



English Studies in India: Some Reflections on the Present Scenario

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Abstract

British literature enjoys a privileged place in the syllabi of the two most prestigious examinations in India—the Civil Service Examinations (CSE) conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and University Grants Commission's National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) in English. This makes it imperative to reflect on the present scenario of English studies in India. This paper is an attempt in this direction. English studies in India, now older by more than 190 years, has been a topic of serious deliberations, especially after the publication of Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquests: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1990). Consequently, the last decade of the twentieth century witnessed a serious attempt on the part of Indian academics, through seminars and conferences, to question the relevance of teaching British literature in post-colonial India. Considering the recommendations of various commissions and committees on teaching of English in India, this paper is an attempt to evaluate the present scenario of English studies in India. The study reviews the syllabi of BA (Special English), MA (English) and M Phil (English) courses offered in 50 Indian universities in the first decade of twenty-first century. Along with its focus on established trends, the paper also reviews trends on decline and points towards emerging ones. The study also assesses the role of English studies with respect to the paucity of teachers, and women and English studies.

Keywords: BA (Special English), Decolonization, English studies, Indian universities, MA (English), National Eligibility Test

Introduction

English Literature has, no doubt, constituted a major part of the English curriculum in India. Though the scenario has changed to some extent in current times, English curriculum is still dominated by British literature. For instance, the English syllabi for examinations like the Civil Service Examinations (CSE) conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and the University Grants Commission's National Eligibility Test (UGC-NET) in English comprises of period-wise papers/units in British literature. English literature is one of the optional subjects for CSE (main). A cursory look at the syllabus of English Literature Paper I—(1600–1900) and Paper II—(1900–1990) for the CSE (2013) reveals that a majority of the texts that are included are by British authors. Ibsen (Norwegian) and Twain (American) are the only non-British

authors included in the syllabus for Paper I whereas Paper II mentions some non-British authors like A. K. Ramanujan, Raja Rao and Naipaul among others.

Similarly, the syllabi for Papers II and III for UGC-NET in English, which is meant for aspiring teachers entering the teaching profession at the tertiary level, are dominated by core units in British literature. In NET's Paper II only one unit is on American and other non-British literature while the remaining eight are on British literature and one is on prosody. In Paper III too the core units are on British literature and on literary theory and criticism whereas the electives include English language teaching, European literature, Indian writing in English, American and other non-British literature and literary theory and criticism. A review of the syllabi for the two examinations shows a remarkably traditional perspective on what constitutes English literature, with weight being put on a thorough knowledge of the literature of the British Isles (Mukherjee 2009: 41–42). Thus, the dominance of British literature in the syllabi for the two most prestigious examinations in the nation reflect its privileged place in English studies in India. This makes it imperative to study English studies in India.

Developments in English studies in India

The publication of Gauri Viswanathan's *Masks of Conquests: Literary Study and British Rule in India* (1990), which deals with the ideology and practice of English studies in British India, set the tone for deliberations on the social and cultural functions of English studies in India. This trend gained momentum in two seminars organized in Delhi and Hyderabad under the aegis of the UGC and the British Council in 1988 and 1991 respectively. This was followed by some seminal books like *The Lie of the Land: English Literary Studies in India* (1992) by Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, *Provocations: The Teaching of English Literature in India* (1993) by Sudhakar Marathe et al., *Rethinking English: Essays in Literature, Language, History* (1994) by Svati Joshi and *Subject to Change: Teaching Literature in the Nineties* (1998) by Susie Tharu.

These much-discussed volumes, which are serious critiques of English studies in India, with the exception of some papers in *The Lie of the Land*, mainly deal with postgraduate (PG) teaching experiences in elite academic institutions in Indian metropolis like Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. The teaching-learning scenario at the undergraduate (UG) level in rural India is not a major issue in these books. The focus of these books, however, remains on literary studies alone. A novice in the field may get the impression that literary studies are synonymous with English studies. Besides, almost all the contributors to these volumes are university teachers of English. Therefore, these books cannot be considered definitive documents of English studies in India (also see Perry 2005 for outsiders' views on these books).

Since the last decade of the twentieth century witnessed a serious attempt on the part of Indian academics to question the relevance of teaching British literature in post-colonial India this paper examines the syllabi reforms in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

The Present Scenario

With a view to providing a glimpse of the diversity in Indian universities, I now review the syllabi for BA (Special English), MA (English) and M Phil (English) courses offered in 50 Indian universities in the first decade of the twenty-first century. The randomly selected universities for this survey represent state, central, private, deemed, open and women's universities in the country (Table 1).

Table 1: Indian universities considered for the present study of courses in English

Sr. No.	Universities considered for the present study	Year of Implementation (w = w.e.f. & d = during)		
		BA (Special English)	MA (English)	M Phil (English)
1	Algappa University	--	--	d 2013–14
2	Amity University (AU)	d 2009–10	d 2011	d 2013–14
3	Bansthali University (BU)	--	--	d 2013–14
4	Bhartiyar University (ByU)	--	--	w 2011–12
5	Bhavnagar University (BnU)	--	--	w 2012–13
6	Benaras Hindu University (BHU)	--	d 2012	--
7	Christ University (CUB)	--	d 2011	--
8	Central University of Rajasthan (CUR)	--	d 2011	--
9	Delhi University (DU)	w 2011–12	w 2009–10	w 2011–12
10	Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (BAMU)	w 2009–10	w 2009–10	d 2013–14
11	Goa University (GoU)	w 2009–10	d 2011	--
12	Gujarat University (GjU)	w 2005–06	w 2005–06	--
13	Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU)	--	w 2011–12	--
14	HNB Garhwal University (HNBGU)	--	--	d 2013–14
15	Indian School of Mines, (ISM-D)	--	--	d 2013–14
16	Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)	--	d 2009	--
17	Jadhavpur University (JU)	--	--	d 2013–14
18	Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI)	w 2003–04	w 2003–04	--
19	Karnatak University (KUD)	w 2008–09 & 2011–12	w 2011–12	--
20	Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU)	--	d 2011	--
21	Mangalore University (MU)	--	w 2008–09	--
22	Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU)	--	--	d 2013–14
23	Maharshi Dayanand University (MDU)	--	--	d 2010–11
24	Mizoram University (MZU)	--	--	w 2008–09
25	Mother Teresa Women's University (MTWU)	d 2011–12	d 2011–12	--
26	Nagarjuna Univeristy (NU)	--	d 2006–07	--
27	Netaji Subhash Open University (NSOU)	--	d 2011–12	--
28	North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU)	--	w 2008–09	--
29	North Maharashtra University (NMU)	w 2009	w 2008–09	--
30	Osmania University (OU) (CBCS)	--	w 2010–11	--
31	Panjab University (PU)	--	d 2008–09	--
32	Pondicherry University (PoU)	--	d 2011–12	--
33	Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya (RDV)	--	d 2010–11	--
34	Saurashtra University (SUR)	--	w 2008–09	w 2008–09
35	Shivaji University (SUK)	w 2007–08	w 2006–07	w 2011–12
36	Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University (SNDTWU)	w 2010–11	--	--

37	Shri Padmavati Women's University (SPWU)	--	d 2011–12	--
38	Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University (SRTMU)	w 2009	--	--
39	Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeetha (TMV)	--	d 2009–10	--
40	Tripura University (TU)	--	d 2011	--
41	University of Calcutta (UoC)	--	d 2009–10	--
42	University of Calicut (UoC-K)	--	d 2010	--
43	University of Lucknow (UoL)	w 2010–11	d 2010–11	--
44	University of Madhya Pradesh	w 2008–09	--	--
45	University of Madras (UnoM)	--	w 2007–08*	d 2007–08
46	University of Mumbai (UoM)	w 2007–08	w 2008–09	--
47	University of Pune (UoP)	w 2008–09	w 2008–09	w 2009–10
48	University of Rajasthan (UoR)	--	--	d 2013–14
49	Utkal University (UU)	--	d 2011	--
50	Yahwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU)	w 2002	--	w 2006–07
	Total	17	35	19

Note: *UnoM—BA—CBCS—affiliated colleges.

British literature's place in English courses at the tertiary level

Singh (2004: 33) expresses concerns about the relevance of contemporary English studies in India. According to him, "Even a fleeting glance at our syllabi will reveal that the syllabi of English literature are titled heavily in favour of British (read English here) literature. About 70 to 90 per cent of syllabi deals with British literature in which the works of English authors form the core and the periphery with some space spared for non-English writers like Swift, Shaw or Yeats.". The following analysis proves this.

The papers offered in the BA (Special English) and MA (English) courses mainly fall in two categories—literature and linguistics. Besides, there are also allied papers. The literature papers can be further sub-divided into two categories: period-wise papers and genre-wise papers.

Out of the 35 universities considered for the present survey of MA (English) courses, 19 universities—BAMU, CUR, DU, GJU, KUD, MGU, MU, OUH, PU, RDV, SPWU, SUR, TU, UoC, UoC(K), UoL, UoM, UoP and UU offer period-wise papers in British literature as core papers. In the past, teaching of English literature meant teaching of British literature. Since genre-wise papers can accommodate representative literary texts from non-British literature in English, in the MA (English) courses, 14 universities—AU, BHU, GNDU, GoU, IGNOU, JMI, MU, NEHU, NMU, NSOU, NU, SUK, TMV and UnoM offer genre-wise papers as core papers. MU offers both period-wise and genre-wise papers as core papers. It should be noted that NU offers an elective period-wise paper in British literature. There is neither a period-wise nor a genre-wise core paper in CUB and MTWU.

In order to accommodate non-British texts as well in the study of MA (English) programmes, the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) for English (2001), UGC's Model Curriculum, attempted to change the course for the MA (English) programme by suggesting alternative approaches: Choice A—*English Language and Literature* (period-wise papers) and Choice B—*English and Literary Studies* (genre-wise papers) (Table 2).

Table 2: Papers for MA (English) programme suggested by CDC (2001)

Cluster/ Paper	Choice A: English Language and Literature	Choice B: English and Literary Studies
I	Literature in English Language, 1550–1600	Poetry
II	Literature in English Language, 1600–1798	Drama
III	Literature in English Language, 1798–1914	Fiction
IV	Literature in English Language, 1914–	Non-fictional prose
V	Study of a Genre	Study of a period of English literature or an English literary movement

Some universities like SUK and NMU have tried to incorporate non-British texts in genre-wise core papers, based on Choice B of the CDC (2001) in their MA (English) courses. Let us see whether this has brought any significant change in the nature of English studies in India. At a time when talks about prescribing texts from ‘New Literatures’ in English are gaining momentum, it will be interesting to know whether the emphasis has really shifted from British literature to non-British literature. The proportion of British and non-British texts prescribed under the major forms of literature are given in Table 3.

Table 3: Genre-wise papers offered by SUK and NMU

University	SUK			NMU					
	MA I (2006–07)		MA II (2007–08)	MA I (2010–11)		MA II (2011–12)			
Core Papers	Poetry	Novel	Drama	Drama		Fiction		Poetry	
				Sem I	Sem II	Sem III	Sem IV	Sem III	Sem IV
British (B)	4 poets	1	1	2	2	3	2	6 poets	6 poets
Non-British (NB)									
American	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Indian	1	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
European	--	4	5	1	1	--	1	--	--
Russian	1	1	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
New literatures	1	--	1	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	B= 4 NB= 4	B= 1 NB=7	B= 1 NB= 7	B= 4, NB=2		B= 5 NB =1		B=12 NB=0	

The earlier discussion indicates that even genre-wise papers (for example, poetry in SUK and NMU and drama and fiction in NMU) are loaded with British texts. If there are eight papers in an MA (English) course, 50 per cent of the core papers are devoted to British literature.

In the BA (Special English) course, UoM, GJU and GoU prefer a combination of period-wise and genre-wise papers while the MPUs, UoP and SUK offer only genre-wise papers. However, in both these papers, it is quite easy to prescribe novels and plays from non-British literature. One text of each kind (British, non-British and Indian) can be prescribed. However, in both types of papers there are more British poems (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: The proportion of British and non-British texts in the period-wise paper: P-VIII (20th Century Literature in English) (TYBA- UoM)

	Poems	Novels	Plays	Non-Fictional Prose
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British	08	--	01	--
Non-British	02	01	01	--
Indian	02	01	01	03
Total	12	01*	01*	03

Note: *Only one text is to be studied.

Table 5: The number of British and non-British poems in papers on poetry

University	UoM	UoP	SUK	Total
Year	SYBA	SYBA	TYBA	
Paper No.	II	S-II	V	
British poems	39	20	08	67
Non-British poems	21	10	12	43
Total	60*	30	20	110

Note: * (including options)—only 24 to be studied.

Despite UoM's attempt at incorporating Indian English poetry and Japanese and Chinese poems in its form-wise arrangement, 66 per cent of the poems are British. In UoP there are 67 per cent British poems against 33 per cent non-British poems. Only in SUK are there 60 per cent non-British poems. Thus, an analysis of the texts prescribed in these three universities reveals that British poems still dominate in all of them.

Thus, the emphasis of the committees in the twentieth century on mainstream British literature has been sustained through both period-wise and genre-wise core papers offered in the MA (English) and BA (Special English) courses by Indian universities. This underscores the ubiquitous place of British literature in English studies in India.

The Place of non-British Literature

Indian Writing in English (IWE) and Indian Literature in English Translation (ILET)

In the nineteenth century a study of British literature was synonymous with a study of English. Under the colonial hangover, members of committees on teaching of English in India considered IWE as a paper worthy to be studied as an optional one. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) for English (1989: 21) noted that non-British literature courses were offered mostly as optional courses. Recently, a few Indian universities have started offering core papers in non-British literature, particularly IWE and ILET. For instance, in their BA (Special English) courses, 'Indian English Literature' and 'Indian Writing in English and Indian Literature in Translation' are offered as separate core papers in SYBA, SUK and UoM respectively.

In the MA (English) courses, among the universities considered for the present study, 16 universities CUB, CUR, DU, KUD, MGU, MU, NEHU, NSOU, NU, OUH, PU, SPWU, TMV, TU, UnoM and UoM offer core papers on IWE while in 15 universities—AU, BAMU, BHU, DU, IGNOU, NEHU, NMU, MU, PoU, RDV, SUK, SUR, UoC, UoL and UU—IWE remains an optional paper. It is a good sign that some universities (CUB, CUR, KUD, NSOU, SPWU, SUR and UnoM) offer core papers in ILET. However, this is offered as an optional paper in ten universities—AU, BHU, GoU, MGU, NEHU, OUH, PoU, UoC, UoL and UoM. DU and NEHU offer both core as well as optional papers in IWE. GNDU and UoP do not offer any separate

paper (either core or elective) in IWE and ILET. It is surprising to note that there is not a single Indian text prescribed by GNDU (even though there are optional papers in American literature and Irish literature).

Other non-British literature

A lot of new non-British literature is introduced to PG students. These mainly include papers in American literature. Just like IWE, 16 universities—CUB, CUR, KUD, MGU, MTWU, MU, NEHU, NMU, NSOU, NU, OUH, PoU, SPWU, TMV, TU and UnoM offer core papers in ‘American Literature’ while 17 universities—AU, BAMU, BHU, Gju, GNDU, GoU, IGNOU, JMI, NEHU, PU, RDV, SUK, SUR, UoC, UoL, UoM and UU—offer optional papers in it. NEHU offers both core as well as elective papers in American literature whereas the UoP does not offer any separate paper in American literature.

Other non-British literature includes papers offered under different names like ‘Commonwealth Literature’ and ‘New Literatures and Postcolonial Literatures’. Elective papers in other non-British literature being offered by 22 universities—BAMU, BHU, DU, Gju, GNDU, GoU, IGNOU, JMI, MGU, MU, NEHU, NMU, NU, PoU, PU, RDV, SUK, SUR, TU, UoC, UoC(K), UoL, UnoM, UoM and UU—is a remarkable trend. MU does not offer a separate paper in ‘New Literatures in English’.

It is interesting to note that no university offers a core paper either in ‘Commonwealth Literature’ or in ‘New Literatures in English’. However, papers in post-colonial literature are offered as core papers in six universities (CUB, CUR, KUD, OUH, PoU and SPWU). PoU offers an elective paper in ‘Aboriginal Literature’.

Literary Criticism and Theory

The paper in literary criticism is a core paper for all the three courses—BA, MA and M Phil. There is hardly any university in the country which does not offer a paper in literary criticism. For MA (English) courses, all the universities under study, except OUH, offer separate core papers on literary criticism and literary theory. Two decades ago, OUH offered an optional paper on literary criticism (CDC 1989: 22) but at present it does not offer even an optional paper in literary criticism. GoU is the only university which offers both a core paper as well as an optional paper in literary criticism and theory while a paper in contemporary literary theory is optional in UoL.

Singh (2004: 35) expresses displeasure over teaching of English literature in India (TELD): “It is nothing but tragic that in our M.A. syllabus, we teach Greek, Roman, English, German, French and Russian critics and their works in the compulsory paper of ‘Literary Criticism’, but not Indian Poetics.”. He further adds, “We should prescribe the texts of Indian Poetics, teach them to our students in the compulsory English paper of ‘literary criticism’ so that our students can locate themselves between the Indian and western critical traditions and interact with them” (Singh 2004: 35).

Singh leads from the front, he implements his own suggestion. SUR is the only university that offers a separate core paper titled ‘Course in Indian Poetics’ at the PG level.

The relevance of teaching literary criticism is questioned at all levels. It is felt that it does not help develop the literary competence of students. Furthermore, Pattanayak (1981: 162) is of the view that in spite of 200 years of English literary studies India has hardly produced a critic who has found a place in the history of English literary criticism. Soundararaj (2007) echoes similar views. He regrets that 60 years of literary studies has not produced a Shakespeare or a T.S. Eliot or a Derrida.

Role of English studies for students

The questions raised in relation to teaching of literary criticism extend over to other areas as well. The teaching of linguistics and women and English studies are two issues taken up for analysis here as examples.

The paucity of competent teachers and teaching of linguistics

Right from the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) nearly every committee on teaching of English in India (Kunzru Committee 1957, Banerjee Committee 1960, Study Group 1967, the UGC National Workshop on Syllabus Reform in English 1977 and the CDC 1989) has stressed on the need of including a paper in the study of the English language. However, CDC (2001) failed to suggest a core paper in language studies.

Even after persistent recommendations by various committees to include a paper on the study of English language, Indian universities offer the traditional BA (Special English) courses mainly in literature studies. For instance, both JMI, a central university, and AU, a private university, do not have a full paper in English linguistics. Similarly, there is no separate core paper in English linguistics in MPUs, GJU and GoU. Even, the 150-year-old UoM does not have a full core paper in linguistics at the BA (English Major) level. The other universities in Maharashtra (BAMU, SNDTWU, NMU, SRTMU and YCMOU to name a few), offer BA in English Literature. The noticeable feature is that almost all the universities include core papers in English linguistics. It is interesting to note that an open university like YCMOU offers two papers in English language studies, one 'Structure of Modern English' and the other 'Communication Skills'.

The rationale behind recommending introducing a paper in linguistics was to overcome a grave shortage of trained teachers of English in India (see Study Group Report 1967). At present, the situation is more of the same (see Annamalai 2008, Graddol 2010 and the National Knowledge Commission of 2006). Two decades later, CDC (1989: 15) observed, "Although it is widely recognized that most of those who pass out with MA in English join the teaching profession, very little is done to ensure that some preparation for that is made during the MA programme. As things stand, only a small number of universities teach a course in modern English, and a very few offer a course in English language teaching."

At the MA level, in 22 out of the universities considered here—BHU, CUB, DU, GNDU, GoU, IGNOU, JMI, MGU, MTWU, MU, NSOU, NU, OUH, PoU, SPWV, SUK, SUR, TMV, TU, UoM, UoL, UoP—offer core papers in language and linguistics while the study of language is optional in GJU, PU, UoC and UU. NEHU does not offer any paper in language studies. UoM offers a core paper in 'Stylistics' while BAMU, GoU, MGU, NMU, SUK, UoL and UoP offer optional papers in it. UoP is the only university which offers a separate elective paper in 'Pragmatics'.

Though the situation seems to have improved with respect to papers in English language and linguistics, the case of ELT is not very encouraging. In the BA (Special English) course, some need-based and innovative papers are restricted to a few universities. MPUs have a paper in ESP in the final year of the course. An elective paper, 'Spoken English and ELT', has been made available only to regular students in GJU. In the third year of its BA (Hons) course, UoL, offers a paper—P-V—titled 'Communication for Business and Media'. KUD includes not only units in modern grammar and ELT in English literature papers offered in semesters III and IV in BA II (w.e.f. 2008–09) but also English phonetics in BA I (w.e.f. 2011–12). The university also offers a paper, P-I, called 'English Language and Media Studies' in semester IV of its BA II

(w.e.f. 2007–08). MGU, Kerala, also offers an elective paper titled ‘English Language Teaching’ in its BA (English) course.

In the MA (English) course, out of the 35 universities only nine (BHU, CUB, KUD, MU, OUH, PoU, UnoM, UoL and UoP) offer core papers in ELT while ten universities (BAMU, CUR, GoU, JMI, MGU, RDV, SUK, SUR, TU, UoM) offer elective papers in it. The universities which do not offer any separate paper in ELT are AU, DU, GJU, GNDU, IGNOU, MTWU, NEHU, NMU, NSOU, NU, PU, SPWU, TMV, UoC, UoC-K (Sem I) and UU.

Women and English studies

The relevance of English studies in India can also be known by considering the example of women’s writings as a sample case. In an age of increased enrolment of girl students for courses in English in Indian universities, in the MA (English) course a core paper in ‘Women’s Writing’ is offered by only six universities—CUR, KUD, MTWU, MU, SPWU and the UoL. This is offered as an optional paper by BAMU, BHU, DU, GoU, MGU, MU, OUH, SUR and UoC. PoU and SPWU offer elective papers titled ‘Indian Women Novelists in English’ and ‘Indian English Women’s Writing’ respectively. Besides, CUB offers a core paper in ‘Gender Studies’. Nearly 65 per cent of the universities under study do not offer even an optional paper in women’s writings. Similarly, for the M Phil (English) courses only two institutes—ISM-D and MZU—offer papers titled ‘Gender studies’ and ‘Women’s Writing’ respectively.

With studies in feminist criticism increasing, it is necessary to know the place of women writers in English studies in India. In the syllabi for BA (Special English) in UoM, UoP and SUK representation of women writers is found only in fiction and poetry. The proportion of literary works/critical writings by women in the Special English papers is: novel—27.27 per cent, short stories—16.67 per cent and poetry—11.91 per cent. However, it is difficult to find women’s representation in genres like drama and prose. The texts prescribed only touch the fringes of women’s issues. Vijay Tendulkar’s *Silence! The Court is in Session* and a few poems by Sylvia Path and Mamata Kalia are some instances.

Table 6: The number of students in JMI’s English department

Sr. No.	Class	Male	Female	Total
1	BA (H) I	26	33	59
2	BA (H) II	25	30	55
3	BA (H) III	06	38	44
4	MA(Previous	10	19	29
5	MA(Final)	05	19	24
6	M Phil	02	13	15
7	PhD	10	23	33

Source: Thoidingjam (2012:13).

Considering the larger number of women students admitted to English courses and their attendance in classrooms, it is essential to include more texts related to women’s studies in the syllabi. Texts written by women writers and dealing with women’s issues should get a fair representation in the syllabi. Indian women’s biographies in English translation will also serve the purpose in this regard. As far as fiction is concerned, alternative optional texts by women writers can be prescribed.

If we have to set an agenda for English studies in India for the new millennium, then there should be enough clarity about what we are aiming for. Since while we are decolonizing

English studies in India, obliquely we are canonizing non-British literary texts. For example, if we see the Indian plays prescribed in the UG and PG English syllabi, we find that the same playwrights (Karnad and Tendulkar, for instance) and the same plays by then re-occur as these are considered as Indian canonical texts. Can we find a place for an Indian woman playwright in the BA/MA/M Phil (English) courses?

Neglected Areas

Though the papers offered in MA (English) courses are dependent on the specialization of the teaching faculty, not all the universities offer elective papers relevant to the Indian context. For instance, 'Translation' is taught by MTWU and UU and 'Techniques of Translation' by PoU in their MA (English) courses. In its BA English (Major) course, a paper titled 'Theory and Practice of Translation' is offered by UoM. Only PoU offers a core paper in 'Translation Studies'. It is offered as an elective paper in CUB, CUR, GJU, GoU, MU, NMU, SPWU, SUK, SUR and TU. Similarly, separate elective papers in 'Translation Studies' (BU and ISM-D) is a rarity in M Phil English courses. 'Comparative Literature', treated as a separate subject for NET, is offered as a core paper only by PoU and SUR while CUR, GJU, SUK and the UoL offer optional papers in it. Core papers in 'Aesthetics' are offered by CUB ('Western Aesthetics: Reading Twentieth Century Euro American Art, Culture & Society') and CUR ('Aesthetics of Appreciation: Drama') while GoU and PoU elective papers titled 'Introduction to Aesthetics' and 'Indian Aesthetics' respectively.

Trends on decline

Shakespeare's exit

Two decades ago CDC (1989: 21) noted that Shakespeare was a compulsory course in almost all universities. However, a study of Shakespeare's works seems to be on the decline among the universities considered for the present study. In their MA (English) courses DU, GoU, MTWU, MU, NEHU, NU, PoU, SPWU, TMV and UoM offer separate core papers and GJU, GoU, PoU, PU and UoC-K offer optional papers in this subject. Among the other authors, optional papers are offered on G. B. Shaw (GJU) and a single paper on four authors—T. S. Eliot, R.K. Narayan, Harold Pinter and Virginia Woolf (UoC). PoU also has R.K. Narayan as an option for Shakespeare.

Creative writing

Creative writing seems to be relegated to the background in English studies in India. For instance, in the course of a syllabi revision one of the optional papers of BA English (Major) under P-VI—'Creative Writing'—was discontinued by UoM from 1999–2000 (but a paper titled 'Introduction to Creative Writing' finds a place in Bachelor of Mass Media (BMM), a professional course offered by UoM.) Perhaps 'Creative Writing' was no longer considered useful for students of humanities. Similarly, at the MA level, CUR and GoU are the only two universities which offer elective papers in creative writing. Creative writing does not find a place in the M Phil course as well.

Emerging trends in English studies in India

Recently 'English studies in India' has begun to move away from the study of canonical texts. The changing global scenario has compelled some Indian universities to take an initiative and introduce innovative and need-based papers relevant to the Indian context, like separate theme-based papers; interdisciplinary papers in culture studies and papers in literature and other arts; papers catering to vocational demands like papers in communication skills in English, English for careers and English for academic purposes.

In search of alternatives: Separate theme-based papers

Some Indian universities offer separate theme-based papers relevant to the Indian context (Table 7).

Table 7: Separate theme-based papers offered by some Indian universities in MA

Humanism and Literature (UoC)	English Studies in India (IGNOU)	Gandhi and Gandhism (RDV)
Environment & Indian Writing in English (NEHU)	English in India: 18th Century to the Present (PoU)	Gandhi and Indian Writing in English: Texts Inspired by Gandhi (RDV)
Green Voices: Literature and The Environment (PoU)	SAARC Literature in English – India, Pak & Bangladesh, Nepal & Bhutan, SL & Maldives (UoL)	Anglo-Irish Literature of the Twentieth Century (UoM)
		Irish Literature (GNDU)
Literature and Revolution (CUR)	Literatures of the Indian Subcontinent (CUR)	Latin American Literature (GoU)
India's Freedom Movement (CUR)	Writers of the Diaspora (CUR)	Sea Literature (UoC-K)
Politics of Narration (MGU)	Indian Diasporic Writing (KUD)	Poetry on War (UoC-K)
Narratives of Partition (MU)	Multi-Cultural Discourse in Immigrant Fiction (UoP)	Folk Literature (UoC-K)
Fiction on Caste System (UoC-K)	Gender and Communication (PoU)	Writing on Racism (UoC-K)

Though most such innovations are feasible at the MA level, this trend has also percolated to the BA level. For instance, to cater to local as well as global needs of students GoU is offering 'Goan Writing' and 'Indian Diaspora Writing' as core papers. Elective papers 'Postcolonial Perspectives on Texts', 'Popular Culture', 'Film & Literature' and 'Literature and Gender', offered by UoM resemble the papers suggested by CDC (2001) for MA (English).

Interdisciplinary papers

Culture studies

In the 1990s, Trivedi (1993) found that students of MA English in DU were interested in reading popular literature. However, a decade later, there were no takers for a paper in popular fiction UoP. Even now some universities are refurbishing their syllabi to incorporate papers in popular

culture (for example, Bangalore University. 'In the course of things', *The Hindu*, 7 June 2011). In the universities surveyed here, CUB is the only university which is offering a separate core as well as elective paper in 'Culture Studies' whereas GoU, PoU, SUR, TU, UoC-K and UoL offer elective papers in it. CUR offers two core papers titled 'Culture and Society' and an innovative paper 'Adaptations and Relocations'. PoU suggests elective papers in 'Science Fiction', 'Children's Literature' and 'Popular Fiction'. UoC-K offers elective papers in 'Orientalism', 'Culture and Literature' and 'Multiculturalism'.

Literature and other arts

Very few Indian universities also offer core and elective interdisciplinary papers in literature and other arts. It is significant to note that CDC (2001) had suggested interdisciplinary elective papers like 'Literature and the Visual Arts' and 'Literature and Film'. The universities which offer core papers are CUB ('Film Studies and Theatre Studies'), CUR ('Aesthetics of Appreciation: Film') and PoU ('Media Studies'). Some universities offer elective papers like 'Literature and the Visual Arts in Europe' (DU), 'Film and Literature' (OUH), 'Media Studies' (SUR), 'Film Studies' (UnoM), 'Literature and Film' (UoL) and 'Film Appreciation' (UU). Besides, UoC-K suggests a paper in 'Performing Arts'.

Towards vocationalization of English studies in Indian universities

Chaudhary (2009: 479) is of the view that motivation for Indians to learn English comes primarily from its economic benefits. Socioeconomic reasons, rather than cultural ones, are responsible for students' inclination towards English. Nevertheless, Indian universities have continued to emphasize the aesthetic value of English in degree level programmes. Since literary studies are generally considered to be non-utilitarian, the fascination for technical and management education has increased. Policymakers failed to foresee the future and did not take adequate measures to update these literature-dominated courses. Consequently, a conspicuous decline in the enrolment of students for MA (English) courses in the first decade of the twenty-first century could be attributed to this indiscretion. According to Rani (2003), in the past there used to be more than 300 applications for the 30 seats for MA (English) at SPWU. In **2002-03** there were only 114 applications for 40 seats. Only 31 of the 40 seats could be filled for want of eligible candidates. The situation appears really grave in the context of a considerable number of female students seeking admission to UG and PG courses in English.

In a metropolis like Mumbai students are more interested in social sciences and quite a few join management courses; there are very few takers for the BA English (Major) and MA (English) courses. Learning from the functional English courses at the UG level, those who compile the syllabus have now started incorporating application-oriented papers in regular MA (English) courses.

Communication skills

Seshadri (1997) expects the departments of English to review their existing courses and modify or restructure them in order to keep pace with the fast changing needs of society. He further feels the need to equip young men and women with the kind of communication skills that they require to operate in a highly competitive world. Since there are comparatively better job opportunities for a PG degree in English than there are for other subjects in Humanities (for example, Indian languages, political science and philosophy), Indian students opt for the MA (English) course.

Some universities have introduced elective as well as core papers in communication skills in MA (English) courses (Table 8).

Table 8: Papers in communication skills offered for MA by some Indian universities

Communicative English (KUD)	Basics of Corporate Communication (UnoM)
Communicative Skills in English (PoU)	English for Business Communication (MTWU)
Strategies for Effective Communication in English (NMU)	Visual culture and communication (PoU)
English for Communication (SPWU)	English Language proficiency (KUD)
Advanced Communication (UoC-K)	Advanced Speaking and Writing Skills (UU)
Professional Writing (UU)	Professional Communication (CUB) and (PoU)

Demand for English in the job market and the failure of literary studies to enhance the communicative competence of students could be the reasons for the inclusion of teaching communication skills even in MA (English) courses. However, Vishwanath (2005) views such changes as a mindless enslavement to market forces. She says, "... it is therefore imperative at this stage in our history that the enabling potential of critical thinking which can fashion a cultural critique of globalization should be explored with commitment in the English curriculum at the UG and PG levels ...". She staunchly advocates English literary studies in India.

English for careers

Krishnaswamy and Sriraman (1994) advise university departments to take into account job-market conditions. They warn that English departments in universities must change their content and style of teaching to suit market conditions; otherwise, they will be marginalized. Some university departments like those in UnoM and in deemed universities like CUB, for instance, are taking this warning seriously and have started offering courses which will of interest to students interest and also those which meet market demands. To cater to the changing needs of its students, UnoM offers a range of elective extra-disciplinary papers like 'Copy Editing', 'Technical Writing', 'New Areas of Knowledge Management', 'Travel, Tourism and Culture' and 'English for Careers'. Other universities have also introduced papers like 'Writing for Media' (CUR and UoC-K), 'Script Writing' (CUB and CUR) and 'Mass Communication' (CUB, MTWU and PoU). Such papers are yet to find a place in the BA (Special English) course.

English for academic purposes

Taking into account the academic needs of students, some universities have also introduced core and elective papers related to research writing in their MA (English) courses: 'Research and Writing Methods' (CUB), 'Writing for Academic and Professional Purposes' (OUH) and 'Doing Research' (UoP). Papers related to textual and bibliographical skills, study skills and reference skills have been introduced only by GJU, RDV and PoU. PoU has made available a whole range of electives like 'Advanced Academic Writing', 'Modern Rhetoric' and 'Research Methodology and English for Science and Technology'.

Such innovative and application-oriented papers are occupying spaces originally meant for literary studies. These emerging trends of introducing application-oriented papers in BA (Special English) and MA (English) courses will determine the future of English studies in India perhaps leading to its complete vocationalization.

Nurturing researchers in English studies in Indian universities

M Phil (English) courses offered in Indian universities are mainly of two types. Most of the universities offer M Phil in English Literature whereas a few universities offer M Phil in English linguistics. Besides, some institutes like BU and ISM-D, offer M Phil in ELT. UoR offers both M Phil (English literature) and M Phil (ELT).

A survey of M Phil (English) courses in 19 Indian universities revealed that Indian universities offer traditional M Phil (English) courses mainly in literary studies (for example, MDU). Apart from core papers in research methodology the Indian universities offer core papers in period-wise British literature (for example, UoR) and genre-wise papers (for example, ByU and MANUU) in literary studies. The most common trend seems to be that papers in Indian English literature or American literature are offered as alternatives to the study of British literature as seen in AgU, AU and HNBSGU. Elective papers in 'New Literatures in English' are offered by universities like BAMU, SUK and MZU. AU provides alternatives like 'Post-colonial Literature to Literature in Translation' while MU has an elective paper in 'Multi-Ethnic/Cultural Voices: The American Experience (Literatures of African-American, Jewish-American, Native-American, Asian-American)'. Papers in ELT are also offered as elective. AgU is offering a paper in 'Professional Competence'.

There are some innovative papers like 'Autobiography: East and West' (UnoM), 'Discourses of Domination, Emancipation and Resistance: Race, Caste, Gender' (UnoM), 'Course in Indian Renaissance Literature' (SUR), 'Course in Genre Studies (The Theatre of the Absurd)' (SUR), 'Course in Popular Fiction' (SUR), 'Literature of the Indian Diaspora' (MZU), 'Ethnographic/Tribal Narratives' (MZU), 'Dalit Writing' (MZU) and 'Dalit Literature: Texts and Contexts' (DU). M Phil (English) courses offered in Indian universities are routine ones which do not offer papers with innovative contents. However, the titles and contents of courses in DU and JU are distinct among all universities. M Phil (English) in comparative literature offered by JU has elective papers like 'Comparative Cultural Studies', 'Performance Studies: *Ramayana* in India and Southeast Asia', 'Literature and Revolution', 'Literature and Culture of Indigenous Canada and Diasporic Canada', 'Pakistani Literatures and Cultures in the South Asian Context', 'Literature and Culture of Bangladesh in the South Asian Context', 'Modern Latin American' and 'Indian Literatures' whereas DU has courses like 'The Culture Concept through Comics to Graphic Novels', 'Dissent and the Shaping of South Asia', 'Intertextual Tensions/Affinities between Modern American Drama and Cinema' and 'Gender, Body and Space: Nineteenth and Century Novel in England and India'.

The main purpose of the M Phil English course work seems to be acquainting research scholars to recent critical approaches to literary studies. In M Phil (English) courses almost all the universities in the country offer core papers in literary criticism and theory under different titles like 'Recent Trends in English Studies' (SUK) and 'Preparing for Research' (UoP). UoR offers a separate paper in 'Interpretation of Literature and Stylistics' in M Phil (ELT). However, very few scholars take the challenge of venturing in this area of research (see Tasildar 2013). Moreover, research scholars are exposed neither to the research requirements of the country nor to the needs of the researchers (current or prospective teachers of English language and literature).

To sum up

The discipline of English studies has changed a lot in the last 60 years. Owing to the snail pace of decolonization of English studies, the ubiquitous place of British literature in English studies in India revealed in prestigious examinations like CSE conducted by UPSC and the UGC-NET in English is also evident in BA, MA and M Phil English courses. The decolonization of English

studies in India is limited to plenary sessions in national seminars and conferences organized by Indian universities. It is not yet adequately reflected in syllabi reforms.

The syllabus of the NET in English seems to determine the syllabi of MA (English) courses in Indian universities. Paradoxically, a separate paper in the history of the English language or literature is not offered by any of the universities considered here. If linguistics and ELT are introduced as core units in the UGC-NET in English, the situation may change. The NET at present does not test the linguistic or teaching competence of aspirant college teachers. Moreover, there is a need for refurbishing NET's syllabus to accommodate IWE and ILET in core papers and for increasing the weighting given to other non-British literature as well. Since European literature is offered as a core paper only by NSOU while it is available as an elective in ten universities (AU, BHU, DU, GJU, MU, PU, SUR, TU, UoC and UU). One needs to consider whether it is necessary to include European literature as a separate elective in the NET syllabus or if it can be replaced by 'New Literatures'. Besides, in the NET syllabus there is a need for creating some space for women's writings, immigrant literature, Dalit studies, film studies and folk and popular literature.

The recommendations of various commissions, committees and experts in the field will be useful in developing English studies in India. Credit for attempting to give a sense of direction to English studies in India, particularly BA (Special English) and MA (English) courses, can be given to these commissions and committees and subject experts. If their suggestions and recommendations had been followed strictly the history of English studies in India would have been different.

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