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**Reading Material for B. Com LL.B. X Semester**

## **The Importance of English in India: Various Purposes**

English is undoubtedly an international language today. Due its global presence in almost all lifestyles, it has become more important today than ever before. Once upon a time it was the British arrival in India that introduced English to the Indians who were expected to be better clerks for facilitating administrative purposes. However, today English has become the part and parcel of Indian life. It will not be exaggeration if English is called the life-line today. It has surpassed Hindi and has become a sort of national language linking and bringing together people belonging to different and diversified cultures, geographical regions, mindsets, attitudes and so on. It will not be overestimation if it is termed as a language that has united people under an umbrella. English in India has been the language of trade and commerce and with globalization at its height, import and export is as common as the use of English for its purpose. It is the library language and the language of education. Most parents send their children to the English medium schools. Even otherwise, the students are advised to opt for Semi-English for their core subjects like Maths and Science at their secondary and higher secondary levels.

There is a significant paradigm shift in the realm of English Language Teaching (henceforth ELT) in India. The communicative approach has been followed everywhere so that the students become conversant in English after their schooling. The use extensive use of ICT in education has changed the educational scenario significantly. The gap between the literate and the illiterate, between the educated and the uneducated is narrowing. The rural and tribal area are also witnessing sea

change with the students from such neglected areas coming out with flying colours. Mobile phones and computers have become very common today. The introduction of MALL and CALL in the teaching of English and the concepts like edutainment and infotainment has become catch-phrases. English is seen being used in all the sectors from education to entertainment and from fashion to fantasy. Many literary artists have proved their mettle producing masterpieces and many of them have been acknowledged world-wide and few of them have received prestigious awards. Translations, adaptations and transcreations have taken the centre stage. The novels and stories have been adapted for films and there are script writers producing radio plays and so on. The English news channels are views widely and the hot discussions and debates are taking place in fluent and spontaneous English. The parliamentary debates and arguments are also taking shape in English as the politicians or people's representatives from some states avoid the use of Hindi. English has become not just a link language but the language of status and prestige. Hence, the crop of English Speaking classes is also seen everywhere.

Few enlightened Indians learned the values of liberty, fraternity and equality from the French Revolution and other sources which was availed through English. The British rule brought many evils in its train but the biggest and probably the only positive thing or virtue they brought is the English language and English education though their motive was not pious. It is remarkable and interesting to note that most of the freedom fighters who selflessly fought for our freedom were barristers. They got the degrees educating themselves in England and had the first hand experience of the laws and rules. This helped igniting the Indian minds against the brutality and foreign rule of the British and they spared no opportunity in revolting against them. Since India was a British colony, the rules and regulations amidst fewer rights and more duties were obvious. As the result of this, the Indians had to follow the British

rules or British made rules for over 150 years. The British laws did help to eradicate some social evils like Sati custom/tradition. However, by and large, the rules were made by the British for the exploitation of the Indians-the subject race. The Indian ethos was so much used to the British laid rules and laws that they were blindly followed in the years after their departure as well. The backbone of legal system- Indian Penal Code was introduced by the British and we have following it even today. Because of all these reasons, the language of law remained English. Moreover, the British English became the language of law. English in India is the language of law as well. Many British-made rules and regulations, concepts and terms, words and phrases are still in vogue. Hence, English is heart and soul of our legal system. Most of the primary sources of law are available in English alone and it is the language of court in honourable High Courts and the honourable Supreme Court.

When we have a close look at British English, we find that it is a borrowed language. It has undergone numerous modifications and changes over the years. It has got lexicon from the Latin, Greek, French languages. Hence many English roots are not English! This added to its beauty on the one hand and difficulty on the other. English is an accommodative language and adjusted with diverse fields including law, medicine, pharmacy, engineering, and technology. Through this came newer discourses and registers. These are the most sought educational sectors where the most talented aspire to study. Every Indian studies English in his/her career or educational life but English is taught regardless of the needs and requirements. Only general English is taught which makes an individual conversant in English though the ideal goal is to enable the students speak and write English accurately and fluently. However, this has failed to a great extent and many students who have either scored good marks or have been the product of English medium schools have

faced enormous difficulties while pursuing their degree of Engineering, technology, medicine, law, pharmacy, hotel management, nursing and so on. It is mainly because such students have been taught general English which does not necessary meet their demands of English for certain particular purposes. Dr. Archana Shrivastava thinks:

Learners feel that the things they have learned in their educational institutions or training centers are not proving helpful when they enter the workplace once they have completed their education. The problem does not restrict only to those students who have studied in Hindi medium schools but also with many who have got their education from good English medium schools. Generally the learners complain that the prescribed textbooks do not satisfy their needs. They feel high scarcity of appropriate words while at work place. ([www.esp-world.info](http://www.esp-world.info))

The work place and the job demands are varied and hence, the English that meets their demands needs to be introduced in their curriculum. It is necessary because the language of instruction in such faculties is English. Moreover, all these disciplines and faculties which have been mentioned above have been borrowed in India from abroad especially the European nations. Hence, their language and their terminology is English and it is almost impossible to find regional equivalents to them. Hence, the need to introduce English as per the needs and requirements was felt which necessitated the introduction of English for Specific Purposes.