CHAPTER - 2

Objectives

Vis-a-Vis

the M.A. Courses in English
Overview.

The present chapter is divided into five sections. In 2.1, it describes the sense in which the term 'objective' is used in the course of the thesis by laying bare some of the confusion that shrouds the description and the definition of the term. It also presents in 2.2 a brief rationale for using objectives in any educational programme. 2.3 focuses on the formulation of objectives.

Section 2.4 outlines the objectives of the M.A. courses in English as they could be drawn from different sources. In most cases where there are no explicitly stated objectives, the objectives have been derived based on the oral responses of teachers who were instrumental in designing the courses and the syllabi. Section 2.5 presents the field objectives of the course as they are stated by the UGC Curriculum Development Committees.

Since the present project concerns itself with the objectives of teaching / learning English, it is essential that we are clear at the very outset about the sense in which the term 'objectives' is used all through the thesis and how objectives are similar to / different from the much synonymously used terms like 'goals', 'aims' and 'purposes'. This chapter focuses on the following aspects of the study of 'objectives'.

1. The confusion that shrouds the usage of the terms 'aims', 'goals', 'purposes', general objectives, etc.

2. Rationale for using objectives in an educational programme.

3. The sources of objectives.
2.1: Aims, Objectives and Goals - Lack of Consensus about the Usage: There is no general consensus on the use of terms like 'objectives', 'goals', 'aims' and 'purposes'. Definitions of these terms vary from user to user depending on his/her perception of the concepts. Ambiguity and confusion seem to characterize their usage. For instance, the difference between 'aims' and 'goals' is important for Davies (1976) while for Romiszowski (1981), there is no identifiably significant distinction between them.

Aims... can be thought of as ends, and general objectives or goals the means of realizing these ends.

Similarly goals can be thought of as ends (or events desired), and specific objectives the means (or objectives) by which they can be realized.

(Davies: 1976, p. 16)

... an educational aim, goal or purpose can be a fairly general statement of intent, not necessarily stated in a systematic way. An educational objective (or instructional objective) on the other hand, is a precise statement of intent, stated in a systematic way.

(Romiszowski: 1981, p. 43)

Some of the nuances of difference perceived between aims, objectives and instructional objectives etc. are so subjective that they are at times even contrary to one another. For instance, according to Romiszowski, an aim is either an 'input' statement or a 'process' statement while an objective is an 'output'
statement stated in precise terms. This distinction is contradictory to the distinction Davies perceives:

... aims are the ends ... and objectives the means by which these ends will be achieved.

(Davies: 1976, p.13)

If objectives are to be understood as the means to realize an aim, they cannot be output statements.

Similarly, if we want to adhere to the distinction that aims describe intentions of an institution, organization, course, subject etc. while objectives describe the intentions of a person or persons – a distinction that Davies makes – we cannot use expressions like "objectives of the course", "objectives of teaching/learning" etc.

Similarly, to Kibler et al. (1974) a distinction between ‘objectives’ and ‘instructional objectives’ is crucial while to Mager (1988) the same distinction is superfluous. Hannah et al. (1977) make a distinction between ‘long-run instructional objectives’ and ‘terminal instructional objectives’ while Norman (1978) draws a distinction between "General instructional objectives" and "Specific learning outcomes".

Using multiple labels interchangeably to a limited set of concepts actually obscures the terms and hinders conceptual clarity. For instance, some of the above terms like “objectives”, “long-run instructional objectives” and “general instructional objectives” as they are used by different authors indicate more or less the same thing. Mager (1988) resolves the confusion by using the plain term “objective” for anything that describes a measurable outcome:
Over the past twenty five years or so the notion of objectives has picked up jargon like a ship collects barnacles. They have been called behavioural objectives, competencies, outcomes and performance objectives. Worse, the same objective has been labelled at one and the same time a classroom objective, a course objective, a school objective, a district objective, and a country objective.

But if you describe a measurable outcome you intend to accomplish, that is an objective. Keep this in mind: they’re not behavioural objectives any more.

( Mager: 1988, p.63)

Guided by the conscious desire to confine the discussion to the focus of the thesis and for reasons of practical convenience, the Researcher is deliberately shunning to enter into the maze of subtle distinctions that could be drawn among various terms like ‘goals’, ‘aims’, ‘purposes’, ‘outcomes’ and objectives. For the purpose of the present thesis no rigid distinction has been made among these terms as drawing too rigid a line of distinction among them, by way of defining them precisely, will have the danger of blinding us to the inter-relationship that exists among them.

However, given the topic of the present thesis and given the multiple senses in which the term ‘objective’ is used by different applied linguists, it becomes imperative to dwell on the term ‘objective’ at some length by clarifying the sense in which it is used in the course of the present thesis. The term ‘objective(s)’ is used in two different senses in the thesis. In a technical sense, it is used in conformity with what Mager has to say about it:
"...if you describe a measurable outcome you intend to accomplish, that is an objective".

(Mager: 1988, p. 63)

In the other sense, the term is used rather loosely to represent an 'intention' or a 'purpose'. When we speak of the objectives of the course, it is in the former sense that the term is used; whenever we speak of the objectives of students and teachers, it is in the latter sense that we use the term.

2.2. The Importance of Objectives:

Objectives play a very important role in indicating the direction or course in which teaching, learning and evaluation have to move. They are crucial in making these three processes systematic and orderly. They indicate a starting point in planning. "They are an ideal, an aspiration, a direction in which to go" (Davies: 1976, p. 12) Objectives are vital in making educational activities valuable, fruitful and worthwhile.

In an ideal situation, the objectives of the course are translated into reality by teachers with the help of certain teaching methods and materials. Thus the teachers, methods and the syllabus are only a means to realize the objectives of the course. In other words, they are expected to execute the formulated objectives of the course which, in turn, are based on the objectives of the students. When a course does not take into consideration the objectives of the students, it will not be worth its while for them.

It is indispensable to have aims and objectives in any educational programme because "If you're not sure where you're going, you're liable to end up some place else and not even know it" (Mager: 1975).
The rationale for using objectives: Having acknowledged the fact that objectives and aims are indispensable in any educational programme, let us now examine the rationale for using them.

Educational Accountability: As teaching "like any other enterprise represents an investment in human and financial resources" (Stern: 1981, p.57) it is essential that whatever is done by way of teaching is accounted for. Accountability entails a balance between investment (in terms of both money and man-hours) and student learning. If an educational endeavour, like any other endeavour, has to prove its success or utility to the society, it has to have a set of explicit objectives which everyone interested in the endeavour is aware of.

Educational accountability can be translated into reality only when the objectives are made explicit and a demonstration of the extent to which these objectives have been realized is made at the end of an educational endeavour.

Merely stating a list of objectives does not ensure educational accountability. What is needed is a circulation of these objectives among all the participants who are involved in the endeavour and the people who are interested in it.

Most of the present postgraduate courses in English, as they are offered by the different universities of the state, do not have any explicitly stated objectives as such. Even in the few cases where there are some objectives, they do not serve the function of educational accountability; neither the teachers and the students, nor the people interested and involved in the course are aware of the objectives.
Thus as far as ensuring educational accountability is concerned having a set of objectives for a course is as good as not having any objectives at all if they are not given publicity.

Facilitation of course design and syllabus design: Given a specific set of well formulated objectives, the task of course designing and syllabus designing becomes easy in that the designers have some guidelines in the form of objectives to proceed with their respective tasks. Without any objectives, the course designers and syllabus makers are confused, not knowing where to start, what to do and how to do it etc. Lack of objectives is the chief reason for the mismatch that occurs between a course design and a syllabus design of the same frame work (syllabus design is only a part of course design. A course includes not just a syllabus but also methods, evaluation procedures, administrative aspects etc.).

A syllabus must reflect the objectives for the realization of which the course is meant. Coordination between syllabus and course design presupposes a set of explicit objectives. Clearly, in all the universities of Andhra Pradesh, the postgraduate courses in English have been designed without any explicit, well-formulated objectives on hand. The absence of objectives makes the courses directionless.

Make teaching focused or Objective oriented: The objectives of a course give direction to teaching and make it an objective oriented activity which is meaningful and worthwhile. No matter how efficient a teacher is and how effective his / her methods of teaching are, if she/he were to teach without having any objectives, the teaching would not have any relevance or meaning. It is essential
that teachers base their teaching on a set of objectives. Thus what is to be taught is made focused and objective-oriented.

Facilitate Evaluation of student learning: Evaluation is so inseparable a part of objectives that it has little meaning sans objectives. The purpose of evaluation is to test how far a specified set of objectives have been realized. Objectives enable us to test student learning in an effective way in that they act as guidelines by informing us about what should go into the evaluation procedures. In other words, the evaluation procedures test the students only on those aspects of learning which the objectives envisaged for them.

Facilitate Evaluation of teacher performance, teaching materials, methods and evaluation procedures: Objectives provide a yard stick with which we can gauge the success and efficiency of the teacher performance, teaching methods and materials.

If a course fails in the realization of its objectives, there could be many reasons for it; the chief of them being the use of improper methods, materials and evaluation procedures. We can not realize our objectives without adopting the right means.

Since methods, materials and evaluation procedures are a means to achieve "something", we cannot evaluate their success and effectiveness without gauging them against this "something" for which they are meant; this "something" is determined by objectives. Thus objectives become indispensable in evaluating the methods, materials and evaluation procedures of a course.

Besides the functions listed above, objectives serve many more functions. But objectives in themselves are of no use unless they are implemented.
2.3: Formulation of objectives: Having argued that we cannot really do away with objectives in the running of any course, it becomes imperative that we know the sources from which objectives are derived. The sources of objectives are determined by the educational philosophy that underlies them. For instance, if we wish to follow a Romantic approach to education where there is a great deal of emphasis on individualized learning and where the learner is free to choose his own materials and methods, there is no real place for objectives. (Davies (1972) gives a detailed account of the three important approaches to education, viz., Classical, Romantic and Modern) Since the kind of objectives we choose are dependent on the kind of educational philosophy that underlies our thinking, there is no one answer to the question "What are the sources of objectives?". However today when a lot of emphasis is placed on need-based learning/teaching, the needs of the students themselves should serve, ideally speaking, as the sole source of objectives.

There are basically three ways in which objectives figure in the process of planning. A detailed account of these three ways is given in Davies (1976). The three ways are:

i. Systematic planning.
ii. Expedient planning.
iii. Piecemeal planning.

i. Systematic planning: In systematic planning, objectives are formulated first and the means to achieve these objectives are determined next. Systematic planning is based on Tyler's model (1949), that is to say, objectives are derived from a study of learners, society and the discipline concerned.
ii. **Expedient planning**: In expedient planning the reverse of what happens in systematic planning takes place. The ends or objectives are formulated after defining the means. The planning is not from objectives to means but from means to objectives. On the face of it, this kind of planning might seem illogical and irrational but it is after all expedient.

iii. **Piecemeal planning**: In piecemeal planning neither the ends nor the means are predetermined in clear cut terms. It involves a merging of ends and means. As the name itself suggests, no master plan is drawn in advance. Instead, objectives are formulated in a piecemeal manner, keeping certain aims as the back drop. There is no one thing always determining the other. That is to say, neither the objectives nor the means have control over each other. It is a very flexible kind of planning in that it can incorporate at any stage any new discoveries related to either the subject matter or the means or the objectives themselves.

Given these three alternative kinds of planning, we must decide on the best way of planning for designing a course in English at the M.A. level in Andhra Pradesh. If we follow systematic planning through and through, it has the demerit of isolating ends and means as two successive steps in the process, rather than seeing them as two integral parts. If we follow expedient planning in toto, it has the limitation of means constraining us from having objectives that are beyond the available means. Piecemeal planning might be ideal in a situation where deciding on the objectives and means is carried out by teachers at the classroom.
level. Implementing piecemeal planning requires expertise on the part of teachers and it also means decentralization of education.

Perhaps a combination of all the three types of planning mentioned above would be ideal for the M.A. courses in English. It might seem impossible, on the face of it, to blend these three conflicting ways of planning. But an eclectic blend of these three modes is not as impossible as it might seem and it would look something like the following in operation:

There are basically two kinds of means, apart from the means already available:

(1) means which can be made available

and

(2) means which cannot be made available

To begin with, we have to choose an objective and then screen it through the following questions:

Can this objective be operationalized with the available means?

If no, can we provide the means the objective requires?

If the answer is ‘yes’ to the second question, we will retain the objective; if no, we will give it up. For instance, if an objective requires that each and every student possess a computer, we have to give up the objective no matter how important it is. If an objective requires that there is at least one computer for the whole class, we can retain this objective as providing a single computer for the whole class, may not be beyond the means of an English department in Andhra Pradesh.
This way we are not letting the means totally constrain us from having higher objectives; nor are we formulating objectives without taking into consideration the means. While operationalizing the objectives, if we realize that the students need something very basic and important which could not be provided by the already formulated objectives, a new objective can be formulated then and there to cater to the learning needs of the students.

Thus an eclectic blend of systematic, expedient and piecemeal planning can be adopted to design a course at the postgraduate level. Such an approach alone can make the formulation of objectives flexible enough to cater to the varied needs of the students.

With regard to the sources of objectives the rather too oft-mentioned name is that of Tyler R.W. who says in his *Basic principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (1949) that the three important sources of the objectives are (a) the learners (b) the subject matter and (c) the society. We can derive our objectives / aims from these three sources. A study of learners and their general needs certainly helps us in formulating objectives for a course. But society and subject matter are too vague to offer us any tenable objectives. The sole source of objectives should be a study of the needs of the learners because their needs reflect societal needs / demands. For instance, in the survey conducted to learn the needs of the students, all the students, with hardly any exception, expressed a desire to communicate effectively in English. Their desire to use English for communication comes from their need to use English in the society. This need represents a societal demand / need.
Thus the needs of the students constitute the most important source of objectives for any course, more so for a language based course. Learners' needs also provide us with a criterion for choosing the subject matter. For instance, until four years ago there was no paper on "Literary criticism" at Sri Padmavathi Mahila University. But keeping in mind the syllabus for competitive examinations like J.R.F, SLET and NET where "Literary criticism" is an integral part of the syllabus, an exclusive paper on criticism came to be offered in the department of English. This has been of immense help for those students taking competitive examinations after their postgraduation.

Having elaborated on the importance of objectives and the formulation and sources of objectives, we shall now see in 2.4 what the objectives of the present M.A. courses in English are as they are being offered by the different universities in Andhra Pradesh.

2.4: The objectives of the M.A. courses in English

No state university in Andhra Pradesh seems to have any explicitly stated objectives as such in black and white. However, an attempt has been made here to enumerate the implicit objectives of the M.A. courses in English.

Based on the responses of the teachers and the syllabuses of the different universities, a general tentative list of the implicit objectives of the M.A. courses in English has been prepared and the objectives are enumerated below in their descending order of importance.

1. To familiarize the students with literary texts of different ages and different countries and to make them understand these texts.

2. To develop in them a taste for literature.
3. To develop in them the critical ability to judge literature impassionately.

4. To develop in them the ability to communicate their ideas about literature cogently and effectively.

5. To stimulate in them a desire to read even beyond the prescribed texts.

6. To develop in them communicative skills.

7. To prepare them for a job/career.

8. To prepare them to face competitive examinations like NET (National Eligibility Test), JRF (Junior Research Fellowship) etc.

9. To prepare them for research.

10. To inculcate certain moral and ethical values in them.

Now let us examine how far the stated objectives of the M.A. courses in English are operationalized through the three most important components of the course namely, syllabus, methods and evaluation.

1. To familiarize the students with literary texts of different ages and different countries: This objective is well reflected in the syllabuses of all the universities as each of them includes a range of texts drawn from different ages like the Ancient Classical period, sixteenth century through twentieth century and different countries like Britain, Greece, America, Australia,
Russia, India, Canada, Africa etc. This objective is well taken care of by the teaching methods and the evaluation components as well.

It is a welcome feature that all the postgraduate departments of English in Andhra Pradesh have included for study, texts drawn from a host of countries and ages. However, the syllabi are still heavily biased towards British literature without any exception. A glance at the syllabi of the different universities would reveal that all of them have given more than 50% weightage to British literature. Whether such heavy weightage to British literature is justifiable or not is a moot question and is being widely debated upon in many an academic forum. While some perceive this practice of giving more weightage to British literature in the literature courses as a mark of colonial hangover and a mark of the inability to decolonize English studies, on the other hand, there are arguments like the following which support the retention of British literature in the English courses:

The canon can certainly be challenged and be replaced or (preferably) supplemented with Indian and third world materials more relevant to our sense of angst and crisis. But apart from the inevitable danger of innovations petrifying into canons, we will be faced with an acute sense of deprivation. The Wife of Bath, Countess and Micawber exist in non-colonial, permanently human (not necessarily universal) situations. Are they to be rolled down to oblivion in our frenzied, relentless pursuit of change?

(Mahalanobis: 1993, p. 155)

Are we unable to understand the problems faced by King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet, Emma or Scobie because they belong to another culture? Or are we
able to understand them because they are portrayed as human beings just like us? One has to remember here that the teacher has to break through the narrow domestic walls and move towards a more universal realisation of human experience. The teacher has to steer his ship in such a way that his students are able to see for themselves how fundamental human emotions can be analysed, crossing the national boundaries. The teacher of English literature in India has to move towards the concept of world literature.

(Sinha: 1993, p. 159)

Meenakshi Mukherjee in her article "Certain Long Simmering Questions" clinches the debate by stating that what we teach is not so important as how we teach students the ways of producing their own meanings from the texts:

- More important than the details of what texts we choose to put into the curriculum and how we interpret these texts in class would be the question of what tools we are providing to students for them to produce their own meanings. Arguably, we do not 'teach' literary texts; we only train students in ways of reading.

(Mukherjee: 1993, p. 35)

2. To develop a taste for literature in the students: The realization of this objective depends more on the method and mode of teaching than on the syllabus of the course. However, one cannot undermine the importance of including in the syllabus texts which are likely to interest students at the postgraduate level. There may not be a uniform set of texts which uniformly appeal to all the postgraduate students of English in the state. Depending on the general configuration of students in a class, texts could be chosen. One need not compromise on the overall objectives of the course in the process.
of including texts which will be of interest to students. For instance at Sri Padamavathi Mahila University, all the students are women and they seem to find women's writing, texts in which women are the protagonists and feminist criticism very interesting. This is not to suggest that all of them like these writings (though it is true with a majority of them) but they find them undoubtedly interesting. By providing what interests the students, the course can indeed cultivate in them a taste for at least some kind of literature. Expecting students to have a taste for all types of literature will be hoping for the impossible. No individual can ever have a uniform taste for all literature. The intelligibility of a text is a prerequisite to its appeal to the students. As the kind of language used affects the intelligibility of a text, keeping in mind the linguistic level of the majority of students, such texts which are forbiddingly difficult must be avoided. Chaucer's Prologue to Canterbury tales was one such text which almost all the students of English at Sri Venkateswara University unanimously felt is a boring, difficult text. They wished that the text be removed from the syllabus. Middleton's Women Beware Women and Ben Jonson's Everyman in his Humour were two more examples of uninteresting, dull texts mentioned by the students of Sri Padmavathí Mahila University.

Possibly, these very texts would be found interesting by the students if they were taught differently using a different mode of teaching. Thus both materials and methods have an important role to play in developing in students a taste for literature.
There are no concrete means by which the realization of this objective could be verified other than by having informal interaction with students. Teachers who constantly interact with students can easily tell how far the students have developed a taste for literature.

'Teachers' competence and performance in the classes have a major role to play in the realization of this objective. Those who have developed a real flair for literature admit that some teacher(s) has / have inspired them at some stage in their lives to read and appreciate literature.

3. To develop in them the critical ability to judge literature impassionately:

Like the second objective, this objective is also a very broad one and its realization depends more on the method and mode of teaching rather than on the materials used. However, within the syllabus, there is room for some kind of criticism. All the state universities except Osmania University have a paper on literary criticism. This paper is expected to provide the students with the theoretical basis and apparatus required for practising criticism themselves. Sri Krishnadeva Raya university offers a paper titled "Literary Criticism; Theory and Practice". Even Andhra University and Sri Padamavathi Mahila University offer papers on criticism which include practical criticism as well. Practical criticism is included in these papers mainly with a view to training the students in responding to literary texts like poems and prose passages in a critically sensitive manner. The exercises in practical criticism which are a compulsory part of the criticism papers should be of immense use in realizing this objective.
But what is achieved by them is highly limited. For different reasons, students do not seem to apply the skills of literary analysis which they learn from the practical criticism module of the course to the texts prescribed in their syllabus. They seem to see exercises in practical criticism as something separate and different and fail to relate the insights they gain from practical criticism to the literary texts prescribed for study. They seem to be comfortable reproducing pre-prepared essays in the examinations, and they avoid approaching a text with their own critical apparatus. When some unseen poems/short stories were given for critical analysis in the M.A. Final year class, quite a few students responded in writing very imaginatively and ingeniously. But the same ingenuity was totally absent when they wrote their answers in the public examinations. This explains the students' inability to apply, what they already know, to a related context. Their diffidence and low linguistic competence compel them to repose more faith in "cribs" than in themselves.

4. To develop in them the ability to communicate their ideas about literature cogently and effectively: This objective is probably the least realized one of all. A cursory glance at the answer scripts of the postgraduate students of different universities which are far from being cogent and effective will prove the case in point.

Within the syllabi, in none of the seven universities is there provision for this particular objective. There is no exclusive module pertaining to the development of the communicative ability in writing. Even in teaching, this
objective gets hardly any focus. The ability to write cogently and effectively is something which can be acquired with practice. Every time the students attempt something in writing, they need to know individually the lapses in their writing. This demands a lot of personal effort on the part of the teacher. But in all the English departments of the universities students hardly get any practice in writing. Except in the year-end examinations, students never get an opportunity to write. Incorporating a continuous assessment scheme into the course will enable the students to write something continually and to get constant feed back as well. Therefore, continuous assessment should be made a part and parcel of the M.A. course in English. With the introduction of semester system in all the universities from the academic year 2002-2003 onwards, one hopes that continuous assessment would be made an integral part of the course.

This would indeed be a welcome change as semester system is more conducive to learning than the annual system. Though semester system has been in vogue for many years in the departments of Central Universities and other premier institutions, it has not succeeded all these years in making inroads into state universities, more so into Humanities departments.

The departments of English at Nagarjuna university and Sri Krishnadeva Raya university once tried the semester pattern but reverted to the annual system owing to a number of reasons. When interviewed, a senior professor who has retired from Nagarjuna university, stated one main reason as responsible for their dispensing with the semester pattern. He said:
We were the first ones to try semester system way back in the seventies itself. But we were forced to dispense with it unable to cope with threats from the students. I myself was a victim of student high handedness. Two students came to my room one day armed with daggers and threatened to eliminate me if I did not give them the marks they demanded in the internal assessment.

Nothing can be more devastating and intimidating for the teaching community than unwarranted threats of this kind. One can only hope that this kind of incidents will not recur with the introduction of semester system and continuous assessment from the academic year 2002-03.

The objective of improving the writing skills of the students, thus, is not operationalized in the course, either in its content or in its teaching methodology.

Even the evaluation component does not test the writing skills of the students. Most students manage not only to just scrape through but also to get first classes despite their outrageous writing skills.

5. To stimulate in them the desire to read even beyond the prescribed texts: This objective is akin to the second objective in that its realization depends on many factors like the methodology, the kind of literary texts prescribed, the students' general attitude towards literature and their motivation.

During the survey, the following two questions were posed to the final year M.A. students:
1. How many books have you read during the last two years which are not prescribed for your study?

2. Have you read all the prescribed texts?

The responses of the students to these two questions were very disheartening. Quite expectedly, most of them conceded that they had not read even the prescribed texts. In all the classes surveyed, there was not a single student who had read all the prescribed texts. In one class, there was only one student who had read five of the prescribed texts and all the others had confessed having tried reading only one or two texts. The main reasons most of them stated for not reading even the prescribed texts were, want of time and unintelligibility of the texts. Their rate of reading apparently was so slow that they were not able to finish reading even half of the prescribed texts. Given this scenario, the objective of encouraging the students to read beyond the prescribed syllabus (though the objective in itself is an ideal one) hardly gets operationalized.

6. To develop communicative skills in the students: This objective, the most important one in the context of the present thesis, is concerned with promoting communicative skills in the students. It includes the development of communicative abilities both in speech and writing. This is the most important objective from the point of view of students as well. But the course as such seems to do very little towards the realization of this objective. What the course offers in the form of a language based paper to cater to this objective of the course/students is not commensurate with what the students actually require.
Phonetics and Grammar, the two common modules of the language based paper in most universities are meant to improve the linguistic awareness of the students which is believed to subsequently develop the communicative competence of the students. While this is true, given the low linguistic proficiency level of the students, what can be accomplished through these two modules of Phonetics and Grammar becomes highly limited and inadequate.

As can be ascertained from the experiment conducted in the M.A. class at Sri Padmavathi Mahila University, neither the linguistic proficiency of the students nor their communicative skills have improved significantly over the two year M.A. programme in spite of the Phonetics and Grammar components in the course.

In addition to the Phonetics and Grammar components in the syllabus, what is required for the students is an exclusive paper on communicative skills and a different orientation to the teaching method currently used predominantly by most teachers at the postgraduate level. Teaching through the stereotyped lecture method does not help the students much in developing their communicative skills. New teaching techniques have to be adopted to promote communicative competence in the students. Chapter VI of the thesis presents in detail the various techniques that could be used in the classroom in order to promote the communicative skills of the students.

7. To prepare the students for a job / career: This objective is the most practical of all in that it pertains to the most practical requirement of the students. This objective is not directly reflected in the syllabus, except in a small component called ELT. The ELT component included in the syllabi of
Kakatiya, Osmania, Padamavathi Mahila and Krishnadeva Raya universities is possibly meant for the realization of this objective.

As has been learnt from the survey, 55.35% of the M.A. students in English intended to become teachers of English at some level after completing the course. Thus the ELT component in the syllabus prepares students for their future career by equipping them with the theoretical apparatus required for teaching English as a second language. Andhra, Nagajuna and Venkateswara are the three universities which do not have an ELT component in their syllabi. In the light of the students' practical needs, the importance of including an exclusive component of ELT in the syllabus cannot be overlooked any longer. It is high time these three universities also started offering a paper on ELT.

Besides providing students with theoretical insights into ELT, opportunities should be provided to involve students in practical teaching through microteaching and other teaching exercises.

If the ELT component in the syllabus and the practical teaching exercises help students who intend to take up teaching after the completion of the course, career counselling should be provided for those who are not clear of what they should do in future. Career counselling would help such students know about the job avenues open for them.

8. **To prepare them to face competitive examinations like NET, JRF etc.**

This objective of preparing the students for important competitive
examinations is reasonably well taken care of by the syllabi of almost all the universities. Nearly all the areas of study included for examinations like NET and JRF are there in the syllabi. Areas like British literature from Chaucer to 1960s, Commonwealth literature, American literature, Indian writings in English... are all part and parcel of the syllabi of all the universities. However, the scope of the syllabus included for competitive examinations is much wider than that of the M.A. course. Faring well in these examinations requires extensive as well as intensive reading of literatures.

This objective cannot be realized by providing for it merely in the syllabus alone without following it up in teaching. The students need to be given repeated mock practice examinations on the lines of the most commonly attempted competitive examinations. Besides, they also need to be taught the skills of preparation for such examinations. Activities like literary quiz should be conducted regularly which would help the students in attempting the objective type of questions in these examinations.

Since competitive examinations are not the common target of all the students, an exclusive paper on “English for Competitive Examinations” could be offered as an optional paper for all those who are intent on taking these examinations.

To prepare the students for research: This objective of preparing students for research, though does not get any direct focus in the syllabus, is indirectly taken care of by the syllabus; students are initiated into different areas of
literature, out of which they might choose one for their research when they take it up. Sri Satya Sai Institute of Higher leaning offers an exclusive optional paper in the fourth semester titled "Dissertation" wherein the students are required to write a dissertation based on a topic of their choice. Incorporating a component of this kind is an ideal way of preparing students for research. If offered as an optional, those who are not interested in pursuing research after their M.A. will have the choice of not opting for it.

10. To inculcate certain moral values in the students: This objective, though figures last here, is certainly the loftiest and the most idealistic one of all and hence is the most difficult one to realize.

This objective was mentioned only by two teachers of the twenty six teachers interviewed. When asked, how they realize this objective, they mentioned that they seize up on every opportunity they get while teaching literary texts to impress upon the students the moral values present in the text. These two teachers spoke with such fervour that they felt that the end of literature is to help students grow morally and teaching literature has no meaning if it does not serve its moral purpose. Verifying the realization of an objective of this kind is very difficult.

At a time when the very notions of 'morals' and 'values' are being widely questioned, it becomes impossible for one to arrive at a standard universally accepted set of 'moral values' which could be instilled in the students. In fact literature questions this myth and makes students alive to the presence of multiple morals. However, this is not to deny that literature can, though in an unobtrusive manner, influence the moral values of students who take it seriously.
Having analysed the objectives of the course, as it is being offered in different universities of the state based on the responses of teachers, syllabi and the scheme of evaluation, let us now examine the held objectives of the course.

2.5: The Held Objectives of the Course:

The objectives of the course as they are stated in the Report of the Curriculum Development Centre in English are:

... the committee defined the objectives of the M A. Programme in English as follows:

1. To produce experts in English language and literature.
2. To develop literary sensibility and critical judgement.
3. To develop linguistic ability and sensitivity.
4. To develop compositional and communicative skills.
5. To train students in the independent use of the tools of learning. (i.e. reference skills)
   (Report of the Curriculum Development Centre in English: 1989, p. 120)

Curiously, none of the teachers interviewed in the survey seems to be aware of the objectives stated above despite the fact that the Report is meant for improvement of curriculum in the university departments of English.

If we compare the objectives stated in the UGC report with those analyzed in 2.4, we realize that only two objectives are common between the two lists. The first, third and the fifth objectives in the given list do not figure in the first set at all. Needless to say, these three objectives are not found in the
execution of the course either in any of the seven universities considered here.

Now the latest UGC Model Curriculum released in 2001 does not state any objectives as such for the M.A. programme. However, in its preamble it states:

Any programme or degree bearing the word "English" in its title should ensure a certain competence in using the English language and studying English texts. The nature and level of this competence will vary from programme to programme.


It further states:

... all Honours and M.A. students should have a serious interest in the discipline, and be able to employ the advanced language skills, critical understanding and human values derived from it in their future lives and careers.


Unlike the previous Report (1989), this report does not spell out either the methodology or the scheme of evaluation to be followed in order to realize the objectives it mentions in its preamble. However, it has recommended two separate courses that could be offered at the postgraduate level and detailed the syllabi for both. The two courses are (i) English Language and Literature (ii) English and Literary studies.

This chapter, in 2.1, tried to make clear the two senses in which the term ‘objective’ is used in the course of the present thesis by steering clear, to a
large extent, of the confusion that shrouds its usage. In a technical sense, the term objective is used to represent 'any measurable outcome', in a loose, general sense, the term represents an 'intention' or 'purpose' or even an 'aim'. Section 2.2 has detailed the raison d'être of objectives in any educational programme and 2.3 has outlined the three important types of planning that could be followed while formulating objectives, viz., systematic, expedient and piecemeal planning. The importance of taking cognizance of student needs while formulating the objectives for any educational programme was also emphasized here.

In 2.4, the present chapter has enumerated the tentative objectives of the M.A. English courses as they are offered by the different state universities in Andhra Pradesh. It has also stated in 2.5, the objectives of the M.A. course as they are formulated by the UGC Curriculum Development Committees.