CHAPTER 3

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

3.0 Curriculum Development

A good knowledge of curriculum and syllabus is essential for the teachers of English because it gives them direction for their classroom teaching. The knowledge of various methods makes a teacher knowledgeable and helps him to choose the right method but the knowledge of the curriculum and syllabus help him to develop his own method suit to the needs of his learners. But it is sad that majority of our English teachers don’t have adequate knowledge of curriculum. They take syllabus as list of the chapters given in the beginning of the text books. They take it as a portion to be covered in the specific period. As far as curriculum is concern, to them, there is no big difference between curriculum and syllabus. They don’t understand the objectives of prescribed books.

3.1 Difference between Syllabus and Curriculum

In fact there is a big difference in syllabus and curriculum.

“A syllabus is a document which on the basis of past information gives guidance on the details of the transmission of knowledge. These details pertain to the selection, classification, distribution, transmission and evaluation of knowledge. The syllabus vindicates what according to experts (and society) is considered to be valid knowledge and valid transmission of knowledge” (Bernstein, 1975).

A document which incorporates all these aspects is often called a syllabus.

- It has the description of the target group.
- It indicates aim and objectives of a concerned course.
- Objectives of a syllabus are the descriptions of what is to be achieved in a course. This might be a single lesson, a chapter of a book, a term’s work etc.
- It gives a list of topics and contents.
• It also includes the suggested techniques for the learners. It clearly spells out the role of teacher and learners.

• A good syllabus also highlights the evaluation pattern. It mentions what the expected outcomes of the course are.

**What is curriculum?**

Some make no difference in syllabus and curriculum. In fact the syllabus is only a small part of the curriculum. “All the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school (Ker, 1968, White, 1998)”

In fact curriculum implies a large pedagogical canvas, which is described by various people as a plan or map of a particular course of study that is covered in a document. A particular educational event, relationships, activities, classroom etc. indeed, any of these smaller educational phenomena are aspects or a microcosm of the large pedagogic scene.

A curriculum contains a broad description of general goals by indicating an overall educational–cultural philosophy that applies across subjects together with a theoretical orientation to language learning. A syllabus, on the other hand, is a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements that translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level. A syllabus designed out of a curriculum and many syllabuses are possible from a curriculum depending on the levels of the learners, provides the learner using the syllabus belong to the same social, economic and political solutions. A syllabus is a vehicle through which policy makers convey information to teachers, textbooks writers, parents, learners and evaluators with regard to the learning program.

**3.2 Curriculum Framing**

The notion of curriculum and syllabus as existing in the three National Curriculum Frameworks (NCFs) are close to each other. All the NCFs emphasis the concern and issues but don’t make a very clear connection between the concern aims and curriculum content. The pedagogy and the view on knowledge also remain hazily defined. Thus, though the NCFs seem to have some form of definition for curriculum
and syllabus, the relative importance of elements within the form and their interconnection remain either unexplored or even entirely neglected. The rationale for almost all prescription is left unstated. Most of the state level curriculum documents are poor imitations of the NCFs. Most of them don’t even see the large picture of curriculum. The role of different boards and the ways in which they undertake similar functions, are viewed as merely examination conducting bodies and their main responsibility is certification. Some kind of curriculum approval bodies also exist in some states.

The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) are usually responsible for developing the syllabus and textbooks at the elementary level. The nature and function of the SCERTs also vary in certain respects. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the apex body at the national level is expected to guide the states by providing a national framework for curriculum development and by building capacities at the state level both at elementary and secondary level. In some states, they themselves have attempted to redefine curriculum and accordingly develop textbooks and other materials at all levels: primary, secondary and tertiary levels. For instance Kerala adopted a new curriculum approach, the process of developing textbooks and the teachers support materials for the primary stage under the District Primary Education Project (DPEP). Eklaya, a voluntary organization in Madhya Pradesh, developed a different approach for primary education based on real experiences of teaching in government primary schools in rural areas. This experience later became an important reference point for those exploring new possibilities and the basis for a curriculum package called Seekhna Sikhana in Madhya Pradesh. Several districts of Karnataka have also adopted a textbook free approach of teaching where the progression is guided and determined by a series of activities. This approach has been guided by the experiences of the Rishi Vally, an NGO, working in Andhra Pradesh. The very presence of these policies and curriculum suggest the need for going in to the reason, to analysis whether the existing policies and curriculum frameworks provide ambiguous aims and facilitate development of flexible and appropriate curriculum approaches for achieving aims.

3.3 Curriculum Development in Haryana

Like other states, English has been started from the first standard. All educational institutions, from primary to senior secondary level may be affiliated with either the
national or the State Board. Research and Training Centre (NCERT) develops the common core curriculum for grade 1st to 10+2 and design the syllabus and textbooks as well. In accordance with this framework, the state formulates its policies and prepares instructional materials. Besides NCERT, there are Teacher Training Curriculum Center Punchculla, Prathmik Shiksha Priyojana, Haryana Education Board, Haryana Open School Board and many others centers in Haryana. Curriculum Development Department makes all efforts to make education relevant to the fast changing world while not compromising on the quality of education. The curriculum of higher education is decided by different committees set up by universities. The committees include the subject experts, experienced teachers, resource persons in particular field. Some kinds of curriculum approval bodies also exist in state. But in spite of their best efforts by all departments, the changes that have been coming over the years are either largely superficial in nature leading to some linking here and there or iterative where one or two new topics have been introduced because of some kind of pressure from central organization, judiciary or some other pressure group.

3.4 Comparative study of various English Syllabi at School and College Level

If we critically analyze the text books prescribed in the schools and colleges of Haryana, we find that that these books are not sufficient to make learners hone skills of English language. The books by NCERT which are prescribed in most of schools, affiliated by CBSE are quite satisfactory as compared to the books of SCERT. Here is an example of a chapter from 4th standard book published by Amity Universe Press from NCERT and approved by CBSE. The chapter is ‘Subuddhi and Kubuddi’. The chapter is in a story form, simple in language, keeping in mind the level of learners. The story is narrative and is full of suspense that engages students till the end. More interesting is the exercises at the end of chapter.

All difficult words are described in simple language.

For e.g.

- Abbreviation---------made short
- Former--------having been in the past
- Tremendous--------very large amount or degree
Under the heading **Word Building**, the description of idioms is given and students are asked to find out the idioms used in the story and explain them in their own words.

- I **turned a deaf ear** to his request.
- As Mr. Sharma lost his job, the family **lives from hand to mouth**.
- He **burnt the midnight oil** to achieve success.
- The hospital is **a stone’s throw** from the railway station.

In **Reading Comprehension**, certain simple questions are given which students will describe by skip reading of the story.

- What wicked plan did Kubuddhi make to become wealthy?
- Why did the two friends hide a large part of the money?
- How did everyone come to know that Kubuddhi was an evil doer?

Under the heading **Use These Words**, certain words and phrases are given in box. Students have to pick the words and place them in proper sentences.

Cheeks had become hollow, the only eyewitness to the accident, poverty, he is a simpleton, many Indians go abroad

1 ----------is one of the reasons why villagers leave their villages and come to cities.
2 --------------------for higher education.
3 Do not give him money. People will cheat him as------------------.
4 The police was searching the old lady as she was-------------------------.

For **Listening Practice**, certain words are given which teacher will pronounce in class and students will listen, keeping their books closed.

- Bury pronounced /beri/
- Earn pronounced /urn/
- Diligence pronounced as /dilijens/

(e is a symbol for clipped sound of a)
Then the students will try to pronounce same words, later on other same sounding words.

For the **grammar portion** exercises of **Articles** are given with a great variety.

For e.g. in some, students have to fill the blanks-

- French is ---------difficult language.
- ---------Gita is a holy book.
- Take------bath and put on -------clean dress.
- I saw ------bird with green and red feathers.

Add **articles** ‘The’ where necessary and correct the following sentences-

- Sun rises in east.
- He is brightest boy of class.
- Fifth man in row is very tall.
- Sri Lanka is an island.
- March is third month of year.

Under the heading **Talk-Time** teacher is suggested to make students read the tales from Panchtantra and organize a story competition.

For **Creative Writing**

Change the end of the story ‘Subuddhi and Kubuddhi.’ Make it more dramatic and interesting. You can make it hilarious, scary or mysterious.

In **It’s Fun Time**, two pictures are given and students have to make comparison.

More interesting is that workbook is also connected with the chapters of text book.

For e.g.

**Fill the Blanks with correct words**

- Little Aditya was given a prize for his----------(honesty/sincere).
- We must never carry (inflammable/flammable) objects when we travel on trains etc.
**Word Building**

Match the idiom in A with their meaning in B. You can draw a row connecting the correct option. The first one has been done as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The storm will soon blow over</td>
<td>sell off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is ready to dispose off his car</td>
<td>wanted very much</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have longed for a good meal</td>
<td>pass off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She seems to be well off</td>
<td>worn away</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Listening Drill**

These words are not only spell differently but are also pronounced differently. Listen to the pronunciation of the words given below.

- Borne: pronounced as bon (to carry) ‘r’ is silent
- Born: pronounced as bon (take birth) ‘r’ is silent
- Wander: pronounced as wonde (o as in orange)
- Leave: pronounced as leev (long ee sound)

**Other exercise as**

Read the passage given below. Fill the blanks with suitable articles.

I think that all Mrs. Well’s, “Dr. Brown said as she handed her-----------list of medicines. -----------list was very long and Mrs. Well almost fainted, when she thought how much cost might be-------------------.”

**Creative Writing**

Punished for being naughty?

- Think of a time when you did something naughty at home, in the class, at a friend’s house.
• How were you punished for it? How did you feel?

• Think of as many describing words as you can to make your composition interesting.

• Since you are writing about something that happened in past, what tense should you write in it

• Think of a suitable title.

If we critically examine this or any other books of NCERT we find that there is much scope for the development of skills of English language. But on the other hand if we study the chapters from the textbooks of SCERT affiliated by Haryana Board, we find that after the stories or poems, there are simple questions and a list of vocabulary which students are expected to cram for examination. Moreover there are help books available in market, based on all expected questions. Students don’t take pain of reading the complete chapter when taught by teachers as they have readymade material for examination. Teachers too become reluctant as students don’t demand from them. As the result such students get no chance to develop skills of language. Those who show good result in examination are totally based on cramming. Such students, after learning English language twelve years of their life, are not able to write a passage correctly or communicate effectively because their creative power has not been developed.

Similarly the text books at college level are not up to the mark. There is single syllabus for B.A classes and English is taught as a compulsory subject. The syllabus prescribed in the universities of Haryana has not been revised from many years. No clue is given for the teachers regarding methodology. There is no scope for evaluation whether the students have understood or not. There is no chance of activities or role play in these syllabi. A few chapters are so complicated that students don’t understand even after the help of teachers. Certain poems are not according to the level of students. So students demand translation of these chapters. Moreover they don’t read original text as examinations are based on certain questions which are easily available in bazaar notes. Their last minute preparations
make them pass their examination. In this process, the real objective of language learning seems nowhere. Here is a sample of the syllabus prescribed in the well-known universities of Haryana.

**Syllabus of Kurushetra University Kurushtra, Ch. Devi Lal University Sirsa, Maharashi Dayanand Universith Rohtak for English Compulsory.**

**B.A (General) part 11**

Effective from Session 2005-2006

The title of the book is **Sound of Stillness: An Anthology of poems.** The poems are

- Blow Blow Thou Winter Wind--- William Shakespeare
- The General Massacre of Gold----Dr. Samuel Johnson
- The Ocean--------Lord Byron
- Ode On the Grecian Urn--------John Keats
- Inexpensive Progress--------Sir John Belteman
- Muses Des Beaux Arts-------Wystan Huge Auden etc.

Most of poems are very difficult to understand without translation. More over these poems don’t touch the heart of learners as these are not concerned with their daily life situation. While considering the length of poems, these are difficult to recite. The indigence of these poems in current syllabus is the evidence that our university system of education is still following the colonial pattern. The beauty and charm of poetry goes when a teacher has to translate a poem for his/her students.

The second book is **Snap Shots** which is a collection of one-act plays. For e.g.

- The Proposal by Anton Chekhov
- Riders To The Sea by J.M. Synge
- Mother’s Day by J B Priester etc.

No doubt plays are easy to understand and students can enjoy themselves. But the purpose of one-act plays is not reading but to act on the stage and these plays are
difficult to dramatize on the stage. Moreover, there are no exercises besides some questions and phrasal verbs which are expected in examination.

The third prescribed book is *Mahabharata* edited by C. Rajgopalachari. This book includes 55 chapters. The book is so monotonous and lengthy that the most of teachers have to skip a big portion, considering the shortage of time and interest of students. So again there is no scope for skills development.

So far as Grammar is concern, a separate book is prescribed for grammar-

**A Course Book of English Grammar, Composition and Translation**

Separate sentences are given for the practice of subject-word concord, active-passive, and narration. It is mentioned on the first page of book that every topic will be from the textbook in examinations. There are lists of common errors, word power, vocabulary, idioms and phrases which students will cram for examination purpose. These phrases, idioms, vocabulary don’t go in the permanent memory of students as they don’t use it in their daily life. They just cram these lists for the examination purpose.

This is just one example. If we critically examine most of the textbooks of English syllabus prescribed in the schools and colleges of Haryana, we find same gloomy picture. It seems that there is no aim of education behind these textbooks; the purpose is to make our students pass their exams and get degree. In this way we are just producing degree holders not learned people and this becomes the cause of unemployment.

### 3.5 Remedies

This is the high time when we have to change our attitude towards education. Education is not just passing the written exams at the end of the year; it is much more than that. We have to take English not as a subject but as a skill that will help learners in communication. For this first essential step is to bring changes in the curriculum, syllabus and textbooks. **Bombay University** has totally changed its English syllabus, keeping the demand of time. They have divided the English syllabus in various
courses. For e.g. ESP (English for Special Purpose), EGP (English for General Purpose), ESR (English for Science Purpose) etc. It is not the time to stuff all the students in one compulsory subject. Students will have to be given choice. It is human nature that they take interest in those which is beneficial for them and which appeals to their taste. So English language teaching should be skill-based. There should be the scope of creative writings, role play, communication situations, listening, grammar etc. Project-based learning is the requirement of time. More over there should be integrated syllabus for all levels i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary level. The problem of large classroom can be solved if English is taught not as a compulsory subject but in variety of forms as linguistic, literature, functional English, soft skill etc. No doubt semester system has been started by all universities of Haryana but this can be effective and successful only when our teachers are research-minded. This can improve the standard of English language teaching. The syllabus should be skills oriented. Task-based activities may be included in syllabuses which will automatically turn the classroom learner-centered.

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