

3. Communicative Approach

The educationists have seen and analysed shortcomings in the previously adopted methods and approaches and worked at introducing and developing a new method or approach suitable for teaching English in Indian conditions. Their activities resulted in the origin of a new approach named as **communicative approach**. It lays emphasis on the practical or user aspect of the language. It enables the students to communicate their ideas freely in and outside the class-room. This approach came into being as a result of realisation that with rapid development and industrialisation, the Indian people have to increasingly interact with the world and a method was needed to help to bridge the gap. As the basic purpose of a language is to impart ability to communicate one's ideas, notion, needs and feelings. This approach aims at communicative competence, including linguistic competence and ability to use the language appropriately.

Characteristics. The main characteristics of this approach are as follows :

- (i) It is based on the principles of use, communication and practice' in real situations. A situation can be un-predictable, varied and spontaneous.
- (ii) It is based on the need analysis and looks forward to plan new kinds of syllabus and curriculum.
- (iii) It is based on the old maxim of simple to complex and concrete to abstract, in which the simpler exercises are put at first followed and receiving the complex ones for a later stage. The progress is based on the performance requirement and not on the grasp of grammar or vocabulary.
- (iv) It lays stress on the use of language rather than in its structures.
- (v) It also lays stress on the semantic value of the language, it was means, to understand the meaning of vocabulary in real life situations.
- (vi) The students are provided enough opportunities to communicate with the help of dialogues debates, discussions, dramas and other class-room activities.
- (vii) It is an integrative approach which takes care of the four objectives of language learning.
- (viii) It is a student centred approach and puts the student in the core of the learning process.

Thus it is different from the traditional approaches of teaching English as it aims at the competence of the students in real life situations and results in development.

Advantages. This approach has the following advantages :

- (i) This approach enables the students to communicate their ideas, feelings and thinking in a logical manner.
- (ii) It develops the speech ability in the students.
- (iii) Difficult and complex concepts can be taught through this approach.
- (iv) It is presented in such a way that the learner commits minimum errors.
- (v) Diagnosis and remediation is also provided to the weak students.
- (vi) It is based on the functional utility of the language.

Disadvantages. The disadvantages of the communicate approach can be enumerated as follows :

- (i) This is a new approach and yet to be tested in language learning.
- (ii) It ignores grammar and structures of language.
- (iii) It requires trained teachers to teach with this approach. Teachers should have mastery over speech factor of the language.
- (iv) It has not yet been fully implemented anywhere and its result is still quite ambiguous.

It can be said that, though being a good approach it needs experimentation in the real life situations. It would need proper training of teachers and development of adequate and suitable training aids need to be effective.