

A comparative analysis of English Textbooks of higher schools of Telengana State

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Abstract- Telengana State English textbooks are developed by the SCERT-State Council of Educational Research and Training according to the State Curriculum Framework - 2011 and the Position Papers tuned into the National Curriculum Framework - 2005 in the year 2013-14. English is introduced in Telengana State from class I to Class X as one of the subjects, irrespective of the medium of instruction. Therefore, in order to have the equality among students of English and Non- English medium, a common English Textbook is prescribed with the name of “Our World through English”. In this paper researcher tried to make a discussion on State board English textbooks of Class VI to Class VIII and made a comparison with NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) English textbooks of Class VI to VIII.

Keywords: SCERT, NCERT, NCF, TS State books.

STATE BOARD ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS - AN INTRODUCTION

Telengana State English textbooks- “Our World through English” are an integrated one in the sense it has the Main Reader part, the Supplementary Reader and the Workbook component intertwined into a single textbook. Hence, these components are found in every single unit. The language skills like, reading, writing, listening, and speaking are integrated in the larger context of the themes as recommended in NCF (National Curriculum Framework)-2005. The activities/tasks/exercises are well designed as to ensure the holistic approach of the English language teaching. Researcher has been observed that present English textbooks of state board will support teachers and students to accomplish the main aim of teaching English is to enable students to develop themselves as an independent users of English by making the teaching and learning process effective. The present textbooks ‘*Our World through English*’ have been set up as per the syllabus for a ten-year course in English

as a second language with proper objectives and outcomes.

They have been prepared to focus everyday classroom transaction on the areas of Listening, Speaking, Reading Comprehension, Vocabulary, Grammar, Conventions of Writing and Creative Expression (Oral and Written Discourses). In order to achieve the specified learning outcomes, the new textbooks have eight units with different themes and genres like *Family, Social Issues, Humanity, Science and Technology, Education and Career, Art and Culture, Women Empowerment and Gratitude*. The themes are well selected and graded. Next there is a clear note given to the students under the section of “Note to the students” stating that what they have to do with the present textbook. This section is very useful to the students to get a clear idea. But it is observed that the textbook has not focused on the section of “Note to the teacher” which is very useful guide for the teachers to understand the methodology of teaching learning process.

FEATURES OF THE STATE BOARD ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

Following are some of the best features of the present State Board English Textbooks:

- In general, the language of the state board English textbooks is simple and easily understandable for the learners with a learner -friendly and interactive in nature.
- Units are thematically sorted out with different passages meant for listening and reading. Tasks/ Activities focus more on reading comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and study skills.
- Measures have been taken to enable students to get the guidelines sorted out with various genres such as plays, poems, narratives, essays,

biographical sketches, etc. and make them in oral as well as written forms.

- Different activities/ exercises in every unit have been sorted out as reading, writing, listening, and speaking as an integrated treatment has been incorporated. Vocabulary and grammar exercises have been contextually designed.
- The new teaching approaches and the tasks/ activities given in the textbooks encourage learners' active participation. Students are motivated to express their ideas and thoughts freely at different phases of learning presented in the textbooks.
- Some of the questions and exercises which are given under reading comprehension do not focus on any fixed responses; rather they request the learners to utilize the language authentically both orally and in writing.

LAYOUT AND DESIGN OF STATE BOARD ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

State English textbooks titled 'Our World through English' are very colourful and appealing in nature. The cover page of the each textbook is in multicolor with attractive images. Throughout the textbooks various colourful pictures are used which support the given content and will enable the students to comprehend the given text better. The quality of the paper, printing and binding of the textbook is satisfactory. All the chapters and illustrations are attractively spread out. The textbooks have the scope to connect learning with the everyday lives of the students. They are planned in a way to develop communicative and literary skills by focusing on various genres such as stories, games, dialogues, poems, crosswords etc. Through the multi-thematic exercises in the reading materials students are presented to different cultures. Hence the ideas and themes are given in the textbooks sensitize the child to the environment and gender.

Components of a Unit

As stated earlier each textbook consist eight units with following components:

Face Sheet/Trigger: Each unit begins with an image/ picture/quotation followed by some sort of interactive questions. This is to warm-up the learners and to generate their real enthusiasm towards the topic and

the learning the texts. Here the teacher can put even more number of questions that can demand divergent responses from the learners in order to motivate to interact more effectively.

Reading Texts: Every unit comprises of three reading texts (Reading A, B and C). These reading texts include various genres such as narratives, short plays, speeches, biographical sketches, monologues, essays, letters, and interviews as per the theme of the unit. All these texts are followed by the glossary, and a few comprehension questions with different exercises. For example 'Our World through English'-VIII textbook, Unit 1-"Family" consists three reading sections like Reading A - 'The Tattered Blanket', Reading, B - 'My Mother' (Poem), Reading C - 'Letter to a Friend', followed by glossary, comprehension questions, vocabulary, fill in the blanks, tick correct words that are similar in meaning, grammar, writing, listening, study skills, project work, self assessment, and oral activity.

The important thing mentioned in the textbook is the 'Reading-C section' meant for pleasure reading and not for assessment. It encourages students' extensive reading habits. Stories and poems are selected from a wide range cutting across the geographical, cultural and civilizational boundaries. Language skills LSRW are taught in an integrated manner and some topics are also included areas from EVS, Maths and Arts.

NCERT AND STATE BOARD TEXTBOOKS- DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON

Comparison in General:

- Both the NCERT and State Board textbooks are colourful and attractive. The qualities of the paper, printing and binding of the textbooks are satisfactory.
- NCERT English textbooks have the main textbook and supplementary reader but whereas the state board textbook "Our World through English" is an integrated one in the sense it has the main reader component, the supplementary reader component into a single textbook.
- In NCERT textbooks there is a clear section - 'Notes for the Teacher'. In this section guidelines are given to the teachers in general which are applicable to all and in particular about the teaching prose, poetry, etc. the section focused on

teaching methodology. This is really very helpful to the teachers to plan their lessons perfectly. Whereas in State board textbooks this section has not given.

- Each NCERT textbook has ten units with different themes, whereas State board textbooks consists eight units with clearly mentioned themes. Each unit in the state board textbooks consist the reading texts followed by heading of glossary, comprehension questions, vocabulary, fill in the blanks, tick correct words that are similar in meaning, grammar, writing, listening, study skills, project work, self assessment. Whereas in NCERT textbooks, each unit consists reading texts followed by headings of glossary, comprehension questions, working with the language (Vocabulary and Grammar), speaking, and writing.
- The reading, writing, listening and speaking skills are given in an integrated manner in both the NCERT and State board textbooks. Measures have been taken to enable students to get the rules organized with various genres such as stories, essays, biographical sketches, dramas, poems, etc. and develop them in oral as well as written forms.
- State board textbooks are well presented and written in a simple language with proper learning outcomes. Both NCERT and State board textbooks contains fun time, project time, discussion time etc., with well presentation and certainly teachers will find it easier to teach in an efficient way. But some lessons are difficult to understand for the students in NCERT textbooks.
- In both the textbooks the students will be able to involve themselves in the process of learning through various exercises/activities. This will make learning a joyful experience for students and inculcate a love for the language.
- Certain activities can be accompanied by several other kinds of materials like worksheets, dictionary pages, games, innovative activities, encouraging reflective thinking etc., in both NCERT and State board textbooks. It has been observed that there is a scope for exploration by the students to go beyond the textbooks; critical thinking, projects etc. are insufficient.

COMPARISON RELATED TO LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

Vocabulary:

It has been observed that both the NCERT and State board textbooks contains some vocabulary tasks/activities/exercises like matching questions, finding synonyms/ antonyms, phrasal verbs, multiple shades of meanings, collocations, homonyms, homophones, homographs, idioms, word formation activities, etc. When we compare both the textbooks State board textbooks contains more examples with suitable explanations. Each reading text followed with a glossary, where students can get the meaning of unfamiliar words. But in state board textbooks this section also contains parts of speech beside the given word whereas in NCERT it is not mentioned. Actually this will help the students to understand the function of the word in the given context. If you look at different vocabulary activities presented in the state board textbooks, in Class VI there is a “*Mind map*” activity(Page 65) related to ‘Furniture’ and ‘Medicinal Plants’; an extract from a news paper on ‘Green Heaven’(Page 85) which helps the students to build their vocabulary easily. In Class VII there is a “*word ladder activity*” with clues, page 92 and a vocabulary game on ‘Chess’, Page 103 also an interesting word building exercises. Though in the NCERT textbooks “Mind Map” activity and “word ladder activity “ are given but less in number.

There is a text named “The story of Ikat” from Class VIII of State board textbook, Page 88, is a good example for cultural aspects. Under this text the students can expose to various words from different regions like word ‘Ikat’ in Oriya called as ‘Chitiki’-in Telugu, ‘Patola’-in Gujarat etc. Such type of texts is really helpful to the students for getting awareness of various cultures. These types of texts should required more in NCERT textbooks because they are using in nationwide. There are ample examples on Homonyms, Homophones in Class VIII, Page 92-93 with suitable examples and Idiomatic expressions by looking at individual words page-115. There is a less exposure in NCERT textbooks on Homonyms, Homophones and Homographs with suitable activities. Still there is a scope to enrich variety of vocabulary tasks and games to be incorporated in both the textbooks.

Writing:

This section contains with some sort of written discourses that help students write narratives/ stories,

conversations, descriptions, messages, letters, e-mails, SMSs, paragraphs, diary entries, essays, biographical sketches, songs / poems and some other writing discourses. For Examples State board English textbook Class VII page 80 focused on ‘describing places and objects’ and ‘rearrange jumbled sentences’ in the right order will help the students to construct the meaningful paragraphs. This is also presented in NCERT textbooks but there is no sufficient information with suitable examples on ‘*Paragraph writing*’ and its parts like topic sentence, suitable sentences and concluding sentence with examples. As we know ‘editing the text’ is an important language element which has been focused in each class, example page 54, Class VII of State board textbook. From this students can identify the errors and edit it properly. Similarly in Class VII, Page 31 writing section focused on ‘Writing a Biography of J.S.Bose’ by using the given information. By these activities students are able to use the right linkers to join the sentences in the process of writing. And another important feature of State Board English textbook in Class VII writing is ‘Poster preparation’, writing an ‘e-mail’ in Class VIII, Page 104 are good activities. Writing Biography, e-mail, poster preparation should focus more in the NCERT textbooks.

Study Skills:

This section contains a few tasks/activities/exercises to improve the students study skills. We will find some verbal and nonverbal activities like pie charts, bar diagrams, tables, advertisements, dictionary entries, route maps, etc. in the State board textbooks under this section. These activities help students to interpret, analyze and transfer the data, and use the language appropriately. For example in Class VI, Page 85 ‘Picture Reading’; Class VII – study the table on ‘Climate of Port Blair’, data on ‘Changing patterns of unemployment in some advanced countries’ and ‘Bar diagram’ on IMR (Infant Mortality Rates); Class VIII, Page 120, ‘reading the Poster’ about two different schools with their salient features in Class VIII, Page 63 are very helpful to the students to interpret and use the language appropriately. ‘Fill in the questionnaire’ under the study skills on ‘How sporty are you?’ in Class VII, Page 101, and ‘sample reference’ on ‘Books on Chess’ in Class VII, page 113 are fine examples. Such types of exercises are really required from this stage onwards. In NCERT, there is a less focus on

study skills when we compare with state board textbooks.

Project work:

This section contains one or two projects related to the theme of the units. It encourage the students to find resources to work out the task i.e. collection, analysis, interpretation of data, study and prepare a report to present the findings before the classmates. For example in Class VI, Page 45-‘Visit a Doctor/ Primary Health Centre / Medical Shop and ‘collect the information about the common diseases’; in Class VII ‘Collecting a humorous story like Tenali/ Birbal / Nasruddin and ‘make a fun Cap’- in Page 68. By these activities students can participate very interestingly to collect, analyse, interpret, and present the data to the class. Some projects are also encouraging social issues like in Class VIII project on ‘Advantages of living a joint / nuclear family’-Page 24 by ‘observing any five families in neighborhood and draw their conclusions’ etc are very interesting. And there is a project on ‘Child Labour’ in Class VIII, Page 29. In this student collect the child information, they might have come across children who work in some households, factories, shops, hotels and construction sites for daily wages and make a brief profile and presents in the class. Like these entire project works are given to promote self learning among the children.

Grammar:

This section contains some grammar tasks/ activities/exercises. We will find tasks that make the students explore the language. And also find activities that help students identify grammatical errors and edit them. In both the NCERT and State board textbooks grammar games and more simplified grammar exercises are needed.

Listening and Speaking:

This listening part contains a listening text given at the end of state board textbooks as an appendix and a few tasks/ activities/exercises to improve speaking and listening skills. We also find some listening comprehension questions in the textbook, and questions that call for the students’ response on what they have listened to. For example in Class VII, students are instructed to listening to the teacher and fill in the blanks in the given ‘family tree’.

This section deals with some oral discourses to develop speaking competencies of the students by encouraging them to participate in the conversations, group discussions, debates, comparing, giving speeches, presenting reports etc. For example in Class VI State board textbook, Page 43 ‘Enacting the story by given procedure’, in Page 43 ‘Route Map’ on ‘Giving Directions’ etc will help the students to actively participate in speaking section in the classroom. Under the oral activity ‘Debate’ has given in Class VII on the topic ‘Science has proved to be more a curse than a blessing’ and in Class VIII, Page 106, ‘Debate’ has given on the topic ‘Education leads to empowerment of women’. Here students are instructed to divide the groups into two sets. One set of students speak in favor and other against it. This is really a wonderful activity to develop spoken and leadership qualities among the children at school level. Giving ‘Vote of Thanks’, by using the clues in Page 135, Class VIII, is an interesting oral activity.

CONCLUSION

The present paper “*A COMPARISON OF TS ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS WITH NCERT ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS*” is limited in scope and focus in that it examines textbooks/materials from one perspective by keeping mind of an evaluative checklist. Teachers who are using these textbooks need to be more critical and creative in overcoming the limitations of present textbooks by making teacher-made hand-out contained additional materials and exercises.

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