

Tracing the Chequered History of the Academic Writing Course in the University of Calicut

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The Southern Indian State of Kerala is known for the “Kerala Model of Development” (CDS) which indicates the rapid and steady progress it attained since its formation in 1957. The development indices in health, education and public infrastructure of the State are high and maintain global standards. The state achieved dramatic progress by increasing the participation of the government in all these fields. Educational institutions run by the government have played an important role in providing and strengthening equitable access to education to the common man.¹ Changes in the higher education began with the changes in the National Education Policy and the subsequent introduction of the semester system in the colleges.

The semester system revamped the existing higher education in Kerala. New courses like Academic Writing, methodology and informatics were included then. The Academic Writing course was visualised with a focus on preparing students to gain a strong hold in higher education through its thrust on developing research skills. The dynamic nature of the course had its utility in all the remaining courses. The policy recommendations about common courses had raked up the lethargy in the earlier yearly pattern through continuous assessment and shaping of study skills. Had the semester system and the new interdisciplinary courses been executed in a systematic and structured fashion at the university, the stakeholders would have reaped the benefits completely. In spite of the drawbacks discussed in this paper, it is a fact that both the semester system and courses like Academic Writing helped students in furthering their academic aspirations.² But there were pitfalls in executing the new higher education policies imbibing its true spirit. They proved detrimental to courses like Academic Writing. This paper maps the history of Academic

Writing in one of the state public universities in Kerala, the University of Calicut. Here, Academic Writing was adopted, modified, dropped and re-adopted between 2009 and 2017. The paper highlights that the important reasons for the chequered history of the course are political, administrative and educational in nature. Since Academic Writing was introduced along with the semester system with explicit guidelines to do so, the history of the course will be understood better along with the history of the semester system here. The paper analyses the history vis-à-vis the recommendations by various higher education commissions and its implementation at the university. Since the authors teach regular college going students, this history takes into account only faculty and students in the regular stream.³

A Brief Introduction to the Semester System in Kerala

The credit and semester system proposed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) is an off shoot of the educational policy prescriptions of the UNESCO and National Knowledge Commission Report (NKC) of 2006. Higher Education found a special mention in the Common Minimum Programme of the UPA I government. New directions emerged in policies, governance, curriculum, student support and progression. These were incorporated and formulated by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) comprehensively in their report in 2006. The NKC “propose[d] a transition to a course credit system where degrees are granted on the basis of completing a requisite number of credits from different courses, which provides students with choices” (NKC Report 45). The Commission had recommended action at three levels: policy changes, reform within the existing system, and revamping statute / legislations (46). The Commission rightly observed that autonomy and accountability should be promoted (45). The semester pattern envisaged global integration, student mobility, industry-academia linkage and employability. They also gave due importance to research-oriented education.⁴

The university system in India is located within the framework of educational policies formulated at the national level. Education is an item in the concurrent list. The adoption and implementation of national policies is dependent on the respective state governments. The Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD) and UGC had issued guidelines to all Higher Education Institutions (HEI) for the implementation of the semester system in 2008. It was implemented in different years by universities across India. The diversity⁵ in higher educational institutions led to the implementation of the credit and semester system in many ways.⁶ The Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC), an advisory body constituted by Kerala state legislature in October 2007, recommended the implementation of the semester system in a phased manner. Various commissions formed under the KSHEC have offered recommendations that have been implemented in the semester system from time to time.⁷

The University of Calicut implemented the semester system in 2009. From a teacher's perspective there were three important changes which this system effected. Firstly, "papers" taught in the yearly pattern were replaced by "courses" in the new system. Hitherto, "papers" were taught for a full academic year followed by a centralised "external" examination conducted by the university. Unlike the American method of designing a course by the teacher, the course here had fixed syllabi like the papers, but had a shorter duration of ninety days. Secondly, direct grading system was introduced. Marks were replaced with a five-point scale in grading (later changed to seven-point scale). Grades from A to E were awarded to the students. Thirdly, the weightage for the internal assessment was raised from 20% to 25%.

Academic Writing in Kerala

The introduction of the semester system in colleges and the inclusion of common courses like societal studies, informatics and Academic Writing in an undergraduate programme was a paradigm shift. For the first time, autonomy and agency on the part of the teachers and

students were visualised by the Higher Educational Council. It also visualized evaluating the student based on the knowledge constructed and not a mere assessment of “pre-packaged knowledge” (Examination Reforms Committee Report 5). The introduction of Academic Writing ushered in a great change in the writing and thinking skills of students who had previously been practicing it merely in the form of improving grammar and composition. It called for a multitude of approaches in teaching and assessment. Since it includes critical thinking skills, Academic Writing extends beyond the process of writing, providing analytical and problem-solving skills, skills in demonstrating judgement and aiding in research. The change from the yearly pattern to the semester system promoted academic enquiry and “prepare[d] the grounds for multidisciplinary and holistic education” (4).

The KSHEC had recommended the inclusion of Academic Writing as a foundation course which was implemented by the University of Calicut in 2009. In its report the NKC had emphasised that “Universities must become the hub of research once again to capture synergies between teaching and research that enrich each other” (45) which necessitates changes in policy measures, resource allocation, and in attitudes. However, these changes did not materialise in the implementation of the recommendations at the University of Calicut. The Academic Writing course faced many challenges during its initial phase of implementation because the necessity for such a course was not understood; and because it was treated in isolation. The undergraduate curriculum was not restructured keeping a focus on research and knowledge production. It merely included critical thinking and Academic Writing as a separate course. The course was removed between 2014 and 2016 and then re-introduced in 2017 with substantial reduction in “content”— especially related to critical thinking. Academic Writing, as a result, has had a chequered history in the university. This paper argues that the combinations of political, administrative and educational reasons were responsible for this uneven history which is explained in the sections that follow.

Political and Administrative Reasons

Since the formation of Kerala in 1957, the state has been ruled by coalition governments led by Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) alternatively. The perspectives on higher education of both these coalitions were, initially at loggerheads. Christian missionaries and organisations for social reforms brought about great changes in education in the pre-independence period here. After the formation of the state in 1957, the educational policies of the Right-wing coalition parties (which later became the UDF in 1978) ⁸ were aimed at strengthening both institutions run by the government and these organisations. The higher education policies of the Left-wing coalition parties (which became the LDF in 1979) ⁹ riveted around the Kerala Education Bill of 1958, which centred on social justice and affordable education for all. Post 1990, when opportunities for individuals/organisations to invest in higher education were thrown open, the UDF favoured this change, whereas the LDF was sceptical about the ill effects of commercialisation. After 2000, both the coalitions have followed similar educational policies, though in their articulations, they appear to differ from each other. This inherent contradiction is visible even in the functioning of the state universities.

Education in Kerala at the tertiary level in the state universities has held Right and Left oriented views for several decades. Though this is not a division into watertight compartments, these views are not often complementary. The state universities in India often succumb to “local level pressure groups”¹⁰ (Hatekar 23) during the formulation of policies and amendment of regulations. The character of the state universities is determined by the political affiliations of teachers, administrators and students. When semester system and courses like Academic Writing were introduced in 2009 at the University of Calicut, a left oriented LDF state government was in power. The policy prescriptions at the Centre by the

UPA and the recommendations of the KSHEC Report (2008) were implemented with minor variations.

The transition from the yearly pattern to the semester system was a major one. It involved a great deal of financial and human capital. Yet, the strategies implemented by the university were ineffective in preparing the stakeholders for a smooth transition from the yearly system to the semester system. The need for innovation in practices and the orientation towards research had to be discussed elaborately before the implementation of the semester pattern. Since this was not done, courses like Academic Writing that requires a strong research culture, were “inedible” to all students whose schooling was not research oriented. When courses like Academic Writing, informatics or methodology were introduced, there was no felt need among teachers as to the relevance of such courses. The university administration also failed to situate these courses in a proper framework because it merely provided a handful of workshops aimed at outlining the credit and semester system and the grading pattern. These workshops paid scant attention to the philosophy behind the introduction of these courses. Though the learning objectives and outcomes were spelt out, there was no mechanism to support or evaluate the outcomes. Rajeswari Sunder Rajan’s observations on the limitations of the reform in Delhi University (DU) are equally applicable to the scenario in Kerala:

The semester system as it being envisaged in DU will not allow instructors the freedom to devise their own courses, but will instead pursue the fixed syllabus format in the interests of imposing uniformity across the large number of its affiliated colleges. So there will be no variation in academic content or its formulation; papers will be taught as before, only for shorter duration and in smaller segments than the year-long "portions" that have been the norm so far

(19-20)

Here, as Sunder Rajan has noted, papers became courses with shorter duration. This led to a detachment of the course in Academic Writing and what was learned and taught in the core subjects.

Another state higher education policy was formulated in 2012, when a Right-wing UDF government was ruling the state. The new policy reflected upon the limitations of the existing semester scheme implemented by the previous government. The new report stressed the need for enhancing research adhering to the essence of the recommendations of the NKC and Yash Pal Report, but paradoxically was silent about courses like Academic Writing. It stressed the need for “commonality and acceptability of the courses offered” (20). Though the later KSHEC Report on Choice Based Credit and Semester System (2012) had also insisted on research, the Academic Writing course was removed by the new Board of Studies at the University and replaced with a few conventional courses that had “literary” content. A new Board of Studies constituted in 2016 reintroduced the course once again during the LDF rule, but with drastic changes. The focus was shifted to the process of writing with little emphasis on critical thinking skills. Both the Left- and Right-wing governments and administrative bodies are responsible for the ineffective administering of the Academic Writing course. Even though the various reports had favoured the granting of autonomy in the design of courses to individual teachers, the local level pressure groups of university administration preferred the continuation of the existing system albeit with minor cosmetic changes.

The non-flexibility of the administrative mechanism has also contributed to the chequered history, by stifling the dynamism required in Academic Writing. The state universities in India are driven by bureaucracy where hierarchy is rigidly insisted upon. It functions according to the rule book and financial codes. Multiple power houses like the Senate, the Syndicate, the Academic Council and Board of Studies could be detrimental to its smooth functioning. Any change executed in the University of Calicut is guided by the

archaic Acts and Statutes, although amended repeatedly. All academic changes at the affiliated colleges are subject to rigid considerations like workload or creation of new posts. The common courses in general, including Academic Writing, emerged as a common course for language teachers, solely to address the workload requirements to retain the teaching posts. Academic writing being discipline specific demands the intervention of core teachers. But the concerns of whether additional teaching posts have to be created in various disciplines forced the authorities to limit Academic Writing to be taught only by English teachers. Thus, instead of assimilating macro and micro skills gained with diverse disciplines, Academic Writing was designed as a separate course to be taught by English language teachers

Promotion of research was envisaged at the undergraduate and the post graduate levels in the KSHEC reports. During the yearly structure, conventional papers taught over a year were in place and the undergraduate education was not research oriented. A culture of research stems from a society oriented towards enquiry and scientific temper. Scientific temper with humanism is a fundamental duty of all the citizens of India, according to Article 51 A of the Constitution. Yet such a temper cannot be inserted into the tertiary level of education in short term. The inclusion of common courses like “Critical Reasoning and Academic Writing” was intended to foster an atmosphere of enquiry leading to research.

The undergraduate system must provide for general liberal education and specialization at the same time. Every undergraduate, irrespective of his/her subjects of specialization, should undergo a minimal common core of general education. The courses in the first semester should be common for every student covering language, informatics, study skills, Academic Writing and societal studies.... These courses would prepare the ground for multi-disciplinary and

holistic education and ensure that the students are not merely trained to perform certain functions, but undergo all round development (KSHEC 3-4)

However, the restructuring of the core subjects was not done as visualised by the KSHEC along lines of research. The Higher Education Council had suggested in 2009 that the respective Board of Studies of various universities were to frame the syllabi and course content initially. Gradually, individual colleges and teachers could frame their own syllabi and conduct the evaluation of their students. But this phased change did not transpire as the Board of Studies continued to frame the respective syllabi in the name of uniformity. The University of Calicut, thus, continued the conventional syllabi in their core subjects with minor cosmetic changes. The novel common courses like Academic Writing which could have complemented the core became merely a few mandatory subjects.

Educational Reasons

Effective classroom pedagogy is the key to success in any course. This section argues that ineffective pedagogics in the method of instruction and assessment, and the failure to integrate the Academic Writing course with various disciplines led to ineffectual realisation of its learning outcomes.

Productivity or innovation is essential for dynamic courses like Academic Writing. Yet, they have never been a criterion for assessment in Indian academics resulting in mediocrity. The policy documents on higher education like the KSHEC report on *Restructuring Undergraduate Education* (2009) and *Examination Committee Report* (2009) had stressed the need to professionalise the curriculum design; for changes in teaching methods; autonomy; inclusion of ICT and Learning Management Systems; and a revamping of the assessment patterns, sections of the teaching community who had had the benefits of such an education were invigorated with the prospects of change hopeful of partial autonomy initially. However, this enthusiasm was dampened quickly with the various measures adopted

by the academic bodies at the university like the adherence to “prescribed” textbooks. The recommendations on autonomy in commission reports were a move towards decentralisation of academic power and freedom from implementing what authorities prescribe. The prescription of textbooks, on the other hand, only held back the move towards autonomy. An analysis of the content of these books in the following paragraphs would demonstrate how the Academic Writing course was straitjacketed and its core principles diluted with each subsequent “prescription.”

The Board of Studies¹¹ at the university prescribed three books on Academic Writing between 2009 and 2017. The Academic Writing course was introduced to the undergraduates in the first semester between 2009 and 2014. When it was reintroduced in 2017, it was included in the second semester of the undergraduate programme. The university recommended *Critical Thinking, Academic Writing and Presentation Skills* by Marilyn Anderson, Pramod K Nayar and Madhuchanda Sen in the first semester of the undergraduate programme for this course besides a common course on the four language skills in 2009. To complement Academic Writing, the Cambridge Student Edition of *Study Reading* was also recommended. Initially, the emphasis was on both macro and micro level skills. In 2012, these books on Academic Writing were replaced by another simplified version: *Critical Reasoning, Writing and Presentation* edited by C.R Murukan Babu. This book was oversimplified and written from the perspective of a teacher as it provided mere definitions of facts, opinions, premises, comparison, contrast, analogy, statements, arguments, evidence and conclusion in the section on critical reasoning. Unlike the earlier book mentioned above, the new book appeared more suitable for the conventional lecture method. Critical reasoning was retained merely as a topic that included facts and opinions, comparison, reasoning and mistakes in reasoning. For ease of understanding, comprehension exercises were added at the end, but these did not challenge any higher order thinking skills of the students. The

questions that were used to test comprehension, for instance, included questions like “Define slippery slope fallacy” or “Write a short note on analogy” (Babu 25) which merely expected students to define the concepts. In June 2012, the question paper for the Academic Writing course had questions like “explain the divine fallacy with example” and “strategies for polishing an essay” (University of Calicut).

Reading comprehension at the tertiary level should lead to critical and creative comprehension. The sections on reading comprehension designed in *Critical Reasoning, Writing and Presentation* test merely the word level comprehension and implied meanings. Academic Writing was reduced to the inclusion of exercises on note making, letters, résumés and essays. In the section on Academic Writing, its principles were not mentioned. Instead, writings used for professional purposes were disguised as Academic Writing. Significantly, the essays provided as examples catered only to the English literature student. The diversity of the disciplines was not taken into consideration while selecting sample essays. Academic style sheets and concerns of academic integrity were not included in the book.

If there was a dilution in critical reasoning and research in the second book, critical thinking finds no place at all in the third book that was introduced in 2017, *Writing for Academic and Professional Success* by Dr Jacob George and Dr Anwar Sadath. The book offers comprehensive units on the genres and types of Academic Writing, the process and elements of writing, vocabulary and grammar for Academic Writing and the mechanics and conventions of writing. The book concentrated only on Academic Writing without placing it in the context of reading or critical thinking, which are important pre-requisites to writing. Macro level skills completely gave way to micro skills.

The classroom pedagogy adopted in the teaching – learning process influences any course. A mixture of teacher-centred and learner-centred pedagogy works effectively in Academic Writing courses with the ideal class strength of fifteen to twenty students. The

strength of the common class varies from seventy-five to ninety-three.¹² The approach followed in the colleges here were only teacher-centred. The ambience in the classrooms and limited time directed the adoption of such a method. Academic Writing was taught to students from different disciplines. This posed problems to the teachers and the students because in the common course classes, the students of Arts, Commerce and Science were combined. There was no other way of rearranging these classes as factors such as strength and workload were important considerations in such groupings. The differences in disciplines contributed to a hindrance in Academic Writing in another way too. A Physics or Mathematics student was required to be precise and brief in their writing whereas a student of History or Languages had to write elaborate answers. Hence, the designing of activities to suit students from diverse streams posed practical problems for the teachers.

The method of instruction followed in the Academic Writing course was detrimental to the effective realisation of its learning objectives and expected outcomes. It is proposed that reading, critical thinking and Academic Writing should be treated collectively. Teaching them must be a sustained effort that runs through all the semesters. The HEC recommendations of providing training or course specific workshops to teachers were flouted. Consequently, teachers who taught Academic Writing had no idea how to modify their pedagogy or provide remediation in honing writing skills and sharpening thinking skills. In the pattern of teaching followed here, reading, critical thinking and Academic Writing were treated as separate “portions” to be divided among different teachers accommodating constraints in time¹³ and workload. The macro level skills like critical thinking were taught by a teacher and the micro level skills like grammar, vocabulary and style were taught by another. The teacher who dealt with critical thinking merely taught what critical thinking was; barriers to critical thinking; arguments and opinions; fallacies and ways to overcome them. Critical thinking was not integrated with reading and writing practiced in different

disciplines; nor was the reverse practiced. A *Tu quoque* or *Non-sequitur* merely remained fallacies of references. The application of fallacies in critical reading, or how they could be avoided in writing, was not integrated with the writing.

Academic writing promotes the process approach where there is no pressure on time, is non-linear, and only encourages the involvement of the teachers (Mukundan 180). Teachers at the university were used to the product approach which advocated the reproduction of good models in writing. The process method was impossible under the new scheme due to the severe time constraints and the large class strength. Many English language teachers who taught the Academic Writing course had not learnt the course either at the undergraduate or postgraduate levels. They had also not been provided adequate workshops or hands on training in handling a dynamic course such as this. There was very little importance placed on writing tasks. Since no training was provided in initiating teachers into a revised mode of teaching, they improvised ways to accommodate the new course content within the lecture method. This teacher-centred method alienated the students from the course and therefore from the teachers. Consequently, only factual information about Academic Writing was transacted.

The prime learning objective in the course was to “demonstrate writing skills, integrate their own ideas with those of others and apply the conventions of Academic Writing correctly” (George 8). The reality of the Academic Writing classes, however, was incongruent with the expected outcomes. The student was expected to integrate his/ her research and produce good essays incorporating a thesis statement, catchy introduction, paragraphs with good topic sentences and a conclusion. Instead of producing such research in their core subjects, students wrote essays about the methods of writing good essays in the English course. The students did not relate what was acquired through the Academic Writing course to their core subjects. Neither did the teachers of the respective core subjects insist

upon the tenets of Academic Writing. As Nupur Samuel notes “the role of other discipline teachers ...in helping students develop their writing does not find any place even in the imagination of curriculum or policy developers” (n.p.). The absence of the need for critical reasoning, enquiry or research in the core syllabi of Academic Writing, led to this becoming merely a common course English subject, which the students had to pass. In the KSHEC Report 2008, it was explicitly mentioned that examination reforms are essential and that “a creative assessment process” was essential.

The Academic Writing course should either be supplemented by a discipline specific writing course or integrated with the core subjects in the curriculum. A possible solution would be a shift from a generalist writing course in the initial semesters to a discipline specific writing course in the later semesters. Such integration would enable outcome-based learning where the learning objectives are realised. But the course was taught in isolation. A student would find Academic Writing useful only if in the respective core subjects, the macro and micro level skills are utilised. Though policy documents recommended inculcation of research skills, they did not emphasise the need for integrating what was learnt in common courses like Academic Writing with the content of the respective core subjects. In the restructuring of the syllabus, a comprehensive revamping was not done in the core subjects except for the introduction of methodology. Teachers who taught core papers neither knew what was being taught in the Academic Writing course, nor did they integrate the two. Even a style sheet was not insisted upon in assignments or seminar papers. As a result, the application of what was acquired was severely limited.

When Academic Writing was introduced in 2009, the greatest apprehension had been that of evaluation. The KSHEC had recommended a judicious mix of different levels of questions and had recommended the preparation of question banks to suit the need. All fears were allayed in the first external question papers, conducted in November 2009, which

followed the pattern of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ), very short answers, paragraphs and essay type questions. Some examples are questions like: “What is post hoc fallacy? Give an example” or “List any two strategies to develop critical thinking?” (University of Calicut). Such questions essentially destroyed the objective of such a course by insisting largely on rote memorisation. Most of the question papers that followed were confined to the prescribed text, defeating the purpose of the course. Discouraged by this, some of the teachers, who had experimented with creating new models of question papers for internal assessment in the first year, soon started depending on the pattern of “model” question papers.

There is an established system in the university in the preparation of question papers; they should follow a set pattern, a fixed duration and must be based on a prescribed text. Hence, a flexible question paper that would attain the objectives of critical thinking or Academic Writing became impossible and would be considered outrageously “out of syllabus”. An out of syllabus question paper question paper is a political project¹⁴ in universities in Kerala. Thus, this necessitates the restructuring of the framework of the evaluation mechanism.

In such a university system, rigorous testing is the pre-requisite for the award of degree. In spite of the recommendations, examinations still emphasise rote learning and memorisation. In an environment where these two factors fetch students better grades, the tendency to reproduce from these books *per se* is greater. It is not even treated as academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The policy for the prevention of plagiarism was introduced by the University only in 2015 (“University Policy on Prevention of Plagiarism”). Till date only research theses are subject to plagiarism check. Nowhere in an undergraduate or post graduate programme does the curriculum emphasise an ‘original’ contribution to research and production of knowledge. Since rote learning fetches better grades, students reproduce ideas from reference books or study aids in their assignments or examinations without citing the

sources. So, plagiarism or honour codes learned in the Academic Writing course serve them only as short answers to be reproduced in their examinations. In our experience, even in the sixth semester when students have to mandatorily submit the project work, they have to begin from the basics of academic style. This experience clarifies that students forget about Academic Writing after the examination is over in the concerned semester. The project work does not involve any serious research and like their assignment papers, it is a mixture of several materials from the web.

The lack of suitable evaluation techniques was another important issue during the implementation of this course. Such a course emphasises research along with good writing skills. The expected outcome was that a student would develop good critical thinking skills that would be reflected in their writings. In the context of teaching writing in an ESL classroom, Samuel observes that “though the policy documents lament the inefficacy of assessment and suggest reforms, they do not provide any clear directive or theoretical underpinnings on the basis of which any revision of assessment could be undertaken” (n.p.). After the introduction of the semester system, an examination committee was formed to study the limitations in implementation and to suggest practical changes. They provided clear directives to assess a student’s originality and comprehension through “open book” examinations, flexible duration in examinations, flip reduced answer booklets and multiple examiners to mark one answer script (ERC Report 14-15).

Unlike what Samuel suggests, in the context of Kerala, it was not the lack of recommendations but that of execution that was a failure. The end semester examinations only had provisions for factual questions like definitions of topic sentences or thesis statements. Even the extended essay only had questions on the fallacies in critical thinking or barriers to critical thinking. No question required the student to identify thesis statements or topic sentences. Even while marking answers, importance was not given to cohesion or use of

transition words. In the whole programme, at no point was the student required to engage himself/ herself in research. Regardless of suggestions and recommendations of innovation, critical thinking and research skills have been sacrificed for the sake of “uniformity” leading to mediocrity in assessment.

To conclude, this paper had set forth to plot the erratic history of Academic Writing in the University of Calicut from 2009 to the present. The motives for the inclusion and removal of the course were broadly categorised under changing politics, administration and education. Academic bodies at the university with differing political affiliations diluted the policy recommendations which resulted in an uneven history for the course and stifled the dynamism of the course. These dilutions, which were introduced for the sake of “uniformity”, reduced the course to content based “teachable” texts. The rigidity of administrative bodies in maintaining considerations of workload and class strength reduced the efficiency. The improper restructuring of the syllabi of core courses without imbibing the essence of various recommendations was another problem. A course oriented towards learner-centred method but implemented using the teacher-oriented method was the greatest challenge for it. Ineffectual pedagogies like adherence to prescribed textbooks and obsolete evaluation strategies were also responsible for the chequered history. It is proposed that Academic Writing courses should be integrated with discipline specific writing courses. Courses like Academic Writing require design of variable instructional material by teachers. At a time when educationists increasingly insist on outcome-based learning, studies ought to concentrate on realistic ways to incorporate Academic Writing in undergraduate programmes.

Notes

¹ The gross enrolment ratio of education in primary and secondary levels is high. At the tertiary stage, it was 37% in 2019 according to the All India Survey of Higher Education report (234). This is higher than the national average but below that of neighbouring States like Tamil Nadu.

² Student progression to postgraduate programmes and later to research scaled up after the commencement of the semester system.

³ Students who pursue courses by attending affiliated colleges under the university belong to the regular stream and those who pursue the same by having only monthly contact classes are students under the distance education stream.

⁴ As highlighted in the NKC Report 2006 and KSHEC Reports of the Committee in Restructuring Undergraduate Education, 2007 and on Industry –Academia Linkages 2012.

⁵ Central Universities and Premier Institutes are governed by the Union government, Deemed Universities are managed by educational trusts and State Universities are run by elected/nominated administrative bodies.

⁶ While some universities and institutions implemented this following the guidelines of UGC and MHRD, many others adopted the system only partially, suspecting its outcome, commercialization of education being one of it.

⁷ These include *Restructuring Undergraduate Education* (2009), *Examination Committee Report* (2009), *Report on Industry-Academia Linkages* (2012), *Report on Kerala State Higher Education Policy* (2012), *Recommendations of the Executive council on Prof. Hrdaya Kumari Committee Report on C.B.C.S.S* (2012)

⁸ The United Democratic Front is headed by the Indian National Congress and is a coalition of the Indian Union Muslim League, factions of the Kerala Congress, the CMP and the RSP.

⁹ The Left Democratic Front is headed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and is a coalition of the Communist Party of India, the Janata Dal (secular), the NCP and sections of the Kerala Congress.

¹⁰ In the context of Kerala, this would refer to the realization of the interests of a section of the academia and the administration.

¹¹ Members of board of studies are nominated for a period of three years. Different boards prescribed different books.

¹² In order to make higher education accessible to maximum number of students, the University adopts a policy of marginal increase every year, which is around twenty percent of the sanctioned strength. The extra number of students admitted is never calculated for workload. Hence the large number of students in common courses.

¹³ Only five hours were allotted per week for the course. This was conveniently divided as one hour each for critical thinking, academic writing, reading and presentation skills, respectively.

¹⁴ “Out of syllabus” questions are reasons for demand of moderation in evaluation by student organizations having multiple affiliations.

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