CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

This chapter is the concluding chapter of the dissertation. The first section of the chapter presents the findings emerging from the analysis of the data. The next section deals with the pedagogical implications of the major factors influencing the writing skill. Finally, some suggestions are given to solve the problems identified through the analysis.

Effective instructional skills for the L2 writing classroom rely on awareness of fundamental concepts. The principles helped in drawing best beliefs and practices of writing pedagogy. These summative practices made clear the theoretical basis for research questions to be tested in the questionnaires. An attempt is made to study the current status of the writing practices which supported the comparison with the theoretical model of best practices. The findings and helped to identify some weaknesses. To furnish a synthesis of theory and practice some suggestions are made.

6.1. Major Findings and Suggestions of the study:

Theoretical principles: The learning theory of communicative approach emphasizes the elements of communication principle, task principle and meaningfulness principle. The task-based theory of language aims at tasks which provide input and output processing for language acquisition, task activity, and achievement which are motivational and learning difficulty that can be negotiated and fine tuned for pedagogical purposes. Observation shows that, none of these principles are taken into consideration in the writing pedagogy at degree level of Acharya Nagarjuna University. For effective teaching / learning process of writing, these principles are to be incorporated.
**Educational qualifications of teachers:** Questions 4 and 6 of the teacher questionnaire elicit responses about the general and professional qualifications of the teachers and information about their participation in any of the special training courses in the teaching of language or literature. The responses through the teacher questionnaire indicate that all the teachers acquired the basic qualification but do not have additional qualifications. The best practice suggests that it is very essential that the teacher requires training in the methodology of teaching language skills. The teacher is expected to have a broad-based knowledge in addition to the specialization in a particular field. Principles, knowledge and skills are to be fundamentally integrated in the professionally competent teacher. This can be acquired through his additional training and qualifications. This training can develop more understanding of the subject, originality, resourcefulness, intuition, etc. which will help him to handle successfully the professional problems confronting him and he can enhance his skills.

**Inservice training and professional growth:** Items 10 and 11 of the teacher questionnaire question whether the respondents participated in orientation courses or refresher courses and whether they are useful in their career. The best practice is that a teacher has to play multiple roles in a task-based communicative approach. Teacher education is a continuous process but very few teachers participated in the inservice training courses such as orientation courses and refresher courses. The result of analysis indicate that most of them felt that these courses will really help them in their career. The participation level of teachers in UGC sponsored programmes like seminars, symposiums, workshops, etc. is very poor, where teachers can gain knowledge about Psychology, Philosophy, subject matter, methodology, contents, techniques of teaching, etc. At the master’s level they may be proficient in the subject but they need training in the latest trends of teaching. They refresh and serve as a dynamic equipment in the pedagogy of
teaching. Regina (1994) suggests that the purpose of teacher programme is the development of academic proficiency in the use of English. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) in his study emphasized the need for conducting workshops for the question-setters. Sanyal Mukti (1984) also stressed the value of innovation and inservice training of practicing teachers. More and more programmes are to be organized and the participation of teachers must be made obligatory.

**Textbooks:** Question 8 from the teacher questionnaire deals with the choice of the components to be taught at the degree level. The responses in the questionnaires indicate that many teachers preferred to choose a textbook with a combination of spoken English, literature, grammar, composition, etc. and the learners use the prescribed textbooks and also grammar books. The best practice is that the textbooks are to be well constructed so that the teachers and students use textbooks as a primary source of content at all levels of language proficiency and so textbooks must aim at teaching different skills, strategies and processes in a sequential way. Textbooks are to be selected only after proper evaluation. The textbooks prescribed by Acharya Nagarjuna University at undergraduate level are found to be insufficient by the students, especially for developing writing skills. They require supplementation and adaptation which are processes requiring a careful balance of process to product, content to form. Eapen (1979) reports that there is need for more exercises in description which help to develop students’ accuracy in vocabulary use. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) suggests that course books, source books and other materials should be conducive for effective communication in writing. Gurupdes Singh (1985) says that they should contain teaching items, test items and learning objectives. Ayesha Banatwala (1979) suggests that textbooks must be need-based and Chaurasia (1978) says that syllabus should serve academic, professional social and personal purposes. Deepa Pillai (1984) reports that curriculum should focus on meaning and communication and
George (1981) says that the content should be organized to teach skills and sub-skills. Sanyal Mukti (1984) suggests elaborate and exhaustive content. Colaco (1985) suggests communicative approach and Sailaja Rani (1995) suggests that textbook should contain activities which integrate all the four fold-skills of language. Textbooks should address the needs of the teachers and learners; provide well-constructed activities, tasks and exercises; provide explanation, strategies, suggestions and also supplemental material. Highest value should be given by the authorities to a textbook which contains extensive readings, discussion activities, writing assignments, sample syllabi and lesson plans.

**Reading habits of teachers:** Item 9 from the teacher questionnaire finds out whether the respondents get enough time to read professional books or journals on teaching English language. It is evident through the questionnaires that most of the teachers find time to read professional books and journals. It is a good practice that they possess a fair knowledge of the changes taking place in the subject and for this they must inculcate the habit of reading newspapers, journals and other professional books. As language is ever changing and classroom teaching demands a good amount of knowledge in different areas, a teacher must possess ready information to satisfy the curiosity of his learners. Reading and writing must be the hobbies of the teachers so that they will be equipped with the latest trends and techniques of teaching. Deepa Pillai (1984) stated that reading could be one of the strong bases for a writing curriculum. Ayesha Banatwala (1979) reported that lack of exposure to English outside the English classroom is one of the problems of teaching writing.

**Practice in language skills:** Question items 5-14 from the student questionnaire question about the practice of language skills by the students. As mentioned in Chapter 1, practice in all language skills is essential as writing integrates all the other skills. The responses
reveal that very few students can afford to get newspapers and other magazines. Only half of the students attempt to read books other than the prescribed ones. It is a good practice that the learners are exposed to all language skills and sub-skills. Language learning is not a content subject but a skill subject which is learnt more by practice. In a writing study Krashen (1984) hypothesized that his generic SLA hypothesis of comprehensible input held for the development of writing skills, suggests that extended reading is necessary for organizational and grammatical improvement. Studies show that the acts of planning, rereading, scanning, revising for clarification occurred significantly more often and with better results in good writers who also reported pleasure in reading.

The data shows that more than half of the students revealed that they listen to radio and television news bulletins in English. The main purpose of learning language is to enable the students to communicate in that language. To be able to use language to convey thoughts, intentions, wishes, information, etc., a person needs a mastery of various elements. Mastery of elements is the mastery of sounds which are arranged in words which are related to each other in utterances by structure. This can be acquired through constant listening to various texts. The best practice is that students should be exposed to good models of pronunciation and intonation so that they will be able to communicate effectively. Intensive listening which is purposive should be developed through interesting, informative and learner-centred activities like drills, exercises, games, talks, story telling, role plays, dialogues etc.

The analysis presented indicates that only half of the respondents make an attempt to write letters or requests in English to friends, relatives or parents. Writing serves a variety of purposes and one of them is to be able to write personal letters. Writing is learnt only through writing. Review of literature shows that learners are required to make a
regular use of it both in classes allotted to writing and also in other classes. Students find it very difficult to express themselves through writing. It is very easy for them to write in their mother tongue but they must be given more practice in writing in English by making them use it in different contexts.

The responses of the questionnaires indicate that very rarely do we find students trying to speak in English. The primary function of the language is interaction and communication. It is a healthy practice that we make the learners converse with each other. To achieve that, we have to teach them the types of language they have to use in different contexts to communicate what they desire to express. They generally do not practise speaking in English which is very essential. The teachers can organize dialogues, information gap activities, communication games, role plays, etc. Oral practice should be given to the learners by making them speak on different topics which will make them effective speakers. Chaurasia (1978), Madhavi (1990) and Ayesha Banatwala (1979) say that low exposure to language skills hinders the learning of language.

**Students’ abilities to be acquired:** Items 12 from the teacher questionnaire and 16 from the student questionnaire seek information about the abilities expected to be acquired by the students after the completion of the degree course. The best practice is that the learners are to be trained to acquire all the abilities of using language. Learning a language is an integrated skill. As this study is about writing skills, focus should be on all four-fold skills because writing involves listening, speaking and reading. From the data collected, it is clear that abilities of speaking simple grammatical English and reading and comprehending ideas in English books, newspapers, periodicals, etc. are acquired to some extent. Pronouncing the words accurately, conveying ideas effectively through writing are not acquired to the expected level. Analysis determined that the students preferred to
acquire the abilities like listening to lectures, speeches, broadcasts and commentaries in English; understand the ideas and gather information followed by ability to read and understand newspapers, books, etc.; and ability to write applications, letters, etc. in English. As mentioned in the review of literature, all the four-fold skills of language should receive due attention. No skill is to be neglected at the cost of others as they are interrelated and interdependent. Sometimes teachers neglect the skills which are not tested in the examination. Sanyal Mukti (1984) also suggested the teaching of necessary skills. Emphasis is to be laid on these different skills at various levels of teaching. The approach should be multi-skill approach.

**Objectives of teaching writing composition:** Questions 13a from the teacher questionnaire and 17 from the student questionnaire seek information about the aims of writing composition. All the objectives mentioned in the questionnaire are considered to be important. The opinions of the teachers reveal that writing grammatically correct sentences and teaching proper spellings of words are most important areas of composition. According to the student responses, the important aims are learning to write words without spelling mistakes, taking down notes from lectures and speeches and summarizing essays or lessons. The results of the needs analysis are to be applied in the development of programme objectives as mentioned in the review of literature. The functions of writing are personal, study, public, creative, social or institutional needs. The best practice is that for proper functioning of these skills, areas like relevance, mechanics, organization, word choice, purpose, audience, content, etc. are also important. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) and Raj (1980) suggested that weightage should be given to each aspect of writing like content, fluency, accuracy, mechanics, organization, style, etc. While teaching writing, special care is to be taken to rectify the mechanical problems with the scripts, problems of accuracy of grammar and lexis, problems relating to style of writing, problems of ease and
comfort in expressing so that the aims of teaching composition are fulfilled. Need for formulation of objectives is stressed by Deepa Pillai (1984) Raj (1980) and Bhaskaran Nair (1987).

**Purpose of teaching composition:** Items 14 from teacher questionnaire and 18 from the student questionnaire deal with the purpose of doing composition in the class. The study shows that most of the teachers expressed that composition is taught for the purpose of testing whereas the students expressed that it mainly intends to develop their writing ability. Teaching of composition should serve the purpose of teaching and testing language in use, mechanical skills, treatment of content, stylistic and judgemental skills. At degree level a high standard of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, legible handwriting, appropriate and accurate language, organized, coherent writing skills are to be aimed at to develop the writing ability.

**Composition tasks:** Questions 15 from the teacher questionnaire and 19 from the student questionnaire find out about the usefulness of various composition tasks. All the prescribed composition activities are considered to be important by the respondents. The best practice is that practically useful composition activities are to be incorporated in the syllabus. Teacher responses indicate that activities like letter-writing, comprehension, and note-making are very useful for the learners. Some of the students report that writing formal letters, report-writing and dialogue-writing are very useful for them. Activities suggested by teachers and students should be incorporated. Besides these activities, the teachers must make an attempt to identify those forms of writing which are likely to be relevant to the learner’s needs and establish classroom contexts for practicing them. Tasks like filling in forms like admission forms, railway reservation forms, pay-in-slip forms, etc, interpreting advertisements, describing a process, preparation of curriculum vitae, etc.
can be incorporated into the syllabus, as they have practical orientation and immediate application in the students’ lives. As Purgason (1991:423) pointed out, “Each activity needs to have a reason. A teacher must think through why the activity is important to the students and what they will be able to do when they finish it” and teach it accordingly. Learners should be taught different types of writing such as descriptive, narrative, persuasive, expository, argumentative etc. Chaurasia (1978) and Deepa Pillai (1984) suggested a variety of activities and Eapen (1979), Sanyal Mukti (1984) suggested organized activities in the writing course.

**Planning:** Item 16 from the teacher questionnaire deals with the importance of planning of different components of language while teaching. It is a good practice that we plan before we teach. The teacher responses indicate that almost all the teachers need a certain amount of prior preparation. Planning is important because it serves as a vital link between curricular goals and the learning we wish to bring about among our students. In composition planning, overall objectives, work previously completed, materials, class management, lesson sequencing, contingency plans, reflection or self-evaluation, etc. should be accommodated. Syllabus planning will enable the teacher to break up the course into convenient units for each term, month, or a week and he does not over-emphasize one skill at the neglect of another. To fit in the needs of the learners, instruction should be planned to progress from simple and move to more complex areas of writing.

**Lesson planning:** Question 17 from the teacher questionnaire elicits information about lesson planning and its importance. All the teacher respondents show that they are in touch with all the components of English and they need to prepare to teach any of the components. The time required for all the components may not be the same. Planning a lesson may be in three stages: pre-teaching planning, planning during teaching and post-
teaching planning. Planning in prose requires activities like teaching vocabulary, structures, loud reading, silent reading, comprehension, testing, etc. Poetry teaching includes vocabulary, grasping the theme, appreciation of beauty of language, rhyme, and rhythm; comprehension, loud reading, silent reading, etc. Teaching of grammar helps us to consolidate forms and structure. It also helps in correction of sentences and improvement of written work, understanding a number of stylistic problems such as, linking one sentence to one the next, unity of thought, etc. These can be taught through planning in steps like presentation, practice and application. Composition planning aims to express oneself correctly, interestingly and imaginatively on topics within the range of experience. Oral preparation for written composition, written work, individual guidance, correction work, remedial teaching, etc. should be included in planning. Teacher should plan all the components of the course to teach the writing skills.

**Materials to be used in composition teaching:** Items 18 from the teacher questionnaire and 20 and 21 from the student questionnaire deal with the nature of the materials used in the teaching of composition. It is a healthy practice that the materials prescribed for teaching writing should be text-based, task-based and realia. The teacher and the student respondents pointed out that most of them make use of the prescribed textbook and the grammar book in the composition work. The composition textbooks prescribed by Acharya Nagarjuna University are not adequate as reported by students, to teach good writing skills. Selection of the textbook and grammar book must be done only after thorough evaluation as they are mostly used. The teacher can make use of supplements, materials, textbooks outside ESL composition but related to topics covered in the writing course. Textbooks in other disciplines like humanities, sciences, social sciences and other professions, journals, literature, biographies, poetry, dramas, reviews, essays, etc. may also be used. Our watch words should be “authentic materials” (Rivers 1983:19) in
natural situation. He also says that assignments have to be given to students to provide opportunities to generate content, to compose and communicate effectively the message. Curriculum planning should be organized basing on the principles mentioned in review of literature. Raj (1980) suggests an organized syllabus for teaching at undergraduate level and Sanyal Mukti (1984) suggests exercises for both teaching and testing to be included in the materials prescribed. Raj (1980), Colaco (1985) and Bhaskaran Nair (1987) suggested a positive role in teaching writing.

Methodology of teaching composition: Questions 20-22 from the teacher questionnaire and 23-25 in the student questionnaire elicit responses about the activities to be taken up at different phases of writing a composition. Analysis shows that all the activites mentioned in different stages are considered to be important by both students and teachers. The best method is to adopt a process approach in different stages of writing. It is clear from the study that in the pre-writing stage, activities like the teacher giving suggestions on the language to be used in the composition and the teacher writing useful words, phrases and expressions on the blackboard are considered as important by the teachers and the students. The teachers should also discuss the content, structure and organization, encourage students to present outlines orally, develop a near model composition, etc. Unstructured activities like free writing, brainstorming and listing and structured activities like loop writing, clustering and cubing should be incorporated.

In the ‘during-writing phase’, teachers mentioned activities like offering help with words, expressions, spellings, etc. and encouraging use of dictionary, grammar and other books of reference material to be very important. The student respondents showed that use of dictionary and other books, explanation of the areas of common difficulty by the teacher and correction of the written work are the most important activities. Besides these
activities, informal outlining i.e. preparing notes and sketching out a rough plan for a piece of writing is also to be integrated. The unrelated ideas may be excluded and narrow elements that cohere must be linked and arranged in a logical sequence.

In the ‘post-writing phase’, teachers considered remedial teaching and correction of individual’s mistakes to be very important. Students also felt that re-teaching of difficult areas is very important. Teachers can also encourage self-correction, peer-correction before their correction. Horowitz (1986) says that the focus on content should be writer-based, process-oriented principles and procedures. Revision, multiple drafts, feedback and remedial teaching are to be integrated into the teaching process. Though it is time-consuming the learners will be able to express ideas clearly, effectively and with integrity.

Colaco (1985) suggested that aimed at communicative approach be included into composition teaching, Deepa Pillai (1984) emphasized the importance of pre-writing and revising strategies and Rajender Singh (1990) felt the need for interactive and integrated language teaching methodology.

**Examinations:** Questions 24-32 from the teacher questionnaire and 27-31 from the student questionnaire relate to the examinations. It is a healthy practice that examinations should be communicative and integrated with a focus on communication, learner-centredness, integrated skills, emphasis on process and tests that teach. Regarding examinations, both teacher respondents and the student respondents expressed that the weightage given to writing is enough. The guidelines given for valuing composition in the examinations are not clear. Chapter II on theoretical issues elaborately discusses the importance of assessment in writing. If assessment is to be reliable and valid, the valuation should be uniform and consistent. This is possible only if the scoring procedures are
designed appropriately. Weightage should be given to content, organization, vocabulary, mechanics, etc. depending on the level of the examinees. Language is to be given more importance at degree level. Teachers reported that both dialogue-writing and letter-writing can be included as both the activities are useful practically. Majority of the students felt that either of them may be included. Teachers suggested that activities like expansion of ideas, information transfer, writing messages, story-writing and précis-writing, may be included in the syllabus whereas the students wished to have report-writing, writing welcome speech or vote of thanks to be read at the meeting, writing captions for cartoons and pictures, writing agenda, etc. Teachers did not want to have a change in the pattern and felt that equal weightage may be given for content, language, mechanics, organization and style. Spelling mistakes are considered to be more serious. Half of the students felt that the instructions given in the question papers are clear. In writing, the message conveyed should have a higher degree of finiteness. This skill needs real proficiency if the communication has to be effective. Examination should test formation of characters, expression, appropriate style, vocabulary and structure of the target language. Suggestions given by students and teachers through questionnaires should be considered.

Deepa Pillai (1984) also suggested the inclusion of adequate and appropriate testing measures in formative evaluation framework. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) and Eapen (1979) suggested importance of guidelines for means of evaluation at undergraduate level. Gurupdesh Singh (1985) and Sanyal Mukti (1984) said that coordination should be established among teacher, tester and the evaluator as they are different persons.

**General issues:** Items 33-38 from the teacher questionnaire and 32-40 from the student questionnaire deal with general issues related to the writing aspect. According to the opinion of the teachers, allotment of one hour for composition per week is insufficient
whereas the students feel it is sufficient. Effective writing demands the mastery of a complex set of processes, each of which calls time and effort. The instructional time should be increased and composition must be introduced in the beginning of the first year of degree course. There is disproportion between time and marks allotted. The teachers do not postpone teaching composition but they finish teaching hurriedly. Teachers should try to teach to use summarizing and note-making in other components. According to the teachers, overcrowded classes and lack of motivation are the main problems for ineffective teaching of composition, and according to the students, due to heavy syllabus and large classes, they are not able to concentrate on composition. The students express that the teachers try to minimize the mother tongue in teaching but the students are not able to follow them. They also identified problems like heavy syllabus, unsuitable textbooks, large classes etc., for ineffective learning of writing skills. Raj (1980) suggested the reduction of the class strength. Intrinsic motivation is a source of spontaneous inspiration and stimulation brings better results in teaching and learning process. Through learner-centered activities, effective methods and devices in teaching, motivation can be achieved. Learners wished to have English as an optional subject and mother tongue to be their medium of examination and medium of instruction. They feel that it is easy to understand and write in their mother tongue. The need for learning English should be explained so that they may be motivated to learn it.

6.2. Pedagogical Implications of Major Factors Influencing Writing Skills:

This study surveys the theoretical conceptions of language teaching which has enormous practical utility and a set of healthy practices are recommended. Then the research includes generating research questions, finding what other people have found out about the topic of investigation, collecting, analysis and interpretation the data, identifying
and suggesting solutions. It is now the responsibility of the university authorities to implement modifications as suggested while reframing the curriculum in writing inorder to make the students effective communicators in writing.

In the light of the findings, the researcher made a close examination of some larger questions as objectives, materials, methods and examinations adopted in teaching ESL writing at undergraduate level of Acharya Nagarjuna University. The researcher feels that in all these areas, changes are to be brought about if the teaching and learning of ESL writing should be effective. These problems are elaborately discussed and their educational implications are drawn.

6.2.1. Instructional objectives: A close examination of the prescribed materials at degree level confirms that there is no statement of detailed objectives of teaching writing. There are no instructions about the content or the quality of the instructional materials. Guidelines on methodology or testing procedures are not given. Lack of explicitly stated objectives makes it difficult for the teachers of English to design the instructional activities. In teaching, it is highly desirable to know exactly what one is hoping to achieve. If this can be clearly seen, the best way of getting to work usually becomes evident. We ought to consider carefully what we are trying to do when we are teaching a language.

Depending on the needs of the changing conditions, the roles assigned to English in contemporary India need to be reformulated. At present Indians need English. As explained in chapter I, according to Krishnaswamy and Lalitha Krishnaswamy (2006), in the changing scenario from coloniality to globality, objectives have to be preestablished by administrators and institutions and teachers should accomplish in planning and execution. English has i) the market-driven utilitarian function; ii) the welfare-driven social function; and iii) the ideology-driven identity projection function. With the needs or functions of
the language in view, goals are frequently recognized as global targets around which the instructional programme and course syllabi are to be designed. Brown (1995:71) defined them as “general statements concerning desirable and attainable programme, purposes and aims based on perceived language and situational needs”. Frodesen (1995) and Reid (1995) also support saying that the goals for a particular programme and its sequence of courses should address specific needs of the student population, and the requirements of the educational institution as identified by regular systematic needs analysis.

Ayesha Banatwala (1979) suggests that if students’ motivation to write English is to be improved, need-based courses are to be introduced in SNBT Women’s University. Instructional objectives stated in behavioural terms provide a description of the course content and expected behavioural change in terms of student learning. They provide the focus and direction for evaluation process. Sanyal Mukti (1984) says that there should be positive correlation between course-general and course-specific skills and goals. Deepa Pillai (1984) evaluated the CBSE X Class writing curriculum and reported that the statement of objectives is inadequate for both teaching and testing. George (1981) reported that the new curriculum of writing in Bombay University clearly indicated objectives and they are related to the purpose for which writing is used and the topics are subdivided into sub-skills. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) studied writing in English at pre-degree level of Calicut University and suggested to the authorities to formulate and lay down the objectives of teaching English to prepare guidelines for materials and evaluation. They help in choosing materials, methods and media. They are to describe the learning outcomes, abilities or qualities of the learners expected during and at the end of the programme. The research studies proved that the formulation of objectives will bring about qualitative improvement in teaching and writing skills.
Acharya Nagarjuna University is yet to formulate the objectives of teaching English at undergraduate course and they should be made available to all the teachers and learners. Clearly defined objectives separately for each component, which accommodate learner’s interest, motivation and needs, should be prescribed and this makes teachers objective-based and goal-oriented. If these objectives are realized, the purpose of the instruction will be served.

A small sample of the types of functions or objectives that ESL writing syllabi might include may be to: identify and summarise in writing the main ideas of the paragraph and larger units of written discourse; compose paragraphs, compose original expository and narrative essays on personal and academic topics; complete simple forms and documents, including bank deposit and withdrawal slips; take legible notes on familiar topics, respond in complete sentences to personal and academic questions; compose letters, paraphrases, compose summaries of statistical and graphic data, etc.

6.2.2. Instructional materials: Reviewing the theory on the role of materials, it can be concluded that, if teaching and learning of writing instruction should be fruitful, the teaching materials have much to contribute. Prescribed materials, source books and reference materials should accommodate the needs of the learner. The teaching materials prescribed by Acharya Nagarjuna University at undergraduate level are thoroughly examined. They are included in the bibliography. They are found to be inadequate to improve the writing skills. They should provide a wide variety of tasks and the communicative approach is to be adopted. The importance of materials in communicative methodology might be specified in the following terms. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001:30), “materials will focus on the communicative abilities of interpretation, expression, and negotiation; materials will focus on understandable, relevant, and
interesting exchanges of information, rather than on the presentation of grammatical form; and materials will involve different kinds of texts and different media which the learners can use to develop their competence through a variety of different activities and tasks”.

Some of the researchers suggested solutions to the problems through their studies. Mohan Raj (1980) reported that there is no organized syllabus at UG level. Sanyal Mukti (1984) in her study mentioned that the materials should be elaborate and exhaustive as the teachers have no other source. Deepa Pillai (1984) reported that very little instructional support was provided to help the students in writing in written English course of class X CBSE syllabus. Chaurasia (1978) in his study suggested that the syllabus should serve academic, professional, social and personal purposes. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) suggested that the course books, source books and other reference materials used for writing should be conducive. Eapen (1979) suggested that a systematic study of needs of all students at different levels might facilitate a more comprehensive coverage of grammatical items that need to be focused in the writing class. Sailaja Rani (1995) worked on composing process and suggested that textbooks are the most important tools. There should be well-designed instructional materials which are both interesting and informative. Topics should be of wide range of subjects and contain activities which integrate all skills. The instructional techniques should be specified. Sanyal Mukti (1984) suggests that interesting exercises, more of free response type which can be used for practice and testing, should be included. Deepa Pillai (1984) reported that the CBSE X Class writing curriculum does not visualize growth in writing ability. It should emphasize pre-writing and revising strategies. Chaurasia (1978) says that the exercises should not be too easy or too difficult but challenging enough. It should be from simple to complex. Eapen (1979) said that the grading of the course in terms of guided to free writing must be carefully visualized.
The materials should be prepared by authentic writers. The instructor’s manual, work-books, sample assignments, etc. should be made available at an affordable price. The manuals and accompanying materials should be complete, flexible and teachable. Guidance should be given on evaluation tools. Textbooks must be user-friendly. Materials should be appropriate addressing the student population in terms of age, educational experience, writing proficiency, etc. They should match with student needs and expectations i.e., address the students’ instructional needs. Variety of literacy and academic samples, model essays, tasks, texts should be presented. Well-written books with good editorial quality and accuracy should be prescribed. Organization should include feasibility, sequencing and progressing, grading, skills integration, flexibility, etc. Tasks, activities, exercises and assignments should encourage the students to participate actively in reading, discussion, feedback and composing task and promote critical thinking to interpret, apply, analyse and synthesize. The value of the materials depends on the effectiveness, and suitability to the student needs, teaching and learning objectives, institutional expectations, instructional beliefs, etc.

The task-based materials must consist of a variety of games, role plays, simulations in the form of exercise handbooks, cue cards, activity cards, pair-communication practice materials and student interaction practice booklets. The use of “authentic” “from-life” materials in the classroom may also be encouraged. These may include language-based realia such as signs, magazines, advertisements and newspapers, or graphic, and visual sources around which activities can be built such as maps, pictures, symbols, graphs, charts, etc. Deepa Pillai (1984) suggested that the writing curriculum should be communication-oriented, learner-centred and development-based one. George (1981) stated that the syllabus in the writing curriculum of Bombay University has incorporated in it most of the skills and sub-skills, which enable the learner to meet his academic, social
and vocational needs. Gurupdesh Singh (1985), in his studies on advanced writing for
graduate studies, said that the teaching of English is grammar-oriented, text-oriented,
translation-oriented and examination-oriented and also that the degree syllabus is a
confused mixture of teaching contents, text items, and learning objectives. Colaco (1985)
studied English at UG level in Mangalore University and suggested a learner-centred,
need-based syllabus with communicative approach based methodology of teaching.
Rajendar Singh (1990) in his integrated methodology for teaching English in UG college
of Kurukshetra University, Haryana suggested that the need was felt for interactive and
integrated language teaching methodology. We must evolve a new curriculum that will
include all these materials to satisfy the needs of our students. The researcher is of the
opinion that syllabus designing and lesson planning, decisions concerning materials
selection and task construction should be integrated with teachers assessment of the
students needs and abilities. Material evaluation and selection should be facilitated by
applying reliable criteria.

6.2.3. Methodology: It has been observed that in some of the classes, the traditional
method of making the learners to write the answers to the textual questions and
stereotyped composition exercises like paragraph-writing, letter-writing, etc., are being
taught. Instead of this, task-oriented and learner-centred activities can be incorporated and
the teacher should be resourceful enough to engage the learners in meaningful learning
activities. Johnson et al. (1994:67-68) gave a procedure of how a collaborative learning
would be carried out when students are requested to write an essay, a report, a story, a
review, or something they have read. A cooperative writing and editing pair arrangement
can be used. Such a communicative methodology can be adopted in our classrooms also:
the teacher may assign students to pair with at least one good reader in each pair; Student
A describes what he or she is planning to write to student B, who listens carefully, probes
with a set of questions, outlines student A’s ideas. Student B gives the written outline to student A; and this procedure is reversed, with student B describing what he or she is going to write and student A listening and completing an outline of student B’s ideas, which is then given to student B. The students individually research the material they need for their compositions keeping searching for material useful to their partner. The students work together to write the first paragraph of each composition to ensure that they both have a clear start on their compositions. The students write their compositions individually. When the students have completed their compositions, they proofread each other’s compositions, making corrections in capitalization, punctuation, spelling, language usage, and other aspects of writing the teacher specifies. Students also give each other suggestions for revision. The students revise their compositions. The students then reread each other’s compositions and correct their mistakes.

Radhika Rao (1996) suggested that bilingual education is a useful alternative education strategy, and it has pedagogic and methodological implications. Mohan Raj (1980) stated that there should be a change in materials and methods in the teaching of composition in Mysore University. Deepa Pillai (1984) suggested that the X class CBSE writing curriculum should be organized. The focus on the meaning and communication in writing activities should form a major part of the students’ learning experiences. Gurupadesh Singh (1985) suggests that imitation and practice should be the principles and the pedagogy has to emphasize the cognitive skills which constitute the development of writing abilities. Regina (1994) suggested that after a thorough teaching of grammar rules, model passages can be used for practical production which substitute the facility that a native learner gets from his environment and through the practice they can gain actual production.
In the course of writing the teacher can offer help at different stages of writing. Tarvers (1993) suggests drafting sequence into five stages: zero draft; shaping draft in which the students focus on organization, audience, and voice; style draft in which the students focus on paragraphing, syntax and diction; editing draft in which students focus on grammatical and formatting features; final draft in which the students submit for the instructor’s evaluation.

Process approach should be oriented in the teaching of writing at degree level. In the pre-writing stage activities like text-based tasks, writing from texts, brainstorming, mapping, cubing, etc. can be incorporated. In the planning and drafting stage we should: allow for extensive writing for discovery in-class and out, encourage students to plan as they go along and to understand the evolving purposes of their writing; continue to supply content through readings, discussions, etc., to supplement their ideas, allow enough time to exchange ideas, share their plans, and elicit new information for further development of writing task etc. In the rewriting and revising stage, the teacher should situate the writing task in transactional space; provide students with practice incorporating peer and expert feedback into their evolving drafts etc. In feedback and revision phase, the instructor should demonstrate productive and supportive ways in which students can respond to the writing of their peers, conduct peer response sessions where students can act as readers; emphasize the benefits of reading and responding to the work of others, demonstrate procedures for evaluating peer and expert feedback, etc. In the editing stage the teacher has to build time into the teaching sequence for peer, teacher and self editing of mature, developed pieces of writing.

As explained in Chapter II, on theoretical background, the role of teacher in teaching writing is unique. During their process of teaching, the teacher monitors the
pairs, intervening when appropriate, to help students. Harel (1992: 169) says “during this time the teacher interacts, teaches, refocuses, questions, clarifies, supports, expands, celebrates and empathises. Depending on what problems evolve, the following supportive behaviours are utilized. Facilitations are giving feedback, redirecting the group with questions, encouraging the group to solve its own problems, extending activity, encouraging thinking, managing conflict, observing students, and supplying resources”.

According to Breen and Candlin,

The teacher has two main roles: The first role is to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and texts. The second role is to act as an independent participant within the learning - teaching group…. A third role for the teacher is that of a researcher and learner, with much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge and abilities, actual and observed experience of the nature of learning and organizational capacities (1980:99).

Besides these roles, the teacher should act as a needs analyst, a counselor, and group process manager. The teacher assumes a responsibility for determining and responding to learner’s language needs. Breen and Candlin say that

The role of learner as negotiator – between the self, the learning process, and the object of learning – emerges from and interacts with the role of joint negotiator within the group and within the classroom procedures and activities which the group undertakes. The implication for the learner is that he should contribute as much as he gains, and thereby learn in an interdependent way (1980:110).

6.2.4. Examinations: The writing skills are complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices, but also of conceptual and judgemental elements. There is the analysis made by Heaton (1988:135) which attempts to group and test the many and varied skills necessary for good prose into five general components.

(i) Language in use: the ability to write correct and appropriate sentences;
(ii) mechanical skills: the ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language - eg: punctuation, spelling; (iii) treatment of
content: the ability to think creatively and develop thoughts, excluding all irrelevant information; (iv) stylistic skills: the ability to manipulate sentences and paragraphs and use language effectively; and (v) judgment skills: the ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with a particular audience in mind, together with an ability to select, organize and order relevant information.

Different standards of writing are expected in the performance of tasks at different levels. In the composition test the students should be presented with a clearly defined problem which motivates them to write. The writing task should be such that it ensures that they have something to say and a purpose for saying it. They should have the audience in mind when they write. Whenever possible, meaningful situations should be given in composition tests.

If the learners have to produce effective writing, different areas of components of composition are to be tested. The skills like language in use, mechanical skills, treatment of content, stylistic skills, judgment skills are to be tested. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) said that in testing, there should be a variety among questions and enough choice. In assessment, weightage should be given for information, content, fluency, accuracy, mechanics of writing, organization, style, etc. Eapen (1979) said that guidance is necessary in terms of evaluation. If all these aspects of composition are to be taught and tested, a wide variety of composition tasks should be introduced in the syllabus. Some of the activities providing basic skills should be introduced in the first year of degree course and some of the activities providing advanced skills should be prescribed for second year students. Along with these test items other activities can be added. It is better to introduce activities of practical value. In some items, choice for one activity is given against another item. Instead of this, choice among same activities may be given. The students will learn more number of activities. The tendency of the learners is that they will not learn unless they are tested. Deepa Pillai (1984) suggested that adequate and appropriate testing
measures should be included in the formative evaluation framework. Chaurasia (1978) suggested having internal assessment in written English. Gurupdesh Singh (1985) said that in testing situations, the teachers, testers and the evaluators are different persons and there is no coordination. Bhaskaran Nair (1987) mentioned that assessment and correction should provide motivation for the students. Two or more compositions usually provide more reliable guides to writing ability than a single composition enabling the testing of different registers and varieties of language.

Along with the final examinations, portfolio assessment can also be implemented in composition work. It can be an overall model for organising writing process and written product. Some portfolio assessment models involve no scoring at all, although the process does necessitate ongoing instructor response and evaluation (Bailey 1988, Elbow 1993). Portfolio assessment has become increasingly recognised as a valid and valuable tool for teaching and evaluation in a variety of contexts from elementary and secondary education (Calfee and Perfumo 1996, Yancey 1992) to college-level writing courses (Belanoff and Dickson 1991). Alternative forms of assessment of classroom based writing as protocol analysis, learning logs, journal entries, dialogue journals etc. may also be chosen as assessment techniques of written communication.

The teaching objectives which aim at bringing about desirable changes in the student behaviour through the learning process must be prescribed and they should cope with the academic, societal as well as employmental needs. The textbook writers must proceed in a systematic and scientific manner and the syllabus designer has to consider the needs of the teacher and the learner. The teaching methods should include techniques and approaches suitable for communicative English. The current methods have to be changed and re-modified. As testing is the cornerstone of instruction, question papers should be
proficiency-oriented and the pattern of the examination should be reliable and valid. The question items need not be text-based but more challenging enough to make the students use their reasoning and thinking abilities. There should be coordination among needs, objectives, materials, methods and examinations.

The objectives of the study mentioned in section 4.3 of the study are fully realized. The responses from the teacher and student questionnaires helped the researcher to identify the problems related to writing component. The description of the various theoretical issues in the second the third chapters helped the researcher to analyse the factors influencing writing process. The detailed examination of objectives, materials, methods and examinations helped to know more about their importance. Some practical suggestions given in this chapter fulfill the aim of improving the conditions of teaching writing.

The research questions mentioned in section 4.4 of the study are also answered. The positive attitude of the teachers and students to teach and learn can be learnt through their responses in the questionnaires. The objectives of composition and the expected outcome can be traced through responses for item 13 from teacher questionnaire and item 17 from the student questionnaire. Responses to items 18 and 19 from teacher questionnaire and 20 and 21 from student questionnaire speak about the inadequacy of the materials of the university. Practically useful composition activities are to be prescribed according to the responses to item 15 in teacher questionnaire and item 19 from student questionnaire. Communicative methodology of teaching composition is to be introduced as it is appropriate according to responses to items 20, 21, 22 in teacher questionnaire and items 23, 24, 25 in student questionnaire. The teachers and students do not get enough guidance from the course books.
From the responses by teachers to items 24-32 and items 27-31 by students about examinations it can be noted that practically useful activities are to be included in examinations. There is a gap existing between expected outcome and achieved competence. The teachers and the students suggest changes based on communicative approach. Item 37 from teacher questionnaire and item 39 from student questionnaire elicit the reasons for inefficient teaching of composition. Problems like over-crowded classes, lack of motivation, heavy syllabus etc., are identified.

6.3. Limitations:

As the study is a time-bound activity it only concentrates on only one area of the components of the undergraduate course, i.e., writing. Studies can be taken up in other components and also at different levels.

6.4. Suggestions for Further Research:

For effective teaching and learning of writing skills, research studies may be made in

i) procedures for identifying and validating learner needs.
ii) studies about instructional objectives to be stated and their learning outcomes.
iii) instruction material which should be skill-oriented rather than content-oriented
iv) innovative methods in communicative methodology and task construction.
v) testing devices and their systematic procedures.

Through the study it is established that the present system of teaching composition in English at degree level is defective and it requires improvement. There are certain wrong practices adopted by the authorities, teachers and students. It is hoped that the present study will prove useful in chalking out an effective programme to bring out better writing competence among the students. It is also hoped that this will provide a guideline for further research on issues regarding teaching of composition.