Chapter III

LEARNS’ NEEDS

*Within the limits of his discipline the language teacher can be his own theorist if he has eyes in his head and has the instinct to theorize that he was born with—as surely as he was born with an instinct for language. A professional is entitled to a mind of his own.*

— Dwight Bolinger

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the light of the argument advanced in the first chapter that a reconsideration of the present materials for intensive reading for General English is overdue at the tertiary level in India, the second chapter has examined its inadequacies from the point of view of teaching in the contemporary Indian context through an analysis of 55 intensive reading textbooks prescribed in various Indian universities in the recent past. Before proposing alternative materials on the basis of well-formulated criteria, the third chapter emphasizes the importance of needs analysis in this context and then discusses the results of a survey undertaken by the researcher to get an awareness of the wants and needs of the students for whom the materials are meant.

3.1 LEARNER-CENTRED CURRICULUM

There have been many changes and innovations in ELT, in the last few years resulting in a greater emphasis on the learner. The learner-centered or learner-based curriculum differs notably from the traditional curriculum in that it is based primarily on a collaborative process between teachers and learners rather than on a number of rules and norms imposed from outside (Nunan 1988).
As a consequence, there has been a tendency to focus on learners' needs. It is assumed that a syllabus for a particular group of learners should not be designed in a vacuum, rather, it should match the students' needs as closely as possible. It is not merely enough to state that curriculum planners need to take account of students' needs and then to proceed as if they did not exist. In the view of Newble and Cannon (1989:70-71), "the key to curriculum planning is to forge educationally sound and logical links between planned intentions, course content, teaching and learning methods, and the assessment of student learning while taking full account of student characteristics." However, they agree that there is "no straightforward formula to guide you in curriculum planning."

Within this broad concept of the curriculum, as Clark (1985:3) suggests, the key elements are objectives, content, and methodology. In any curriculum design, certain ends have to be reached through the specification of content and methodology. Richards (1984) reports that, within language teaching, there is a narrow conception of curriculum development, where the focus has been almost exclusively on language syllabuses, that is, on the specification of content and input, to the exclusion of other crucially important aspects of the curriculum development process, such as needs analysis, methodology, and evaluation. He suggests that the starting point for curriculum development should be an analysis of learners' needs rather than of the linguistic needs. He states further that needs analysis allows for more people to be involved in curriculum development, enables goals and objectives to be identified, and provides data for evaluation and accountability. According to him, the purpose of evaluation is to determine whether the objectives of a programme have been attained and, where they have not been attained, to suggest procedures for improvement.

Curriculum development should be an ongoing process. In practice, curriculum development can and does start with any of the linked elements—
planned intentions, course content, teaching and learning methods, and the assessment of student learning. In the present study, the element of course content which is a crucial link in the chain of the process has been addressed. The General English course in India starts with vague intentions, involves teaching which has a tenuous relationship to these intentions, and employs methods of assessment which bear little or no relationship to either.

3.2 NEEDS ANALYSIS
The scope of needs analysis up to and including Munby (1978) was syllabus specification derived from target-situation needs, but the scope has since been broadened to include areas specifically excluded by Munby—practicalities and constraints, teaching methods and learning strategies, and, recently, materials selection. Much of the later work in needs analysis is either not widely known or it is still assumed that curriculum development in language teaching should concentrate on language syllabuses (Richards 1984, cited in Nunan 1988 17). Recent critics of needs analysis have "generally failed to appreciate the significant shift which has occurred over the years, and still tend to equate needs analysis with the sort of narrow-band ESP approach which typified the work of people such as Munby" (Nunan 1988 44).

West (1994 12) points out that there has been a broadening of the scope of needs analysis to encompass the full educational process—the determination of objectives, contents and curricula, for the production and testing of new materials, for the development of autonomous learning, assessment by the learner, feedback for the conduct and reorientation of the project, teacher education and re-education. In short, as Richtenrch (1983 12) says, needs analysis is used "for running an entire system."

The term 'analysis of needs' first appears in India in the 1920s (Howatt 1984 245; White 1988 12-13, Tickoo 1988), when Michael West introduced the
concept to cover two separate and potentially conflicting concepts of 'need' contributing to the 'surrender value' of learning what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training. The concept of need does not seem to reappear for almost 50 years after West, a point commented on by Schutz and Derwing (1981 30) "it would seem that most language planners in the past have bypassed a logically necessary first step. they have presumed to set about going somewhere without first determining whether or not their planned destination was reasonable or proper."

Language teachers have frequently based their teaching on some kind of intuitive or informal analysis of students' needs (Tarone and Yule 1989 21), but the concept of a formal analysis of "the requirements which arise from the use of that language in the multitude of situations which may arise in the social lives of individuals and adults" (Richterich 1973. 32) was established during the early 1970s, largely as a result of the vigorous work of those associated with the Council of Europe (1981) in the field of ESP

Needs analysis is, by its very nature, a pragmatic activity (Schutz and Derwing 1981) based on highly localized situations (Tarone and Yule 1989 11) It has a basis in theory according to Coffey (1984), or principle that was largely established by the Council of Europe (Robinson 1991) But Yalden (1987 107) suggests that there has been little subsequent theoretical discussion Rodgers (1980 148) and Littlewood (1992) state that the broad theoretical basis is that of curriculum development

According to Holec (1985 263-4), curriculum development has since the early 1960s followed three main tendencies improving teaching methods, adapting the teaching to the type of learning public, and training the learner how to learn. Needs analysis has been rooted in the second of these tendencies and,
more recently, the third (West 1994 2) It is no accident that needs analysis emerged at a time when communicative approaches to language and language learning were displacing grammar-based approaches. For instance, Wilkins (1976 55) noted "The first step in the construction of any language syllabus or course is to define objectives. Wherever possible these will be based on an analysis of the needs of the learners and these needs, in turn, will be expressed in terms of the particular types of communication in which the learner will need to engage."

However, there has been a reluctance to agree on a definition of needs. Richterich (1983 2) is of the view that the "very concept of language needs has never been clearly defined and remains at best ambiguous." This view is endorsed by Van Hest and Oud-de Glas (1990 7) Widdowson (1979, cited in Bowers 1980. 66) and Brindley (1989 65) identify the source of this ambiguity as the distinction or even contradiction between various concepts of need: necessities or demands (also called objectives, product-oriented or perceived needs), learners' wants (subjective, or felt needs), and the methods of bridging the gap between the two (process-oriented needs) Hutchinson and Waters (1987) offer a useful classification of needs which may be seen to reflect differing viewpoints and to give rise to different forms of needs analysis. As a result, the term 'needs' is now seen as an umbrella term covering several interpretations.

Necessities are "the type of need determined by the demands of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation," while wants are "what the learners want or feel they need" (Hutchinson and Waters 1987 55-57) "These needs are personal and are therefore sometimes referred to as subjective needs." They cannot be said to be general and are "quite unforeseeable and therefore indefinable" (Richterich 1973. 32).
A common example of wants is the demand for speaking, which normally emerges as the least needed skill for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students, but, if not a need, speaking is often a want, since in many students' opinion, oral proficiency is the best indicator of mastery of a language (Chitavelu 1980 ix, Robinson 1991 105) Deficiency analysis, which asks learners to identify their own learning priorities, should throw up any such wants. It is often pointed out that wants may differ, even conflict, with necessities as perceived by the syllabus framers or the teacher. This, however, does not mean that wants are any less real and ways will have to be found to accommodate them (West 1994. 4)

Course content is "a broad concept meant to include all aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to the course and to the intellectual experiences of students and their teachers in a course" (Nunan 1988 72) In a second language situation, teaching materials mostly reflect this concept.

An examination, in the previous chapter, of the course content for intensive reading prose in General English prescribed in Pondicherry University and elsewhere in India has shown that it does not usually take into account either the linguistic competence of the students while they enter the colleges or the linguistic demands of the future. The cultural and conceptual difficulties are far from being considered. This strongly suggests that content should be matched to the intellectual and maturity level of the students and made to grip them at the very first stage of their interaction with the text. Thus, content should be selected to reflect the needs and interests of the students.

3.3 NEEDS ANALYSIS IN GENERAL ENGLISH

One might expect to find an increased interest in the analysis of learners' needs at the heart of current learner-centred and communicative approaches, and indeed there have been several general acknowledgments of the place of needs analysis even in General English curriculum design, for example, in Richards
“Needs analysis is also fundamental to the planning of General English Courses.” Although learners’ needs are theoretically of prime importance in current learner-centred approaches, needs analysis is rarely carried out in the General English classroom. It is argued that this is partly because of an erroneous belief that it is not possible to specify the needs of General English learners, and partly because of a lack of literature on the practicalities of analyzing needs data in the context of General English. But Seedhouse (1995) is confident that it is possible to specify General English needs, even in the abstract area of psychological needs, and needs analysis can be useful in the General English classroom with respect to problem-solving, and as a basis for designing aims, courses, and materials. He illustrates further how analysis of data can be performed, and how a tight and direct link can be maintained between needs, aims, and materials, and what actually occurs in the classroom.

English language teachers should, therefore, learn continually from their students, with the purpose of incorporating everything they learn into their teaching. Teachers are constantly being enriched by daily contact with their learners, which puts them in touch with different perspectives and ways of looking at things. Martinez (1993) lists those things that teachers may usefully learn from their students:

a) Students’ attitudes toward English and the English class.

Are these positive or negative? Do the students consider English important? How do they rate it in comparison with other subjects or disciplines? What are their attitudes towards the target culture?

b) Students’ motivations.

Are they learning English just because it is required? Because they like it? Because they are interested in British/American culture and/or literature?
Because they think they may get a better job? Because they would like to communicate with people in other countries? Because they like travelling?

c) Learners' preferences for teaching materials.
Do they consider textbooks necessary? What sort do they like best? What language do they prefer for explanations in their teaching materials? Do they like having a glossary of vocabulary at the end of the textbook? What sort of characters do they prefer in their textbooks? What sort of topics do they like best?

d) Learners' preferences for different forms of classroom interaction
Do they like working in pairs, in small/large groups, individually, and so on?

e) Learners' views on the four language skills.
How do they rate in importance the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)?

f) Learners' preferences regarding the assessment method/system.
When and how would students like to be assessed? By means of tests, through individual/group projects, self-assessment, and so on.

g) Learners' views on the roles of the teacher and the learners.
Are the students happy with the teacher's management of the class? What aspects can be improved? Does the student prefer a passive or an active role?

h) Learners' use of learning strategies and study skills
Are learners aware of their own use of learning strategies? What sort of learning strategies do they prefer to use? When do they make use of learning strategies?

He leaves the list open-ended. Many other issues could be added to the above list, depending on the situation and the teacher's objectives. He feels that the issues listed should be certainly taken into account, as they will lead to a better understanding of what our students want and need, which should result in a general improvement of teaching and learning. Furthermore, through this
process, teachers may become researchers of their own classes, and this may bring about a form of teacher self-development without the teacher having to leave the classroom.

Once those areas of the teaching and learning processes that can be learned from our learners have been explored, we must next consider how all this can be learned—that is to say, the instruments that can be used to gather that information. This will again depend on our aims, as well as our own teaching and learning situation.

3.4 NEEDS ANALYSIS INSTRUMENTS USED

The crucial phase in needs analysis is “selecting the information-gathering instrument” (Schutz and Derwing 1981 35). Needs analysis methods can be classified in various ways. Berwick (1989 56-61) makes a distinction between inductive (that is, observations and case studies from which courses can be generalized) and, more common, deductive methods (that is, Questionnaires, Surveys or other data-gathering instruments which provide various forms of information as the basis of course design).

The present study has made use of the instrument ‘Survey based on questionnaire’. The tool used here for gathering information is briefly discussed. In an early example, Jordan and Mackay (1973) used a questionnaire to survey 106 students at two British universities to assess their learning priorities and the questionnaire is now established as the most common method of needs analysis. Gardner and Winslow (1983 74-5) identify objectivity as the principal advantage of a questionnaire, but also admit to expense and a very low (7%) rate of return besides the difficulty in achieving a balance between asking too many questions and asking too few. A few basic rules for questionnaire construction are given by Utley (1992: 40).
“Questionnaires are structural instruments for the collection of data which translate research hypothesis into questions” (Richterich and Chancerel 1977. 55). Surveys and questionnaires are useful for collecting data from large groups of students. The items on surveys and questionnaires may vary in the degree of explicitness with which they elicit data from subjects and the degree of specificity in which items are formulated. Items may consist of questions or other stimuli that either limit responses to a very narrow range of possibilities or allow more latitude in response. They may be administered directly by the researcher to a subject if the subject is unable to complete the questionnaire, or if it is thought undesirable for the subject to do so. Surveys may be conducted in the presence of the researcher, or by mail, or by telephone (Seliger and Shohamy 1989: 126).

3.4.1 Types of Questionnaire

Questionnaires could consist of either close or open-ended questions. In close-ended questions, the person questioned has to opt from the choices given by the researcher. A number of possibilities which the researcher predetermines as important will be given as options. Open questions do not ask for ‘ready-made’ answers. The person questioned is given the freedom of expression. But “what is gained in freedom is lost in validity and accuracy” (Richterich and Chancerel 1977 59). Thus it is always better to use mixed questions, both open and closed.

3.4.2 Purpose of Questionnaire

A questionnaire can be used to gather any type of information, especially when the research focus is more on the ‘information’ than on the individuals, and the manner in which the questions are framed influences the answers. Thus it is important to frame questions devoid of the biased opinions of the researcher. Suitable questions or graded questions would possibly show graded answers which would indicate positive or negative attitudes of the learners towards the
course they are undergoing. Graded questionnaires help in forming typologies of
the population under study, the materials used for study, the methodology followed
by teachers, and so on. The students may also be provided with checklists or
rating scales.

3.4.3 Data Analysis of Questionnaire
When designing the questionnaire, the teacher should bear in mind the method to
be used for analyzing the data obtained. Certain types of data may be analyzed
manually, while other types, because of the large amount, the complexity or
attention to particular variables, have to be processed by computer, using a
statistical test such as Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), Factor Analysis, and so on.

Teachers should also determine to what extent the questions are reliable and
valid.

3.5 Survey Analysis
In the present study, a needs analysis survey of the learners' views on the study
of English as a second language under the compulsory General English
programme and of the coursebooks which are characteristically the staple diet of
their foreign/second language study has been carried out. On the basis of
randomization principle, a total of 192 second year undergraduate students from
two colleges in Pondicherry, namely, Tagore Arts College (TAC) and
Bharathidasan Government College for Women (BGCW), both affiliated to
Pondicherry University completed a needs analysis questionnaire. They had just
completed their first year General English programme (appendix 2 for full details).

It was ensured that the students selected for the survey were at the beginning of
the second year of the General English programme of tertiary education and that
they had used the same set of coursebooks in the first year and had appeared
for the same university examinations in April 1994.
The students were drawn from various disciplines and from both sexes. The main disciplines included seven sciences, namely, Computer Science, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Home Science, Botany and Zoology, and four arts, namely, Economics, History, Tamil and Philosophy. Eighty boys and four girls (15%) out of 541 from TAC and 108 girls (15.5%) out of 723 from BGCW completed the questionnaire. Of the total of 192 students, boys were 80 (41.6%) and girls were 112 (58.3%). The medium of instruction in both the colleges is English but the samples constitute two groups, those who had their schooling in the English medium throughout and those who had their schooling in the regional language medium throughout with limited exposure to English as a compulsory second language. The former category comprised 127 students (47 {39 boys and 8 girls} from TAC and 80 from BGCW) and the latter category 65 students (37 {31 boys and 6 girls} from TAC and 28 from BGCW).

The three-page questionnaire (appendix 3) was designed to be readily comprehensible to a wide range of language abilities of the learners, and it could be completed in about half an hour. The students were asked not to reveal their identity because it was felt that they should feel free to express their opinions and make their choices without any inhibition.

The questionnaire was administered during lecture hours on normal working days. Most of the questions involved simple choices of opinion or judgment presented on the familiar ‘semantic differential’ scale, and the responses could be expressed by ticking the relevant boxes. The first question (Section A) involved the ranking of choices and the last question (Section E) invited original comments or suggestions and also issues not covered in the other parts of the questionnaire.
The questionnaire aimed to elicit the learners' views on their purpose of studying English under the compulsory General English programme and also on the set of course books they had used in the first year in terms of the following.

i) the capacity of the textbooks to arouse their interest and invite their involvement in them,

ii) the perceived value in day-to-day use of various component features of the course and supporting resources,

iii) the perceived contribution of the course to their enjoyment, their personal and linguistic development (that is, its usefulness and relevance) and general motivation for foreign language study,

iv) learners' views on improving the coursebooks. Each of the following sections first explains the rationale or the principles underlying the questions included in that section and then analyses the responses of the students to those questions.

3.5.1 Section A: 'Purpose of studying English'

The purpose of this section was to find out whether students had a clear idea of why they wanted to learn English. Very often students are assumed to be studying English not out of any clear sense of purpose but simply because they have to. In this section, the students were asked to rank 10 general objectives of learning English as a second language according to the degree of their importance. The first section is an adaptation of Shaw's (1982) 'Ad Hoc Needs Analysis'. A majority (75%) gave the highest priority to learning English to 'speak and write in English more fluently and correctly' (item 4). Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) gave the highest priority to learning English to face competitive examinations and get good jobs. Learning English to 'behave like the British or the American people' (item 2) was valued lowest by 82%, while
64% ranked 'learning about and understanding the English-speaking people and their customs, manners, culture, and so on' as the next lowest.

Nobody ranked either 'speak and write in English more fluently and correctly' (item 4) or 'face competitive examinations and get a good job' (item 7) the lowest. Interestingly, nobody ranked 'behave like the British or the American people' (item 2) first.

Table 1 shows the percentage of students in terms of ranking preference itemwise.

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The fairly homogeneous responses suggest that the group members had similar needs, and that the learners were indeed aware of their specific needs, and were able to identify them. There was unanimity concerning the prime motivations for learning English as a second language. The responses also showed that the students were least interested in learning about Britain/America and their cultural and social tendencies.

At one extreme, items 4 and 7 received the highest priority reflecting the students’ extensive interest in those purposes of learning English under the compulsory programme (Part-II). At the other extreme, items 2 and 6 got the lowest ranking, indicating the respondents’ least interest in them.

3.5.2 Section B: ‘Students’ Attitudes’

The two-part section B was designed to learn about the students’ attitudes towards and views on the teaching they had received. The first part in this section attempted to gauge their views on the value of the General English programme. Responses to this part of the section were based on a three-point scale designed to identify a clearly positive view (e.g., ‘Quite enjoyable’) and a negative one (e.g., ‘Not at all enjoyable’). This question called for students’ responses to a series of three questions through a simple ‘box ticking’ exercise: whether the General English Programme that the students were undergoing was a) enjoyable, b) relevant, and c) useful. The students were asked to answer them each with three possible alternatives: ‘Quite’, ‘Somewhat’, and ‘Not at all’.

The first (‘enjoyable’) focused on the important affective domain while the second and the third (‘relevant’ and ‘useful’ respectively) touched on the cognitive issues.

The second part of the Section B invited some fairly subjective responses. An open-ended opportunity for explaining the reasons for their choices in the previous part was provided by this question. This part was devised to obtain the respondents’ views on the teaching materials they were using in terms of subject
matter, language/style, lessons/exercises, and also on the way of teaching and teaching aids/facilities available in their colleges. The learners were also given the opportunity to add any other reasons/comments if they desired. The question was concerned with students’ evaluation of both the teaching and learning processes they were experiencing.

This question was a little difficult for the learners but it was felt that all the components of the programme (and some key supporting resources) should come under scrutiny. Although in the response to the first question, a majority of the students opted for the middle or neutral position, it is obvious from the figures in Table 2 that not many of them felt strongly enough about the existing programme being quite enjoyable, relevant, or useful.

Table 2 shows a clear picture of the students’ responses.

**Table 2**

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<th>Quite</th>
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<th>Not at all</th>
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<td>a) enjoyable</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
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<td>b) relevant</td>
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<td>c) useful</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
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The lukewarm response to the General English programme was confirmed by the students’ subsequent explanations and comments in the second question of Section B. The figures in Table 2 also point to the fact that the learners would certainly welcome a more interesting, relevant, and useful General English programme. A substantial majority considered the subject matter dull, problematic, unfamiliar, and irrelevant.

A little over half of the respondents found the language and style tough and not easily comprehensible. Nearly two-thirds of the students looked forward to less number of lessons. A sizeable number (77.6%) pointed out the absence
of audio-video facilities in their colleges, while the rest did not offer any comments. Video, computer, and conversation were the favoured methods of working. This seemed to suggest that the students disfavoured traditional learning activities and wanted the focus to be shifted away from teacher-fronted activities. It also suggests that they preferred to have variety in classroom activities.

3.5.3 Section C: ‘Using the Course’

This section aimed to focus directly on the learners and their personal views on the textbooks that they had already studied. The four questions focused on the input provided by the course in four different areas: poetry, prose, extensive reader, and written communication. All the four questions were open-ended and aimed at eliciting the learners' views on the prescribed texts—which of them they found most interesting and easily understandable and which ones they liked best.

More than one-third of the respondents left this section blank, perhaps because they could not think deeply enough about this aspect or because they could not recollect the part of the programme or the text or the lessons which interested them most, thus suggesting a lack of involvement in the programme. Written communication exercises—paragraph writing, letter-writing, writing narratives and telegrams—in general scored a high percentage. Prose lessons and poems with simple style, story-like narration, and familiar background were identified to be the most liked ones. Of the two extensive readers, *Swami and Friends* by R. K. Narayan had an edge over *Telling Tales*, a collection of stones.

3.5.4 Section D: ‘Expectations’

This section included two questions—how the General English programme could be made more enjoyable, relevant, and useful, and whether they would like to study, even if it were made optional. The first question was aimed at making the students reflect critically on the General English programme and think
constructively of improvements on it or of alternative proposals. Although the programme is compulsory at present in the Indian context, the second question was asked to find out whether there was any intrinsic motivation in the students to learn English irrespective of its status as a compulsory or only an optional subject of study.

In the first question, the students were given seven suggestions for improving the programme so as to make it more enjoyable and useful. An overwhelming 83% of the respondents favoured the inclusion of contemporary Indian social, cultural, and economic themes in the texts, about 61% of them favoured materials that dealt with the current affairs of the world in addition to the current problems concerning India, about 60% favoured texts set in familiar/local/Indian environment and materials gathered from newspapers, magazines, and so on to supplement the textbooks and about 48% equally preferred simpler texts. It was interesting to note that about 20% were in favour of textbooks exclusively prepared from newspapers/magazines, and so on. Thus about 68% would like materials from non-conventional sources for language learning purposes. Another equally salient finding was that only about 11% of the students suggested using texts set in unfamiliar/foreign social and cultural environment.

These suggestions given by the students clearly remind us that the English curriculum would be more varied and rich than it is now if only we cared to negotiate the syllabus and the materials with our students. In this context, the idea of the process syllabus suggested by Breen (1984) seems to be a viable alternative to the idea of having a fixed and permanent textbook.

In response to the second question, about 78% of the students expressed their willingness to study English even if it was made an optional subject. This highlights the continued importance and need of the study of English in India notwithstanding the general counter claims made about its value and continuance in the present day context.
3.5.5 Section E: ‘Final Impressions’

The final section of the questionnaire invited subjective responses from the learners based on their broad perceptions on how the coursebooks for the Part-II compulsory English programme should be

Before this fully open-ended question, however, two more specific questions were asked on what the learners wanted to be removed from the existing course materials and what they liked to be included in them.

Quite surprisingly, 85% of the students suggested that poetry should not be included. Some of the reasons given by them were

1. “because this is not necessary to learn English”
2. “poetries [sic] are of no use to students”
3. “since it is not worth studying”
4. “uninteresting poetic lessons”

As regards the items worthy of inclusion in the present syllabus, 90% of the respondents favoured spoken English and ‘English for competitive examinations’. Other prominent suggestions were

1. “Debates, group discussions, periodical seminars”
2. “Matters concerned with worldly things, like violence, drugs, and so on”
3. “Tips to attend interviews”
4. “Detective stories and jokes”

The last open-ended question, inviting suggestions for making the General English programme more interesting, relevant, and useful, triggered a wide range of responses. Some of the students who had had schooling in the regional language medium gave their suggestions in Tamil and they were very expressive of their opinions since the first language did not inhibit them. The majority of the students (81%) favoured easily understandable texts in simple English and wanted texts which would be useful to them in their life.
Other suggestions repeatedly made by them are classified to bring them into a sharp focus and they are given below in the students' own words.

I **Contemporaneous**

1. "Include essays dealing current affairs"
2. "Avoiding outdated informations"
3. "Repeated essays or poems should be avoided year after year. The syllabus should be updated"
4. "General discussion on social and political problems that prevail. Improvement on the vocabulary of students"
5. "Some newspaper articles", "some useful articles from magazines"
6. "New topics, which is useful to the present generation should be included"
7. "We want to use the english connecting the world"

II **Cultural**

8. "Please you remove the culture of foreign country and add the culture of our nation. I thought that it will be very useful to the student get release from the boring subject"
9. "Avoid texts set in foreign social and cultural things"
10. "You can give some of our Indian writers books. I don't think the foreign authors items is not necessary for us"
11. "Avoid texts set in foreign social and cultural things"

III **Utilitarian**

12. "The syllabus should help us to face the entrance examination because there is no use in reading the summaries of the lessons in prose and so on"
13. "In English class, teachers should train us in doing exercise that are coming in competitive examination"
IV Procedural

14 “Teaching can be made interesting by introducing some new methods.”

15 “The teacher should make discussion with general topics about the surrounding world and the teacher should ask the students opinion.”

16 “More interaction is necessary between the students and the teachers.”

17 “Audio visuals and videos should be shown based on the syllabus.”

18 “The Programme should contain a number of tasks based on realistic situations demanding genuine communication or writing.”

19 “I think the lecturers should be more communicative. The way of teaching is school like.”

3.6 SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

Although this survey was limited in scope, it did represent the views of a cross-section of the students who had completed their first year General English programme. The survey aimed at gaining direct access to the learners' views on their wants and needs and also on features of the course materials which they liked best and those which they did not. The researcher was impressed with the thoughtful and earnest responses of the learners. The main findings of the survey are listed below, and this summary list includes only those views which had been given by a minimum of 10% of the respondents.

1. Learners are capable of expressing their views on their wants and needs.

2. Students study English mainly for its utilitarian value.

3. Learners clearly favour
   a) written English exercises,
   b) materials that deal with the contemporary world,
c) relevant materials from sources like good magazines, newspapers, and so on,
d) more interaction in the classroom,
e) Spoken English in the syllabus,
f) the periodical updating of the General English syllabus,
g) the use of audio-video materials in teaching,
h) materials that reflect Indian socio-cultural aspects,
i) training to face competitive examinations, and
j) tasks based on realistic situations

4 Learners are not motivated by
   a) poems and prose lessons that do not deal with their immediate concerns in life, and
   b) lessons with outdated information

   These then are the most significant findings that have emerged from the survey. It is understood that in addition to the generally recognized features affecting readability such as sentence length, syntactic complexity, and type of vocabulary, socio-cultural difficulties in, and contemporarily uninteresting nature of, second language materials are intuitively felt by the students to affect readability of a text.

   The findings underline firmly a number of issues about foreign/second language learning in the contemporary Indian context. The General English Programme materials should help learners have an experience, which is enjoyable, comprehensible, meaningful and practical, and which appeals to their desire both to learn and to engage in social behaviour. In addition, it should help them to realize the needs of their career prospects.
3.7 CONCLUSION

The needs of learners at the tertiary level having been defined fairly clearly, we must now consider the practical implications of this understanding. It should be possible to cater to the stated academic (cognitive) and affective needs of the learners and enable them to move closer to, and readily comprehend, the material on hand in the classroom. So, it was decided to select and field-test some materials that would be socially and culturally appropriate to the contemporary Indian context with the main aim of making learning enjoyable, meaningful, and purposeful.