

**ENGLISH TEACHERS VERSUS THE STANDARD OF ENGLISH TEACHING
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BATTICALOA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA -
A CRITICAL STUDY**

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Introduction:

Batticaloa District is divided in four educational zones such as Batticaloa, Batticaloa Central, Kalkudah, and Pattiruppu. A total number of 118,715 from grade 1 to grade 11 and 6,278 students from grade 12 and grade 13 are studying respectively. There are 371 appointed English teachers are teaching in the District. But the District needs a total of 671 English teachers, where as the deficiency is 300 teachers. That is 45% of teachers are needed further to fill the vacancies in the District.

The available teachers do not cater the needs of the District. But the issue behind this research does not see whether the available English teachers are sufficient or not, instead it looks the standard of English teaching knowledge and their own standard of English knowledge.

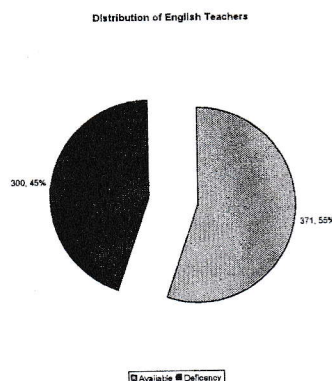


Figure - 1

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of this study are to check;

1. *the knowledge of English language of the teachers,*
2. *the quality of teaching on English language,*
3. *the level of their professional qualification, and*
4. *how to develop their English knowledge if they need.*

Methodology:

A basic survey was conducted to check the available teachers and the needs of the District. Based on that,

- 1. a questionnaire was developed both in English and Tamil to check the standard of English education, English language knowledge, speaking level of English language, and the standard of English language teaching methodology,*
- 2. personal interviews with the teachers and present and retired officials had been contacted in order to get adequate information to finalize the result, and*
- 3. observing the teachers inside their class-rooms to check their teaching methodology.*

Sampling:

A minimum of 20% of teachers had been selected randomly from each zone.

Data Analysis:

Based on the above methodology, the results had been analyzed. Data had also been analyzed using descriptive statistics from the Zonal Educational offices about the educational and professional qualifications of the teachers.

Results and Discussions:

According to the data analysis, the following findings had been identified:

- 1. nearly 45% of English teachers are needed to fill the required vacancies,*
- 2. 74% of them are specially trained teachers where as only 1% of them have Diploma in Teaching English as Second Language qualification,*
- 3. 14% of the total population is untrained and do not have any professional qualification,*
- 4. on their highest educational qualification 70%, 18%, 12% obtain GCE (O/L), GCE (A/L), and degree respectively. Out of the 12% degree holders only 2% had offered English as a subject in their degree,*
- 5. most of the teachers do not teach in English inside their class-rooms,*
- 6. most of them do not utilize the allocated time schedule with the students due to the class strength and structure,*
- 7. 65% of the teachers give private tuition classes where they take much effort to teach English language rather than in their class-rooms,*
- 8. most of the specially trained and graduate teachers hesitate to speak in English inside their class-rooms. They are not reluctant but hesitant,*
- 9. the officials do not take much interest (honestly) to improve the standard of the teachers. Rather they act according to the governments orders and circular letters,*
- 10. the teachers want to obtain a degree to get increment in their salary rather gaining their English knowledge. Hence they offer subjects other than English*

- since they feel it would be easy to study,
11. no Sri Lankan universities and higher educational institutions offer any degree/diploma courses specially designed for the English teachers,
 12. 70% of the schools which have GCE (A/L) classes do not conduct English in the class-rooms. Either the students do not attend the class or the schools do not have adequate English teachers, and
 13. the curriculum does not coop with the standard of the students especially with the rural schools where as most of the appointed English teachers in these areas are asked to teach other subjects such as science, mathematics, social science, etc. than teaching English.

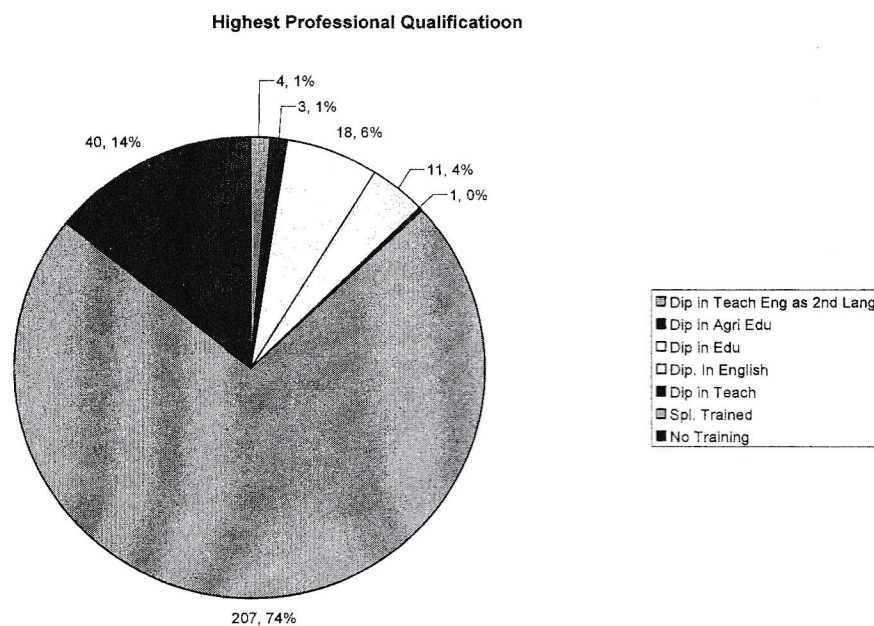


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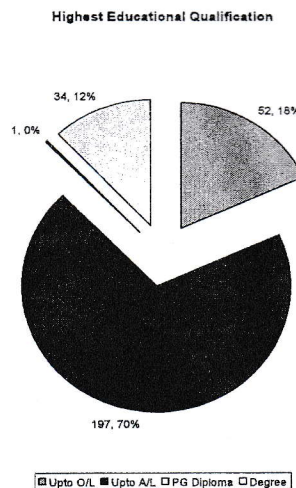


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Recommendations:

Based on the results, the following recommendations are made to improve the standard of the English language and skills of the appointed English teacher:

1. the teachers must be observed in regular intervals by higher officials and authorities other than their ISAs and officials from their own zone or districts,
2. after their appointment, immediate intensive courses/programmes on teaching and learning English language must be conducted,
3. the policy of the government should be changed in the designing and developing curricula for different levels of schools such as rural and urban,
4. the government policy on appointing English teachers should be revised. That is, for the appointment of an English teacher, the basic qualification must be a diploma in English rather having a credit (C) or 'B' pass in GCE (O/L),
5. seminars and workshops must be conducted on regular basis with the sincere participation of the teachers,
6. an independent team of specialists must be formed in the District/Provincial/Central level to inspect the quality of English teaching of the teachers. The team may comprise university English teachers/lecturers and retired English teachers,
7. the 14% of the untrained teachers are to be trained immediately,
8. while giving training, the teachers from the Tamil speaking communities should be sent to Sinhala speaking areas in order to improve their speaking standard and come out from reluctance in speaking,
9. universities and such higher educational institutions must start degree/diploma courses incorporating English teaching/learning methodologies along with English literature as a part of their curriculum to cater the needs of the English teachers,
10. the schools and educational zones should have a cordial relationship with the higher educational institutions such as universities to monitor the standard of English teaching of their English teachers, and
11. teachers below 45 years of age must be given further training, since the teachers above 45 years of age have good command in the English language.

Conclusion:

This research is only a beginning to test the standard of the English knowledge of the appointed English teachers. And the present area of this research should be widened to check the quality throughout the country consisting both the teachers and students and both rural and urban areas. While widening the area, a general standard of the English education (both medium and the language) can be formed and a general policy can be formulated with the help of the code-makers.