

Participant Contributions: Prospects for English Studies Workshop April 2012

Introduction

The Workshop proceeded as a discussion among its expert participants, rather than as a sequence of formal papers. Participants spoke briefly from their expertise, gearing their comments to the discussion. In some cases they spoke *ex tempore*, in some cases using preliminary notes. This document collects together these notes where they have been provided and should be seen as an adjunct to the Report of the Workshop “Questions of Curriculum, Pedagogy and the Market”.

Session 1a English Studies in the XIth and XIIth Plans: the Institutional and Policy Context

Saugata Bhaduri (JNU)

Summary: While the XIth plan lays a lot of stress on education in general and higher education in particular, when it comes to English education, the focus is on primary and secondary education or vocational training alone.

A) XIth Plan: A lot of focus has been put on education

1. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has referred to the XIth Five Year Plan as the “National Education Plan”:

“There is a massive thrust in the Eleventh Plan on access to education and health, which are critical to social and economic empowerment of the people. In education, the Plan will spend more than double of what was spent in the Tenth Plan, as a proportion of the total budgetary support to Central Ministries. We have made good progress in providing access to primary education but there are quality issues that need to be addressed. We must also expand access to secondary education in the Eleventh Plan. In higher education, the Plan will work towards increasing enrolment rates from 11 to 21 percent over a ten year period. This will require a massive expansion in our university system. There will also be emphasis on creating competitive, world class institutions of higher learning. The National Skill Development Mission will help in meeting the demands for skills in our growing economy as well as in generating high quality employment. Both in higher education and skill development, the private sector will be encouraged to augment the government’s efforts appropriately. Given the special focus on education in the Eleventh Plan, I have no hesitation in calling this Plan a ‘National Education Plan’.” (Manmohan Singh, “Foreword”, Vol.1, p. iv)

2. The plan has budget allocation for education increasing dramatically as a percentage of the total budget: from 7.68% in the 10thPlan (Rs. 62461 cr) to 19.29% in the 11thPlan (Rs. 274228 cr). (Vol.1, p. 45); (Rs. 163506 cr on school education and literacy and Rs. 75102 cr on higher education) (Vol.1, p. 54)
3. “Higher education will be a key driver in an increasingly globalized and

knowledge-driven world and we need to increase the enrolment rate in higher education from around 11% at present to 21% over a ten annum period. This will require a massive expansion in the university system which must be combined with efforts to create competitive world class institutions of higher education. Given the scarcity of resources, private sector initiatives in higher education and various forms of public–private partnerships (PPPs) must be encouraged.” (Montek Singh Ahluwalia, “Preface”, Vol.1, p. ix)

4. “1.105. Education and skill development will receive high priority in the Eleventh Plan, both to meet the needs of a growing economy and to promote social equality by empowering those currently excluded because of unequal access to education and skills to participate fully in the growth process. Public expenditure (Centre and States) on education is only around 3.6% of GDP. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) had set a target of raising it to 6%.” (Vol.1, p. 17)

B) XIth Plan: focus on education – what does it have in store for higher education?

1. “1.3.1 ... By the end of the Tenth Plan, the Indian higher education system has grown into one of the largest in the world with 378 universities, 18064 colleges, a faculty strength of 4.92 lakh, and an estimated enrolment of 140 lakh students. The higher education institutions include 23 Central universities (CU), 216 State universities, 110 deemed universities, 11 private universities, and 33 institutions of national importance established through central legislation and another 5 institutions established through State legislations.” (Vol.2, p. 22)
2. “1.110. The following initiatives will be taken in the Eleventh Plan to attain these objectives in higher education.
 - Establishment of 30 new Central universities, one in each of the 16 States which do not have a Central university at present, and 14 other Central universities in different parts of the country. Some of these universities will be targeted ab initio to achieve world class standards, which will involve coverage of a wider range of subjects, including, especially engineering and medicine.
 - Establishment of eight IITs, seven IIMs and five Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research.” (Vol.1, p. 18)

C) XIth Plan: focus on higher education – what does it have in store for English?

1. Vague mention of promoting and developing English:

“1.3.76 ... Promotion and development of ~~22 languages listed in the Schedule VIII of the constitution, including classical languages on the one hand and~~ English and foreign languages ~~on the other~~, have received due attention and will continue to do so.” (Vol.2, p. 35)
2. But English considered either mainly in the primary and secondary education context
 - a. “1.2.7 ... The doubling of the share of private unaided schools indicates that parents are willing to pay for education that is perceived to be of good quality. The factors underlying this perception include better English teaching, better monitoring and supervision of students’ performance, better

attention, attendance and accountability of teachers.” (Vol.2, p. 15)

b. “SECONDARY EDUCATION: GOALS, TARGETS, AND STRATEGIES FOR THE ELEVENTH PLAN

1.2.16 The Eleventh Plan aims to: ... (ii) ensure good quality secondary education with focus on Science, Mathematics, and English...” (Vol.2, pp. 16-17)

3. Or, in a Vocational context (focus, in the plan itself, more on Vocational Education)

a. “13.27. In the first 30 years of independence the emphasis on higher education coupled with slow GDP growth created an excess supply of highly educated manpower that could not be absorbed productively within the country.” (Vol.1, p. 271)

b. “5.35... (iii) ACTION PLAN FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

- Expand VE from 9500 senior secondary schools to 20000 schools. Intake capacity to go up from 1.0 million to 2.5 million ...
- Progressively move vocational education from an unviable 2–year stream, commencing after Class 10, to a stream that captures 9th Class dropouts and later on it should commence from Class 7, capturing 7th Class dropouts. Give emphasis to last mile employability related soft skills— viz., English language skills, quantitative skills, computer literacy, spreadsheet, word processing, computer graphics, presentation skills, behavioral and interpersonal skills, etc.” (Vol.1, p. 94)

c. “13.39 ... India’s main advantage in its software sector story is that the sector has been able to tap into the pool of human resources that includes, engineering graduates, software professionals and English-speaking young graduates prepared to work in BPO centers.” (Vol.1, p. 274)

Sources:

- Planning Commission, Govt. of India, *XIth Five Year Plan 2007-2012*, Volume I: *Inclusive Growth*, Delhi: OUP, 2008 (abbreviated above as Vol.1).

(http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/11th/11_v1/11th_vol1.pdf)

- Planning Commission, Govt. of India, *XIth Five Year Plan 2007-2012*, Volume II: *Social Sector*, Delhi: OUP, 2008 (abbreviated above as Vol.2).

(http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/planrel/fiveyr/11th/11_v2/11th_vol2.pdf)

Richard Allen (The Open University)

I want to offer a comparative approach to this discussion of the institutional and policy context of the development of English Studies in India. If time permitted this comparison could be widened with more reference to distinctive features of the US, Australian systems etc. but I will confine myself to a comparison with the UK system. It seems to me however that there are clear international trends in the development of universities and of Government policies towards universities - a process of globalisation, if you like - and the UK system can in this context be taken as exemplary in a number of respects. Given this globalising trend what I say can count

as something of a prophecy of the way the Indian system will develop. On the other hand globalisation can be resisted through protection, and it might be equally that what I can say might count as an awful warning -- a road not to be taken.

The key driver of the change I describe is the increase in funding for, and provision of, university level through the latter part of the 20th century (in Britain there were key changes around 1962 and 1992). The increase in funding and provision has generally had a liberal rationale but within a short time the increase has been matched by an increase in control over the flow of money and the uses of that money. This control has usually been central but is also to some extent disguised - by the use of agencies apparently at arms length from the state, or self-regulation, or by an emphasis on the student as the consumer of educational resources. The government in the UK also asserts control by privileging certain subjects, especially those that can be linked to industrial and economic expansion. Within universities, internal market systems operate, with money following the student and subject areas competing for student numbers and thus resources.

A further change - the separation of funding for teaching from that for research - has led to a fragmentation within departments and within the lives of academics. Funding for teaching, designed to cover the cost of teaching itself and a minimum of staff updating, flows separately from funding for research which is largely allocated centrally against specific bids and projects, and geared to specific outputs. The emphasis in the UK is on understanding whether there is cross subsidy between these two activities, and this in turn requires that academic staff record time spent on each.

Finally in this general survey, the Government is also encouraging new providers of university level awards - private providers, FE Colleges etc. - to enter the market. It also encourages new 'products', i.e. 2 year vocationally oriented Foundation degrees, accelerated study for Honours degrees etc. In all this, however, the standard model of the three year degree remains remarkably resilient.

At present the view of many is that a key effect of all this will be to prompt students - faced with a commitment to a very significant loan repayment/graduate tax - to look to courses which will maximise their earnings. Research suggests that recruiters are often more impressed by the place of study or the class of degree than the subject so those students who do well at an elite university may be insulated from this, but even they may be inclined to think differently of their studies. English Departments in turn may need to think of themselves as either

- Teaching skills useful in employment
- Offering a 'pure' subject, akin to pure mathematics.

Pretty much all other internationally rated universities in the UK, Australia, Singapore, China etc. are subject to a mandatory quality inspection system, and it is difficult to think that Indian universities can escape this requirement for much longer. In the UK, this involves not only a 5 year review, but also the publication of key information showing the amount of teaching contact time etc.

This analysis could be extended but I should move to set out some of the implications I see for English Studies. To emphasise the shift to a more consumer focus among students I'd suggest that they'll be asking their teachers -

- Where can I see the results of the latest quality inspection so I know it will be worth studying here?

- What am I going to get out of this degree?
- Why are you teaching me this?
- How do I know this university/department has the standing that will impress an employer?
- How can I get a better mark?
- Is my syllabus up to date?
- Is your teaching just designed to produce teachers like yourselves, or will it enable me to move to an MA, or get a job in a profession or industry?

Mukesh Ranjan (Jamia Millia Islamia)

Since the general framework for this session is English Studies in the XIth and XIIth Plans: the Institutional and Policy Context, my inputs would have general reference to the questions and issues that Prof. Richard Allen had sent to us. I would rather conform to his formulations. At the outset, I would like state(and of course, this is my personal assessment) that as far as English Studies is concerned in India, even as we are discussing, is moving from strength to strength. And when I say this, I am making reference to pedagogy and scholarship in English Language which resonates with the idea that that it is the 'medium' and not the 'message' which is at the heart of English Studies in India. The basis of my argument is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical perspective is stemming from the Plan Documents –both the XIth and XIIth. Though the XIIth Plan Document is still in the making, one has access to its approach paper and its broad recommendations and prescriptions. Education is the single most important instrument for social and economic transformation. Higher education, as we all know, has made a significant contribution to economic development, social progress and political democracy in Independent India.

A close perusal of the XIth Plan Document reveals that there is a discussion on development of 22 languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution and English is one of them. This policy framework is in line with National Policy in Education 1986 and the Programme of Action 1992. There is a passing reference to English Language per se. But when we come to the XIIth Plan we see marked shift in the focus. There is a reinforcement of the idea that the English Language is a tool of transformation. There is recognition of the fact that English language, in India, is a linguistic tool for wider communication fostering internal cohesiveness and economic mobility. Since there is growing youth aspirations and massive expansion of schooling, a huge demand has been created for higher education. This is likely to result in significant increase in the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) which would build a workforce capable of underpinning a modern competitive economy. The process of broadening access, making higher education inclusive and promoting excellence initiated during the XIth Plan will get further consolidated and expanded during the XIIth Plan. One of the objectives of Higher Education under the XIIth Plan is to enhance employability of graduates. Indian Higher Education is organized into 'General' and 'Professional' General education which is an excellent foundation for knowledge-based careers, often fails to equip graduates with necessary work skills due to its poor quality. On the other hand, professional education comes with an exorbitant cost and is long-drawn and is imparted in narrowly specialized private institutions with little emphasis on liberal arts, which is so very vital for the

development of intelligent able-minded citizens. The XIIth Plan visualizes course-correction by recommending integrated curriculum, for both 'General' and 'Professional' education streams, with greater flexibility in choice of subjects and innovative pedagogic practices to improve quality and hence employability. It says that graduates now require the skills beyond the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic ('3Rs'). Skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity ('4Cs') are now significant in more and more jobs. The approach paper suggests that emphasis on verbal and written communication skills, especially English would go a long way in improving the employability of the large and growing mass of disempowered youth. It is obvious that with recommendation for more resources (from 1.12% of GDP to 1.5% of GDP) and promotion of private partnership government is arguing for expansion/access and equity. The assumption is that the economic transformation of India can be brought about by expansion (which involves creating more universities, changing the system of regulation, increasing public funding and diversifying source of financing and establishing around 50 national universities), excellence (which involves reforming existing universities, restructuring undergraduate colleges and promoting enhanced quality) and inclusion (which involves ensuring access and affirmative action). Other higher education initiatives likely to emerge from the XIIth Plan document are in respect of curricular and pedagogic reforms. Since Higher Education has been viewed as an increasingly global enterprise, Indian institutions are expected to embrace internationalization which would enable India enhance its soft power by producing graduates with international competencies and skills. It is also felt that with widespread use of English Language in India and low cost of living, India can potentially become a global hub for higher education. A robust higher education system will spur India's economic growth and promote international competitiveness. English Language will be the catalyst promoting wider communication and economic integration.

Coming to the institutional context, I would like to talk of Jamia Millia Islamia to acquaint you with level of funding and the research projects awarded by the UGC and other funding agencies. Out of the total 171 research projects in the university during the XIth Plan, there were only 5 projects for arts and humanities. Out of these 5, two belonged to Department of English, 1 to Department of Urdu, 1 to Department of Hindi and 1 to Department of History. As far as English is concerned there was a Minor Research Project entitled "The English Writings of A. Madhaviah" with grant outlay of Rs. 90,000/- and another on-going UGC Special Assistance Programme with grant outlay Rs. 40 Lacs from April 2009 to March 2014. The total grant outlay for all the five projects in regard to arts and humanities come to 122 lacs out of 38 crores which is 0.46 % of the total allocation. But when one compares these figures with the figures of the Xth Plan, one concludes that there is forward movement in terms of grant allocation.

The universities in India put their plan projections for academic positions before the UGC. In the IXth Plan (1997-2002) there was not a single academic position given to the Department of English in Jamia Millia Islamia. Under the Xth Plan (2002-2007), once again, no academic position was given to the Department. But when we come to the XIth Plan we get two positions in the Professor's grade. And one is optimistic that under the XIIth plan the Department is likely to get many more academic positions, which I believe, would be consistent with the XIIth Plan principle of expansion and inclusion to stimulate India's economic growth. And these positions would come with

a specific rider for promoting Communication Skills in English Language.

One could reel off more statistics and data to present a comparative picture in relation to other departments of arts and humanities, but, I guess, I would like to stop here and contribute more when we get down to discuss the nitty-gritty. Thank you.

(Other speakers: Supriya Chaudhuri, Jadvpur University; Debanjan Chakrabarti, British Council, Kolkata)

Session 1b Students and Teachers: Common or Competing Aims

Subarno Chatterjee (Delhi University)

Students and teachers: common or competing aims

English Studies in Delhi University (DU) in curricular and pedagogic terms seems not to be responsive to student desires and demands. Part of this unresponsiveness is attributable to the ways in which the designing and revision of curricula are structured. When the BA Honours English syllabus was revised in the late-1990s it was the culmination of a decade (or more) of consultative meetings with teachers of constituent colleges of DU and significant in its pedagogic desire and indeed revolutionary in its movement away from canonical English literature. Courses on Indian writing in English, literatures in translation, literature and gender, popular culture texts such as those by Ian Fleming and Isaac Asimov shared space with Shakespeare and other dead white men. The momentum of change and pedagogical possibility seems, however, to have been stymied by the fact that the syllabus remains unchanged more than a decade after. This is related to the structural difficulties of curricular revision as departments of English in constituent colleges of DU have no autonomy regarding texts, authors, periods they wish to teach. The lack of autonomy has been further compounded by the introduction of a semester system of teaching and examining whereby syllabi were mechanically divided with no academic rationale or pedagogic logic. Arguably, from a University administrative point of view, the switch to a semester system keeps the interests of students in mind, allowing for more concentrated teaching and learning interactions. However, the DU system omits one crucial aspect of semester teaching – the flexibility of course offerings and the empowerment of individual departments which can make those offerings based on faculty specialisms and student demands. The mismatch is conceivably deliberate in that a top-down administrative frame allows for absolute control over syllabi and teaching patterns while opening the University to global consumption in that there is now an easier one-way interface with foreign universities. (Students from participating universities can spend a semester at DU and transfer credits to their parent institutions, while there are no provisions for credit transfers between universities in Delhi or abroad for DU students.) Global capital in higher education in India is now driven by policy imperatives to integrate with these networks which in turn have consequences for English Studies, particularly in the ways in which such studies are sought to be trivialized in their conflation with a marketized model of English. Private players in the higher education field such as Amity University, Gautam Buddha University, and Shiv Nadar University offer courses based solely on

English language as a communicative tool. ‘The communications revolution – computers, the Internet, satellite communications – has been strategically deployed in many accounts as central to the process of globalisation, bracketed outside the terrains of power as simply the vehicle that facilitates the flows of power and value.’ (Kayman, 14) Within this matrix of communication English is the dominant language. As Martin Kayman argues, ‘by this token, English seems to receive the qualities attributed to the communications technology; the language itself becomes a technology, a tool, a simple instrument. In other words, the intimate association of English with the technological *means* of communication reinforces its claims as the pre-eminent *medium* of globalization: branded, in fact, as the language of communication *par excellence*.’ (Kayman 14) The marketization/monetization of English Studies – a means-ends instrumentality manifest in the drive towards courses in business communication, or the ways in which the Institute of Life Long Learning (ILL) intervenes in course constructions, or the lure of the call centre – constitute what Tom Samet calls the ‘structural politics’ of higher education. What is interesting and fairly obvious about this drive is that it is related to the idea of English as a global language seamlessly interwoven into a global knowledge economy. This globalizing of English, as Martin Kayman observes is ‘distinguished from previous historical moments of linguistic expansion [...] precisely by the claim that, this time, it is not being artificially or externally imposed. Rather, we are frequently told, the demand for English arises naturally from ‘people’ or ‘the world’ in general. In the words of a former director-general of the British Council, Sir John Hanson: ‘The world wants to speak English – who doubts it?’ (Kayman, 4) Along with the normalizing of the spread of English the ‘structural politics’ of Higher Education in India ‘surrounds and conditions all we do; unacknowledged and repressed, it frequently conflicts with our avowed curricular intentions and our conscious political commitments’. (Samet 232) Samet’s frame of reference is the US system and it seems entirely unsurprising that these structural politics now permeate the Indian context given policy and administrative drives towards global education standards and integration. [Global integrative drive: little by way of concrete results so far as no major foreign university has set up shop in India. Lancaster University in Gurgaon.]

Curriculum decisions seem also to be based on what Gerald Graff in *Professing Literature* (1987) calls the ‘field coverage’ model of English Studies. Graff’s analysis is located in American academia and he considers the ways in which this model has ‘shaped universities into discrete disciplinary departments, and departments into aggregates of clearly defined sub-specialities’. (Samet 232) This is the old argument about the professionalization of English and other humanistic studies. Graff perceives this model as ideal in the ways in which it allows for heterogeneity, flexibility, self-regulation, and assimilation of new ideas. What he omits, however, are the politics of field coverage and the ways in which administrative functions subdue or elide political disputes. ‘The effectiveness of the model [...] lie[s] precisely in its [seeming] managerial neutrality, its assimilative powers, the agility with which it orders and contains potentially disruptive tensions.’ (Samet 234) These instruments of managerial, juridical, and state power and interventions were on display during the semester non-debates in DU and seem to me to be emblematic of new directions and positions for English Studies in India.

As part of more recent managerial frameworks the University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines specify benchmarks for judging and quantifying scholarship. Research reviews such as the REF in Britain or peer assessment in the US are fairly

common practices. In DU there is no peer assessment but there is a yearly assessment linked to ones increment, as direct an incentive to scholarship as any. This assessment seems to me to be non-transparent (I am not aware where my detailed pro-forma was sent and who looked at it and what their qualifications were/are) and there is no system of academic feedback. There also seem to be anomalies in the ways in which benchmarks are set and resources allocated. For instance, I am encouraged, indeed urged, to attend international conferences but unless such conferences are held in Delhi or elsewhere in India it is unlikely I'll be able to attend since conference funding is limited to one trip every three years. The UGC did propose a mode of student evaluation for teaching but that was not implemented in DU. One questionnaire circulated in DU seemed targeted at science students with questions such as 'What was your laboratory experience and how did it help your study?' Departments such as mine wrote back suggesting a more English Studies/Humanities orientated questionnaire and have not heard anything further. Pedagogically it seems to me quite unsatisfying to have no mechanism of transparent, anonymous student feedback. Student discontent, angst, anger are expressed either on Facebook or through Right To Information (RTI) petitions.

As Prasanta Chakravarty and Brinda Bose have argued, the disempowerment of faculty and the marginalization of English Studies go hand-in-hand with the valorization of English Studies in the global marketplace. ('English at the Marketplace,' *The Telegraph*, 24 June 2010) In varying administrative and policy modes English Studies is sought to be instrumentalized given perceived exigencies of the market; this responsiveness and trajectory leaves little space, to cite Chakravarty and Bose, for 'imagination, creativity, emotional investment, analysis, clarity of thought and expression, poise, reflection.' Without entering into a politics of nostalgia it seems necessary to reconfigure the position of English Studies in India for teachers and students, one that moves away from the purely communicative to a strongly contextualized, historicized understanding of texts and their worlds.

References

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Divya Dwivedi (Adjunct Faculty, Dept. of English, University of Delhi)

While in colleges and universities the student demand is left up to perceptions of it, without much or any formal or even informal discussion of what comprises it, in vocational institutions such as IIT opportunities frequently arise to discuss actual demands as perceived by students. Almost any discussion, on plagiarism and copyright, on ethics of engineering, on whistleblowing, quickly leads to the staple

declaration that everything we do is for personal gratification and/or earning money, both being the same.

There is scope here for comparing institutional structures, for example, the understanding of “study” implicit in the idea of university education versus, say, technical education. It appears that non-instrumental education is enshrined in the idea of the university in such a way that so-called providers alone constitute the event of a questioning regarding the aims of ES and the needs which might or might not exist, might or might not be met. Students of ES, or Humanities in general, in the university remain passive recipients, with either no formal occasion such as feedback mechanisms, or no conveyed need to ask or assert why they study English. However, the question *why they are there* seems more readily answered, by them or on their behalf (answers include: marriage market, civil service exams, nothing to be done). In contrast, market need, career aspiration and employers’ needs are worn on the sleeve by the IITian, although these guiding principles of vocational education are no less implicit for that. They have not been explicitly thought. For instance, IIT students cannot or refuse to fathom, or are never offered, the reasons why Humanities forms a component of their education.

ES is not symmetrically situated in these two different kinds of institutions. In the university in India there is little doubt that ES occupies a central, prestigious and enviable position of greater visibility, even as it seems less informed by students’ needs. In a tech institute, Humanities and social sciences are marginalized and looked down upon enough, but the ES component may be slightly lower in the hierarchy, with larger numbers of students opting for economics courses. If the numbers even out in the end it is because options are required to be distributed across disciplines over the 4 year course.

Yet, one is more likely in an institution like IIT to confront the actual demand of students. Every moment, every class discussion or writing assignment in Humanities course, especially in English, might present the opportunity for students to vocalize their perception even if it is always the same, and not particularly articulate. Here, the enabling condition is not merely the idea of education implicit in this kind of institution. The IIT students and teachers’ *be-ing-in-the-university* (that is, university as the place of education that is open to questioning; and a *be-ing* that is different for IIT and for universities) unfolds through concrete and material pedagogical practices and structures which allow regular opportunities for students to haggle with teachers over marks and grades. The final gradesheet is required in any event to reflect the class performance in the form of a bell curve, towards the which end teachers have to make minor adjustments to scores and to translation of marks into grades, and students attempt to squeeze in a few marks to jump up the grade scale. The aim of the entire semester is the palpable credits obtained. Teachers present their course design on the website indicating modes of assessment: quizzes, term papers, written tests, class participation and the distribution of marks for each mode in percentage.

Yet in the palpability of this structure, where one never demurs from direct discussion of aims, needs and provisions, there is something, among others, which this workshop and project wish to put their finger on remains obscure. We know that this kind of discussion still does not amount to asking what is ES today, what is it (not) doing and how it can do so better.

To return to the contrast, perceived student demand in dedicated ES programmes such as in a university or college may be *hypothetically* framed by market needs but does

not appear to reflect much in course design and pedagogical practices. For instance, courses are not designed to improve clarity of communication or enhance language skills for specific vocations. They are hardly designed to enhance skills required for ES itself! Students owe it to the discretion of the teachers at college level to learn something about prosody, rhetoric, narrative theory, methods of literary history, genre theory. Mostly it is by a mimic art that we might chance upon the way to *interpret works* and *read texts*. On the other hand, perceived student demand is *actually* framed to a comparatively greater extent by ideas of postcoloniality, legitimacy of Indian English, relevance of popular culture or culture per se. It reflects in syllabus change.

Responsiveness to student demand, then, is not lacking, but if there is a lack of responses, it is likely because these demands are not articulated, perhaps not formulated even. Questionnaires and surveys are much needed. They will go a long way in articulating demands. Thought also has to be given to where and how they are formulated.

Difference in perception of students and providers is institutionally structured in some ways. While the professors continue to profess the Humanities, students may, in both universities and vocational institutes, be haunted by the spectre of exams and the transcripts on which their futures seem to depend. Teachers are deeply concerned about the quality and quantity of students, and the hollowness of their previous degrees. It has been observed that it is the scholars alone who seem conflicted by the politics of syllabi, canons and language. Postgraduate students and doctoral candidates secretly anguish over how to write papers, to meet the word lengths, to conceive a research proposal. The politics of teaching composition versus teaching literature and theory is perhaps yet to visit Indian shores, although by and large the student body (or so the complaint of teachers does go) is in dire need of remedial English classes, let alone writing skills.

Certainly HE ES cannot provide some these basic skills, although it needs to take them for granted. It remains, however, the discipline of aspiration, as English is its language. The obscurity of the demands notwithstanding, there is quite a demand for the subject everywhere. The enigma of ES seems to be that on the one hand everyone is convinced that ES opens doors to opportunities, and on the other we are at a loss as to whether and how ES curricula and pedagogy respond to market needs, career aspirations, and needs of employers. It is acknowledged that ES equips graduates in an indefinable way for several different professions: journalism and media, management, hospitality, public relations, publishing, for careers abroad. But all this while ES has in no way attempted to orient itself by looking at market needs. One witnesses the instrumentality of a non-instrumental discipline.

Should it remain so? Perhaps, yes. But how? How can English studies (for instance the effort embodied in this project) bring itself as English studies into institutionality? What kind of transformations is it capable of from within even as pressures come from elsewhere in the form of funding bodies and governmental policies, the rise of private universities?

As everyone increasingly feels pressed to make themselves relevant (as means to ends), there is a trap of the present which blocks the look from the future. In societies like India, it is possible that a new caste system would emerge from this drive towards relevance, where difference classes of people would be limited to the immediately accessible ways of becoming relevant to immediately perceivable ends. No distant future of wide ranging possibilities would be open to them. Even the thought of

dreaming outrageously would not occur to them, as they would be trained to and expected to only make themselves immediately relevant. If the university is the place of education that is open to questioning, to the future, then ES is perhaps the one place that is open to this sense of the university, the place where this sense is available, is sheltered, no matter how dim it may be. On the other hand, IIT is a being-in-the-university that is constrained by technologization, that is, by the calculation of means to ends; education is seen as means. Although IIT is not an institute of mere technical education but an institute of technology, it does not think what *technology* itself is. *Why these means, why these ends* is never asked. ES refuses technologization, the becoming means to ends.

English, Prof. Udaya Kumar of the Dept of English, DU, observed, has a weak sense of disciplinarity. I am not sure what the precise senses were in which he meant this phrase, but I think, this weak disciplinarity is the power of English departments. There is something vague but also felicitous in its name. 'English' here means many things but refers at bottom to language, and not merely to *a language* or *the language*. Language does not only communicate or transact but traces the paths of engagement with the world, with ourselves who are others, with the futures, including the futures of ES. ES would continue to determine its future depending on the way it calls itself, and calls both students and teachers. The way ES understands itself alters its own understanding. It is even the institution where such altering is harboured. Every moment is a possibility that the student and teacher would be seized by the word and undergo a change of self-understanding. Without this possibility, as the poet said,

Connoisseurs of jewels go closing the commerce of poesie,
Whomever shall we now go selling the diamond and pearl?
(Faiz Ahmed Faiz)

Sumitra Thoidingjam (Jamia Millia Islamia)

Generally speaking, speaking the language English fluently is considered to be an accomplishment for most Indians. In a country of 1.2 billion people only 74% of the total population are literate. Out of this only a small percent speak English fluently. Some of the primary reasons why fluency in English is given a lot of importance is because it is associated with a higher status in the society and of course, the demand in the job market. Almost all advertisements for jobs today seek employees who have "excellent communication skills" irrespective of the position or job responsibilities. Therefore, speaking the English language fluently and correctly is considered to be a 'skill' in itself. However, having said this, one can deny the fact that there are certain factors that need thorough investigation to understand ES in India.

I) Heterogeneity of students

a) Gender b) Level/standard of education c) Region (north, south, east west) they belong to

II) Objectives

a) ES comes under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, MHRD. The role of Humanities is to promote humane qualities

III) Student's demands/expectations

a) Job market – hospitality industry, secretary, banks, BPO and KPOs, copy editing, editors, advertising, translators, travel industry, b) Higher studies – media, journalism, mass communication, civil services, teaching – B. Ed – Lecturers, research institutes, theater, acting school, c) Marriage prospects

IV) Input and the resultant output

a) Syllabus b) Teacher's contribution

I a n b) A classification the students in the English department, JMI reveals the following composition:

Table I

Class	Male	Female	Total
BA (H) I	26	33	59
BA (H) II	25	30	55
BA (H) III	06	38	38
MA (Previous)	10	19	29
MA (Final)	05	19	34
M. Phil.	02	13	15
Ph. D	10	23	33
Diploma in Translation	07	05	12
Certificate in Translation	23	06	29

From the above table it is apparent that ES is more popular with female students. The number of female students displays a marked increase the higher the degree. Male students opt for more 'marketable' and job oriented courses like Business Studies, Engineering or short term professional courses. The popularity of the Certificate in Translation Proficiency, CTP and Diploma in Translation Proficiency among male students is also a proof of this fact. It should be noted that the ES is popular among female students because it enhances their marriage prospects. In India, especially north India, brides who are M.A. in English/speak English fluently are considered highly desirable.

One also need to take different regions in India into consideration. For example, what does ES mean for students in the northeastern states where the literacy rate is much higher than the National percentage? In fact, English is the official language in Nagaland and not Hindi as the case is in most states. Also most of the schools in these states are run by Christian missionaries which give the students an edge over their Indian counterparts when it comes to speaking the English language fluently. The same is true for most students in south Indian states. An assessment of ES would have to take into account all these factors if one wants a wholesome picture.

Since most university do not have streamlined courses to cater to English studies students opt for courses like English (Honours) and Master of Arts in English. The expectation they have from the course has various disjunctions with the course objective. We as teachers of these courses are expected to teach literature. But the

students take it to up to learn the language. Their main aim is - “To improve our English”, “To be a fluent English speaker”, “To learn English” etc. It is clear that there is need to cater to this demand of ES students.

The Department of English, Jamia Millia Islamia has introduced an independent evening course entitled Communicative English Programme (CEP) which caters to such aspirations of students. It is a course that is popular with students. However, most students¹ cannot afford to enroll in such courses as the fees are much higher-sometimes double or triple of their annual course fees.

An important aspect of Higher Studies that is sadly neglected in India is Teacher assessment by students. No doubt, there are certain mechanisms in place which takes into account API scores, interview boards, etc, for promotion of teachers. However, I feel they are inadequate as modes of assessment. Feedback from students will supplement and help in making up for this inadequacy. It is true that most teachers feel threatened by the idea of students assessment and view it as working against their interest. However, it will help teachers assess his/her performance in class. For example, some teachers are great scholars and power houses of knowledge. But he/she could fail in imparting adequate knowledge in class due to a number of reasons – lack of oratorical skills, a weak voice, lack of interactivity, etc. Students will eventually get 'bored' of such teachers. Through the feedback provided by student teachers can explore avenues of improvement that would promote interactivity and productivity in class.

Harriet Raghunathan (Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi)

I begin with summarising the results of an informal survey I have made of two groups of students I teach in Jesus and Mary College, Delhi University. I asked them whether they envisaged doing any further education / training after their BA degree, and if so, in what field. Then I asked if they planned to work, and if so, would it be a temporary stop-gap until marriage or children, or long-term. They also told me in what fields they hoped to work and what their priorities were in terms of job satisfaction, money, service to the community or high status. Finally they reported whether the English course they had studied had been fun, useful, one of these, or neither.

There were 21 responses from IIIrd English Honours. (I teach 26 of them in the Literary Theory option). All 21 planned some postgraduate education and all 21 hoped to work the rest of their lives. This is an enormous change for female college students from the situation when I began teaching in this college in 1980; at that time most envisaged no career but marriage.

Counting their first and second choices of possible post-graduate study, MA English was a leading option (12) MA in media, Journalism, Mass Com. etc (6), 2 MBA's and 2 wanting Cultural Studies or Sociology. Law, Gemmology and Creative Writing attracted one person each.

A fairly similar spread characterised their preferences for areas of work. Six were thinking of teaching or being an academic, 5 wanted publishing, journalism, media, 'writing or editing', as they put it, 3 wanted PR or advertising, 3 Civil Services and 2 some kind of corporate job. The rest did not yet know.

¹ Most of the students in Jamia Millia Islamia belong to economically backward section of the society

Questioned about what they would prioritise when choosing a job, 15 put ‘job satisfaction’ first and 5 more put it second, several specifying that they wanted something creative or intellectually stimulating. ‘Service to Others’ and ‘Money’ came next with 8 each putting it in one of the top two priorities. ‘Status’ was clearly in 4th place; eight people put it as a last priority.

On the question of the enjoyability and/ or usefulness of English Studies at Honours level, 15 out of the 21 definitely felt it was useful and 13 stressed that they had learned to think, become critically aware, less prejudiced and more open-minded as a result of the course. 12 said the course had been fun, and 13 emphasised the way the course had given them a perspective on society, in particular issues facing India today, and a greater sensitivity to cultural differences. Only one person felt dismayed at discovering ‘the amount of ideological control society’s dominant groups held over the individual.’

In comparison with the above group, which can be said broadly speaking to be the top 50% of our IIIrd year Honours class, the second group here surveyed were IInd year students of Discipline English, a literature elective subject in BA Programme. While in first year they studied a modern cross-cultural anthology based on the themes of race, gender, class / caste and war, and in the third year they face a variety of postcolonial texts from 3 continents, their second year course is more traditional. There is an anthology of poems from the Renaissance to the twentieth century, a Shakespeare play and novels by Dickens and Graham Greene. It is a challenging course for many, especially those who are admitted under some reserved category, or any who do not have reasonable English skills.

The number I surveyed was 42. All 42 plan some kind of further education, an MA being the dream in about 38 cases, and more vocational courses in Fashion, Design, Health and Nutrition, Tourism, Hotel Management, etc accounting for 11. (Several had put more than one option). A degree in education attracted the highest number (12); becoming a teacher is attractive to many Christians, (ours is a Christian college) especially those from modest family backgrounds who aim to help support their families and will definitely need to work for economic reasons. These students choose the Discipline English – History combination because both are school subjects and acceptable if they apply for an Education degree. The other half of my class takes French in place of History. Three of these want to do an MA in French, and some plan to work in an embassy. In the past, knowledge of French has enabled students to get very good jobs with multi-national corporations and international bodies.

The range of jobs aspired for among these BA Programme students was wider than in the Honours group. Business, Advertising, Banking, Fashion, Hospitality Industry, Web Design, PR, Real Estate Marketing, Health Consultant, Event Manager and ‘Entrepreneur in Cooking and Baking’ are among the responses for those other than the 15 who opted for teaching (including 3 who wished to be college lecturers) and the 3 who wanted NGO or social work. 40 out of the 42 girls hoped to work life-long, ‘if my in-laws allow,’ one of them added.

Their response to the English course was fairly encouraging. 14 found it ‘fun and useful’ and a further 14 thought it useful, making 28 happy-ish customers. Two said it wasn’t useful, one hated it. Many thought it was improving their language skills; I am not sure it is, (nor is it designed to) but that is definitely one of the outcomes they seek from any English course because good English makes them employable.

In April 2011 the department of English in Jesus and Mary College held an all-day workshop for all three years of the Honours students in order to find out why they appeared 'disaffected' with some areas of college life, and to discover their response to the Honours course and the ways they thought it could be improved. A huge open-ended questionnaire was given them and they discussed its findings in groups and reported back to the main body. It was an exercise they thoroughly enjoyed, and it was extremely useful feedback for the department.

I have summarised the answers to only one question of this survey, which was about their expectations of English Honours and whether the course lived up to their expectations or not. 101 students from across the 3 years responded.

An almost universal response was that though English had the reputation of being easy, a 'cakewalk', the course was in fact challenging and comprehensive, which many respondents welcomed as it gave them a sense of pride and achievement.

37 were thoroughly delighted with the course, 32 reasonably pleased with it, 25 specifically mentioned its challenging nature in favourable terms, and only 5 said it was 'too tough.' Two found it easy.

The students had expected 'novels and poems' and were surprised to find Karl Marx, history, socio-economic background, philosophical ideas etc as essential parts of the course; 'of all the Humanities subjects it is the most interesting and all-inclusive. We learn so much history, sociology, political science and psychology through our course that it helps us emerge as all-rounders.' Many praised the 'whole new perspective on life' they gained from this 'amazing' course. 'I think literature is a subject that can teach us much more than any other subject can.'

A few did not appreciate the broad scope of the course, 14 writing favourable and 3 writing unfavourable comments specifically on its wide-ranging nature. 22 stressed that the course was interesting and fun and 17 praised in particular the way it had enhanced their critical awareness. Where students found the course 'not interesting' the historical and political background was sometimes the cause cited: 'Teacher should focus majorly on the text rather than the outside world,' and 'Excessive details of the political background of the period leave me bored and confused.' However these comments were very much in the minority and other complaints of dullness relate not to syllabus content but to pedagogic methods: the monotony of lectures as a medium, the absence of movies and quizzes, and above all, the way that 'discussion' was handled. Nearly all wanted more 'discussion' and wanted it to be more genuinely open-ended and not directed towards securing agreement with the teacher's opinions. Most students like literature to be 'related to our lives', some dislike the teacher going off the point.

Among the doubts relating to the course, 6 or so stressed that they wanted more emphasis on 'writing skills' or 'techniques for professional writing', and one who was enjoying the course wrote 'honestly I sometimes wonder if we are actually benefiting from English Honours. Intellectually we are, but in a capitalist society, that's not all that matters.'

The above responses all come from female students in a college that has a reasonably good reputation and all the general category Honours students have about 88% in their best four subjects at school level when they join. Minority candidates and other special categories may have considerably lower scores at entry. The response to the undergraduate course in English Honours seems on the whole to be extremely

favourable; as a footnote we can add that the MA students who attend our college find their course much less attractive. They are neither enjoying it nor learning anything much.

The wide scope of our current Honours course is both challenging and extremely valuable as many students have appreciated. Our best students do attain a 'critical literacy' and breadth of mind that I would be sorry to see thrown away or damaged in future, even if it is neither immediately marketable nor exactly what the government of the day is willing to pay for.

In conclusion we can say that since almost 100% now envisage working in jobs which will be careers not stop-gaps, we have to offer courses, or modules, which cater to this need. In particular I would suggest a basic writing skills course for all, near the start of the course, with 'academic writing' or 'essay writing' as part of its content and also a component of advanced comprehension skills. I would also suggest 'techniques of professional writing' including editing skills be offered at some point as many want to enter publishing and journalism. Since many students will become teachers, there might also be scope for evolving courses which have relevance to the pedagogy of language teaching, or children's literature perhaps. If we can come up with some method of teaching Creative Writing seriously for Honours students, that also might be worth considering as an optional course.

(Other speaker: Vikas Jain, JNU)

Session 2 Past, present and future changes in Curriculum and Pedagogy in English Language and Literature

Poonam Trivedi (Indraprasatha College, University of Delhi)

- 1. The challenge of Literature teachers being faced with large amounts of language teaching:** This is summarized in the admonition that an ex-principal would often direct at us not to 'scorn the Pass Course (General Degree course) language teaching as it is your bread and butter.' Yes, we, in DU undergraduate colleges have always had to do more language than literature teaching. This has therefore left me with a lingering sense of 'living a lie', of professing something that one was not fully qualified to do so. ES in India has to recognize that ELT is a specialized discipline and needs separate training to be effective.
- 2. Achievement in literature teaching:** On the other hand there has always been a palpable sense of achievement in teaching literature at the Undergraduate level, both Hons. and Pass/ Elective. Students warm up to the ideas and values in literary texts and to the modes of reading/discovering them. They go away with a sense of enrichment and empowerment. Hence the debate is not either/or between Language or Literature teaching but that the market demands and the system should equip teachers to do both.
- 3. A cautionary note** was sounded against observations on the gendering of the student body and the fact that a large percent of ES students being female get absorbed in the marriage machinery and hence their knowledges cannot be quantified

in 'productive' terms. This view was found regrettable as an undergraduate education was considered a basic right of all individuals, irrespective of gender.

4. **Syllabi**, at the undergraduate level, should move away from the heavy canonical orientation to a more accessible modern content since that seems to engage the younger students better.

Mukhti Sanyal (Bharati College, Delhi University)

CONCEPT NOTE [FOR A WORKSHOP] ON STREAMING

Streaming for the English Language courses for the BA Programme, University of Delhi has been a contentious and neglected issue. Though almost everyone accepts that the existing criteria that are in use for streaming students to the English A, B and C courses of the current BA Programme in DU colleges are hopelessly out-dated, it has not been possible to effect a change in spite of some serious tries.

Teachers who teach these courses in colleges have long felt that it is imperative to change the criteria for streaming to accommodate the changed profile of college entrants caused by changes in the school curriculum in Delhi and more than eleven other states. During their tenure of headship, both Dr Manju Jain and Dr Shormishtha Panja exerted considerable pressure and the issue came up in an AC Meeting. Streaming by marks, which had been recommended by the GB of English Teachers was presented to the AC as an option. Two principals opposed the criterion even though many others supported it. Since a consensus could not be reached, the Vice Chancellor referred the matter to the PVC Committee. At a meeting on 4th June 2007, the PVC found streaming by marks an unacceptable proposition and it was decided that status quo should be maintained.

The issue was taken up again recently at the Workshop on the Review of the BA Programme English Courses held at Bharati College (with the collaboration of the Department of English) on 19th January 2012 where it was decided that an easy to use, reliable and simple system of streaming be collectively evolved by English teachers working under the guidance of experts.

Reasons for Change of Criteria in Streaming

English was introduced from Class I in all government, MCD and Sarvodaya Schools in Delhi from 2003. Therefore, students who will come to colleges in 2016 will have all studied English from Class I. Even now, English Core is a compulsory paper for all government school students opting for the Humanities, Science and Commerce Streams. Even in the Vocational Stream, English Core is compulsory for students opting for Computer Studies. In the Vocational stream too, students study two languages, one of which is generally English. As a result, there are very few takers (often none) for English B and C, which are then treated as soft options or simply not given timetable/workload space. English A, on the other hand, has large numbers. In the year 2007, the number of candidates who took the II/III year exams was over 6000 for A, around 500 for B and only 140 for C. More importantly, it is widely recognized that one's ability in a language cannot be gauged by the number of years one has studied it or even by the marks scored at the year end examination, particularly at the CBSE level. The language abilities of the large number of students who are herded into Stream A vary greatly and thus designing and teaching them the same course is counterproductive. A finely tuned but easy to administer and reliable

method of streaming could go a long way in making teaching the language more successful.

Another primary concern of those who wish to improve the linguistic abilities of these students is that the present situation is leading to bad language teaching practices among both teachers and students. The present course books and their accompanying examination model papers and system of weightage of marks were created to cater to three different levels of language proficiency – namely, those having Advanced, Intermediate and Pre-intermediate skills.

However, since the criteria for streaming have not changed, the objectives for these courses cannot be achieved. The existing streaming criteria treat students from elite public schools, government schools and schools in rural and semi-rural areas at par because they have studied the same course (Core English) in Class XII. As a result, students who should have been studying English B or C, if they had been placed in their courses according to their levels of proficiency in English are all now studying English A. The existing criteria which were first implemented in 1991 fail to take into account the changing face of School English and the socio-economic factors that determine the extent of proficiency in English language is acquired by different groups of students.

To improve our efficiency as teachers and to make any syllabus revision meaningful it is essential that the criteria for streaming be changed. The present workshop will study the issue in great detail and will attempt to arrive at a useable system which will be proposed to the Department of English and shared with the academic community of the university

(Other speakers: Suman Gupta, The Open University; Anuradha Ghosh, Jamia Millia Islamia; GJV Prasad, JNU; Harish Trivedi, Delhi University)

Session 3: English Language: Is it the real core of English Studies

Mohammed Asaddudin (Jamia Millia Islamia)

Teaching of language as a skill has great relevance for English Studies. In the sense that often when students join MA in English or research, we find that their English language skill is inadequate. Let alone writing analytical or critical prose. They cannot write even simple descriptive prose correctly.

Those who have had the experience of mentoring such students for their assignments or dissertation of MA, M Phil and Ph D will attest to the fact that the mentor has to spend a good deal of time correcting their English rather than concentrating on the strength of argument. It may be a good idea to introduce skill-based courses concurrently with courses in literatures in English. The Central University of Hyderabad has introduced precisely such a course which it calls Language Intensive Study program, as part of their course in English literature. I quote from a colleague, Narayan Chandan, from the University of Hyderabad:

Although students for an MA English program are recruited on the basis of their

performance in a nation wide entrance examination; and their skill in reading and writing are rigorously tested and graded, we have found their levels of understanding and expression quite inadequate for the task we assign them through the semesters. The advantageous mix of regional (and occasionally international) socio-economic, linguistic and cultural background of our female and male students does not always translate into distinctive strengths in their study of English. We have assumed that this owes, in the main, to the imbalance English has created in their education. Nor all our students can claim the dubious advantage of an undergraduate degree in English literature. As an all- through English medium education in cities, we have found our high scores in tests falling way below reasonable standards in their necessary tasks (writing an essay or reading texts critically and noticing salient facts, notes, rhythms etc) nearly 90% of students in Semester I of MA are very poor in their basic skills.

LISP which is currently a two-credit compulsory course, has been trying since 2001 to improve this situation by meeting the class in three or four separate batches of seven to eight students in one batch. The instructors combine a variety of exercises and methods in reading, writing, speaking and listening during their 100 minute session each week through the semester. LISP also aims to equip students of English with basic and necessary references and study skills besides alerting them to the usual courtesies of scholarly presentation and interaction.

Vocationalisation is being pressed most strongly at this hour. Many private players are in the field. All conceivable kinds of courses are being offered to prepare students for different kinds of jobs, particularly for BPO and MNCS. Apart from courses in communication skills, courses like medical transcriptions, legal transcriptions, content writing etc have gained popularity in recent times. Look at the way the British council has transformed itself as a vocational institute offering various short term and long term courses for different kinds of job enhancement. Not so long ago we visited it in connection with our research in English literature. We no longer do so.

I do feel that a decolonization process is well underway when distinct varieties of Indian English have found their place in literary production. Lessons about common errors in British English that were scrupulously given have disappeared and we no longer agonize over received production or go to see English movies to learn correct ways of speaking English. Desi English has found its twang and timber which is greatly evident in the streets of our cities. If anyone has any doubt about the self-assuredness of Indian English one has just to follow the talk shows or cricket commentaries on various English channels.

The exigencies and strategies of teaching English in a multilingual and multicultural country will be different from teaching English in monolingual countries. Rather than considering the learner's mother tongue as a deterrent we can harness the energies of bilingualism to teach English more effectively. As a language teacher I have found my effectiveness considerably enhanced when I knew the first language of the learner. When I learnt French it made a great difference that my French teacher knew Urdu, so she could point out to me common syntactical patterns, sound system, linguistic conventions etc. Teaching language skills is not a mechanical activity because each lexical item contains a cultural history of its own, and when we teach students a language we teach them a culture, a world view. Students who learn through bilingualism are also exposed to two cultures and multiple world views and hence their conceptual world gets enriched. Come to think of it, a good deal of our language and literature teaching is done through translation of one kind or another. Move away

just ten to twenty miles from the metropolitan cities and you will find that a large number of students read the synopsis of Shakespeare's plays or Jane Austen's novels either in simple English or translated into some other Indian languages. I mentored an Italian student some years ago who was doing his major in English literature from the university of Rome. He was studying the English texts in Italian translation, studied the history of English literature in Italian. If we are comparing English Studies in Britain and India, this can be one of the significant points of departure that a good deal of our thinking and self-perception as Indians is informed by our bilingualism.

(Other speakers: Tapan Basu, University of Delhi; Rama Mathew, University of Delhi; Debanjan Chakrabarti, British Council, Kolkata)

Session 4a: Scholarship and Research: What can it tell us? What are the key questions for the future?

Rohini Mokashi-Punekar (IIT, Gauhati)

English Studies in Higher Education in India

(C6a) In what ways does ES scholarship engage with social and cultural issues which have a purchase beyond the academic disciplines of ES (which interest those other than ES specialists)? In what ways is such a larger interest evident?

1. In the last three or four decades many of the assumptions that define the discipline of English studies have been questioned in the wake of work that has interrogated the cultural politics of imperialism and colonization that underpin English studies programmes available in India.
2. There have also been paradigm shifts that have characterised the direction of social and humanities in general in the context of India. The growing domain of Culture Studies has blurred boundaries between areas. Disciplines are less neatly compartmentalized and there is a degree and kind of interdisciplinary work which has been unprecedented. Culture Studies enables the tracking of a subject/topic through related subject domains. For instance a study of a performance genre may have to traverse through historical, sociological, economical and political perspectives besides the literary angle.
3. Literary texts in the vernacular often lend themselves as corroborating *evidence* and sites of rich information of immense value for studies in economic, social, political or cultural history. In this context such studies depend upon the texts available in English translation since most of the work in social sciences that happens in India today is primarily in English.
4. In a sense then, the multilingual context of India has permeated the practice of research in English Studies as well. English Studies in India cannot remain isolated and insular from other language cultures since it inhabits the same time and space. Just as the context cannot be isolated from the text: the pedagogy and research of English Studies has to converse with its context. It may be incorrect to see Comparative literature as a limited and exclusive

domain of study; to be engaged with literary studies in India is to be mediated by a comparative framework always.

5. A generation ago a typical teacher of English Studies was somebody who did his creative work in the vernacular. There are innumerable such examples of English teachers whose exposure to western literature ignited new directions in native literary traditions.
6. Large numbers of the present generation of English teachers translate from the regional literatures into English, thereby expanding the capacity of English language to hold simultaneously within its body literatures from multiple Indian languages.
7. Translation therefore has assumed renewed centrality. I use the word 'renewed' advisedly: the history of translations between the different regional languages of India is a fact. The contemporary influx of translations may be seen as a continuation of older traditions. It is also a fact that liberalization and globalization have produced paradoxically a market for translations of texts from vernacular languages, thereby making available a category called Indian literature in English translation. The attendant danger of course is that translations are predominantly into English.
8. The direction for research (for Ph.ds or post-doctoral) lies in studying this legacy of comparative literature. Research needs to be in the comparative mode which would enable the perspective that literature in English in India is one more body of work interwoven with other literatures.
9. Necessary also are literary histories in the comparative mode tracing genres, metaphors across vernacular literatures, seeing traces/ influences of these.
10. However, for studies on Dalit literature or translations of Dalit literature in English, the medium of English is often perceived to be an enabling factor. Just as Ambedkar's political praxis was based on modern institutions, contemporary Dalit activism sees the English language as an aspirational language of modernity denied to the marginalized sections. The translation of Dalit literature into English enables this literature to become a part of global subaltern protest movements and their literatures making it possible to draw international attention. However the question remains if Dalit literature is to be seen as unhistoricized or is it possible to read it as a continuing mode of indigenous protest.

(Other speakers: Mohammed Asaduddin, Jamia Millia Islamia; Prasanta Chakravarty, Delhi University; Supriya Chaudhuri, Jadvpur University; Harish Trivedi, Delhi University)

Session 4b What drives change?

Makarand Paranjape (JNU)

1. The value of the workshop

We are able to spend some time with, talk and listen to one another, which is so rare.

Another value is that we are looking at those policy papers, including plan documents, which actually impact upon our professional activities, not to speak of lives. Finally, there are concrete proposals and suggestions for change.

2. What drives change? The key question in this session.

In the present context is it demand? Or supply?

In a free market it should be the former. By this token, we should deliver what the market demands, that is what students need. But that is *not* what is happening.

Here, supply drives English Studies. We have a traditional curriculum to offer; students who don't need it or cannot benefit from it, must lump it.

The fact is that no one is job worthy with the present English BAs. But who will change this? Private universities, offering-job oriented courses?

Or new policies which will force us to change?

3. Government Policy Directives

My colleague, Professor Prasad, has a felicitous title for one of his papers, which we published in a book we edited jointly, *Indian English and Vernacular India: "A Minute Stretching into Centuries."* Macaulay's Minute drove change, so does Government policy today. The XI th Plan, the XII th plan and so on, but there's a great mismatch between what policy makers want, what the stake holders can supply, and what the end-users need.

So Homi K. Bhabha was right. There is a process of constant leakage, if not deliberate subversion, whenever power is sought to be exercised.

So what drives change is perhaps neither policy, nor supply, nor demand, but perhaps a peculiar combination of these—if not chance, fate, or even chaos.

4. Gaps, Disjunctures

Policy-----→ often faces the UK or some overseas model, not entirely applicable to India. (Indian policy as a derivative discourse.)

But it acts on -----→ the stake-holders, that is teachers, who are more interested in promotions, increments, pensions, and so on; who therefore find themselves "forced" to implement or subvert it.

Finally coming to the poor-----→ end-users (students) who face the job market are thus frustrated. The demand is never met. A BA is a basic degree, a social or educational emblem, which though not valuable in itself, gives one the dubious distinction of being a "graduate"—the minimum qualification to be middle-class or fit for a white collar job.

5. Govt. Approach Flawed

The whole approach of the Government is top down or, worse, trying to pass the buck. Their responsibility was to offer universal primary education, but they failed. According to Pratham figures, 27% of primary education is actually being supplied by private providers. To mask their failure they try to over-fund higher education, then impose quotas to make to look politically correct or feasible.

6. The Importance of English

Why people who say that English does not create jobs are wrong. When stenographers

are replaced by programmers, the scale is totally different. Apple is today a company worth more than \$350 billion, which is greater than the economy of Pakistan and Bangladesh (combined). Five companies of the size of Apple equal India's GDP. English is crucial to programming not because of the intrinsic value of the language but because the top programmers use English and top companies are mostly in the U.S. (Experience of Brazil).

7. What is English?

It is not just a language, but it is an ideology which also becomes a product. The marketing of English, the hard-selling of it is also so important—like opium. After a while, you can't do without it. In India, you can't feed the people so you say, "Give them English."

8. English and the Vernaculars

Can't talk of English in India without reference to the vernaculars; without hybridization, code-switching, code-mixing, and so on.

9. The "disciplinary weakness" of English

May actually be wonderful; it's idiosyncratic method produces great teachers.

10. Research

1. Lack of data, but experience. You have to attend so many seminar; national or international to be promoted, etc. Similarly, so many papers published because these are necessary for promotions.
2. The numbers game; new journals and publications coming up all the time.
3. Political correctness as a mark of what is acceptable not the strength of ideas or analysis.

(Other speakers: all participants)