

CHAPTER : 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

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“A review of prior, relevant literature is an essential feature of any academic project. An effective review creates a firm foundation for advancing knowledge. It facilitates theory development, closes areas where a plethora of research exists, and uncovers areas where research is needed.”

(Webster & Watson, 2002)

2.1 A Concept Centric Chapter

As a ‘Concept-Centric’ chapter, ‘Review of Related Literature’ offers a solid groundwork for the research. It provides a historical background information and evidence which is required to acquaint the researcher for the framework of the thesis. This chapter explains the rationale of the study. The reading of the previous research and literature make known to the researcher with the limitations, problems, and research gaps in the current scenario. It also shows the progress in the concerned arena of the research and aids to comprehend the subject systematically and methodically. As the review of related literature provides the immediate apparatuses of the collection of the works and papers of the concerned research area, it prevents the duplication of the research

efforts. It also is helpful to the researcher in clarifying the research problem, applying new approaches to the research.

This chapter is sub-categorized into two. First, this chapter deals with various aspects of the curriculum development and evaluation reforms through the theoretical study of the contributions made by the University Grants Commission in higher education system in India. The first section of the research is chronicled from the establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC) till the current reforms executed. This chapter, then explores the existing research that can provide the research gaps to work upon.

“Describing the research questions and locating them properly in the existing literature are important aspects of research planning. A literature review involves searching and compiling the literature available on a specific topic.”

(Good Academic Research Practices: 17)

The sections for the ‘Review of Related Literature’ are classified as follows:

- Research on the Contribution by UGC for Higher Education in India
- Research on Curriculum Framework and Syllabus Designing
- Research on Teaching and Testing Practices
- Research on English Language Proficiency
- Need for the Present Research

2.2 Contributions by UGC to Higher Education in India

The evolution of University Grants Commission can be traced back in 1948 with the First Education Commission, also known as Radhakrishnan Commission. The University Grants Commission (UGC) was recognized in 1956 through an Act of Parliament. “The University Grants Committee was created to enable the Parliament to make an informed decision on the allocations needed for higher education and to distribute the available grants to the various universities.” (*Sixty Years of the University Grants Commission*, 12).

With the pace growing demands of the corporate world, the policies on the higher education are in constant review. The initiative was made from Radhakrishnan Commission Report in 1948-49, following by Kothari Commission Report in 1964-66. “These two reports... form the base for New Education Policy (1986) and Programme of Action (1992)”. (*Higher Education in India*, 2011: 01). The main aim was to focus on curriculum, teaching-learning process, and evaluation. One of the main tools to develop the system of higher education, to review the progress of the universities, colleges, and other higher education institutions, with financial planning is Five-Year Plans.

2.2.1 Five Year Plans

The first major change higher education has witnessed is the planning and implementation of the Semester System through the XI Plan of 2007-2012. The Eleventh Plan was described as the “Second Wave” in the development of higher education (*Higher Education in India*, 2011: 01). The assessment and accreditation of the universities and colleges by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was made compulsory, which is considered as a “historic step” for the quality development in higher education institutions. NAAC initiated the new methodology where ‘Curricular Aspects’ and ‘Teaching-Learning and Evaluation’, are two of the criteria for assessment and grading today.

Providing relevant education in the higher education system has always been a subject of concern. As defined in the Eleventh Plan of Higher Education in India (2007-12), the relevant education has three aspects while planning for curriculum: scientific or specialised knowledge, skill, and values. Thus, by the end of graduation, the students would possess “scientific temper, with necessary skill and values” (*Higher Education in India*, 2011: 17).

The schemes like “Equal Opportunity Cell” and “Remedial Coaching for SC/ST/OBC Minorities Community Students” were taken into consideration to develop employability skills among the students through cultivating the academic skills and ‘linguistic’ (ibid: 23) proficiency.

Chapter -08 of XI Plan of *Higher Education in India*, titled “Academic Reforms in Higher Education” focuses on the compulsory implementation of the Semester System, followed by Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), the development of curriculum, admission, and examination reforms.

“It enlarges curricular space and encourages and supports accelerated learning opportunities for all concerned. Further, it has ability to accommodate diverse choices that dynamic and motivate students may like to have.” (*Higher Education in India*, 2011: 76)

Driven influence from the higher education system of Western Europe and North America, the Semester System provides universities and colleges to review and revised the syllabi time-to-time as per the need of the learners. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) provides students to select from multiple papers. CBCS also ensures students’ multidisciplinary knowledge. The multidisciplinary electives and open elective papers offer them a choice to select the course of their choice. For each selected paper, the students will be given credit scores, out of 5-point scale or 10-point scale via Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) – formerly known as Cumulative Grade Point Score (CGPS).

XI Plan also promotes the continuous evaluation process. “Examination only at the end of academic session or year, more often than not, insulates students from the quest of knowledge, the excitement of

discovery and joy of learning.” (Ibid: 79). The internal evaluation is inspired from the maxim of Western Europe and North America for the evaluation i.e., “Those who teach should evaluate.” However, to deliver transparency while assessing or evaluating and to ensure students’ fair marking and grading, integration of both ‘Continuous Internal’ and ‘End-of-Semester’ examinations has been highly endorsed with 25-40 marks for the continuous internal and 75-60 marks for the end-semester. The range may vary universities-to-universities or colleges-to-colleges.

“The UGC has also taken steps to come up with model curricula to guide universities in ensuring periodic revision of their syllabi and courses, undertaking academic reforms such as introduction of semester system, grading system, choice-based credit system, keeping curriculum updated, transparent admission procedures, inter-university student mobility, reform of examination system with switch over to continuous internal evaluation and improving the quality of external examination component, credit transfer, and credit accumulation. This has been welcomed by the universities and many of them have initiated changes in such aspects of academic reform.”

(Inclusive and Qualitative Expansion of Higher Education: 53)

The Twelfth Year Plan was very crucial for the development of Higher Education in India. With the reassurance and the guidelines

provided by the University Grants Commission (UGC), Semester System was successfully implemented in the universities and colleges across the country. The planning for regular revisions and guidelines to be provided to the universities and colleges through National Educational Resource Portal was made available where the education institutions get guidance related to the availability of the teaching models, research related programmes, new implemented initiatives or ideas, templated syllabus for the UG and PG courses, etc.

The vital footstep that was taken during XII Year Plan for Higher Education in India was the review and the revision of the syllabus at least once in three years by the universities and colleges to tune with the changing aspects of current job-markets. The question of the lacunae in teaching-learning process through the medium of instruction was also taken into consideration.

Higher Education in India – In Search of Equality, Quality and Quantity was published to stimulate teaching and learning among the researchers in Higher Education System. The present book is a series of essays from *Economic and Political Weekly* (2010-12), as a partial requirement of University Grants Commission project. *Higher Education in India* is a collection of essays which enlightens the readers about the development made by the universities and colleges since independence, with special reference to the policies and changes made by the Government of India and University Grants Commission. The divided

seven sections include essays on the role of democracy, equality in the Higher Education Institutions, impact of reservation policies, the issues in funding, unemployment of graduates' related researches, case studies, expenditure in education, effect of globalization on Higher Education and the recommendations in search for quality education and research. The collected essays depict the whole journey from the establishment the Takshashila and Nalanda in the Introduction to the present scenario.

2.2.2 National Education Policies (NEPs)

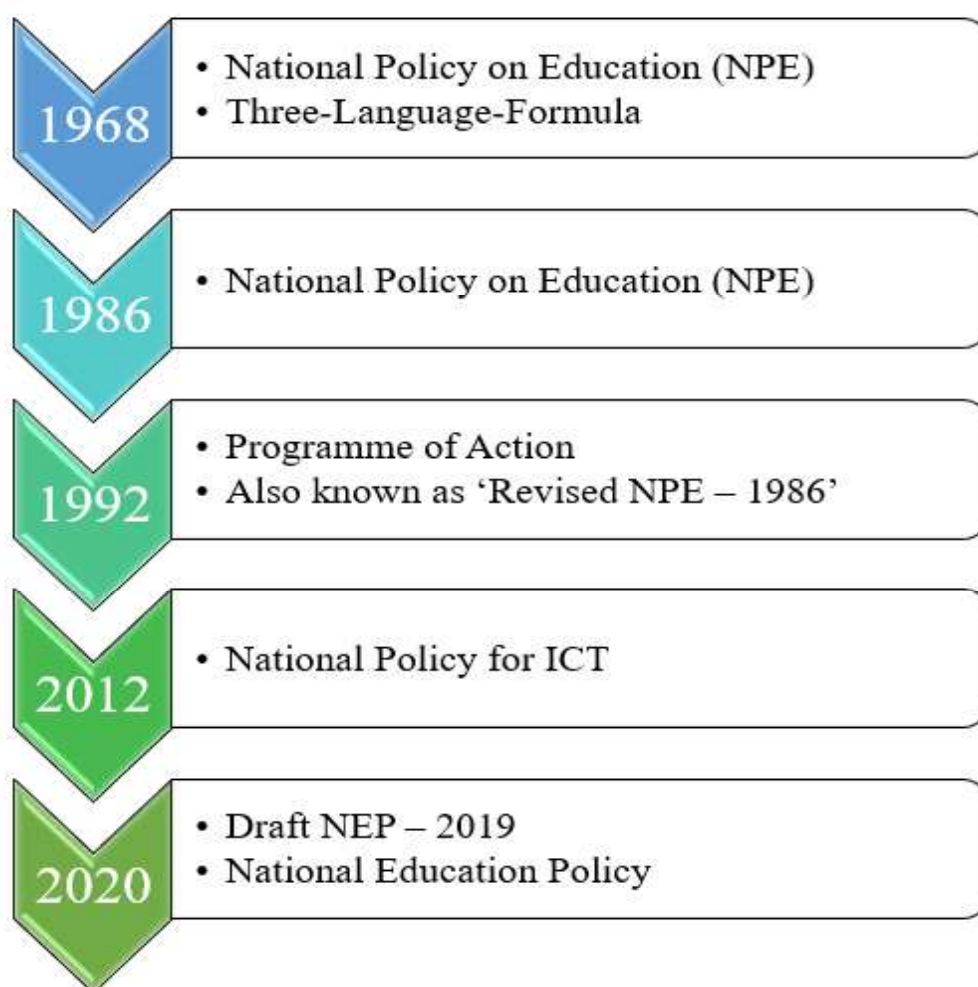


Figure 2.1: A Glimpse of Educational Policies in India

The first National Policy of Education (NPE) was put forth in 1968, in order to implement the recommendations made in Kothari Commission (1964-1966). The first step for the First National Policy on Education was to make primary education mandatory and free for all the children of the country up to 14 years. Under the recommendation of ‘Development of Languages’, the concept of “Three-Language-Formula” came in existence. The Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE) initiated the issue of language policy in schools. Out of five issues to pay consideration on, one was ‘the place and role of English’ as a language in schools or universities. It was recommended for the State Governments to adopt the ‘Three-Language-Formula’ from Secondary Education which embraces:

“...the study of a modern Indian language, preferably one of the southern languages, apart from Hindi and English in the Hindi-speaking States, and of Hindi along with the regional language and English in the non-Hindi speaking States. Suitable courses in Hindi and/or English should also be available in universities and colleges with a view to improving the proficiency of students in these languages up to the prescribed university standards.” (*National Policy on Education*, 1968:3)

To remove the discrepancies and to provide equal education opportunity, the new National Policy on Education (NPE) was introduced in 1986. It was led by *Challenges of Education – A Policy Perspective* of

1985. This policy suggested some initiatives, especially to provide equal education to women, the ST and SC communities. Also, the scheme of “Operation Blackboard” was launched to provide sufficient funding to the schools and colleges in rural areas or the remote places where education was not easily available for the learners. It ensured to open primary schools in tribal areas as well. Moreover, the National Policy on Education of 1986 was revised in 1992. It was modified and implemented through called as *Programme of Action (PoA), 1992*. It introduced the conduct of Common Entrance Tests/ Examinations for the admissions in higher education programmes. Programme of Action 1992 also criticized the Annual Based Examination in Higher Education Institutions of India. This was first time where the higher education system sowed a seed for introducing Semester System and Continuous Evaluation in the higher education system. Though, the seed of the Semester System reaped in 2008 with the idea to implement it by the UGC.

All the responses towards the criticism of the National Education Policies, were finally taken into consideration and after around two decades, the New National Education Policy has brought in 2020 by the Government of India. It echoes innovative and revolutionary changes in the Indian education system. The major lacunae of the education system were the categorizations of the streams after Secondary School Education (10th Std.). It was divided into Humanities, Commerce and Science where with the learners were not able to choose their subjects of their choice or

other streams. With the implementation of the NEP 2020, students would be able to select any course of any of the streams provided. Students will be given flexibility to choose their course and subjects.

Another major progress in the recent education system is the elimination of the 10+2 academic structure. It has been replaced by 5+3+3+4 system now which is similar to the education of the developed countries. The new academic structure will be sub categorized into Foundation Stage (3+2), Preparatory Stage (3), Middle Stage (3) and Secondary Stage (4). After Class 12, the Multiple Entry-Exit Programme will ensure the credits earned by the students at any stage of four-year of undergraduate level will be useful for them in their career-scope through Academic Bank of Credits (ABC). This system of credit transfer is widely accepted in developed countries. The flexibility to choose the course and subjects will be provided to the students from class ninth. Students will be able to trace their progress on their own with the initiative of PARAKH i.e., Performance, Assessment, Review and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development. Self-Evaluation will be a very beneficial step to develop critical thinking among the students.

Furthermore, education system of India also faces the problem of rote learning. Most of the exams are designed in such a way that students are forced to memorize topics or things rather than understanding or implementing it. Thus, through evolution reforms, the examination will be conducted in such as way that would not require much memorization.

In point no. 4.13 of NEP-2020, it is stated that:

“The three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions, and the Union, and the need to promote multilingualism as well as promote national unity. However, there will be a greater flexibility in the three-language formula, and no language will be imposed on any State. The three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves, so long as at least two of the three languages are native to India.” (*National Education Policy*, 2020: 14)

English, being communicated world-wide, is still in priority today. It is essential to adopt English for competing at an international level. In his lecture “Introducing NEP 2020 and Breaking the Myths Regarding the New Policy”, in the seminar on “National Education Policy 2020, in Regard to the English Education”, held at Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat (KCG), Ahmedabad, Prof. Jagdish Joshi quoted Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, “The end-product of education should be a free creative man, who can battle against historical circumstances and adversities of nature”, thereby stating the current pandemic situation and the paradigm shift in English Education in India since Macaulay’s idea of introducing English education to Indians. He broke the myth whether English should

be abandoned, and further specified that the demand for English in this global world cannot be ignored.

Thus, the New Education Policy 2020 suggests that the Primary Education should be provided to the students in their native or home or regional language and they further can opt the medium of the instruction of their choice. The emphasize is given on the idea that the new policies are a makeover of the system. It gets revised in segments and suggestive in nature, thus, the decision should be taken by students only.

NEP 2020 focuses on a holistic and integrated approach where the students can enjoy the process of unlearn, learn, and relearn from the courses of their choice. There is a remarkable change in paradigm shift, where Macaulay's aim of providing English education to Indians was to create a class of subordinates. Instead, the New Education Policy 2020 focuses on to create a group of skilled experts.

Prof. Hitesh D. Raviya in his seminar on "Decolonizing English Education in India", suggested that the colleges and universities should have textbooks of their own and the focus must be set on the local context. It is thus, affirmed that introducing textbooks in the schools in dual languages i.e., English, and Regional / Vernacular language, will bring the positive changes in the learning and it will promote English language as Skill rather than just a language for privileges.

For Undergraduate Courses in B.Com., B.A., and B.Sc., especially in Foundation or Compulsory Courses in English, where English can be

taught only through Indian texts i.e., Indian Prose and Poetry. He indicated that the curriculum of English must focus on life skills, such as communication and teamwork rather than typical British Canonical texts. For example, instead of introducing Shakespeare, students must be familiarized with Kalidas. Thus, efforts should be made to encourage the Indianization of English through ‘Local-Based Needs Textbook’, i.e., Decolonizing the Indian Minds, then English Education.

2.2.3 Notices, Guidelines and Committee Reports

University Grants Commission releases notices and guidelines time-to-time to recommend updates to the universities and colleges of India. This section mainly focuses on the notices and guidelines provided by the UGC on Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) and Learning Outcomes Based Curriculum Framework (LOCF). The notices and guidelines are chronicled from 2008 to 2022.

A national conference of Vice-Chancellors for the universities of India was held in October 2007 to carry out new initiatives under 11th Plan for ‘Action Plan for Academic and Administrative Reforms’ (2009:1) in the universities. Following initiative were taken into consideration by central and state universities of India (Ibid):

- Semester System
- Choice-Based Credit System
- Curriculum Development
- Admission Procedures
- Examination Reforms

An action plan was made out to alter the annual examination system wholly with semester system. After the introduction to the semester system in all the universities and colleges, the next step it laid emphasis is on the examination system with continuous internal assessment to “reduce the written examination component to a reasonable level” (Ibid: 4). For assessment, Cumulative Grade Point Score was endorsed to improve Grading System where the students will be provided with scale grade as a replacement for percentage and marking system. Choice of courses for the undergraduates was another major concern. With the introduction of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), flexibility is prearranged for the students to select the subject of their individual interests and choices from the provided lists.

“Instructional Template for Facilitating Implementation of Choice Based Credit System”, published by the UGC in 2015 introduces the ‘learner-centric’ approach (pg. 02). The requirement to let the learners choose their courses of choice that they are interested in, can be feasible only with the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). The courses offered to them are sub-categorized under various titles such as Core, Allied, Elective and Foundation. Elective Courses are further divided into Generic Elective, Projects, and Interdisciplinary courses. This helps students to choose the course of their choice to nurture their undergraduate programme in a useful multidisciplinary approach.

Ability Enhancement Courses provide the learners to upgrade their language and other technical skills. Compulsory English Course is a part of Ability Enhancement Compulsory Course (AECC). They can opt for as many as credits they wish to and are ‘Allowed to Keep Terms (ATKT)’, is they miss the mark. The curriculum provides the learners to transfer their credits from one institute to the other as well.

Furthermore, the evaluation system was introduced with Semester Grade Point Average (SGPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) to bring the uniformity in CBCS and transparency in Grading System. Above Figure 2.2 demonstrates the updated grade marking (according to the template of 2015, Page: 20):

Letter Grade		Numerical Grade
O	Outstanding	10
A+	Excellent	9
A	Very Good	8
B+	Good	7
B	Above Average	6
C	Average	5
D	Pass	4
F	Fail	0
Ab	Absent	0
Figure 2.2: Grade Points for CBCS (Template: 2015)		

“The CBCS provides for inbuilt flexibilities in which the students have a choice of pursuing courses of their choice in the form of electives. This not only broadens their horizons but also intends to make students well rounded in all spheres of development.”

(UGC Notice: 2016)

The first draft guidelines for Learning Outcomes Based Curriculum Framework were introduced in July, 2018 by the University Grants Commission. To boost the employability skills among undergraduate students, the UGC under Quality Mandate acquainted the Outcome-Based Education where, the contemporary job and corporate market requirements should be focused on before framing the set of courses for UG Level. “Learning Outcomes specify what graduates completing a particular programme of study are expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of their programme of study.” (*LOCF*: 2018, 1)

The Learning Outcomes-Based Curriculum Framework (*LOCF*) in Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) provides more flexibility to the learners. Guidelines are provided to the syllabi creators to look for graduate attributes and qualification descriptors before finalizing the syllabus. This will also help the learners to be able to evaluate what they are going to study in their selected course. Furthermore, the students will be able to decide what courses to opt for by perceiving the contents of the syllabi from the list of subjects provided.

LOCF provides “an important point of reference” (Ibid, 02) for designing the syllabus, determining instruction approaches to use during the session, evaluating the learning levels of the apprentices and overseeing the programme outcomes frequently.

“Learning Outcome Curriculum Framework (LOCF) aims to equip students with knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, leadership readiness / qualities, and lifelong learning. The fundamental premise of LOCF is to specify what graduates completing a particular programme of study are expected to know, understand and be able to do at the end of their programme of study. Besides this, students will attain various 21st century skills like critical thinking, problem solving, analytic reasoning, cognitive skills, self-directed learning, etc.” (LOCF, Forward, 2019)

The document, *Learning Outcomes based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) for English as Generic Elective for Undergraduate Programme*, published by UGC in 2019 facilitates the universities and colleges of India with the suggestive model curriculum of the undergraduate courses. It states the English language as “a window of the world” (Ibid: 4). Thus, the committee recommends including the following courses for undergraduate students:

- Basic English Communication Skills
- Advanced English Communication Skills

- Dictionary and Study Skills
- Creativity Through Language
- Appreciating Literature

The committee also suggested to mention PLO and CLO. Thus, it is required for the colleges and universities to mention course learning outcomes in the syllabi for the students to know what they are going to learn in a particular selected course. An Experiential or Process-Based Approach was given a preference for teaching-learning process over a Domain Based Approach. A variety of “knowledge delivery methods” (Ibid: 12) were also proposed such as lectures, discussions, case studies, role playing, group work, etc.

With the increase in the number of the learners to opt for higher education studies in India, UGC is continuously making new initiatives to offer quality education to the undergraduates and to develop their capability according to the requirements of the job market today.

2.2.4 E-Publications

It is significant to bring ‘life skills’ such as communication skills, professional skills, etc. among the students. It consists of “the set of human talents acquired by an individual via classroom learning or life experience that can help them to deal with problems encountered in day-to-day life.” (*Curriculum for Life Skills (Jeevan Kaushal: Foreword)*). Life

skills, as defined by the UGC in *Curriculum for Life Skills*, are “the behaviors used appropriately and responsibly in the management of personal and professional affairs.” Life skills play a vital role to increase the self-confidence and employability among the students.

With this view, National Education Policy 2020 also lay emphasis on holistic learning, where the students are provided the guidance in correct skillsets along with their specialized degrees. Students will gain confidence not only in professional competency but also in emotional competency. Through this, it is evident that professional and communication skills are given much more importance to develop the performance of the learners. Thus, the main objective of this model curriculum is to improve the graduate outcomes. This will ensure the learners to engage themselves in the scope of employment or self-employment.

To endorse evaluation reform in current examination system, the Quality Mandate of the UGC introduced *Evaluation Reforms in Higher Educational Institutions* in 2019. The report lay importance on the ‘continuous evaluation system’ which can be linked with the learning outcomes of the undergraduate courses.

“The examination pattern that currently exists in universities structure, test memory learning. In most cases, the examination system is affiliating in nature with external final University-

conducted examination at the end of every semester or year; this solely, serves the purpose of assessment.” (Ibid: 11)

Along with this, the marks of the evaluation of the long-three-hour examination answer-sheets are to be integrated in individual’s marksheet correctly within limited time. With ‘continuous evaluation’, there is a pressure to declare the results on time by the universities or colleges which lay a big question mark on the accuracy and reliability of the examiners.

Thus, this document offers awareness to the teachers of the universities and colleges certain facets to look into while determining testing practices. A framework of the assessment modes is provided for the teachers to decide, such as, written mode, oral mode, practical mode and integrated mode. For current examination system, most of the universities of the Gujarat prefers the integration of Continuous Evaluation and End-Semester Examinations, by provided 30% to 40% of Internal Assessment (IA) and 70% to 60% percent of University (External) Assessment (UA) respectively. Thus, the proportion of the Internal Evaluation (IE) and External Evaluation (EE) for the undergraduate students is 30:70 or 40:60.

Learning Outcomes-Based Curriculum Framework for Undergraduate Education, published in January, 2020, particularizes the Graduate Attributes (GA), that the learners should possess by the end of

their graduation. The Graduate Attributes (Ibid, 2020: 7 and *LOCF*, 2018: 03) are as follows:

- Disciplinary Knowledge
- Communication Skills
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Analytical Reasoning
- Research-related Skills
- Cooperation / Teamwork
- Scientific Reasoning
- Reflective Thinking
- Information / Digital Literacy
- Self-Directed Learning
- Multicultural Competence
- Moral and Ethical Awareness / Reasoning
- Leadership Readiness / Qualities
- Lifelong Learning

Therefore, along with achieving the 21st Century Skills like communication skills, proficient skills, digital literacy skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, negotiation skills, etc., “*LOCF* works towards a more holistic experience for the students, while focusing not just on knowledge delivery in higher education but also on the application

of knowledge through field and lab work and emphasis on application of knowledge to real life experiences.” (Ibid: Foreword).

The University Grants Commission (UGC) initiated the ‘Quality Mandate’ in 2018. It has five objectives and ten verticals to ensure the qualitative enlargement of the higher education institutions. *Quality Mandate for Higher Education Institutions in India* states, “Quality in higher education is a multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic concept that is related to specifications of the context of an educational model, to the mission and institutional aims, as well as to the specific patterns within a certain system, institution, programme, or discipline” (Page: 02).

To improve graduate outcomes through which the learners would be able to compete in the employment engagement is one of the objectives of the Quality Mandate. To attain this objective, initiatives has been taken by the GoI and UGC such as revising CBCS curriculum with LOCF and reviewing it on regular intervals, imparting life skills and evaluation reforms. Other ‘mission mode’ initiatives are also included viz., Induction Programme for students, tracking their progress after the completion of graduation, adoption of ICT based teaching-learning, etc.

2.3 Curriculum, Syllabus, Teaching and Testing

Curriculum is “a programme of study at educational institutions, usually consisting of a group of related subjects” (McArthur: 275). Syllabus is a part of curriculum, it is “a description of the contents of a

course of instruction and the order in which they are to be taught”. It is an established set of courses or papers accessible to the apprentices to obtain special knowledge. Curriculum design is a systematic, organised plan which précises the list of contents to be learned by the students. It summarizes the list of topics that are to be learnt by the apprentices. Curriculum design bids a ‘blueprint’ to the teachers or educators as well as the students which provides them the objectives, the plan for implementation and the probable outcomes by the end of a specific designated course.

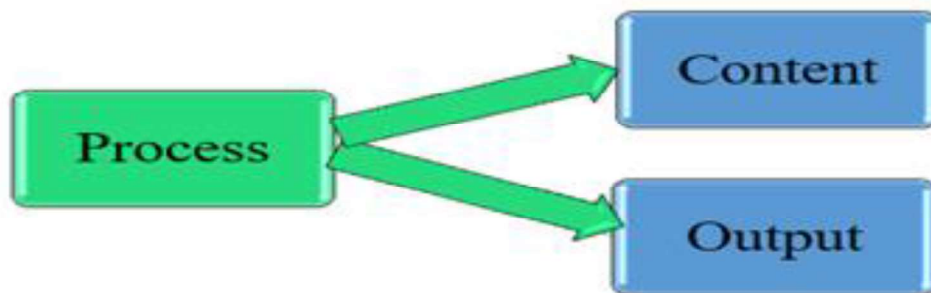
Jack C. Richards in “Curriculum Approaches in Language Teaching: Forward, Central and Backward Design” (2013), designates various dimensions of the curriculum framework and implementation. They are input, syllabus, process, methodology, output and learning outcomes. Designing a curriculum starts with an ‘input’ as what contents the apprentices are going to learn accordingly, course contents are made. Methodology is stage where the syllabus is put in use for teaching and learning processes which lead to outcomes, or we can say the learning outcomes. Jack C. Richards projected three possible approaches for curriculum framework. They are: ‘The Forward Design’, ‘The Central Design’ and ‘The Backward Design’.

The forward design is an old-style approach where a teacher or a specialised person of the subject, decides the contents for the learners, provides material and resources. Tests are taken at the end to get the

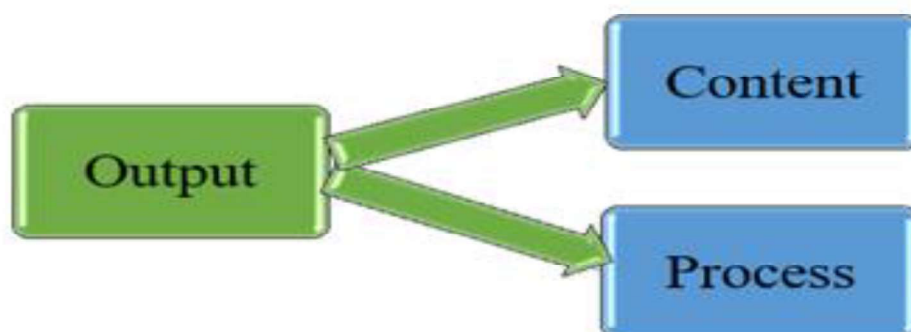
possible output. Most of the time, the learners are ‘passive listeners or readers’ here. The central design begins with the selection of the resources for the students. Next, methodology is suggested for the teachers to conduct the sessions and output is determined during teaching-learning process itself.



The Forward Design



The Central Design



The Backward Design

Figure 2.3: Approaches for Curriculum Framework

The apprentices are ‘active participants’ in the central design approach. The backward design is a seven-stage process. First, the needs of the students are analysed, and objectives are made. On the basis of objectives, the contents for a course are selected and organised in a sequence to avoid discrepancies. Next step is to select and organise the learning experiences. The backward design approach suggests using the real-life examples. Then, before implementation the ways to evaluate the course are decided.

“Syllabi are too often simply handed to faculty members to teach, with little room for any creativity or innovation in presentation, content, assignments, or assessment.”

(NEP, 2019: 256)

Nanduri Aparna Rao in her submitted thesis *Curriculum and Methodological Issues of Business Communication in Management Institutions*, concludes the thesis with how important English Language Skills are. The research attempts to discuss the issues and challenges faced by the management students after the changes has been done in the curriculum and the syllabus of Business Communication. The researcher aims to form a conceptual syllabus for the subject of Business Communication / English. The study attempts to highlight the importance of research-based approach for curriculum design. The researcher recommended the urgent need to improve and bring up-to-date curriculum

“with a view to catering to requirements of Indian students as well as global organizations” (Page: 125).

2.4 Foundation Courses in English

Ali, Areena in her thesis *Teaching Oral Communication at Undergraduate Level in Aligarh Muslim University: A Study of Theory and Practice* states,

“Teaching English is not an easy task and most of the times it has failed to meet its goal. Learners studying English cannot use English inside and outside classroom. Their production in the language is limited to writing skills and they face difficulty in daily-life communication. The traditional English classroom helps to develop accuracy rather than fluency” (Abstract: 3).

The present thesis provides analysis of the course of Oral Communication in English at B.A., B.Com. and B.Sc. at Aligarh Muslim University. While finding the gap between the theory and practice, it is found that the speaking skills are not in focus if the syllabi. The overcrowded heterogeneous classroom limits teachers to make use of pair or group work activities. Individual attention is also minimal due to the large ratio of the students in Compulsory English course. Special training for the teachers is also recommended by the researcher to improve the quality of teaching in the classrooms. Also, class size should be compact.

“The basic ability expected of learners at the end of the literature course is that they should become proficient in language and communication skills. However, it is generally observed that many students of literature lack language proficiency and face problems in communication even after their graduation” (Page: 16)

Raviya, Hitesh (2002) worked on his doctoral work *A Critical Evaluation of the Efficacy of the Testing Practices in English (Compulsory) at the Undergraduate Level in Some Universities of Gujarat*, under J.H. Khan, states the following null hypothesis of his research that stands accepted:

“The testes’ familiarity with the test format and the structure of the test-tasks in vogue for long allows them to easily guess the questions likely to figure in any examination by going through the question papers in that examination in the last four or five years.” (2005: 55)

With the implementation of Choice Based Credit System in Higher Education Institutions, there is a shift in emphasis from the teacher-centric to the learner-centric teaching, yet the apprentices lack proficiency in communication skills. Thus, Learning Outcomes-Based Education (LOBE) suggests adopting field-based learning or experiential-based learning. ‘Foundation Courses in English’ / ‘Foundation English’ /

‘Compulsory English’ / ‘Communicative English’ / ‘Communication Skills in English’ / ‘English Language Skills’ / ‘English for Specific Purposes’ / ‘English for Academic Purposes’ / English for Business Purposes’ / ‘Ability Enhancement Course’ / are the various titles of the compulsory English courses offered to the undergraduates. They are specially meant for the development of the LSRW skills among the learners.

Listening and Speaking Skills can be attained straight through the environment or the surroundings where the individuals communicate in English. Reading and Writing is learned through formal education. However, the language is usually taught in formal educational set up, resulting to lack in confidence in students to perform well. Quality Mandate of UGC suggest applying at least 04 Credits for Foundation or Compulsory English in an undergraduate course. Thus, before finalising the course, the curriculum setters must begin with the ‘Need Analysis’ of the learners today. Need Analysis, defined by Prof. Raviya:

“...is a reference to a process used in an academic setting for the purpose of determining the social, academic, and vocational needs of a group of learners requiring the use of language, and for prioritising these needs by making use of both subjective and objective information.” (Raviya, 2011: 110-111).

It is a matter of concern that after the introduction of Choice Based Credit System, teachers find it very less space to kindle the interest of the

students in developing the critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and reasoning as the students are more focused on the frequent examinations schedules. Lack of digital labs and other infrastructure facilities are also one of the lacunae of the current education system. So, the stated objectives in the beginning of the course might be impressive, but there are genuine concerns to investigate while implementing the same. Sometimes, due to time constraints, it is difficult to put designed course or the syllabus into practice. As the Foundation Courses in English is the common subject for all the specialised courses, the increasing number of students per classroom is also the subject of apprehension.

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