CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion
CHAPTER- FIVE

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted in order to critically analyze the learning, teaching, trends, situations, practices, factors and scope of English writing skills at senior secondary schools of Aligarh Muslim University. English as one of the subjects is made compulsory till undergraduate courses of Aligarh Muslim University and occupies an important position in the course content. The syllabus for senior secondary classes is recommended by the C.B.S.E (Central Board of Secondary Education) which is one of the national level boards of India. The board has recommended two sets of English course books by N.C.E.R.T (National Council of Education, Research and Training) at class XI (Hornbill and Snapshots) and class XII (Flamingo and Vistas). These books have given due importance to writing skills.

English writing as a skill is one of the laborious activities where students have to put in constant efforts in order to be logical. They have to make proper arrangements and explore various areas before the act of writing. Teachers and students are found to be serious when it comes to the teaching and learning of writing skills, as a wrong approach would lead to inappropriate and ineffective communication and thus defeating the purpose of writing.

Writing appears to be a neat outlay of printed or written text on page but it is never so as writing represents the most complex activities which a writer goes from jottings and sentences to a coherent piece of text. The
writer can be compared to a creator who is creating out of vague words and ideas which were lying dormant somewhere in his/her mind. Writing is a learnt skill which is acquired at later stages of one’s life through a set of teaching strategies adopted in a formal setting. Almost every writing activity is a solitary activity where learners try to retrieve all that logic learnt by them in their course of learning, the more the writer is skilled the better writer he/she would be.

Writing is often said to be the visual representation of speech due to which early pedagogic approaches focused their attention on imitation and memorization of spoken sentences which were neatly copied. However, speech and writing are two different entities having their own styles and formats. Speech is ephemeral and faster while writing is a permanent source of knowledge which can be retrieved. Speech is supplemented with tone, facial features and gestures while writing is made logical through grammatical, lexical and cohesive devices.

Writing is a tool of thinking as it requires learners to solve various issues before penning their thoughts to writing. As one writes he/she has to think deeply about the purpose, the choice of sentences, vocabulary, grammar etc. then moving further he/she goes back to consider the sentences written by him/her, sometimes he/she changes whole chunks of sentences for some other sentence. This continuous overlapping of different stages of writing makes it more complex.

Writing is considered to be the authentic medium of communication as it is the written medium which goes beyond time and place and gives the reader innumerable chances to confer what the writer intends. Perhaps that is why students tend to skip writing as they feel that a wrong
endeavor would lead their copies to be marked with red or green ink. The reasons could be that today majority of the teaching fraternity tend to assess students’ writing on the basis of a high degree of organization, accuracy, choice of vocabulary, grammar and sentence coordination.

Writing consists of three stages which are:

Pre-writing: Students tend to gather data for the required purpose and then plan how they are going to proceed and put the data into a logical order.

Writing: The stage where students actually take up the pen and start writing, keeping in mind the style and conventions of the language.

Rewriting: Students review and revise in order to find out mistakes or errors.

Academic writing went through many fluctuations under different approaches. The traditional or the product approach focused their attention on the end product or the final draft of the students. The writing activities comprised translation exercises and duplication of models which students have memorized in their course of learning. The dissatisfaction with this model gave way to a newer approach known as the process approach. This approach focused attention on the process of writing and errors and mistakes were tackled through positive feedbacks. Soon this approach too had its criticism and gave way to another approach known as genre approach. This approach focused on the fact that language evolves out of a social purpose keeping in mind the conventions and norms of a particular culture and context. Students were made to understand the organizational and linguistic features reflected by a particular text type through examples and later students were asked to
acquire the features associated with each genre under the teacher's
guidance. This approach is seen to comprise the features of product as
well as process approach.

Writing is divided into four types which are narrative, descriptive,
expository and persuasive. Narrative writing tells a story or a part of it,
descriptive writing helps the readers visualize a picture of the writer's
experience, expository writing provides information, explanation and
clarification regarding its subject and persuasive writing intends to
convince its readers.

Writing is basically approached through a set of parameters to make the
written language acceptable and logical to its readers. Ann Raimes has
provided a set of parameters which are- mechanics, grammar, syntax,
content, the writer's process, audience, purpose, word choice,
organization etc.

Textbooks play an important role in the learning and teaching of writing
skills. It is the use of textbooks which creates uniformity in the
classroom. The textbooks prescribed at senior secondary have claimed
that they have been designed in a way that students' associate the tasks
with the outside world and have maintained sharp boundaries between
different subject areas. The textbook also claim that they have tried to
discourage rote learning and have worked in the direction of child-
centered system of education. The core textbooks Hornbill and Flamingo
have given place to writing skills specifically while supplementary
readers Snapshots and Vistas have focused more on reading skills and
text- based questions. These textbooks are found to be partly suitable in
the Aligarh Muslim University context. However it is recommended that
some coloured layout, audio-visual aids, space to carry out writing tasks and some new forms of writing skill such as e-mail writing should be included.

English writing skills play an important role in the academic development, as it provides students with the comprehensibility, fluency, ability and confidence. Majority of the teaching fraternity accept that writing itself is a difficult skill to be taught as it works on multidisciplinary function of the language thereby making it complex and a serious activity. Teaching of writing skills require careful planning and implementation of strategies specified by syllabus. Every writing class cannot be always effective as there may be other factors which directly or indirectly influence the learning and teaching of writing skills. These factors may include the context, classroom observation, teacher’s and learner’s attitude, short term and long term objectives of the syllabus, motivation etc.

It is found that majority of the students’ have accepted that writing is an important skill in consideration to students’ future needs and helps them to improve their English grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction but when compared to other skills of language majority were keen on learning English speaking skills.

Teachers have also pointed out that students were lacking in proper knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and sentence construction resulting in an incoherent piece of written text..

Majority of the teachers and students have also confirmed that the writing skills recommended are not sufficient to improve their skills in writing further, these textbooks are not much motivating to the students.
Recommendations:

- Teachers should be provided with a formal training at the beginning of each session by experts.

- A class record of the writing skills carried should be maintained and be assessed at the end of the session by the school authorities.

- Teachers should give unusual topics to the students so that use of guide books is discouraged.

- Teachers can select their own topics which seem interesting to their students.

- Group work should be promoted.

- Teachers should use audio-visual aids.

- Teachers should provide students with suitable examples of writing skills.