



FORUM FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

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Now 15 years old !!!

## From the Editor

It feels good to be editing the FORTELL newsletter – more so because it is appearing after a gap of three years (the last issue that appeared was in 2001!). Rather than dwell on the reasons for its not coming out all these years, I would like to share with you the enthusiasm that our editorial team feels about its re-emergence, and the plans we have for making it a site for interaction, collaboration and meaningful debates for all those who are concerned with issues of English language and literature, and more broadly with issues of communication and empowerment through communication across different levels and sections.

Before I move on, I would like to say a warm 'thank you' to Dr N. K. Jain (the previous editor of the Newsletter) and his team members who had envisioned the need of a newsletter initially and then worked for a number of years towards concretizing this vision. We build on this tradition.

Enthused as we are about the newsletter, a void opens before me- the void created by the sad

demise of Dr S. K. Verma in January 2004. Dr. Verma was the founder President of FORTELL for the first term of two years and had been its Patron ever since. An eminent scholar, a renowned linguist, a wonderful human being- Dr. Verma inspired a generation of students to become committed researchers and classroom practitioners, himself being the perfect image of what it meant to be a great teacher. Teaching was a passion with him, research came naturally to his questioning mind. His contribution to English Language Teaching in India and research in Indian English during his years in CIEFL (Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages), Hyderabad will be always remembered.

We dedicate this issue to your memory, dear Sir.

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## REMEMBERING PROF. S. K. VERMA



It was in July 1979 that I first saw Prof. S. K. Verma, a dark, average height, square-faced, stockily built, youngish looking man. I had just joined the PGDTE programme at the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad. He was sitting at a neatly laid table in the dining hall of the hostel mess. It had proper table linen and a small flower vase with a few roses for effect. Pointing the direction where Prof. Verma sat, I asked the person in front of me at the bare table we occupied, Who is that man sitting there? Oh! Replied my partner at the table, don't you know him, he is God himself. God himself! I had exclaimed. Yes, said my friend, he is Prof. S. K. Verma, the only Professor of Contemporary English in India. Now that meant a significant statement - Our own professor of Contemporary English! I kept wondering what that man would be like!

In the days that passed, I came to know Prof. Verma better. He was from Patna to begin with, came down to CIEFL, did a short course in ELT, went to Britain, and finally came back with a Ph.D. from the University of York, Britain. He was a versatile genius, had academic brilliance and acumen for research and innovation of ideas. He was a specialist, he was a linguist, often doubled up for speech and accent expert, was a grammarian par excellence and was soon calling the shots in the field of sociolinguistics - a field just beginning to open up in India in those days.

He was one of the earliest crusaders for establishing the identity of Indian English as a legitimate variety of English and having motivated some of us - his students. He relentlessly carried on the pursuit of getting Indian English rid of the stigma of Hobson Jobson or 'babu' English kind of nicknames. Today, Indian English is accepted as one of the various world Englishes that are in use without any pejorative connotation. I think this was the most outstanding achievement of Prof. S. K. Verma - the passion and pride that he put into his students on the question of Indian English

and its status. We were proud that we spoke the kind of English that we did and of the kind we wrote. It is a just tribute to Prof. Verma and his faith in Indian English that today Indian teachers of English, trained in India teach English internationally, including England, the United States, Canada, Australia, Africa and the Middle East.

He was an excellent teacher. What you learned in his classes you did not fail to understand and imbibe. His blackboard work was neat and meticulous. He had it all planned in his mind even at the beginning of his lecture what would go where on the blackboard. His handwriting on the blackboard was a treat to watch. His zeal was infectious and his energy was unending. One was never tired of listening to and working with him.

He was a very able administrator, humane and gentle and yet firm and unbending. You could take your punishments from him with a smile. He was a stickler for discipline and while we were at the CIEFL we could set our watches by the appearance of Prof. S. K. Verma at the gate when he was leaving for his walk around the Osmania University Campus at 6:00 o'clock in the evening or as he entered the campus at 6:30 am in the morning. He was the warden of the hostel and often joined us for breakfast. Very informally, he would drop into our humble rooms sometimes and talk to us like a true guardian would do, enquire about our families, personal lives and so on - trivial matters but those that made us feel at ease in the institute. During festivals, Prof. Verma and his family would play host to the trainees or participants as we were known, with sweets and sumptuous meals. He instilled such trust and confidence in us that we could go up to him with ease regarding most complex academic issues or very mundane personal problems. If his lights were on he was available to us what ever the time of the night and his lights were generally on till quite late in the night.

Very rightly, Prof. Verma rose to become the first Vice Chancellor of this very prestigious Institute. He died soon after his retirement and after a brief illness. We miss him. But then, as some one said, *Gods don't die!*

- by Sudesh Sawhney



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## OPENING A CHAPTER OF FORTELL

A FORTELL chapter can be formed by 25 or more members in any state of India.

### (i) RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CHAPTER

A FORTELL chapter will:

- a) adopt FORTELL's name and constitution.
- b) nominate till such time that elections can take place (which should not exceed a period of two years), a Working Committee for the smooth functioning of that chapter.
- c) run its own independent programmes such as academic sessions and workshops and send reports of all its activities to the Extended Executive Council (EEC).
- d) hold free academic sessions (preferably two hours every month) which are open to both members and non-members on a regular basis at a specified date, time and venue.
- e) hold an annual seminar.
- f) be responsible for generating its own funds.
- g) will open and maintain an account of its funds and get them audited every year.
- h) elect its representative(s) for the Extended Executive Council (EEC) as per the constitution.
- i) hold regular minuted meetings of its working committee. The dates and minutes of these meetings should be sent to the Extended Executive Committee.
- j) hold an annual general body meeting of its members at which audited accounts will be presented. (A copy of this meeting and a copy of the audited accounts will be sent to the Extended Executive Council).
- k) hold elections of its office bearers as per the FORTELL constitution definitely by March 31 each year and send a copy of results of the elections to the Extended Executive Council.

- l) will contribute at least 10% of its membership money to the FORTELL.

### ii) ENTITLEMENT

A FORTELL Chapter will be entitled to:

- a) host the FORTELL annual conference after the approval by the Extended Executive Council (EEC).
- b) maintain a detailed manual of its academic activities.
- c) approach local/foreign agencies for programme funding, after prior intimation to the EEC.

### WITHDRAWAL OF STATUS AS CHAPTER

- \* EEC may withdraw the status of a chapter if it does not follow FORTELL objectives, basic working structure and traditions.
- \* In case of non-receipt of any report, EEC will serve a notice to the concerned Chapter and will keep it under observation for six months. After six months, the status of the Chapter will be withheld.

### OFFICE BEARER OF THE CHAPTER

Each Chapter shall have the following office bearers:

- a) Programme Coordinator.
- b) Finance Coordinator.
- c) Newsletter Coordinator.

Each Coordinator can form a sub-committee of volunteer members to help in the working of FORTELL.

### KOLKATA CHAPTER OF FORTELL

Programme Co-ordinator : *Dr. Sampa Chatterjee*

Finance Co-ordinator : *Ms. Nandini Mukherjee*  
(Teacher, International School)

Newsletter Co-ordinator : *Ms. Susmita Bhattacharjya*  
(Teacher, Sri Sikshayatan High School)

## HISTORY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

*A Critical Companion*

Edited by Indrance Ghosh, Bidhannagar Govt. College,  
Kolkata University, Kolkata

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## Reports on Regional Networking through Teachers Associations

We would like to thank the British Council, Delhi for providing support and funding to FORTELL to participate in regional Teachers Associations meetings and exchange information and good practices among each other. In this regard we would like to say a special 'thank you' to Dr. Rajni Badlani, Manager, ELT and Training, North and East India, British Council, Delhi whose initiative and encouragement made it possible for FORTELL to benefit from participation in these meetings and to widen its outreach and networking.

The first South Asia Meeting for Teachers Associations was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from 10-13 February 2004. Madhu Gurtu, Secretary FORTELL at that time, was nominated by the executive to represent the association.

Another meeting 'Strength in Numbers' was held in England which was attended by Tulika Prasad, a member of the executive committee of FORTELL.

**A Seminar on Increasing the Impact of English Language Teacher Associations, was held at Bournemouth, UK on 20<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June, 2004 : A Brief Report**

*By Tulika Prasad*

I, as a teacher-representative of FORTELL, attended a seminar "Strength in Numbers: Increasing the Impact of English Language Teacher Associations" at Bournemouth, U.K. between 20<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004. We had representatives of Teacher Associations from twenty-one countries across four continents. I would like to share some of my thoughts of the seminar. The seminar was designed to enable us to share and spread best practices in order to improve the effectiveness of Teacher Associations as well as the services that we offer. We were encouraged to offer new services like creating websites and discussion lists to disseminate information about the organization.

George Pickering our course director gave us an overview of the topics to be covered. We began with Mission of Teacher Associations and its purpose. Leadership and management was the next topic. We all agreed that Teacher Associations representatives should be both a leader and a manager. Project management came next and we were informed that to undertake any project we need to keep in mind all the parameters of the project beginning from the objective to the plan, the execution and the risks involved. Next there was a discussion on the services that Teacher Associations provide. It was very interesting to know that some Teacher Associations had members who were working in the ministry of education, consequently they were able to influence some of the policy decisions of the government regarding education, which I think is commendable. We talked of how to organize conferences, the content of newsletters, websites and discussion lists. This was followed

*contd...(5)*



Our Publications on ELT :

- Language Activities - parts A, B & C
- A Graded English Grammar & Composition - parts 1 to 5
- English in Use - introductory and 1 to 5
- Compact English Grammar - for Junior classes
- A Book of English Grammar & Composition (including Reading Comprehension) - for Secondary classes
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by an enlightening discussion on marketing, resource generation, membership drive and strategic ways to increase the influence and credibility of Teacher Associations. We ended the seminar with a presentation of our action plans. Overall, a memorable seminar.

This Teacher Association seminar has opened up, in my view, newer and wider horizons of the role of a Teacher Association. I now realize the immense opportunities that exist for a Teacher Association like ours, and the potential it has to be an active and vibrant Teacher Association. For example, the Teacher Association of Brazil has got accreditation from the government and teachers, who are active members of the association and attend seminars or workshops conducted by it, are given duty leave by their organization. This is the kind of credibility that I would like to attain for FORTELL. It also must have a consultative and advisory role with regard to educational developments and policies.

When I joined FORTELL my impressions of the organization was limited to just belonging to a Teacher Association which met once in a while conducted seminars and workshops intermittently and published a newsletter annually. But this seminar seems to have proved me wrong as far as Teacher Associations and their roles are concerned. Teacher Associations are all about being an effective instrument to bring about change in the field of English Language Teaching: be it language teaching, proficiency in communication skills, materials production or conducting workshops and seminars.

I think one of the things that I learnt was, ways to manage a teacher association which is all about strategic planning to implement our objectives. We should set realistic targets and then try to achieve them. We need to match the work we want to do with the work we can do. Another important aspect that I feel we need to concentrate on is to market our organization. There is a

need to identify our customers and then offer our services, be it teacher training, organizing workshops and seminars in the areas of teaching methodology materials development, curriculum design and evaluation and other activities.

It is true that this teacher association seminar has motivated me to strengthen my teacher association, but this is not enough. This needs to filter down to the rest of the members of the organization who have a shared purpose of improving the practice of language teaching and learning and to promote high professional standards. Apart from this, we need to create a forum to encourage cooperation and mutual respect amongst us.

At this juncture, it would be relevant to mention a few aspects that need to be emphasized as far as FORTELL is concerned:

- a) Membership drive
- b) Structural changes in the organization
- c) Fund generation

In FORTELL the first thing one needs to do is to reach out to others and broaden the base of our membership. FORTELL has a concentration of college teachers but has not been able to enroll teachers in sufficient numbers from schools both government and private as also members from other organizations like the NCERT, SCERT, the publishing houses, private universities and language schools, the government officials from relevant ministries and even the corporate sector. To make ourselves visible initially in Delhi and later on elsewhere (by opening FORTELL chapters), we have to disseminate information about FORTELL and its activities to all prospective members. We need to organize ourselves into small groups and make presentations about FORTELL at different places. This will have a twofold effect. Together with an increase in membership we will also generate resources.

There is also a need to make structural changes in the organization

to make it more broad based and representative. The proposal is to have four joint secretaries and eight executive members in the executive committee. The rationale of doing this is to build zonal networks and make the organization more representatives. The eight executive members will preferably be selected from schools, national education boards, distance learning institutions, publishing houses and the like.

Another important issue, which we have to address, is organizing ourselves into small groups as per our interests and capabilities. The groups will be formed on the basis of the various services that FORTELL intends to offer or to undertake. We would have groups concentrating on membership drive, publication of newsletters, other publications like monographs, fund generation, seminars and workshops, teacher training and working on projects.

Fund generation is an integral part of a productive teachers association. As an initial step increase in membership would generate some funds. We also need to look for sponsors to fund some of our activities.

I think the title of the teacher association seminar STRENGTH IN NUMBERS is very appropriate as far as FORTELL is concerned. The strength, the credibility and the effectiveness of our teacher association will be reflected only if we have numbers (members) to strengthen the association.



[Tulika Prasad (on the extreme right) with other participants in the conference.]

**A Conference on South Asia Meeting of Teachers Associations was held at Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 10-13 February, 2004 : A Brief Report**

*By Madhu Gurtu*



The South Asia Meeting of Teachers Associations was attended by representatives from India, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nigeria, and Indonesia. India was the only country represented by two Teachers Associations, ELTAI, Chennai and FORTELL, Delhi.

All the participants assembled at Tony O'Brien's lovely house in the evening of 10th February to a warm welcome and sumptuous dinner, getting to know each other, forging a bond together, meeting old friends (in some cases). By the time we dispersed, common issues were already sorted out and we were ready for the hectic rounds of discussion and group work going to take place during the next three days.

The main objectives for the meeting were:

- Raising awareness on the wider roles of TAs (Teachers Associations) in education
- Examining the purpose of TAs in relation to their contexts
- Developing mission statements
- Developing a series of guidelines for good practice in dealing with the main issues facing TAs
- Examining international support networks available to TAs
- Brainstorming on various activities to enhance the working and outreach of TAs
- Writing/rewriting of a constitution

- Establishing PR, working with government/educational institutions, gaining recognition, advertising
- Establishing a map of regional activity and developing a rationale for expanding this activity
- Developing guidelines for effective publicity and information distribution for TAs
- Bringing the threads together for more focused work

Here are the salient points of the three day discussion on the activities following from the objectives:

Jeremy Jacobson started the morning session on 11 February looking at the concept of Networking, its aims and objectives. Starting with its dictionary definitions he went on to compare the benefits of good networking with the drawbacks of ordinary networking. He focused on the need of thinking laterally for identifying a good, solid model that would help solve problems of TAs. A virtual cycle could evolve from increased membership, leading in turn to more money for the association to give rise to more activities, which again could help get more money for the association. Some processes for solving problems could be chat groups, forums, seminars, and training sessions with British Council/or other organizations as a key partner.

Jeremy's session was followed by individual TAs giving the history and description of their associations, and some of their key problems and achievements. Interestingly, this session brought out some common issues on which TAs across the region were seeking solutions, and aspects on which they could agree. Some of the issues raised were: problems in attracting and renewing membership, of moving activities from the centre to the regions, of policy making, of setting up links with private and public sectors. There were some success stories, particularly by SPELT, Pakistan.

In the next activity, TAs were

asked to write out the Mission and Vision statements of their association. Discussion within groups resolved the difference between the two concepts: while the mission statement should be quite general so that it did not get outdated too quickly, the vision statement needed to be quite specific, spelling out the achievable goals and the time frame within which TAs would achieve these.

Zakia from SPELT followed this session with a discussion on the guidelines of good practice in associations, for attaining credibility. Some specific points stressed for achieving this were, to have rules of conduct, written or unwritten, to be punctual, to maintain regularity in work and activities, to be systematic, and aim to maintain a non-hierarchical structure.

The sessions on the second day were in a way a continuation of the discussion of the main themes articulated on Day 1, viz. (i) How could TAs arrive at some guidelines for good practices to achieve the objectives set by their associations? and (ii) How could TAs find sponsors and donors for their programmes?

In the morning session on 12 February, Jeremy Jacobson and Kandan Elango discussed the issue of support to TAs by sharing information about international support networks available to TAs. The members were informed of the benefits of IATEFL associateship for the TAs and their scheme of wide membership (WMS) for members of the associate TAs at a considerably reduced rate. The second network available to TAs was ELTeCS membership, which links TAs and their members to a wider network, and also provides funding for individual/collaborative projects on issues of language development and social relevance. Next we had a brainstorming session led by Tony O'Brien on various activities to enhance the working and outreach of TAs. All of us tried to think outside the box, in the 'whimsical' mood as it were.



The questions we discussed in groups were:

1. Who do the TAs need (reach out to) and who needs TAs?
2. What can we offer to the sponsors and what can they do for us?
3. How do we visualize the relationship between TAs and the other communities?

The groups came up with a number of responses, which can be collated in the following way:

TAs can reach out to teacher trainers, practicing teachers of English and across the curriculum, teacher trainees, other TAs, publishers, educationists, media, business communities, British Council, other Foundations and NGOs, offering consultancy services, materials, short courses suited to specific needs. The relationship between the TAs and these communities was viewed in terms of mutual support and respect, energizing and enriching each other - in other words, a relationship between partners and collaborators. For services offered, the TAs thought that they should be 'remembered' and their work acknowledged in some form.

In the third session led by Charlie Walker and Laxman Gnawali, the discussion moved from thinking in the abstract way to thinking about what the TAs could do in concrete terms. Ways of raising funds and getting sponsorships were debated and discussed. In this regard we were told how SPELT, Pakistan and NELTA, Nepal were able to tackle the issue of sponsorship. What clearly emerged from the presentations was that offering tangible benefits to the sponsors was an effective way of enlisting their support for the TAs. As a follow up, the TAs were asked to form country groups and think of a forthcoming project, its budget, and prospective sponsors, which was a way of concretizing the discussion in the form of an action plan.

The post-lunch sessions focused on the organizational structure of TAs and different groups were again formed

to discuss the structure, membership, finance, activities and meetings. This was a good exercise as it forced us to think more clearly about the roles and responsibilities of the members of the committees and the importance of having a constitution for effective and transparent functioning of the TAs.

In the last session Chandrika Bhatt and Emma Levy facilitated a discussion on establishing PR. The groups were again asked to focus on any two issues related to the problem of establishing good PR and come up with suggestions / solutions. The groups had a near unanimity of opinion in choosing two issues pertinent to the issue of PR, viz. (i) the visibility/reputation/standing of the PR, and (ii) the person responsible for establishing PR.

The suggestions stressed the need to (i) increase membership at the grassroots level, widen the base and the appeal of the association, gain credibility and circulate information about the work done by the TA, and (ii) select the right person for establishing PR, in other words someone who is skilled in interpersonal skills, and who is persuasive and persistent.

All in all, the activities of the day kept the participants enthusiastically engaged in discussions on various aspects of invigorating and strengthening their TAs and set the stage for creating networks of collaboration among the regional TAs.

On 13 February the session started with a quick brainstorming to explore ways in which TAs could explore areas of cooperation and collaboration. The following possibilities emerged from the discussion:

- taking up regional research projects and other integrated language projects.
- bringing out a regional magazine that publishes theme-based issues with the "best of articles" from different associations
- facilitating participation from different countries in

conferences, reducing the registration fee for the TA members from the respective countries.

- launch of a regional website. This website would be useful for sharing information and also it could work as a portal linking all TA websites of the region. The usefulness of the site can be found out by keeping a track record of how often it is used.

Participants reached an agreement that a regional web site could have a main home page and links to:

- a) the web sites of the member TAs,
- b) articles with the same themes,
- c) news,
- d) research reports,
- e) forthcoming events,
- f) review of key note speeches delivered in the conferences.

With a view to enabling participants to leave the meeting with a clear idea of future cooperation, Jeremy asked the participants from each TA to work together and come out with three action plans to be carried out immediately after the return. Each TA presented its own action plans. However, common action plans from most TAs were

- Disseminate information about the Colombo meeting.
- Activate chapters/branches to increase members.
- Re-launch TAs if dormant, re-launch Journal.
- Design or redesign the website, take feedback from users.
- Work towards IATEFL associate membership.
- Revisit the constitution.
- Explore new sponsors.
- Work to establish effective PR.
- Carry out in-country follow-ups.

A discussion was held to develop a regional action plan. Participants agreed to start regional research projects. SPELT, Pakistan and FORTELL, India decided to take up a research project together, the specific

details were to be decided later.

Thus ended three hectic days of fruitful discussion and regional networking, coupled with the hospitality of the British Council, Sri Lanka, refreshed by the sea breeze coming from the sea-shores.

**A Workshop on Writing for Upper Primary Classes was held at Udaipur, India from September 4-5, 2004 : A Brief Report**

*By A. L. Khanna*

A two day workshops on writing for the teachers at the upper primary classes was organized by Vidya Bhawan Education Centre, Udaipur from Sep. 4-5, 2004. It was attended by thirty six teacher participants from various schools, including the schools run by Vidya Bhawan Society, in and around Udaipur. The resource persons were professor R.K. Agnihotri and Dr. A.L. Khanna of Delhi University (life members of FORTELL).

The workshop began with a discussion of the following :

- What is writing?
- What are the types of writing?
- What are the steps involved in writing?

The participants were divided into groups to reflect on these issues and were asked to make their presentations. In the post presentation sessions on the first day, besides giving the participants examples of various types of writing, the concepts of coherence and cohesion were discussed at length and examples were provided to help them understand and internalize these abstract concepts. Afterwards, the participants were given a text to analyze in terms of coherence and cohesion. They were also asked to rewrite the text to make it more coherent and cohesive.

On the second day the participants were introduced to the concept of evaluation of a written text on the basis of holistic and analytic scoring criteria. The scoring criteria were explained to the participants with a detailed discussion of each component of the scale by citing

several examples. In order to provide more practice in the use of these criteria, the participants were asked to evaluate a passage both on the basis of the holistic and analytic criteria. It was noticed that there was no significant difference between the scores obtained on these twin methods of evaluation. Yet, the participants felt that it was a better idea to evaluate classroom assignments on the analytical scoring criteria because it provided a more detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the students and therefore could help in monitoring teacher inputs and classroom teaching. In the last session of the workshop on the second day the participants were provided some essays written by upper primary students and were asked to analyse them. In the light of their analysis the participants suggested the steps that could be taken to help the students improve their writing abilities, including the mechanics of writing.

**Client Centric English Teaching at the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS): A Brief Report**

*By Soma Bhattacharya*

The National Institute of Open Schooling (formerly the National Open School) was set up in 1989 as an autonomous organization under the MHRD, Government of India, to cater to a prioritized client group through the Distance Education mode. The objective of this mission was to provide an opportunity to millions of willing and potential learners who could not complete school education for a number of various reasons. Thus, the Open School system was designed so as to equip these learners with sufficient scholastic abilities so that they would be able to respond meaningfully to their environment while pursuing their chosen fields of endeavour. One such area in which learners opt for in very large numbers is English.

As mentioned earlier, the NIOS caters to a clientele for whom education is linked to their daily

survival needs. Therefore, the educational inputs for such learners have to be need-based and functional in nature. And given the fact that NIOS operates in the Distance Education mode, it is a challenge because all that the teaching-learning process can utilize are the study materials prepared for the learners, which are self-instructional in nature and supported by personal contact programmes over weekends at the study centers. It thus follows that all major inputs must be contained in the study materials since that is the primary source of information for the learners. English Language Teaching follows this challenge and gives to the learners lessons with all four language skills represented in them. So an English language lesson under this pattern will have a reading comprehension passage followed by integrated grammar and vocabulary activities, writing tasks that follow to a large extent thematically from the passage (i.e. a descriptive reading passage might lead on to an exercise on writing descriptive paragraphs), and finally communicative tasks based on certain selected language functions. Learners are given a model following which they are led step by step through the mechanics of the process involved in developing a piece of language use. For example, if the target is describing people in a paragraph, then learners will first be directed to those passages in the reading text that offer a model of such descriptions. Then they will be told step by step how each point was arrived at-topic, information, organization, coherence, editing etc. And finally to give the learners a feeling of achievement a self-check activity is designed which might be guided in nature or a task completion activity. The communicative tasks are, as mentioned earlier, based on language functions detailed in the syllabus. Here too, learners are given a model following which they are guided on how to converse along similar lines in real life situations.

In the latest course being developed for the Senior Secondary



level, audio material is integrated with the learning materials. So, students will have access to an audio cassette as part of the learning package; listening and speaking are, however, not tested at term-end examinations. To make language learning functional and meaningful for learners. The English study materials expose learners not just to a variety of text types but also to a variety of writing tasks, communicative tasks and also activities on study skills and reference skills. Learners' special real life needs are taken care of by (i) training them in interpreting data represented in different forms- tables, charts, pie diagrams, time tables etc.(ii) exposing them to samples of public utility forms and guiding them on how to use those forms and(iii) training them in understanding literature contained in newspapers, journals, magazines etc. in lessons with the sole objective of developing reading comprehension.

Thus even though the challenges of Language teaching through the Distance Mode are many, yet the NIOS takes care to reach the unreached-so far by tailoring client specific courses and evolving delivery mechanisms suitable to the learning styles and habits of intended clientele. The fact that the learner is central in any activity relating to course development is demonstrated also in the physical and qualitative aspects of the course materials like bulk of learning pages, vocabulary used to develop lessons, illustrations, theme, etc. In conclusion, it can be said that it is perhaps this pragmatic approach that accounts for the high percentage enrolment in the subject of English.

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE SEMINAR FOR TEACHERS

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Information may also please be sent relating to innovative experiments tried in the areas of teaching of English Language/ Literature for inclusion under the column **REPORTS**.

## ARTICLE

### An Overview of English Language Teaching in Schools managed by MCD.

By Kusum Sharma

MCD schools are the backbone of primary education in Delhi. Though there are Sarvodaya Vidyalayas, aided schools and public schools, where the primary education is also provided, yet the number of MCD primary schools is largest of all. Delhi has more than 1900 primary schools now, where more than 20,000 teachers strive to educate the youngsters.

English Language is taught as a subject from Class I in all the schools of MCD. Hence the major concern of ELT focuses on:

- academic & professional qualification of teachers.
- classroom problems.
- time allocation for teaching English.
- resource support available for ELT.
- suggestions for improvement.

As far as academic & professional qualifications are concerned, the teachers are well-qualified to teach at primary level. They do possess rich experience of teaching as well. Almost all the teachers have studied English up to Class X level as a subject, but most of them do not have any professional training in Teaching of English, till date, is not a compulsory paper in the ETE/JBT Diploma Course. Most of the teachers have attended workshop/seminar/orientation programmes, which are being conducted either by MCD or SCERT, but the focus on teaching of English in these 21-day programmes is again not sufficient. Hence, most of the teachers, who have been entrusted with the responsibility of teaching at primary level, require professional training.

Academic & resource support available to the teachers in schools is not satisfactory. Even the sufficient numbers of textbooks are not available in most of the schools. A few short-story books and dictionaries are available in the name of resource

material, which do not cater to the needs of teachers or students.

As far as the school timetable is concerned, generally one period of 30 minutes is allotted to ELT from Class I to V, six days a week. Besides, not many co-curricular activities related to English are generally organised at school level/zonal level. MCD schools do organise science fair, exhibitions and competitions in all other subjects, but only calligraphy competition in English and that too only for students. There are many activities/competitions organised for MCD teachers such as debate, poetry recitation and declamation, but only Hindi. No incentive has been given for the promotion of English Language Teaching so far.

Almost all the teachers feel that English Language Teaching is difficult in MCD schools as no parental support/guidance is available to children. New textbooks have been introduced, but teachers do not have proper guidelines in terms of unit-wise syllabus or evaluation pattern. There are still many ELT issues that require immediate attention of the MCD authorities.

#### A PROFILE OF Ms. S.K. RAM



Ms. S. K. Ram's name is perhaps one of the best known names in the field of ELT in India.

Her name is synonymous with English Language Materials production. One of the pioneers in the field in India, she has dedicated her life in the cause of enhancing the quality of teaching and learning of English in Indian Class Rooms.

She began teaching English in a Govt. School in U.P. in 1952 soon after completing her M.A. and L.T. (the equivalent those days of B. Ed.). She was a principal too for a short while before she joined the newly started E.L.T.I. at Allahabad in 1956.

Along with Prof. C. S. Bandhari and Mr. V. A. Hinkley, she put in yeoman's work in building up the institute. The ELTI (English Language

Teaching Institute) had been set up with financial support of Nuffield Foundation, U.K. and academic support of the British Council, U.K. It ran four month intensive in-service teacher training courses and summer institutes of four to six weeks duration for English Lecturers in B. Ed. Colleges. The Structural Method was being assured in and appeared to be a giant leap towards systematizing language teaching from the grip of grammar-translation and direct method.

The need of the hour then was materials production so that the structural syllabus could be taught and practiced step-by-step from class to class, moving up a gradient of simple to complex. The Institute therefore, fell into the task of preparing text books, supplementary readers, books of methodology, series of activities called Drills & Exercises. They also prepared a battery of wall charts for structure drills and picture composition. Between 1956 to 1963, she contributed in bringing out 31 books published by Orient Longman. The texts of the Read and Learn Series were trend-setters. They had accompanying gramophone records, brought out in collaboration with HMV. Rural students therefore had the benefit of listening to native speakers of English.

Such was the commitment of the threesome at the ELTI that they gifted their royalty to the institute to make further expansion possible. All three had been students of Jack Nunnan of the Institute of Education, University of London and he took pride in the progress they made.

In 1963, Ms. S. K. Ram moved to the Regional College of Education, Bhubaneswar and then Ajmer, where she was instrumental in starting a new course within B. Ed., with special interest in English. This course was affiliated to the University of Rajasthan, which perhaps helps us understand how and why the University of Rajasthan has been more ELT-friendly than many universities in the North.

In 1992 she joined the NIE (National Institute of Education) which was a branch of the NCERT. She set up the English unit and headed it until her super annuation. Not only did her team at NCERT prepare texts for CBSE and other school boards, but she collaborated extensively with the Materials Production Department at CIEFL to give quality teaching materials. She worked as Education Consultant for OUP from 1989 to Nov. 2000.

In her own words Prof. C. S. Bhandhari and Dr. M. L. Tickoo have been the strongest influences in her work. While the former has been a mentor and guide, she appreciates the intuitive insights the latter has in exploiting materials.

Asked if the CLT answers all our questions, Ms Ram says that there should be a happy amalgam of all approaches; each approach has its strength which should not be lost sight of.

Asked what work FORTELL should undertake, she says that it should work extensively with school teachers. "A successful teacher is one who is in love with her students, subject and her teaching. A good teacher should be a good reader. Let us pool our resources and run classes for underprivileged children," she says. "FORTELL could adopt two or three schools and over a sustained long period of time interact with teachers and students there". With other senior citizens she is working on a Reading for Pleasure Programme. We wish her success in all her endeavors and look forward to fruitful involvement with FORTELL!

*by Mukti Sanyal*

#### **Delhi S.C.E.R.T. Project on English Text Books**

Soon after the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), New Delhi decided to produce its own text books for all the subjects taught in the primary and upper primary classes of Delhi schools, it formed several teams of highly

experienced teachers to handle each subject separately. It organised a workshop of 25 University, College, DIET and school teachers (many of them FORTELL members) on April 24, 2003 at the Dept. of Linguistics, University of Delhi to reflect on the issues involved in preparing English textbooks for children studying in the state funded schools of Delhi. Some of the guidelines, that were agreed upon were the following : The materials should be

- a) as far as possible authentic.
- b) be interesting, challenging and thought provoking.
- c) match the cognitive levels and interests of the children at each level.
- d) be related to the lives and experiences of the children in rural, semi-urban and urban settings.
- e) match with the syllabus for each level.

It was resolved that since the time available for preparing the textbooks was less than a year each team should make a judicious and constructive use of the existing materials too. Further, in order that children are exposed to a variety of text types it was felt that the text books should cover a wide range of texts including poems, stories, biographies, adventures, newspaper clippings, reports, ads etc. Everyone agreed that the textbooks should inspire children to think and explore on their own rather than simply memorize and reproduce what they had read before.

The participants were divided into groups and granted freedom to have their group meetings to select their materials, debate on their compatibility with the parameter/guidelines agreed upon earlier and produce suitable exercises and activities for each unit/lesson. These materials were periodically screened by the chairperson and suitable changes were made in them in consultation with the authors of the particular book.

Participants at the end of the project felt that if there had been a little more time, these materials could have been tried out and fine tuned before



they were sent for final printing. But such things generally don't happen in projects of such gigantic stature. Therefore, in such cases the first edition after its use in the respective classes is taken as a sort of test trial, and necessary changes of all kinds are made in the second edition.

Since the textbooks are already in use in Delhi schools, the teachers using them have already started sending their reactions to these books through various fora. Some of these reactions are reproduced here.

*-A.L. Khanna, a member  
English Textbooks Committee*

### BOOK-I ENGLISH

[Delhi: Delhi Bureau of Text Books]

The book is introduced to the students of class I with colourful pictures on two pages depicting the busy life in Delhi. As mentioned in the preface, the book is meant for the Delhi child and she finds the pictures very interesting and familiar recognising almost everything given in the pictures making the child feel excited about the contents.

The first units comprising four lessons are more conversation-based introducing new words and antonyms with pictures accompanying the words for the beginner.

The notes 'for the teacher' help the teacher to motivate students to participate in conversation and teach new words. The four line sets meant for the exercise are however not sufficient for practice; they define what the student is expected to learn to write after the lesson is over. The activities suggested are to make classroom situation interesting and help the students feel free to ask questions and interact with the teacher and other class mates. The words in 'lost and found' relate to a new situation and the lesson introduces question words like 'where' and 'who' the students are expected to recognise and relate the sounds to the English alphabet.

The book has been designed to teach the students in the best possible

way by the teacher. The lessons also motivate the students to learn and think about new words. Much depends on the efficiency of the teacher in thinking of innovative activities and setting the ball rolling in the class. The teacher is also expected to design 'drill exercises' and have good conversational skills.

The switch over from simple to difficult sentences is sometimes sudden and not gradual. The introduction of the phrase 'strong enough' at lesson 8 level seems to be too high a level for Class I. The students have been asked to answer the question 'How does the earth smell on the first rainy day?' The choice of words has not been given, making the question a little difficult for small children to answer. The lesson 'Rain, Rain' is interesting with a four line stanza on 'Rain'. The questions given in the chapter are meant to introduce new words but the words have not been enlisted.

The review exercises given at the end of each unit in order to test the vocabulary are quite comprehensive and within the reach of the students' set of vocabulary. Appendix I enlists the set of words the child is supposed to have learnt by the end of the session and serves as a guide for the teachers, students and parents for examination purpose. Appendix II includes poems, and rhymes. However, 'Busy Lizzy' is quite lengthy. 'A flicking tongue and a flashing claw' require a careful observation on the part of the students to be able to understand and recite the poem.

The concept of matching sound and alphabet introduced in the book is new to the parents of lower socio-economic group. They still find 'alphabet to words' approach easier for English language.

The new approach 'from sound to alphabet' however shall definitely equip the children with better linguistic skills for the future.

*by Sunita Ahuja*

### BOOK-II ENGLISH

[Delhi: Delhi Bureau of Text Books]

The book is based on some basic

principles of language learning. The teachers of class II will definitely feel that this book intervenes child's psychological and daily experiences with various subjects. Lesson 1-4 are related to day to day activities of children. Children can really learn (a lot) all the skills like reading, writing, listening and speaking through exercises and activities given at the end of each lesson. Children take keen interest in linking the rhyming sounds and phrases with their own activities (of daily routine). 'Lick' and 'bite' are comparatively difficult words for class II students though visuals and illustrations definitely help them understand the meaning. However the word 'gulp' has been introduced only in the exercise portion but is missing from the poem. Various sounds have been introduced in the poem 'The Cow in the Storm' but on the whole the poem is a bit difficult for class II. Students are taught by way of pictures and illustrations that water should not be wasted like shown in the visuals. Teachers can ask them to give suggestions on how water can be saved in a better way.

In lessons 11-12 questions have been asked in the portion 'Reading comprehension'. Students of class II are not familiar with different types of tenses, so it would be really difficult for them to frame answers using different tenses. Reading comprehension should have questions like Fill in the blanks \_\_\_. Use of degrees of comparison in lesson 8 and 13 will definitely help them understand the three degrees of comparison. Teachers can efficiently tell them (make them familiar) taking different examples in the class like small, smaller, smallest and so on. Children learn a lot when they are asked to match the columns 'draw different shapes of certain things like clouds, leaves etc. It is good that after each lesson there is some activity 'For the Teacher'. This helps the teacher make the students work in groups or as individuals. Teachers can in this way help them answer certain questions verbally too.



### BOOK-III ENGLISH

[Delhi: Delhi Bureau of Text Books]

As mentioned in the preface, teachers of Class III will surely realise that the book presents children's psychological and daily experiences with various objectives. Children who come from lower socio-economic background have been kept in mind. Simple exercises and activities have been linked with the natural activities of the children. The book will prove to be quite effective in making children learn all the skills such as reading, writing, speaking and learning. Word meanings are given, which help children to learn new words along with the meanings. Almost all portions of Grammar have been included in the lessons, to name a few for example, match the following, writing opposites - Lesson IV, making nouns - Lesson VI, Exclamation Mark - Lesson X, Narration - Lesson XI, Use of articles - Lesson XII, Use of is/am/are, was/were, use of prepositions and exercises on making sentences have also been included. A number of activities for students as well as teachers have been described. Lesson XIV is designed in such a way that the children will be taught to develop a paragraph from the verbal input given. Children can thus engage with the text and transact its meaning among themselves.

As the children who read these books come from the lower socio-economic background, teachers can encourage them to use the language naturally.

by Shobha Tahlilani

### PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

1. FORTELL members (Delhi University English teachers) are engaged in preparing English *Textbooks for Undergraduates of Delhi University for Streams A, B and C*. The books are likely to be ready in July 2005 and replace the existing books of English.
2. FORTELL members (college, DIET and school teachers) are working on a pilot package for *enhancing proficiency skills in*

English of inservice primary school teachers of MCD schools in Delhi.

### Activities Bank for young learners of English in State funded Schools.

FORTELL members feel that since most of the materials writers address themselves to the needs of young learners of English going to private schools, they need to prepare a resource book of activities and games for students studying in the state funded schools at the primary classes. Members are planning to interact with the practising teachers, pool the activities they find interesting and successful and try them out in more schools. Finally, they would compile these activities for wider use.

### BOOK REVIEWS



**BUSINESS COMMUNICATION TODAY** (Seventh Edition) by C. L. BOVEE, J. V. THILL, & B. E. SCHATZMAN

[DELHI: PEARSON EDUCATION, INC., 2004. (First published in 2002)].

In a very unique way, *Business Communication Today* has evaluated the language of the corporate world that is an essential ingredient for effective and efficient intensification. The evaluation has been done keeping the readers, especially the students, in mind. The way the authors have handled such a complicated and complex topic has made the book an asset even for the instructors.

The book has been divided into seven parts comprising several chapters. Each part deals with different segments and features, which are important characteristics for business communication. At the very outset, the authors discuss in detail the basics of the language of the corporate world, also dealing with the 'mastering' of the skills especially needed for 'listening' and oral communication. The book also discusses the communication beyond the boundary of a particular

culture, rather how the typified communication varies, if it takes places interculturally. This feature one usually doesn't see in most of the books on business communication.

The following two parts evaluate the writing processes and the use of these processes in the format of messages. Taking into account the role and application of technology in the corporate world, the book has a chapter on 'writing for the web', which discusses the technicalities of corresponding through web. The discussion continues even in the next part where the book describes several forms of brief messages, like the 'good-news', 'goodwill', 'bad news', and 'persuasive' messages. The part four evaluates the search for and communicating of information. This part also ends with the other chapter that explains how companies today use Internet and other technologies to communicate information. The next part deals with the theme of proposals and writing skills necessary for such a theme.

One exclusive thing about this book is that it really seems to have taken into account the change of the technological impact in the world of business communication. Probably that is why it has chapters dedicated to the world of web and e-mails. Good oral presentations are essential for influencing the people one communicates with. This book has chapters concerning the details about how to write a better oral presentation. The concluding part of the book deals with one of the concurrent themes of the corporate life -- the human resource department. The book has kept even that in mind. So it explains in detail about writing a resume and application letters, as well as interviewing for employment and the following up of it.

Probably keeping the instructors in mind, the book has one of the most interesting parts, and that is, the 'Exercises'. The students are also thought a lot about and so the book continues to give sources for enhancing the knowledge, like testing, applying, practicing, and expanding the

knowledge that they gain from each chapter. Another unique feature of the book for the students is the section of 'Appendix'. It contains five sections in it that elaborately discuss the technicalities necessary for business communication. Henceforth, the book serves the purpose of knowing the subject thoroughly.

*by Himadri Roy*

**Business Communication – Concepts, Cases and Applications,**  
P.D. Chaturvedi, Mukesh Chaturvedi,  
[Pearson Education (Singapore)  
Pte.Ltd. 2004, India.]

Effective Business Communication necessitates a thorough understanding of the conceptual framework of Communication and an astute application of the principals laid therein. Focusing towards developing total communication skills, this book provides not only the theory of communication with its definition, nature, process, types etc, but also a wide selection of case studies and various applications that showcase the proper and effective use of these concepts. It views Business Communication as a complete strategy and not just a purpose driven, managerial ability. Hence, it attempts to understand the process of communication from different levels in the Business scenario – the personal level, the organizational level and the augmented level.

The book is organized into four parts – Theory of Communication (Part 1), Forms of Communication (Part 2), Applications (Part 3), and Language (Part 4). Part one describes the principal concepts as well as the process and attributes of an effective communication. Emphasizing the role and responsibility of both sender and receiver in making a communication effective, the book advocates a reciprocal empathy as the meaning of a message is in the perception of the receiver. Communication is, thus, a manifestation of the personality of both the sender and the receiver. The book illustrates how a proper understanding

of these concepts and their effective and extensive use in both formal as well as informal business communication helps the management in planning, directing, coordinating and controlling the employees, materials and production.

Part two deals with the two different ways of communication – verbal and non- verbal. Verbal communication includes oral communication and written business communication comprising of letters, memos and reports of various kinds. Non – verbal communication, on the other hand, deals with body language of the communicators. The book discusses in detail the essentials of effective written communication – pre-writing planning; identification of purpose for writing; consideration for audience; choice of appropriate language; and use of effective tone. It provides detailed discussions, illustrations and samples of both short informal reports and long formal reports. The methods of documentation and the use of tables, charts and other graphic presentations are also aptly dealt with. This is very effectively complemented by a detailed discussion on Oral Communication, ranging from face- to- face to telephonic conversation on the one hand and Non – verbal Communication on the other. A need, however, is keenly felt for an inclusion of other forms of written Business Communication techniques like Notification, Agendas, and Drafting Minutes of meetings as well as making a summary or a précis of long business reports. An inclusion of techniques of citation and using bibliographical and research tools while making project reports should similarly have been considered.

The most conspicuous and novel section of the book is the third part. Bringing together both the verbal and non – verbal forms of business communication, this part deals with their application in Negotiation Skills (including the entire strategy of initiating, discussing and concluding the process of bargaining), Presentation Skills (including preparation, clarity of purpose,

understanding of the audience needs, structuring of information, choice of proper visual aids and the final performance), Project Reports, Writing CVs, Group Discussions and Attending Interviews. Recognizing a need for training in Business Etiquette, a chapter on the same has been included. Similarly, a detailed discussion on the written analysis of cases, which is an effective tool in training future Business leaders, has also been included.

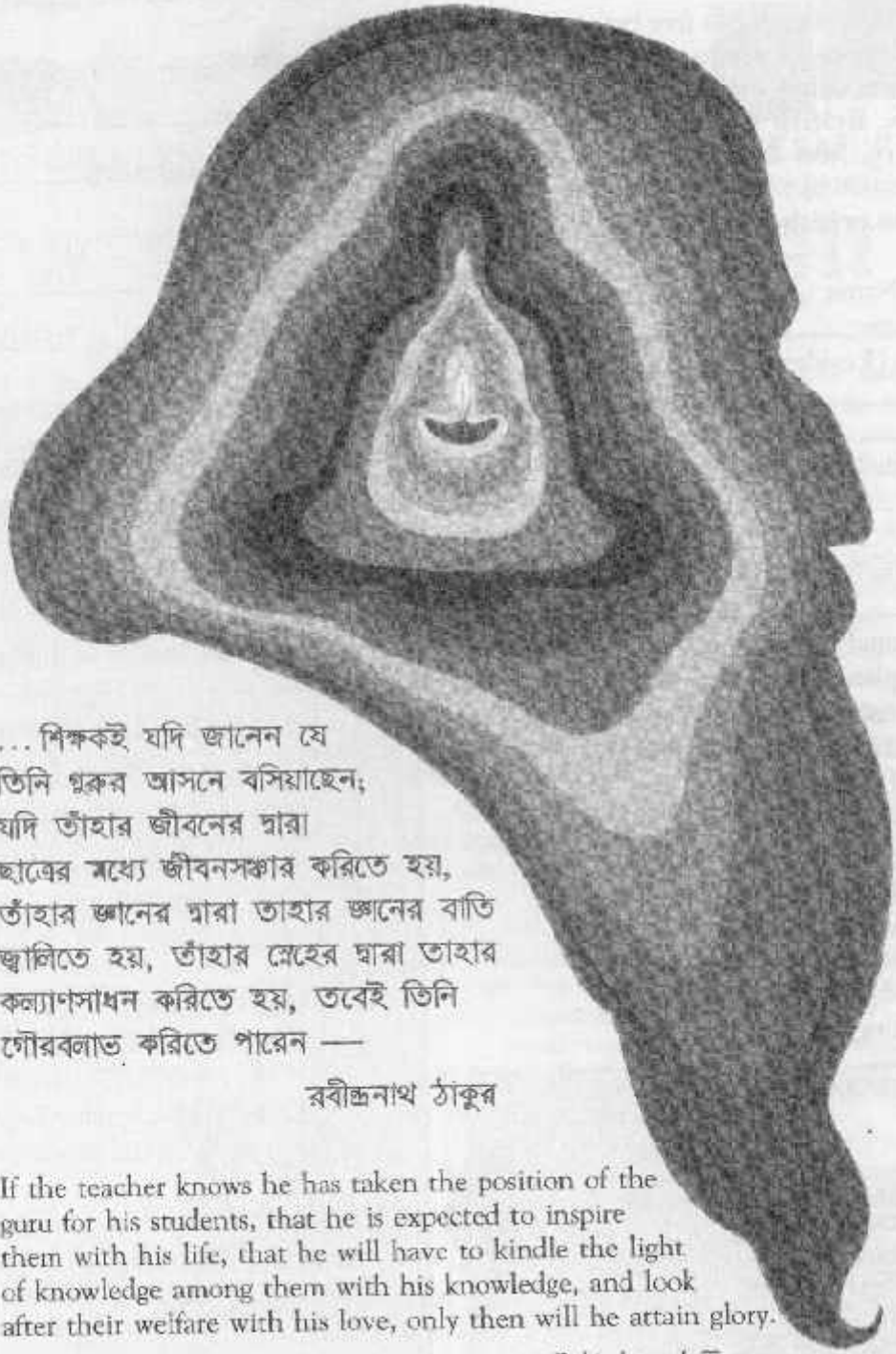
Part Four, which forms the concluding section of the book, deals with language skills for effective communication. Giving due credence to the fact that a Business Communication – no matter how strong in content and the technique applied – would fail to be an effective one, if the basics of language used therein are not correct; the book provides a useful compendium of essential language skills.

However, a chapter on E-Correspondence, delineating the use of technology in communication, including the use of e-mail, SMS and teleconferencing is quite conspicuous by its absence. The inclusion of the same, one feels would have greatly contributed to the overall effectiveness of this otherwise comprehensive attempt.

The book is written in a lucid, user-friendly style replete with examples and illustrations. Every chapter is preceded by a clear delineation of its learning objectives and followed by Case Studies, Questions to Answer, Summary and Review Questions. Important points have also been highlighted and summarized on the margins to make them easily accessible in the case of a hurried perusal. Thus, the book will definitely be very useful for teaching and training as well as for self-development of teachers, executives and students.

*by Divya Bajpai Jha*

**ARTICLES/ BOOK REVIEWS/  
NOTICES OF BOOKS** relating to  
the teaching of English Language/  
Literature are invited from members.



... শিক্ষকই যদি জানেন যে  
তিনি গুরুর আসনে বসিয়াছেন;  
যদি তাঁহার জীবনের দ্বারা  
ছাত্রের মধ্যে জীবনসঞ্চার করিতে হয়,  
তাঁহার জ্ঞানের দ্বারা তাহার জ্ঞানের বাতি  
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কল্যাণসাধন করিতে হয়, তবেই তিনি  
গৌরবলাভ করিতে পারেন —

রবীন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর

If the teacher knows he has taken the position of the guru for his students, that he is expected to inspire them with his life, that he will have to kindle the light of knowledge among them with his knowledge, and look after their welfare with his love, only then will he attain glory.

Rabindranath Tagore



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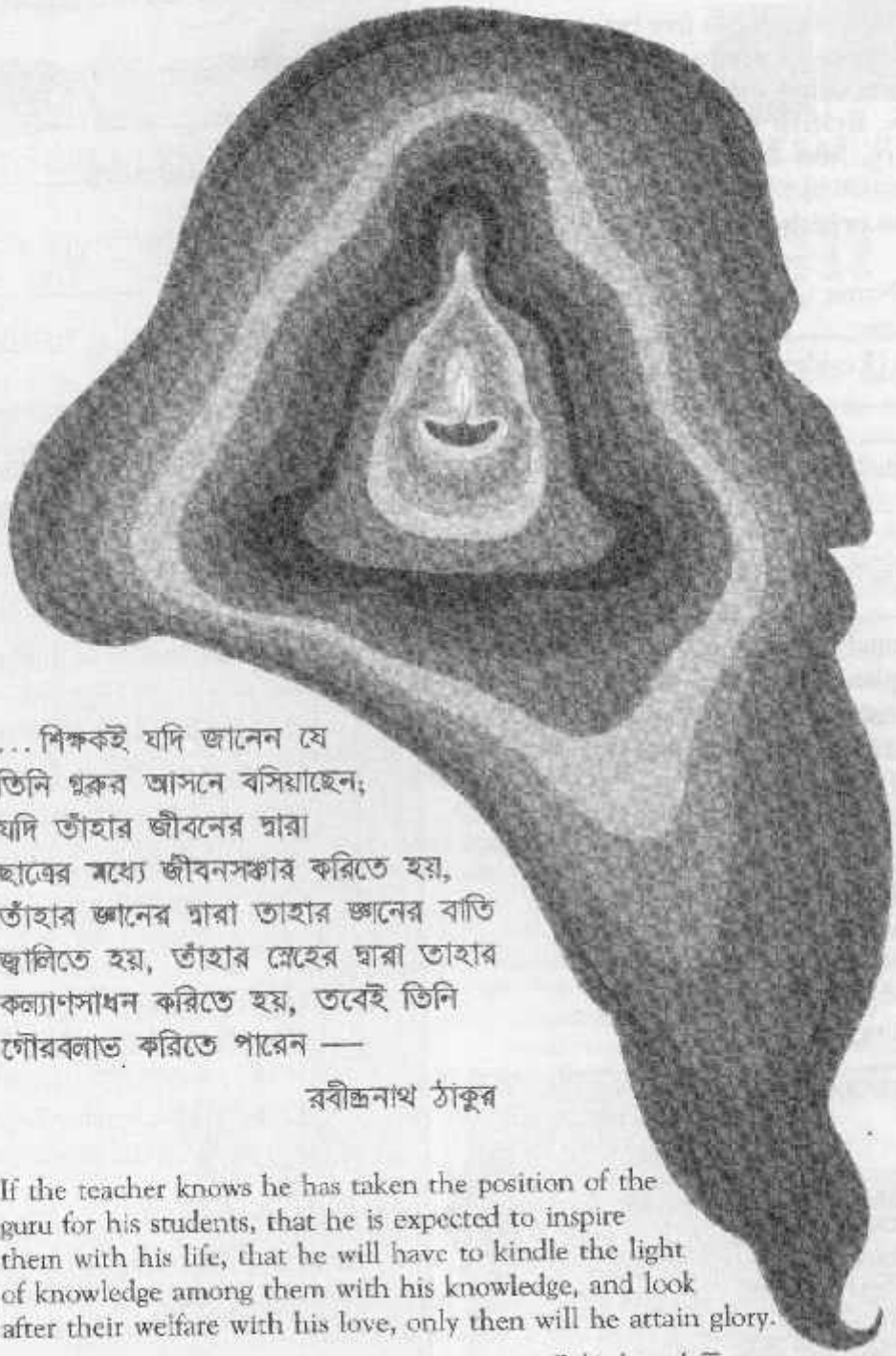
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The Secretary

**FORTELL**

A1A/33 B, Janakpuri, New Delhi- 110058.

e-mail : a\_l\_khanna@yahoo.co.in

## MEMBERSHIP FORM OF FORTELL

1. Surname: \_\_\_\_\_
2. First Name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Address (Residence): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Telephone No.: \_\_\_\_\_
5. E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Institution/Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Professional Interests. Indicate by putting tick/ticks.

- ☐ Curriculum Development
- ☐ English for Young Learners
- ☐ Materials Development
- ☐ Communications Skills Development
- ☐ Teacher Training
- ☐ Testing
- ☐ Technology in ELT
- ☐ Literature Teaching

9. I enclose my membership fee of Rs. \_\_\_\_\_ as per the details ticked below:

i) Type of Membership:

Annual Membership ☐

Life Membership ☐

ii) Membership Status

☐ Individual ☐ Student ☐ Institution

Signature : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

*All those who became a members before April 2004, are requested to fill this membership form in order to activate the facilities through e-correspondence.*