

Study of Local Curriculum Implementation Imparting Local Scientific Knowledge in Nepal

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Abstract

This study focuses on the status of local curriculum development and implementation with imparting scientific knowledge in Purvakhola, Palpa. Though the education policy of Nepal is authorizing the construction of the local curriculum and its implementation, due to different causes most school clusters are not showing interest in the local curriculum. So, the study explores an existing gap in the educational policy of the government of Nepal and its implementation by local educational authorities. This study is adopting a qualitative method and data generation and its interpretation is based on primary data. The finding is drawn on its status of implementation of local curriculum, local curriculum should be designed based on local needs and covering local scientific knowledge. Also, it should be included local heritages, local autonomy, and the policy of decentralization of curriculum development.

Keywords: Curriculum, local scientific knowledge, educational authorities, national policy

Introduction

The curriculum is the guidelines to run education effectively. The term curriculum was derived from the Latin word "current" which means 'to run' or runway. Etymologically, curriculum means a chariot course of the learners. Regarding this Cunningham (2011), defines "curriculum is a tool in the hands of artists (teachers) to mould his material (learners) according to his desires (aims and objectives of education)" (p. 53). Therefore, curriculum is an essential document that has planned to fulfill the aim of education of a country (Apriani, et al. 2020). Regarding that, Mohan (2007) gives a comprehensive view of the curriculum as follows: The curriculum is the planned and guided learning experiences and intended outcomes, formulated through systematic reconstruction of knowledge and experience, under the auspices of the school, for the learners' continuous and willful growth in personal social competence. The

curriculum is the total of all the experiences which have to be provided for the good of the individual and the society. (p, 52)

Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) (2007) noted, “the national education should be harmonized and based on local needs to address the local necessity. Therefore the efficient management of formal school education must be related to local curriculum and its implementation” (p. 23). But it is not possible to incorporate all the local scientific knowledge and technologies, heritage, occupations, local environments in the national curriculum. The report of (CDC, 2071 BS) also mentioned that the central (national) curriculum cannot cover all the mentioned areas in the local curriculum.

Different reports (CDC, 2007 & Subedi, 2018) and field reports also suggested the necessity of a local curriculum. According to its need in basic level education, the curriculum has managed the weightage of 20% for the study of local contents concerning with different subject areas like social studies, creative arts, and physical education but it is not allocated in the secondary level. Besides, the main document of secondary level cooperative program, 10% to 15% weightage should be allocated based on local needs in secondary level too (CDC, 2007, p.23).

The constitution of Nepal (2072 BS) part 3 and article 31 also has provided the right to get primary education in the mother tongue, protect and develop ethnic language, script, culture, and cultural civilization and cultural heritage. This shows that constitution has provided the right for the implementation of the local curriculum. But according to Subedi (2018) very rare schools are implementing the local curriculum.

Despite providing those provisions for local curriculum development right it, is not showing any interest to implement the local curriculum in all schools of basic level in Nepal (Bhetuwal, 2015). So, this study determines the gap between local authorities and government policy.

The study of different documents and reports showed that the Government of Nepal and its educational policy has declared the importance of local curriculum policy but the implementation process of policy is still interfering/dilemma. Constitution of Nepal (part 3, article 31, 2072 BS)

also declares the right to get primary education through mother tongue and protect its script and cultural heritage.

On the other hand, the policy regulator division seems passive in implementation, evaluation, and monitoring in the institutions (Bhetuwal, 2015). It is the critical question that among those interferes, what has the condition of Palpa district (Purvakhola) regarding the implementation of local curriculum is and what are the cause behind this existing situation of local curriculum development. The objectives of this study are to find out the status of implementation of the local curriculum in the study area; (2) to determine the factors affecting on implementation of local curriculum; and (3) to find the way out the measure for its effective implementation.

Theoretical review

The first prior of linking theory is related to Durkheim (Giddens, 2009), who believed that every society has its norms, values, and beliefs. Schools also have certain norms, values, rules, and regulations. So, the local curriculum helps to share their social norms and values, scientific knowledge, skills which are helpful to their life sustain.

For the effective teaching/learning process of local curriculum, content and pedagogy should be student-centered. Teachers should have the teaching skills to explore freely (in a democratic way) the learner's experience where the students came from the different community such as Newar, Tamang, Brahmin, Gurung, etc. So, the effective implementation of the local curriculum is related to the theory of multiculturalism (Giddens, 2009).

UNESCO (2017) mentioned that local scientific knowledge is not a static body of traditional information but it is a dynamic system that is continuously revisited, reshaped, and shared across the community. Hence local knowledge resemblance to science and the scientific method is not as a fixed body of data. Regarding this Senanayake (2006) viewed that local scientific knowledge reveals the methods of maintaining cultural and ecological balance. Likewise, local knowledge institutions promote the situation of “constructive dependence” instead of destructive development.

The national curriculum framework 2007, mentioned that it is globally accepted that education must be based on local needs and should address the local needs property (CDC, 2007). The provision of the constitution of Nepal (2072 BS) has made an obligation to local governance authority to implement the local curriculum. Hence the legal provision highly supports for the implementation of the local curriculum but local level government institutions do not seem to have serious interest in this issue.

According to the CDC (2067 BS), curriculum is the fundamental base of education and destination. It not only guides the teacher but also guides a whole education. The national curriculum addresses the individual, societal, national, and international demand and necessities. But the curriculum should address our multi-language, multi-religion, and multiethnic community. So, the provision is brought to construct a local curriculum that can include all the subject matters. Therefore twenty percent credit hour is managed at the basic level. It should include; Development of local occupation, business, and profession. Local subject matters and their necessity. Conserve and develop historical, religious, and local heritages. Mobilize local resources. Nepal (2014) said the Nepalese curriculum is blamed as that the curriculum is not based on Nepalese context. It means the curriculum should be designed by the good knower of learners' interest and environment. But it is designed by so-called experts from the central mind. While the provision of local curriculum development brought the policy of decentralization and curriculum can be designed by schools' local authorities like the guardian, students, teachers, etc. In local curriculum design, it is better to have participation from local governments also. In rural areas, parents are unaware of the curriculum what the government is selling in their kids' education that the curriculum is what the school and government offer to sell. Whatever if we fail to develop the right machine with a rightly order system we cannot imply it effectively. So all the implementation phase is needed aware of stakeholders, conscious and participation of concerned agencies, bodies, and civil society (Nepal, 2014; p.14).

Methods and materials

The study is based on primary data as well as secondary data. As the nature of the objectives, it is adjusted qualitative research design (Wiersma and Jurs, 2000). The research is conducted in the secondary level schools of Purbakhola rural municipality, Palpa. According to the CDC (2007) grade, one to grade eight is the basic level and grade nine to grade twelve is the secondary level in Nepal. The sampled basic schools of the study were attached to secondary schools. They were selected from seven secondary schools, through random sampling process. The informants were four Headmasters were selected through judgment sampling. One resource person was also included as an authentic informant. As suggested by Creswell (2011) qualitative data were generated with the help of interview protocols and information was collected with Headmasters and Resource person. Whenever, some gaps were found in the analysis of collected data, informants were again contacted by mobile phone and completed them (Creswell, 2011). Then data interpretation was adopted as a thematic design.

Result and discussion

Impact of Globalization

By education, the world is changing very fast. So, all the phenomena are rushing ahead of global competency. And it is thought that English is getting away from joining in the success of meeting proficiency in all sectors. So, most of the schools are teaching extra English subjects instead of applying local curriculum as well as mother tongue education. A Headmaster also viewed that the students of the rural areas are heading to English medium boarding schools. Guardian, community are also impressed with the English language. Then students are decreasing in the public schools. So, to check the migration of students towards private schools, we have to promote/imply the English language environment in the schools. So, we are teaching extra English subjects in the place of mother tongue education and not showing any interest to develop the local curriculum. This phenomenon is related to the view of Anna (2016) i.e., the globalization of languages like English spread in the world, another consequence is that many other languages (local languages) becoming endangered and can extinct.

Regarding this view, an informant informed that on school guardians' day and students' prize distribution day a *gaupalika* high positioned man gave a speech to promote English language education in the sense of showing importance of English education. According to him, students with good English, would excel in education and can grab national or international opportunities. So anyhow the schools should do for Englishization. Teachers should do hard work to maintain an English environment in schools. According to the guest speaker and villagers' concept, it may take further time to imply local curriculum in the study area.

Collaboration for the implication of local curriculum

In the process of data collection, informants (Headmasters) informed that the stakeholders like resource person (RP), students, school management committee, teacher guardian association(union), and upper institutions do not show any interest for discussion to develop local curriculum. So the implication practice is being passive though the provision is drafted in the National curriculum framework and primary school curriculum. Curriculum designing guidelines (CDC, 2067 BS) also reported that it is necessary to discuss/negotiate for local curriculum development between local authentic people like teachers, students, experts, guardians, etc. But it is not conducting any negotiations as guided by CDC 2076. According to informants, they have a regular meeting every month rotating in a different school of the resource center but this issue could never be the agenda. Informants informed however they are in the process of negotiation on this issue.

Training and Budgets:

Budget is an essential factor in curriculum development and implication. Marxist theory (Ritzer, 2002) claims that budget plays the main role in any programme. Regarding this, the informants viewed that to construct a local curriculum the managerial sectors should provide the budget, experts for training to design the local curriculum. Teachers and local authentic bodies have no knowledge to construct a local curriculum. So the local human resources should be made perfect knowledge, skillful to mobilize them in curriculum development. In this regard, the National

curriculum framework (2007, p. 24) also argued that despite the provision of policy for local curriculum development at the basic level, the following problems are seen in the development of local curriculum;

- Lack of human resources at the local level to develop a local need-based curriculum.
- Lack of trained teachers to carry out local need-based child-centered teaching.
- Lack of a conducive environment to develop and implement the local curriculum at the local level.
- Lack of institutional mechanism to provide necessary technical assistance, guidance, and suggestions for the development and implementation of curriculum at the local level.

To resolve this problem government also must be more active in providing training, expert, and negotiation with local governments. Regular supervision and evaluation should be conducted in local institutions adjoining local authenticity.

Careless(ness) of legal authentic bodies

As informants informed that the upper authority or government also did not care for this issue. They developed legal provision for the local curriculum but did not care about its mandatory for construction and its implementation. They have to manage the environment by providing experts, educationists, resource persons assembling local institutional authorities but the government is not doing so, means not taking any care of this. The informants added they have been teaching unrelated subjects like(English) even in place of local or mother tongue subject. In this regards, the National curriculum framework (2007 Cited in Subedi, 2066 BS) also highlighted that present curriculum development and implementation could not bring into practice the following issues:

- Ensure stakeholders participation
- Develop and implement a need-based curriculum
- Decentralize the curriculum development process
- Establish institutional mechanisms up to the local level.

A resource person said that the upper stakeholders are not willing to develop a local curriculum. It is not possible to construct with single person's efforts. It is only possible by the collaborative of different educational stakeholders at the central level, district level, and local level

Importance of local curriculum implementation

On the issue of the importance of local curriculum, the informants (teachers) opined that it may imply government policy of decentralization on education. They also added that the local curriculum can be documented and transfer local knowledge of a particular area. Also, communities can promote plant management as well as environmental conservation through local knowledge. Regarding this view Gurung (2018) reported that local knowledge and practice of resource management promotes sustainable resource use and environmental protection. Hence, local teaching/learning supports the community on the sustainable use of local resources as well. Another informant said that the local curriculum promotes the preservation of cultural heritage, home stay, and tourism which can improve income generation in local/rural areas. This provision is also kept in the local curriculum framework (CDC, 2071 BS). Likewise, another informant opined that local curriculum/education can promote agricultural development in the local area.

Way out on implication of local curriculum

As informants informed that it should be made compulsory to imply the provision established by government for local curriculum. Due to the lack of hard and fast rules, schools are teaching English subject in the place of mother tongue education. Also they are not taking any interest in the local curriculum. For this, the government should conduct different seminars on the importance of local curriculum and management training to local educational stakeholders. Local governments should allocate a budget for the development of the local curriculum. Then should provide pedagogical training for teachers.

Findings of this study show that in Palpa (Purvakhola) schools are not developing local curriculum but it is in the process of its development. Now in the schools, extra English subject is taught even in the place of mother tongue education. Different factors are affecting on

development of the local curriculum. The government is also not taking any interest in the implication of local curriculum in the resource center. Local government is also not caring for discussion among schools and guardians. According to informants, local government seems reluctant to allocate budget for local curriculum development and its implementation. To follow the government educational policy of local curriculum implication, all the indicated problems should be addressed by the government also.

Conclusion

According to the consideration of educationists, the Government of Nepal made the policy of implementation of local curriculum on the base of local needs, local knowledge/skills at the basic level, but did not could not implement it. So most of the schools in Nepal are not implementing the local curriculum. Another cause is that, due to the globalization of the English language, the schools are teaching extra English subject in the place of mother tongue education as well as the local curriculum. This study also found that the local curriculum has not been developed and implemented. They are in the process of developing and implementing in the study area. The study found the need of intensified discussion among the stakeholders, experts and manage the budget for this endeavor. Looking ahead to their *gaupalika* for management of local curriculum. According to the findings, initiation should be taken by the governance and local level of educational authorities.

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