

English proficiency in Gujarat

By

SCOPE

Programme Introduction



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Society for Creation of Opportunity through Proficiency in English (SCOPE)
(A Govt. of Gujarat initiative)

Vision

To build English language proficiency in the youth of Gujarat and thereby provide employment opportunities for them.

Mission

To train, assess and certify 5 lakh youth in English as per international standards in a period of five years through partnerships - PPP (Public Private Partnership) and ITP (Institutional Training Partnership).

Objectives

1. To act as an autonomous and independent body to implement English language teaching in Gujarat and outside Gujarat.
2. To aid and promote advancement of communication skills in English by imparting training to the youth of 15-35 years of age group.
3. To identify partners to serve the purpose for imparting and enhancing English language teaching.
4. To monitor the functioning of the training centres run by the identified partners.
5. To prepare an appropriate curriculum for various levels of need based training programmes.
6. To prepare need based training modules for English language teaching.
7. To encourage use of technology in English language teaching.

Preamble

English is a global language. English is a language to help in trade, travel, communication and success beyond national boundaries. It has become a yardstick to measure the performance of employees in many industries and a key element for employability in others. Why Gujarat should be devoid of riding on the bandwagon of language proficiency when it is emerging as the fastest growing state, signing MoUs worth thousand of crores of rupees and creating more employment opportunities for its youth. To avail of enormous opportunities these situations have generated, a need was felt for a state nodal agency to equip Gujarat youth with English language (listening, reading, speaking and grammar) along with other essential skills. The main spirit behind concept of SCOPE is "Neither dominance nor disinclination" for English. SCOPE programme is centred on three challenges of education - Access, Equity and Quality.

Keeping in view the aforesaid mission, SCOPE (Society for Creation of Opportunity through Proficiency in English) has been setup by Government of Gujarat in February, 2007 and registered as a society under Societies Registration Act, 1860, to build English language proficiency in the youth of Gujarat and thereby create employment opportunities for them. SCOPE, being a language flagship body of government focusing only on English language skill, has already tied up with University of Cambridge, UK for providing international certificate to its students. Since its inception, SCOPE has already witnessed an enrolment of more than 4,75,000 candidates (as of September, 2015) and may cross 5,00,000 by the end of the year.

Programme Highlights

The project runs into PPP (Public Private Partnership) and ITP (Institutional Training Partnership) model and has more than 650 training centers across state.

It is the most successful project of Govt of Gujarat where all stakeholders are in profit. The BEP for a training centre is achieved by running an initial batch of 10 candidates only.

SCOPE is conducting online exam of international standard (Cambridge University) at such a mass scale which is unique in the world. SCOPE conducts exam in almost every talukas of the state. Major highlights of the programme are :

- PPP centres are controlled through 5 Zonal Training Partners (ZTPs)
- Presence in all districts of Gujarat.
- International Certification by Cambridge English, part of the University of Cambridge, UK.
- Enhancing the employability and showcasing the proficiency of English.
- BULATS equivalency to IELTS and other international tests.
- Training of 90 hours at each level - face to face classroom training as well as practice on computers using language learning softwares.
- Training programme is being developed on the Common European Framework (Level A1 to C2, six levels) of Reference.
- Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) to grade SCOPE centers in A, B & C categories
- Online MIS (Information system) for various processes
- By September, 2015, SCOPE had already crossed a mark of 4,76,000 enrolments

Implementation modes

SCOPE implements its programmes through two models – 1. PPP (Public Private Partnership) model, 2. Constituents of Higher Education i.e. colleges through its OAS (Open Assessment Scheme) and assessment with training in DEL lab. It tries to bring in efficiency of the private sector with the wide reach and infrastructure of government. Many centres of SCOPE are already running in the premises of schools and colleges. It also has a significant presence of private centres who deliver this programme from their own training centres. SCOPE has established a network of more than 350 active centres through five Zonal Training Partners (ZTPs) across Gujarat for the purpose of providing English language training to candidates. SCOPE has its presence in all districts in Gujarat with significant presence in four major cities like Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Baroda and Surat. It is envisaged that all management and technical colleges under Commissionerate of Technical Education will be SCOPE centres in due course of time.

International Assessment and Certification

To enhance the employability and to showcase the proficiency of English, SCOPE has roped in Cambridge English, part of the University of Cambridge, UK as the assessment and certification partner. The Cambridge English examinations are recognized by various employers, universities & colleges, professional bodies, ministries & government organizations throughout the world including visa applications at UK.

The B level course offered by SCOPE (called BULATS Online) is now recognised for Tiers 1, 2 and 4 of the Points Based Immigration by the UK Border Agency for visa applications and for Partner Visas (please refer the website, www.bulats.org/Bulats/certificated-bulats-online.html).

Structure of Programme and Fee

The English Language Training programme is being developed on the Common European Framework of Reference which is mapped with ALTE levels. Six level of courses are offered :

Basic : A1, A2

Advanced : B1, B2

Proficient : C1, C2

To make the course accessible to all, the fee structure is fairly reasonable and affordable. Fees for levels A1 to level A2 courses is kept at Rs. 1550/- while for B1 to B2 it is Rs. 1800/- and C1 to C2 it is Rs. 2200/- (taxes extra). A premium level has recently been introduced for corporate sector and fee for this training is Rs. 3200/- (taxes extra). Even at these levels, it has been ensured that it is profitable for the training centres as well as the Zonal Partners. This includes training, course materials, exam coordination, assessment and certification.

For the college students who just want to assess their current level of English proficiency or who want to have a credible certification in their resume, SCOPE has devised a very innovative arrangement. Under OAS, fee for college students is only

Rs. 350/- for A level course and Rs. 600/- for B level course. Out of it, SCOPE charges only Rs. 275/- for A level and Rs. 525/- per candidate for B level course. Rest of the amount remains with college for administration and incidental expenses. Under fat assessment scheme where training is provided to the students, fee is Rs. 750/- for A level and Rs. 1200/- for B level course. It gives them a chance to benchmark themselves at the international standards in English language at a very nominal price.

For delivery of course a syllabus of international standards has been adopted and the materials for the same is used to train candidates. SCOPE also provides audio-visual material for training. SCOPE has also provided infrastructural support in terms of LCD projector and computer to many of the centres for enhancing the quality of training.

Quality Assurance Cell

A QAC agency has been identified by SCOPE to grade the centres and keep a check and balance on the quality of deliverables. Based on various parameters and physical onsite visit by QAC personnels, centres are graded as A, B or C. Three consecutive attainment of grade C qualifies a centre to be deactivated by SCOPE authorities.

Environment Building and Dissemination

To create awareness of these programmes among general public, Government of Gujarat has played an active role in advertising courses and associated benefits through various modes of dissemination. Print media like newspaper, pamphlets, brochures, hoarding etc. has been used along with electronic media like cable Ads, radio jingles and lecture telecast through BISAG. The government's role has been in administering the advertisement campaign, assessment and certification, quality assurance activities and generating placement opportunities for pass outs. Private partners have to look after the delivery of training and enrolling candidates.

Assessment at doorstep – Spoken English Test

Normally SCOPE conducts exam at every fourth month i.e. three exam cycles in a year. 'A' level exam is held across Gujarat at various locations on a single day. It is conducted in multiple choice question formats. The exam is conducted even at the

remote places of state so that candidates don't have to travel too far. 'B' level exam is now taken as computer based test (CBT), which is more comprehensive and adaptive test. Digital Education and Learning Labs established at various colleges are used to conduct this test. SCOPE has also started conducting online speaking test from January 2011 exam session. Probably this is the first time in India that such a test is conducted on such a wide scale reaching out to the candidates at every nook and corner of the state. Lakhs of candidates have appeared for online BULATS speaking test since then.

Placement Opportunity

SCOPE not only provides learning opportunities but also placement opportunities for its pass out candidates. SCOPE had signed an MoU with Azure Knowledge Corporation, No.1 KPO/BPO of Vodafone, during Vibrant Gujarat Summit to provide employment opportunities to students who pass out SCOPE exam. After the expiry of MoU, it was not renewed but Azure was willing to absorb SCOPE candidates. Similarly, many other companies have been approaching SCOPE for need of good English speaking candidates. SCOPE, generally, passes on such contacts to its Zonal Training Partners for wider dissemination among their training centres.

Achievements:

- More than 4,75,000 students have taken part in SCOPE programme till September, 2015 since its inception. This includes learners from all corners of the state i.e. students, teachers, government employees, corporate employees, PSU employees, housewives, entrepreneurs etc. have enrolled themselves in past six years.
- SCOPE has been conducting online speaking test for lakhs of candidates every year from January, 2011. This is first time in India that a speaking test is conducted in real time, online format on such a wide scale.
- SCOPE has converted its advanced level test (BULATS) to a fully computer based test from July 2009. It makes the assessment more comprehensive and adaptive. It serves as a model of assessment which can lead the way of online /computerised assessments in future for Education Department.

- SCOPE is providing training to the candidates registered with Employment Department and in turn candidates receive stipend from the department for learning English. It has trained more than 100,000 candidates under this arrangement.
- SCOPE has emerged as a trainer for English language at many of the Government departments and corporate houses. It has already trained employees at Commissionerate of Higher Education, District Collectorate Ahmedabad, All subsidiaries of Gujarat Electricity Board, District Institute of Education and Training (DIET), Gujarat Law University etc. SCOPE has delivered training in reputed companies like L&T, Bombardier, MicroLink, TCSR, TCS etc.
- SCOPE has trained more than 2000 teachers and students of ITI's at a subsidised rate of just Rs. 700.
- SCOPE has carried out traffic awareness programme among candidates of SCOPE in Vadodara city working together with Vadodara traffic police.

Mobile based learning : SCOPE courses are available on Android and iPhone platforms. In association with a company, Concepts Eduserv, a mobile based application "FLINNT" has been launched to learn English Language courses and use the skills in day to day events and happening.

As of now, four levels A1, A2, B1 & B2 has been covered in the application. The subscription is absolutely free for all students for one year. The learning methodologies is based on real time incidents and news with new posts created everyday to make learning interesting.

Case Study by IIM, Ahmedabad : Prof. Vijaya Sherry Chand of IIMA has done a case study on SCOPE programme (No. IIMA/RJMC0021) describing novel features of SCOPE training, its reach to remote places and the employment opportunities it provides.

Conclusion

Few are some of the benefits which can be reaped by candidates who wish to enrol themselves with SCOPE:

1. Govt. of Gujarat initiative
2. Nominally priced (subsidised by Govt. of Gujarat)
3. International certification (Cambridge English, UK)
4. BULATS equivalency to IELTS and other international tests.
5. Assessing self proficiency in language against international standards. It helps in preparation of other international tests also.
6. Entrepreneurship opportunity for trainers who want to venture into field of English training
7. Placement opportunity
8. Attractive schemes for college students
9. Opportunity to become Accredited Cambridge oral examiner for assessing speaking tests.
10. Secure, Integral and adaptive examination
11. Computer Based Test – This improves IT skills as well.

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