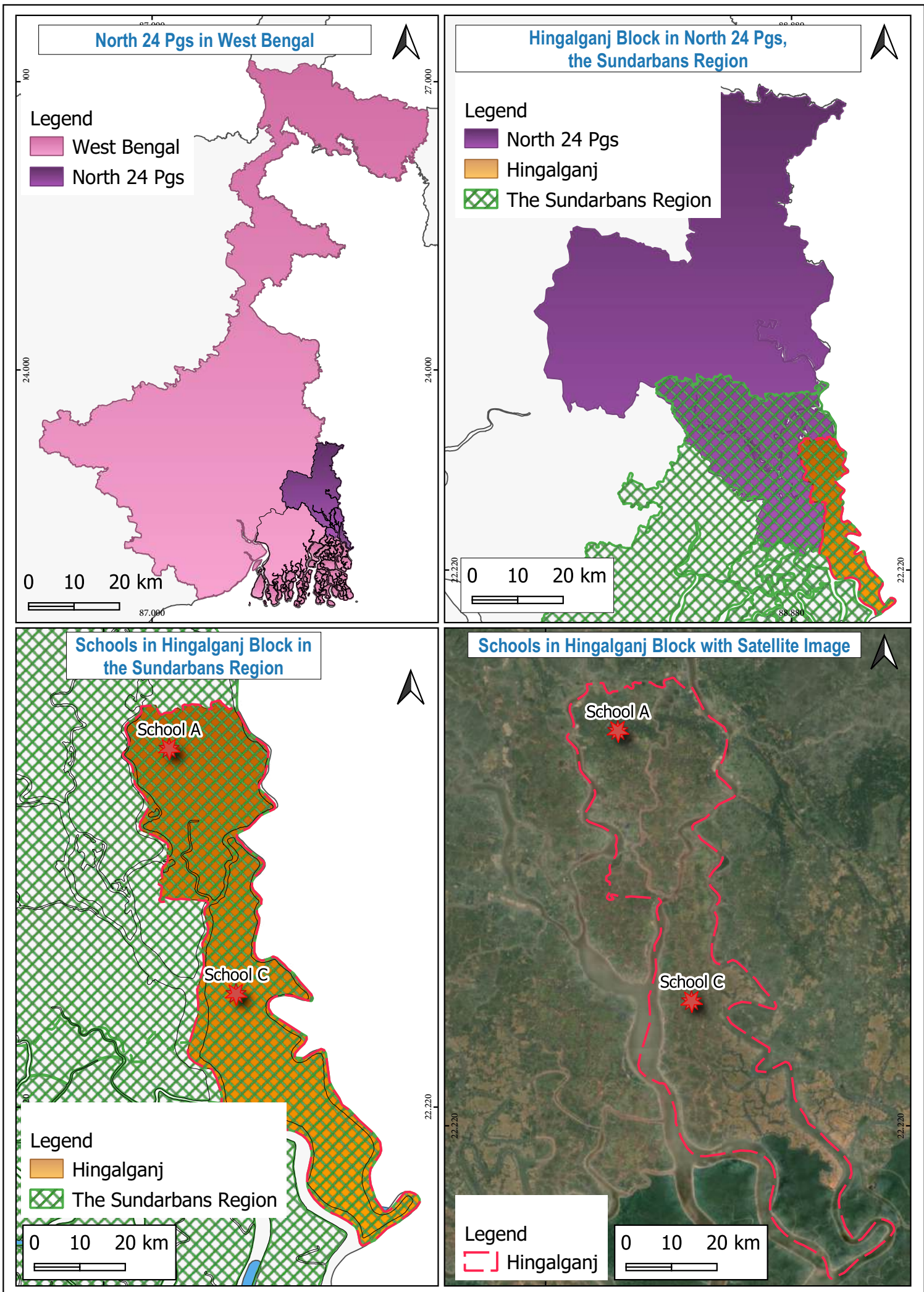


Figure : Location Map of Schools in Hingalganj Block in the Sundarbans Region

Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

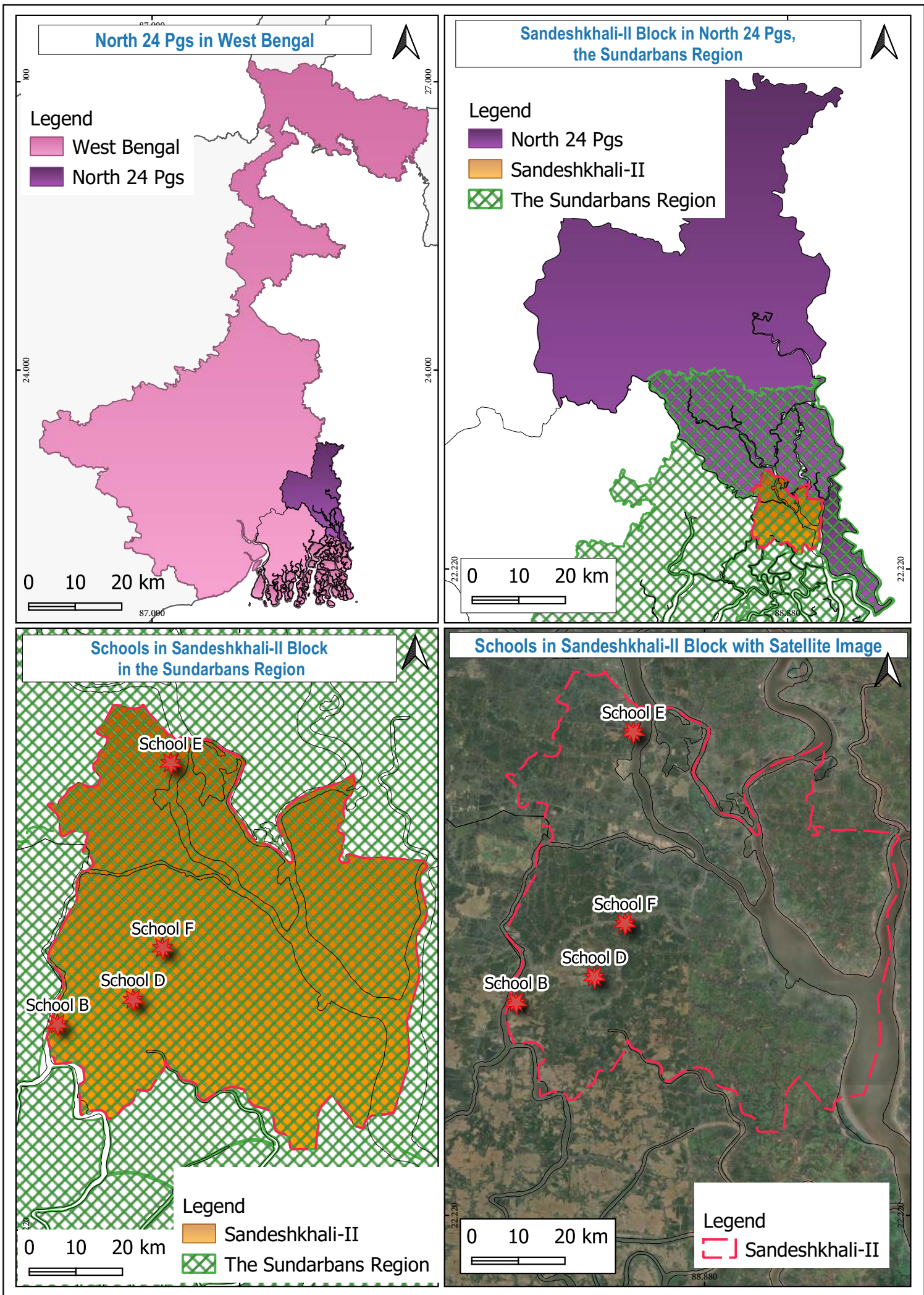


Figure : Location Map of Schools in Sandeshkhali-II Block in the Sundarbans Region

Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

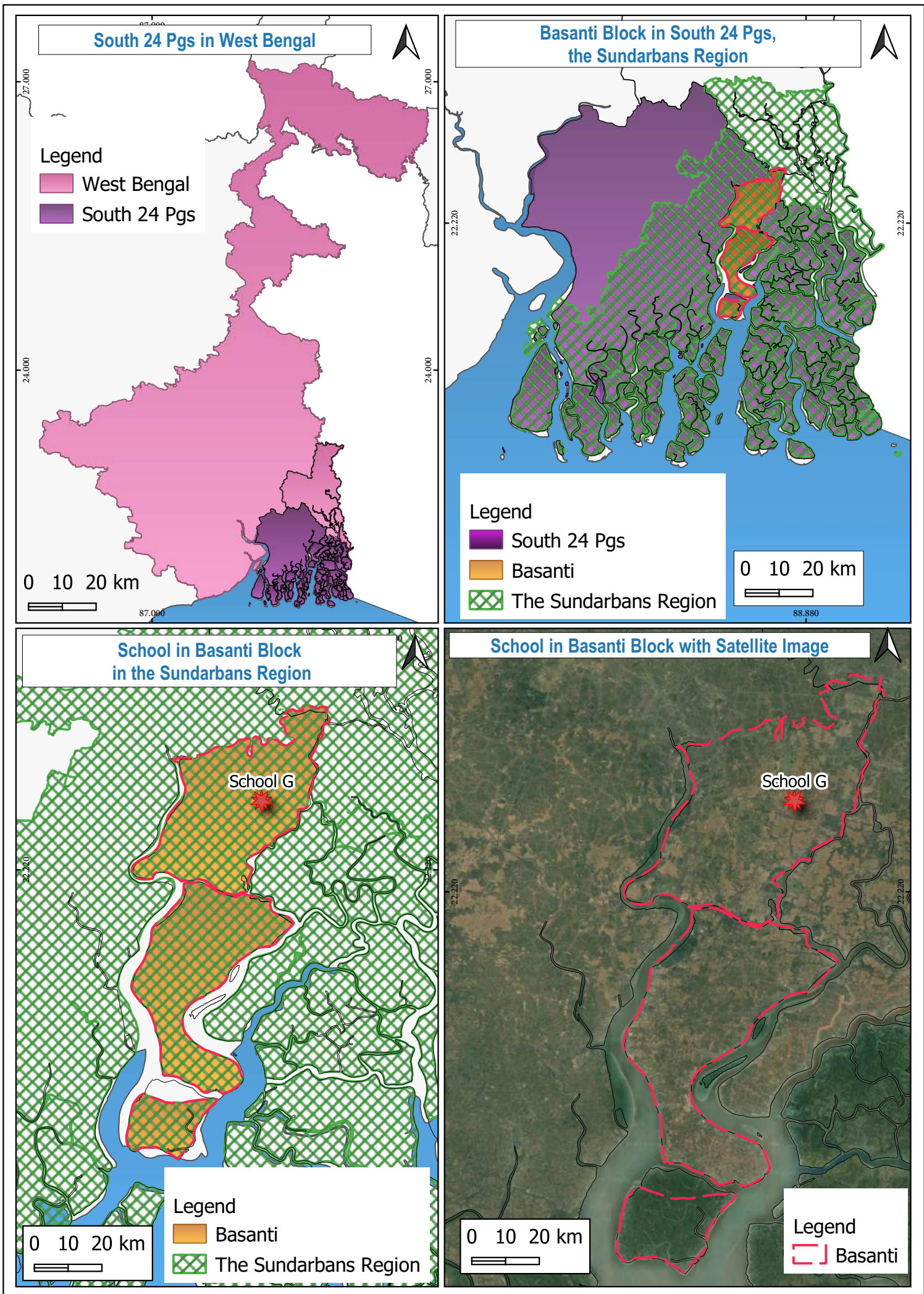


Figure : Location Map of the School in Basanti Block in the Sundarbans Region

Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

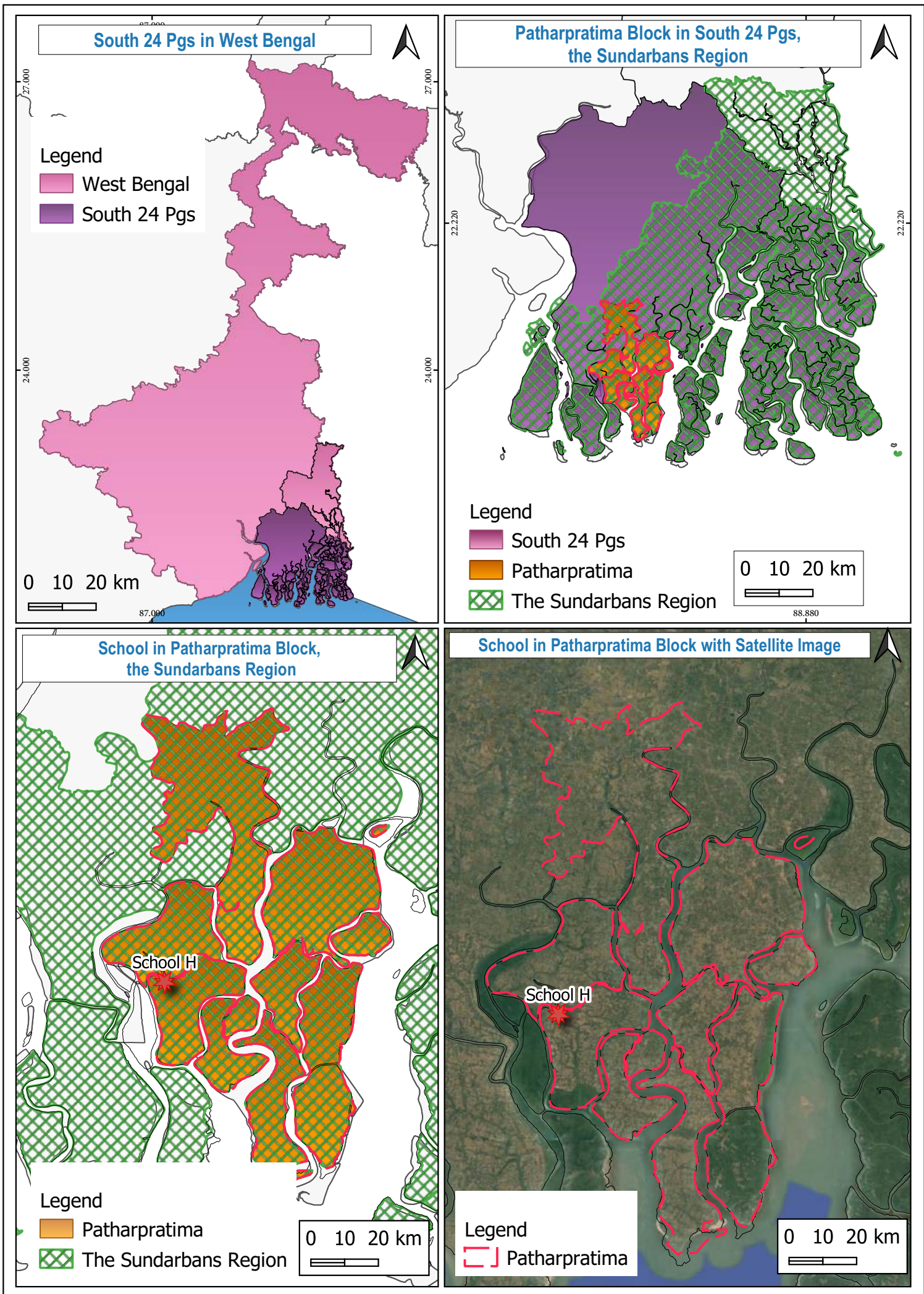


Figure : Location Map of the School in Patharpratima Block in the Sundarbans Region Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kolkata

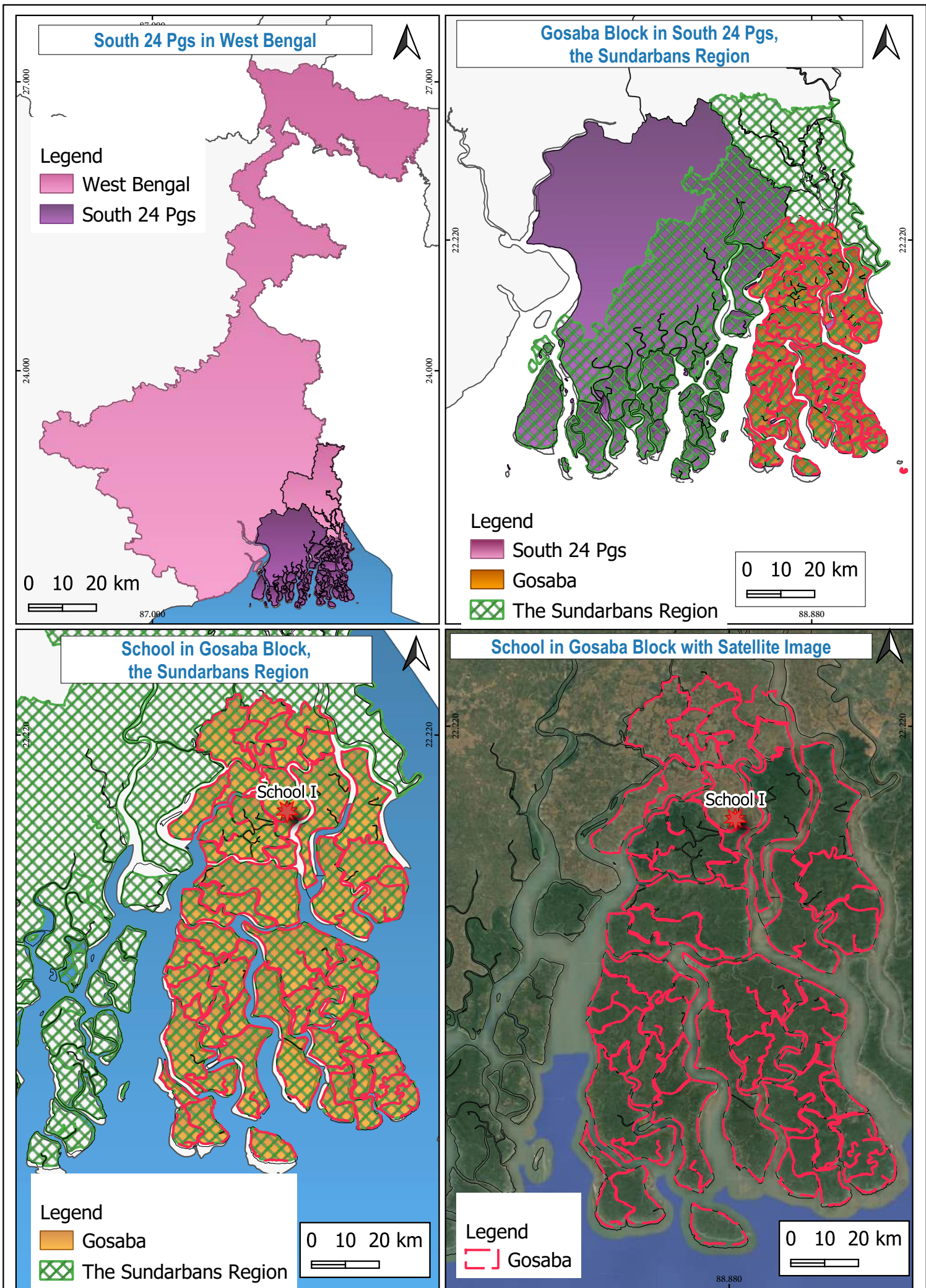


Figure :Location Map of the School in Gosaba Block in the Sundarbans Region Source: Dist Planning Map Series, NATMO, Kol

## Appendix 2

### Images of the Schools Visited



School A



**School B**



**School C**



**School D**



**School E**



**School F**



**School G**



**School H**



School I

## Appendix 3

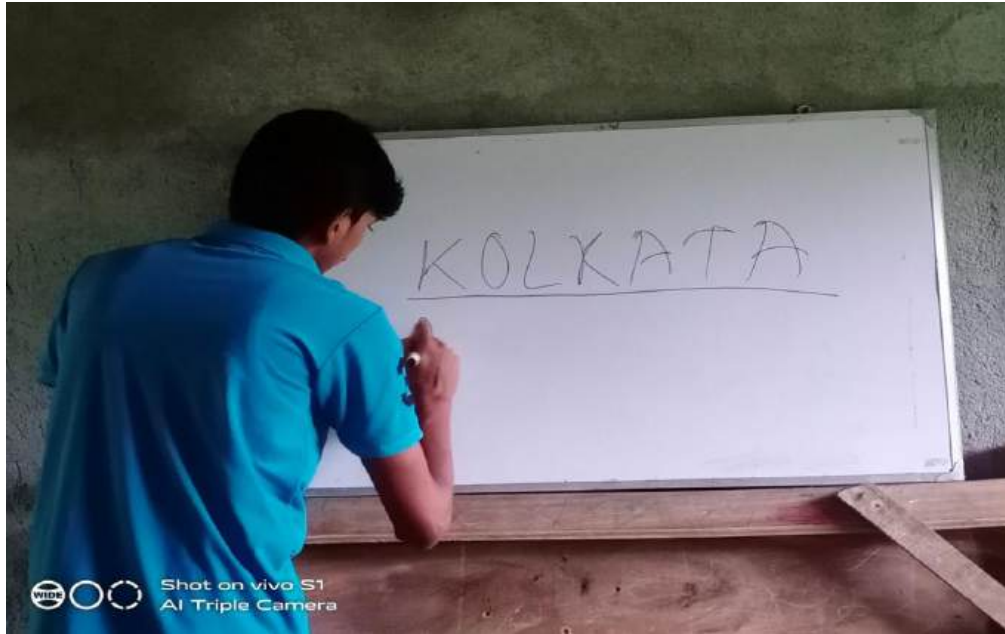
### Sample Images of Data Collection from the Sites



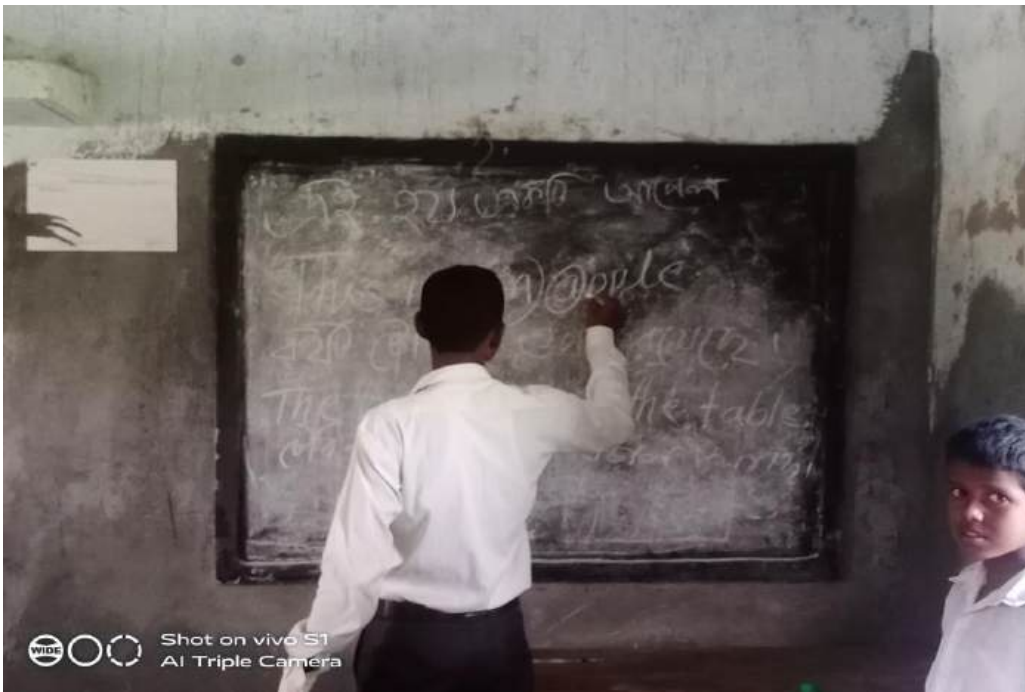
**Interview with Head teachers**



**Interview with Assistant Teachers of English [ESL/EFL Teachers]**



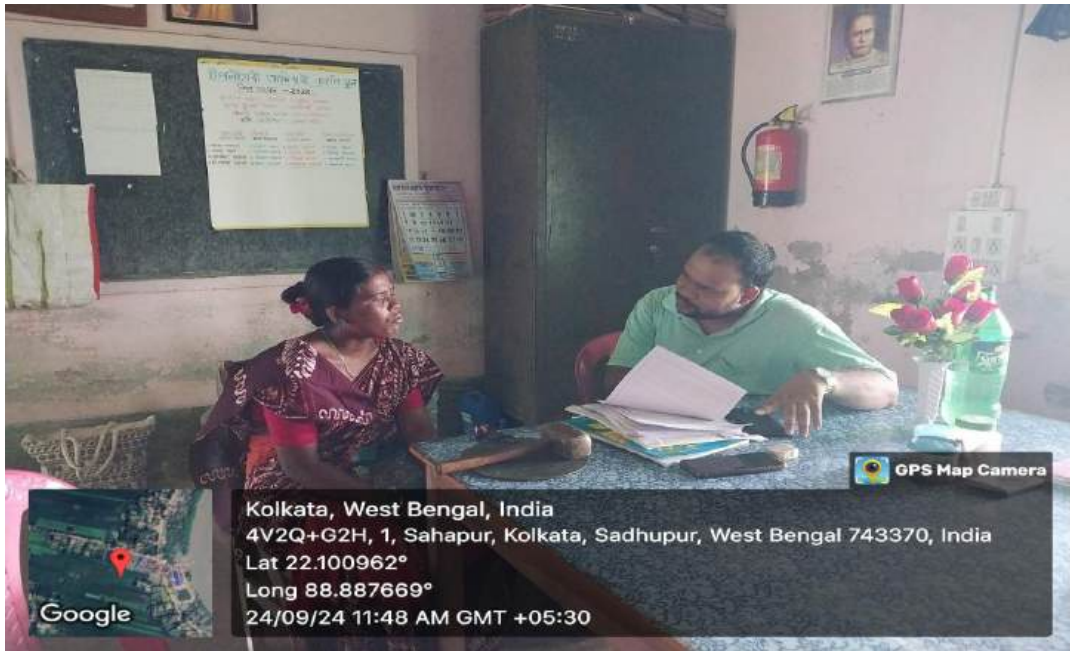
**Classroom Observation (1)**



**Classroom Observation (2)**



**Interview with Parents (1)**



**Interview with Parents (2)**



**Focus Group Discussion with Children**

Appendix 4

Interview Schedule for Head Teachers



যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Head Teacher Respondent (HTR).....

*Introduction*

Before starting our conversation I would like to thank you for sparing your invaluable time and consent to this interview, which will take approximately 20-30 minutes. As you have already granted permission for this interview to be recorded, I would once again like to assure you that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for this study. Your identity will never be disclosed for security purposes.

**Background Information**

Name.....

Educational Qualifications.....

Name of the Workplace (School).....

Teaching Experience.....

Address.....

Contact Number (Whatsapp).....

Languages Known.....

Date:

Description of the School

Time:

Specification of Tribal learners and languages

1. Do you take English language classes? If yes, then please describe in detail how you prefer to teach them (strategies, approaches, TLM, use of language etc.).
2. What is your perception about the importance of English language teaching and learning in India?
3. What is your view about parents' role in assisting their children for getting better support for English learning in the context of learners from socio-economically disadvantaged and linguistic minority backgrounds?
4. To what extent are you satisfied with the teaching strategies employed by the teachers of your institution in the English language classroom?
5. Have you ever heard any tribal child speaking his/her native language apart from Bengali in the school premises? If yes, please provide descriptions.
6. Do you prefer the usage of native tongue (apart from Bengali) during English language teaching? Have you any experience of using it or of encouraging teachers to use it for the learners from linguistic minority background?

### **Challenges**

7. What are the common barriers to your institution in general (e.g. infrastructure, resources, communication etc.)?
8. What are the challenges that EFL/ESL teachers (or you) face while teaching English? What are the challenges that students face while learning English? Please describe in detail.

### **For Advancement/Improvement**

9. In your opinion how can English language teaching and learning be improved for learners from the linguistic minority background?
10. What initiatives can be taken so that learners from the linguistic minority background become motivated towards learning English?

## Appendix 5

### Interview Schedule for Assistant Teachers [EFL/ESL Teachers]



যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

**Date:** *Assistant Teacher Respondent. (ATR)....*

**Time:**

#### *Introduction*

Before starting our conversation I would like to thank you for sparing your invaluable time and consent to this interview, which will take approximately 20-30 minutes. As you have already granted permission for this interview to be recorded, I would once again like to assure you that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for this study. Your identity will never be disclosed for security purposes.

#### *Background Information*

**Name**.....

**Educational Qualification**.....

**Name of the Workplace (School)**.....

**Teaching Experience**.....

**Address**.....

**Contact Number (Whatsapp)**.....

**Topics Taught**.....

**Languages Known**.....

## **Teaching Strategies in the Classroom for Teaching English**

1. In which language/s do you communicate with your students in the classroom while teaching English?
2. How do you begin any topic for teaching in the English language class?
3. Do you check previous knowledge of the learners in English while teaching? If yes, then how do you do that?
4. Do you use TLM for teaching English? If yes, then provide details.
5. How do you check whether the learners learn properly what you teach in the EFL/ESL class?
6. What errors do the learners usually make and how do you rectify those?
7. Does your classroom contain learners from linguistic minority background? If, yes then please mention to which communities they belong.
8. Have you ever heard your learners using their tribal languages apart from Bengali? If yes, then share your experience.
9. How do you motivate the learners for learning English?
10. How do you develop different skills required for learning and developing English proficiency among learners (for example, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills)?
11. What is your opinion about the text book?
12. What is your opinion about the evaluation system at the primary level (especially for the learners of grades 3, 4 and/or 5) with regard to English language learning?
13. Have you ever used technology to facilitate your teaching and learning for the learners? If no, explain why? If yes, what type of technology do you use and how much successful are they? How often do you use technology in your classroom?
14. Have you attended any training or faculty development programme during the in-service period? If yes, please add details.
15. What is your opinion about parents' role in assisting their children in getting better support for providing education, especially for learning English?

## **Challenges**

16. What are the challenges that the teachers and the learners face during the teaching and learning of English? Please describe in detail.

**For Advancement/Improvement**

17. In your opinion how can English language teaching and learning be improved for the learners from the linguistic minority background?
  
18. What initiatives can be taken so that the learners from linguistic minority background (belonging to socio-economically disadvantaged class) become motivated towards learning English?

## Appendix 6

### Interview Schedule for Parents



# যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

**Date:**

*Parent Respondent (PR).....*

**Time:**

#### *Introduction*

Before starting our conversation I would like to thank you for sparing your invaluable time and consent to this interview, which will take approximately 20-30 minutes. As you have already granted permission for this interview to be recorded, I would once again like to assure you that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for this study. Your identity will never be disclosed for security purposes.

1. Which language do you speak in at home with your child/ren? Can you speak the language of the community to which you belong?
2. Do you help your child/children in study? If yes, then explain how and if not, then explain why.
3. Do you think it is important for your child to learn English? Explain the reasons in brief.
4. Do you prefer providing additional support to your child/ren for learning English better (e.g. by sending your child/ren for English classes to any private tutor or any other English medium school etc.)?
5. How do you provide assistance to your child/ren in English language learning?
6. How do you feel about the teaching strategies used by teachers in the school for teaching English?
7. What facilities do you think are required for facilitating your child's learning in general and English in particular?
8. How do you motivate your child to learn English?
9. How do you feel if you find that your child is not progressing in English?
10. How do you feel when you find your child is progressing in English?

Appendix 7

Focus Group Discussion Guide



যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Date:

Learner Respondent No. (LRN).....  
(Participant)

Time:

*Introduction*

Before starting our conversation I would like to thank you for sparing your invaluable time and consent to this discussion, which will take approximately 20-30 minutes. As you have already granted permission for this interview to be recorded, I would once again like to assure you that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential and will be used only for this study. Your identity will never be disclosed for security purposes.

**Background Information**

Name.....

Father's Name.....

Mother's Name.....

Address.....

Information about Family.....

Class..... Name of the School.....

Gender..... Age.....

### **Engagement Questions**

1. Which language do you speak in at home and with your friends?
2. What do you prefer to do most?
3. What is your favourite subject?
4. Who helps you in your study at home?

### **Exploration Questions**

5. How do you feel studying and learning English? Why?
6. How do you feel about the way the teacher teaches you English?
7. If you cannot answer to any question or give wrong answer in English class, how does the teacher react to you?
8. Which parts of the English book do you like most?
9. Which parts of the English book appears tough for you?

### **Exit Questions**

10. Do you have any idea about the need of English? If yes, then please explain.

## Appendix 8

### Classroom Observation Protocol



# যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

**Title of the Research (PhD):** *Exploring English Language Teaching and Learning among Linguistic Minority Learners: A Case Study*

**Name of Researcher:** Pradipta Dey Sarkar

**Affiliation:** PhD Scholar (SRF), Department of Education, Jadavpur University

**Email:** deysarkarpradipta@gmail.com

**Research Supervisor:** Prof. Prokash Biswas

**Designation:** Professor, Department of Education, Jadavpur University

The aim of this classroom observation is to identify the English language teaching strategies, employed by teachers at primary schools while teaching English to non-English speaking learners. This observation will also focus on the learners' and teacher's use of the target language (TL) in the classroom. Besides, it will explore the young learners' attitude and reaction towards English language along with the difficulties faced by them during the learning process. Apart from these, the favourable and unfavourable aspects of the language classroom i.e. teachers' positive and negative reactions and responses towards learners, language anxiety, self-confidence and motivation will also be explored.

A video/audio recorder (whichever will be allowed and if not allowed note taking will be done) may be placed at the convenient position of the class to assist the researcher for detailed analysis of the observation data collected.

**Materials and Text:**

**Number of Students:**

**Lesson:**

**Name of the School:**

**Level of students:**

**Class Timing:**

**Teacher:**

**Age of Group:**

**Date:**

<b>Preliminary Description (if, any)</b>	
<b>1. Description of how the teacher starts interaction with learners</b>	
<b>2. Description of the teacher's relation with his learners in the classroom (reaction, responses, comments, motivation, dealing with individual student etc.)</b>	
<b>3. Learner's reaction and compatibility with teachers</b>	
<b>4. Methodologies and strategies used by the teachers while teaching</b>	
<b>5. Learners' interaction and reaction to teachers' teaching strategies</b>	
<b>6. Teachers' strategies for various skill development of the learners</b>	
<b>7. Challenges faced by both learners and teachers</b>	
<b>8. Teachers' accommodation of the learners' challenges (e.g. use of scaffolding, error correction)</b>	
<b>9. Several considerable aspects in the language classroom ( e.g. language anxiety including fear of negative evaluation, self-confidence and motivation)</b>	
<b>10. Additional Comments (if any)</b>	

## Appendix 9

### Plain Language Statement

The present study aims to explore English language teaching and learning among linguistic minority learners in Indian context. The study explores the strategies employed by teachers while teaching English to linguistic minority learners and also the challenges faced by both teachers and learners during teaching and learning English. The study also attempts to explore perceptions from teachers, linguistic minority learners and their parents towards the importance of learning English.

I, Pradipta Dey Sarkar, am a doctoral scholar in the Department of Education, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India and this study is a part of my doctoral research under the supervision of Prof. Prokash Biswas.

You are cordially requested to participate in this research by sharing your thoughts and experiences in the form of an interview and to allow me to observe your English language classes (optional).

If you need any further information or clarification in relation to the present study, please feel free to contact me. Your input in the form of data will help in successful completion of the present study. However, it should be mentioned that your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw yourself from the study at any point of time without showing any reason. Besides, you can discuss the matter of participation with others before taking the final decision for participation. Your identity will be kept confidential.

If you give your consent for the interview, you would be asked for sparing your valuable time for conducting the interview which may take 20-30 minutes approximately. All the interview data will be kept confidential and will be used only for the purpose of the present study. If you need any further information, please feel free to contact me at [deysarkarpradipta@gmail.com](mailto:deysarkarpradipta@gmail.com).

Appendix 10

Participant Consent Form



যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়  
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

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**Title of Research (PhD):** *Exploring English Language Teaching and Learning among Linguistic Minority Learners: A Case Study*

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**Research Supervisor:** Prof. Prokash Biswas

**Affiliation:** Professor, Department of Education, Jadavpur University

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**Please check the box if you agree with the following statements:**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information explaining the above research project and I have undertaken the responsibility to ask questions about the project.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline.
3. I agree for the data collected from me to be used for academic research and may be used in future publications, both print and online.
4. I agree to the interviews being audio recorded with a digital recorder/ mobile and to the use of anonymized quotes in publications.
5. I give my consent to do the study on a few children/or my child/ren without causing any harm to them and taking utmost care.
6. I give my consent to observe my class/es while teaching English and to audio record for the purpose of research and to be published in future.

**Name of Participant**.....

**Signature with Date**.....

## Appendix 11

### Sample Coded Text

Participants [Assistant Teacher Respondents]	Data Transcripts	Codes
<b>ATR 1</b>	Children have <b>individual differences</b> . So the errors committed by students are not easily explicable. Some make <b>grammatical mistakes</b> , others make <b>spelling mistakes</b> and some <b>commit basic mistakes</b> . So, the process of rectification varies from child to child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual learning style</li> <li>• Errors in grammar and spelling</li> </ul>
<b>ATR 2</b>	Most strikingly <b>spelling mistakes</b> are found among the learners. When I check their notebooks, those mistakes can be identified and I help them to rectify their spelling mistakes. When they come across <b>a long word or a difficult word</b> we help them to read the word or write it for them because they <b>get stuck with those</b> . Along with the text, I help them solve the exercises along with the text, containing sentence formation and tense related concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling errors</li> <li>• Reading and spelling problems</li> </ul>
<b>ATR 3</b>	I help them <b>to read a text multiple times</b> and when I ask them the next day they cannot do because they don't study at home. Besides, lot of spelling mistakes they do. When I ask them "why did you do the mistake?", they reply, "Sir, we have studied. We don't know the reason for committing such mistakes." <b>They, have nobody at home to guide</b> . They only study for the sake of study only. They don't study with much concentration. That's why they commit such mistakes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping learners to practice reading</li> <li>• Lack of guidance at home</li> </ul>
<b>ATR 4</b>	The students do a lot of <b>spelling mistakes</b> . They <b>mispronounce</b> a lot of words. Sometimes they fail to read out correctly. I help by telling them the sounds of each letter. Besides, I rectify the different pronunciations of different letters in words.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and pronunciation errors</li> </ul>
<b>ATR 5</b>	Mainly they face problems related to <b>pronunciation</b> , tense and <b>sentence construction</b> . Also they lack <b>writing skills</b> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors related to pronunciation and sentence construction</li> </ul>

Participants [Assistant Teacher Respondents]	Data Transcripts	Codes
ATR 6	They face difficulties in reading English passages. They cannot pronounce words properly. Sometimes they face problems in identifying letters from the alphabets. Besides, they don't have proper grammar knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Errors related to pronunciation and reading</li> </ul>
ATR 7	They mainly lack in grammar and also there is no one to guide them at home. Most of the parents go out to work. The topics in grammar also vary from year to year. For example, if there are two chapters on subject verb agreement in this year, there will be another two new chapters in the next year. They face difficulties in these areas. The changes in the topic in different years create problems for them. In fact the foundation level of education of the learners is very weak here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges related to grammar</li> </ul>
ATR 8	Most of the learners are deficient in spelling, reading and punctuation. Since most of the parents stay outside to earn their living, there is no one to guide them at home and they lack a proper stimulating environment. Most of the tribal children are looked after by their relatives or grandparents. Their parents stay in other states for work or go out for work early in the morning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems with spelling, reading and pronunciation</li> <li>• Lack of parental support at home</li> </ul>

## Appendix 12

### Sample Extracts from the Process of Theme Generation

Category	Themes	
Poor conditions of the roads during rainy season	<b>Theme 2: Challenges</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worn out school building</li> <li>• Lack of maintenance</li> <li>• Insufficient number of classroom</li> </ul>		<b>Sub-theme 1:</b> Financial, Infrastructural and Communication-related Challenges
Poverty of the parents		
Abolition of pass-fail system		<b>Sub-theme 2:</b> Curriculum & Evaluation Process
Learners' difficulties in learning		<b>Sub-theme 3:</b> Lack of Skilled and Specialized Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' difficulties in teaching</li> <li>• Lack of teachers with specialization in English</li> <li>• Low educational qualifications of teachers</li> </ul>		<b>Sub-theme 4:</b> Challenges during Teaching and Learning English
Parents' indifference towards their children's education		<b>Sub-theme 5:</b> Lack of Parental Support

## Appendix 13

### Letter to the District Education Officer

To,

The District Education Officer

Date: 06.03.2023

North 24 Parganas

**Sub: Request for gaining access to data regarding enrolment of students at primary schools**

Respected Sir/ Ma'am,

With due respect I would like to let you know that I, Mr. Pradipta Dey Sarkar, a PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Jadavpur University, am working on primary education in the Sundarbans [North & South 24 Parganas]. For this purpose I need some survey-based data from the following blocks:

**Blocks:** Hingalganj, Hasnabad, Sandeshkhali-I, Sandeshkhali-II, Haroa, Minakha.

**Requirements:**

- ❖ Number and names of primary schools of the mentioned blocks
- ❖ Enrolment details of students [along with categories like UR, OBC, SC, ST and others] in classes 3, 4 & 5 in the schools of the latest academic session (2023).

Therefore, I shall be highly obliged if you kindly help me by providing the data as early as possible.

Thanking you,

Sincerely Yours,

Pradipta Dey Sarkar

PhD Scholar [SRF], Department of Education

Jadavpur University

Email: [deysarkarpradipta@gmail.com](mailto:deysarkarpradipta@gmail.com)

  
06/03/23  
Received without verification  
Paschim Banga Samagra Siksha Mission  
District Project Office, North 24 Parganas

# EXPLORING ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING AMONG LINGUISTIC MINORITY LEARNERS: A CASE STUDY

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ORIGINALITY REPORT

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SIMILARITY INDEX

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