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Curriculum and Text Books
Issues and Challenges in Planning

As announced, the theme for this issue of newsletter is "Curriculum and Text Books: Issues and Challenges". We had requested the member institutions to contribute articles regarding the experiences of respective countries. We have received articles from AKES, P (Pakistan), BRAC (Bangladesh) and NCERT (India).

The paper from AKES, P presents a detailed description of process and procedure of curriculum development, agencies involved, several issues related to relevance and usefulness of curriculum vis-à-vis the reality of child's life. The paper highlights the role played by NGO's and few institutions in adopting several innovations in improving quality and relevance of curriculum in Pakistan. Developing curriculum plan involves extensive process and the responsibility rests on federal ministry of education although education otherwise falls under the sphere of provincial government. In view of National Educational Policy, the federal government develops curriculum objectives shares with provincial governments and obtain feed back and inputs. In Pakistan, curriculum reforms have been associated with the changes in National Education Policies. Unlike in many countries curriculum development is quite a controlled process in Pakistan. Bureaucratic and political interests play major role in curriculum development despite experts are involved. The National Curriculum and Text Book Bureau works in collaboration with Provincial Curriculum Bureau and Text Book Board in developing curriculum and to ensure implementation at provincial level. The last time it was taken up was as a part of National Education Policy of 1998-2010. There has been perceptible change in the aims and objectives of curriculum. The article explains the gap between the curriculum plan and its implementation.

Realising the outcomes of Civil Society initiatives, the Federal and Provincial Education Ministries are keenly building partnerships for joint curriculum review and development.

The second article on "Curriculum Development: Issues and Reforms in School Education in India" presents historical background of educational policies and curriculum development. It also discusses several issues related to school curriculum in contemporary India. The first National Policy on Education (1968) has envisaged

In this issue...

education to be more closely related to lives of the people, emphasis on science and technology and inculcation of moral and social values. Accordingly the first Curriculum for the Ten Year School-A Frame Work was developed in 1975 by National Council for Educational research and Training. Subsequent to National Policy on Education (1986), the second National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education-A Framework (1988) was prepared. Attempts were made to define the minimum levels of learning and change in the evaluation pattern. The constant discussion on school curriculum resulted with a committee called 'Learning without Burden' during nineties which advocated reducing the curricular load, adopting localised knowledge and curriculum. After a long gap National Curriculum Framework for School Education was developed at the beginning of new millennium. The present paper points some of the grey areas like making education child centred, reducing curriculum load as major challenges. The latest draft National Curriculum (2005) makes an attempt to readdress these issues.

The paper from Bangladesh presents the process and procedure of developing school curriculum and its implementation. The objectives of school curriculum render the manpower requirements, national policies, ideals and goals. The curriculum is developed based on situational analysis of the country encompassing national ideology, economic, religious conditions and development of contemporary knowledge, science and technology. The curriculum emerges from the national educational policies. The paper presents the eight educational goals that continue to provide direction in framing the school curriculum. A systematic approach is adopted in preparation of curriculum plan and further translating curriculum in to text books. Teachers are provided training to implement the text books and to adopt appropriate pedagogical strategies. The curriculum and textbooks are evaluated systematically both at formative and summative stages. A continuous evaluation is conducted on implementation of curriculum vis-a-vis its objectives. The paper points some of the problems and issues related to curriculum development.

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The July-December 2005 issue of the ANTRIEP Newsletter will focus on **Privatisation of School Education: Issues and Challenges.** The member institutions are requested to send their contributions to the Editor not later than October 31, 2005.

Curriculum Development
Issues and Challenges in Pakistan

Introduction

Curriculum is a mysterious term for educators. Its interpretation varies from a narrow concept of "a *set of subjects or program of studies*" to a broader concept of "*a series of experiences undergone by learners in the school*". At times it seems analogous to Blind Man's Elephant. For some it is bulky, massive and heavy thing but for others it is thin and straight like an arrow. These interpretations vary so much that different people try to understand and develop curriculum in the light of their own educational beliefs. This conceptual complexity makes curriculum development a complicated and at times controversial process. The other aspect which makes "curriculum" a sensitive and controversial topic is it being a means for social, political and religious indoctrination which can create very serious and deep rooted issues for any society.

There are many such issues and challenges related to curriculum which are universal but several are context specific as well. This paper presents a brief background of curriculum development process in Pakistan, major curriculum reforms, and issues and challenges associated with them.

Background

In Pakistan, for organizing teaching-learning processes in schools (Grades K-X), an education plan is developed and documented in the form of National Curriculum. These plans comprise a set of curriculum objectives, graded content, instructional objectives, a few suggested activities and assessment and evaluation guidelines. The process of developing these curriculum plans is rather extensive. The main responsibility rests with the Federal Ministry of Education although education otherwise falls under the sphere of provincial ministries. To ensure that the national standards and requirements are met, a National Bureau of Curriculum and Textbook has been established, which is commonly known as "Curriculum Wing". Furthermore, each province has Provincial Curriculum Bureau and Provincial Textbook Board who collaborate with the Federal Curriculum Wing not only in terms of providing provincial perspectives in policy development but also for ensuring curriculum implementation at provincial level.

While developing the curriculum, basic conceptual curriculum framework is developed in the light of National Education Policy. Federal Ministry develops the curriculum objectives and shares them with the Provincial Institutes for their feedback and input. Once curriculum objectives are finalized, the Scheme of Studies is developed keeping in mind the National Education Policy, curriculum objectives, market needs and global trends. Based on the Scheme of Studies, various subject-specific syllabi are prepared in consultation with the Provincial Institutes. Provincial Textbook Boards develop textbooks according to the approved syllabi for their provinces which are reviewed by the National Review Committee. Finally, Provincial Institutes make arrangements for teacher training for the implementation of curricula at school level.

Unlike many other parts of the world, curriculum design and development is quite a controlled process in Pakistan. Though Curriculum Wing engages a number of subject specialists, teachers and academicians from public and private sector, the extent to which their input is incorporated is largely influenced by bureaucratic and political interests. Consequently, these vested interests are transpired in actual curriculum schemes and textbooks, hence compromising on the intellectual autonomy.

Curriculum and Textbook Reforms in Pakistan

In Pakistan, curriculum reform has been associated with the changes in National Education Policies. The first review of the curriculum was thus undertaken after 1972 National Educational Policy was introduced. Since then, the National Curriculum has only been reviewed twice, in 1976 and more recently in 1998. In 1976, the Curriculum Wing of the Federal Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan, through the Federal Act X was made responsible to develop the National Curriculum on the basis of the Islamic philosophy and ideology of Pakistan for all schools as their road map. The curriculum developed as a result was hugely criticized for its unrealistic and biased expectations from the students in terms of demonstrating nationalism. The current Curriculum Reform Cycle, titled Vision 2010, is aligned with the National Education Policy 1998-2010, which aims at meeting basic learning needs of all children, diversifying education system, making curriculum development a continuous process, popularizing Information Technology and making Quranic teaching and Islamic principles an integral part of curricula.

To implement Vision 2010, Ministry of Education has formed a National Committee on Education (NCE). As a first step of the Vision 2010, NCE developed a Conceptual Framework to provide a genuine educational philosophy as a guideline to review the National Curriculum. The Conceptual Framework is aimed at bringing a paradigm shift in the education system from rote learning to one which builds on the understanding nature and interest of individual students. It also talks about sound pedagogical approaches to ensure intellectual autonomy, facilitation of the innate ability and motivation to learn, and promotion of child's conceptual understanding through contextualized models. Furthermore, for child's holistic development *(encompassing cognitive, social, spiritual and emotional development)*, the framework also charts out integrated learning, learning how to learn and analysis oriented exam system as key methods to achieving its goals.

After the development of the Conceptual Framework in collaboration with Provincial Institutes, several subject curricula were reviewed, modified and implemented. Following issues and challenges have emerged in relation to the modified curricula.

Issues of Curriculum Understanding

The understanding of what curriculum entails is perhaps the most crucial factor in realizing the Conceptual Framework of curriculum. The policy and curriculum documents clearly identify "sermonizing and regimentation as an anti-thesis of happy, meaningful learning and intellectual growth of children" (p.21, National Curriculum, 2002). However, the entire educational framework of our schools and colleges is obsessively and rigidly built around textbooks which are mostly prescribed. Textbooks are considered as the sole and legitimate source of knowledge both for students and teachers. Information presented in the textbooks plays a pivotal role in shaping up the process of classroom teaching and learning, designing of assessment system and evaluation with students' memorizing and reproducing the information presented in textbooks. One of the main reasons of this hegemony of textbooks is the non-availability of curriculum document itself. Unfortunately, the curriculum documents do not reach the hands of those who are responsible for their implementation. Curriculum documents remain with the policy makers and textbook writers only. Implementers get textbooks only and build all the processes around them and start interpreting curriculum as a set of topics prescribed for a particular level. They remain unaware of curricular framework and its main objectives. With this lack of understanding of the curriculum, classroom learning process is not designed to achieve the curricular objectives, rather it is organized to transfer textbook content to

children thereby narrowing down the scope of learning process.

This issue gives rise to another major issue where curriculum is considered as a set of facts and information needed to be transferred to students step by step. People generally do not take learning environment, learning process and assessment of learning as aspects of curriculum and fail to see the connection among them. It becomes difficult for them to understand that many of the curricular objectives are related to the processes of learning in which children are engaged and not with the final outcome in the form of acquired set of facts and figures. One of the major contributors of this situation is the role of teacher education/training process. Teachers are not exposed to the broader philosophy of the curriculum. They are not facilitated to build links between curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning process and assessment. The training focuses more on the delivery of textbook content.

The entire situation points to a deeper and serious issue which is related to people's beliefs and assumptions about education and learning. The factory model of schooling has made the vision of learning narrow. It does not go beyond the transfer of information though many of the curriculum objectives capture many other things beyond information collection as a part of learning; they remain on paper and are not translated into practices. The most important consideration thus becomes accumulation of information and is greatly emphasized at school level. However, it has no relation with the Conceptual Framework of National Curriculum or learning and holistic development in general.

Intellectual Issues

The Federal Ministry of Education and the National Curriculum Committee have developed a comprehensive Conceptual Framework for curriculum development. This is a well articulated framework and presents a broader perspective of education and learning. The framework is founded on "respect for the child, encouraging free enquiry, and creativity and on providing happy and rewarding in-school and out-of-school opportunities for developing key learning skills" (p. 11). The framework though highlights key learning aspects, but the curriculum which is developed on the basis of this conceptual framework does not reflect the conceptual understanding of the framework. A wide gap exists between the ideas presented in the framework and the way they are translated into actual curriculum.

Since the intellectually challenging framework set for learning is not translated into actual curriculum, the intellectual quality of the curriculum is very low. For example, the Conceptual Framework beautifully presents the idea of intellectual autonomy as a basic premise for learning. According to the Section 2.2.1 of the Conceptual Framework,

> "Intellectual autonomy is the freedom that allows children to be architects of their own understanding and knowledge. In principle it has to do with making choices in the course of learning, while knowing how to make reasonable and responsible decisions. In practice, it means that while there will be a standard course of studies which all children will have to follow, the system will accommodate the varied perspectives, experiences and aptitudes that children bring with them to their learning places." (p. 16)

Now if we look at the instructional objectives and learning outcomes mentioned in various subject-specific curricula, they emphasize on defining, re-calling, describing, naming, listing etc as the main learning process instead of focusing on understanding, analyzing, synthesizing, questioning, reflecting etc. which are the main processes involved in the process of constructing own meaning and bringing in a personal perspective to the various aspects of learning. There is hardly any objective which focuses on students developing their own

view points. Consequently, this contradiction can be observed in textbooks as well. While the framework emphasizes on bringing multiple perspectives and view points in the classroom, textbooks strictly present singular perspective of several local and global issues. The text and the teaching methodology do not encourage children to think differently, consider various perspectives and to look at things from different angles. In the same way, there is a clear contradiction between curriculum frameworks and the examination policies also. The framework puts emphasis on children learning at their own pace but examination policies do not allow students to learn at their own pace. All the students have to be ready for examination and evaluation at the same time, all are assessed in the same way, all are evaluated using same criteria etc. There is no consideration and flexibility to accommodate individual differences as mentioned in the framework. Furthermore, Public Examination requires students to reproduce what is written in the textbooks. Students are not asked to give their view point or perspective in any case.

All these contradictions do not only show the low intellectual quality of the curriculum implementation which promotes rote learning and ignores the holistic perspective of a child's development. It also highlights the intellectual and communication gaps in designing and implementing curriculum.

Another important angle of the intellectual issues of curriculum is the absence of the approach and thought for developing "Thinking Mind" i.e. mind that is free to ask questions, who can challenge wrong practices and ideas based on rational arguments, who can analyze issues and form their own opinions. The existing approach of curriculum promotes "Captive Mind" who accepts things passively and does not have a critical approach to life and learning. If the purpose of education and learning is to improve the quality of life in terms of justice for every aspect, one needs to focus on nurturing thinking minds rather than producing captive minds.

Issues of Diversity and Relevance

Two other major issues associated with the curriculum are the issues of diversity and relevance. If we look at the content of the curriculum, at many places it is not relevant to child's immediate life and has no meaning for him. Though the Conceptual Framework of the curriculum puts strong emphasis on this aspect by highlighting "*Development of concepts through children's immediate context*" as one of the basic learning principles, but it is not taken into consideration while developing the curriculum, especially for early classes. The Conceptual Framework elaborates explicitly that, "*When subject matter precedes or is unrelated to children's experiences, it is not able to hold their attention. The subject matter gains meaning only when it is placed in the context of children's own experiences, interest and curiosity*" (P. 18). Inspite of this clear guideline, the curriculum is full of meaningless topics for children. For example, children of age 5 to 8 years are expected to learn a plethora of terms in science and memorize different facts about plants and animals instead of getting opportunities to observe the living world around them and express themselves in their own language and style. At this stage, more important aspect is to build relationships with all living beings and develop a caring and considerate attitude towards them instead of memorizing technical terms to express them. Likewise, Chemistry curriculum makes the students of ages 10 to 12 years to learn about the abstract ideas of moles, Avogadro's number, atomic models etc. but they are not helped to understand Kitchen and Garden Chemistry which is more relevant to their lives and have meaning for them. They are forced to learn several theories of acids and bases but a knowledge of not using acid-full beverages is not developed. The transfer of meaningless and decontextualized information through curriculum makes learning a meaningless process which in fact should not be called as learning.

One of the reasons for this de-contextualization is that while developing curriculum, the so called "Western standards" are followed instead of developing own standards based on local realities. The curriculum does not have spaces and provision for children to learn about the content of their own choice or the content relevant to their immediate life. Urban and rural children study the same content, irrespective of their interests and contextual realities being different. Children studying in highly remote rural areas are also made to learn about the parts of atoms, types of friction, and the construction of a triangle; they are not provided opportunities to understand the live issues of their own areas and way to solve them. After the successful completion of this curriculum, they get a certificate labeling them as "Educated". However, the education they get does not help them to make any meaningful contribution to their own lives or to the lives of others. Neither it helps them to develop a better or stronger relationship with their own communities. On the contrary, they become frustrated from their realities and seek escape from them through diverse ways.

This narrowness also creates the issues of diversity as well. The curriculum does not encourage pupil to use multiple sources for learning. It heavily emphasizes on structuring learning around textbooks and in the classroom. There is no space in the curriculum to bring local resources in the learning process or to bring in local perspectives. If in some cases it is done, it is done as an activity once in a blue moon. The other important aspect is that official recognition and acceptance is given only to the ideas which are presented in the textbook and any thing beyond the textbook is not accepted as a valid perspective. This approach undermines the local knowledge systems and indigenous learning resources of a community and kills the diversity of learning. This approach of curriculum also leads the young minds towards the acceptance of "Western" knowledge system while undermining their own local values, culture, knowledge system and wisdom of their own people.

Issues of Biases

Use of curriculum as a tool of indoctrination is the biggest challenge. More specifically, the curricula relating to social sciences and humanities are designed in a way that they convey a particular ideology and fastidious views. This approach makes the young learner narrow minded. Several political, religious, historical and ideological biases can be observed in the curricular objectives and in the textbooks developed for children. Likewise, the curriculum is not very sensitive to religious diversity also. The lessons for promoting tolerance among students for religious and cultural diversity are not very prominent and enough attention is not given to this aspect also. These are the serious issues of the existing curriculum because they hinder openness, respect and tolerance for the rich diversity that exists in the context of Pakistan and which is essential for national solidarity.

Ray of Hope

In the above mentioned scenario of curriculum issues, there are institutions and people who have made enough efforts to bring a positive change in the learning environment for children. There are many NGOs and private educational institutions that have created better learning processes for students and have caused spaces for children to learn from a variety of sources, to look at various issues from different angles, to analyze the facts to draw their own conclusions etc. All these efforts are exactly in line with the Conceptual Framework of National Curriculum. Now there is a need to learn from the experiences of these organizations and collectively make efforts to bring a change at the national level. One way to build on the experiences of these organizations and people is to make the National Curriculum Wing more diverse and autonomous. In the present age of information technology and globalization, it seems unwise to keep children unaware of the facts and not to give them the skills of independent thinking, analysis and opinion formation. These skills will equip children to create

a better life not only for themselves but for the overall society as well. Another possibility of improving the situation could be to review the concept of National Curriculum itself. There could be National Standards collectively developed by various stakeholders in education and then institutions can be set free to design their processes and frame their recommendation of books and other learning resources.

Recognizing the positive outcomes of small scale Civil Society initiatives with respect to learner development, the Federal and the Provincial Ministries are keenly building partnerships for joint curriculum review and development. In line with this, assessment policies and processes are also being changed so that these may become flexible to accommodate the learners' progression and understanding holistically. For instance, in one of the provinces, government has already introduced automatic promotions till Grade 8, taking away the regimented formal paper-pencil tests and introducing ongoing learning assessment. Building on such initiatives, other governments are also moving ahead.

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Curriculum Development
Issues and Reforms in School Education in India

Introduction

Curriculum development is a continuous process that takes into consideration the national goals, societal aspirations and disciplinary advances at any given point of time. In India, since the country attained independence nearly six decades ago, a number of attempts were made to develop curricula for school education. This article traces the issues and concerns that various curricula have so far attempted to address. It particularly focuses on the issues and concerns highlighted in the latest draft *National Curriculum Framework*, brought out in 2005.

Historically, the education system in ancient India, as Dharampal (1983) noted, was akin to and even better than some European countries in terms of its spread, participation of people from different strata of society, course content, teachers' qualifications and dedication, and so forth. The British rule, spanning over two countries, is seen as a period of widespread neglect and disintegration of indigenous education system in India. However, in the twentieth century, sustained efforts were made to evolve a national system of education. The great Indian philosopher, Sri Aurobindo, in 1910 visualized *A National System of Education*, which stressed on nurturing the mental and logical faculty of human beings. Mahatma Gandhi's *Buniyadi Taleem* (Basic Education) emphasized self-reliance and dignity of the individual. It recommended the use of the immediate environment, including the mother tongue and work, as a resource for socializing the child.

National Curriculum

After Independence, the national concerns related to education were articulated by the *S*econdary Education Commission (1951-53), and the Education Commission (1964-66). The recommendations of these commissions formed the basis for the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1968). The NPE recommended the implementation of a common school structure (10+2 system of schooling) and a common pattern of studies throughout the country.

It also visualized education to be more closely related to the lives of the people, to raise the quality of education and provide expanded educational opportunities, to emphasize the development of science and technology, and to inculcate moral and social values.

These recommendations were incorporated in the first curriculum, The Curriculum for the Ten-Year School—A Framework, developed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in 1975. The supporting syllabi and textbooks to be used as models by the States and the Union Territories were also developed.

A major impetus to education was provided in 1976 through a constitutional amendment, whereby education, until then a State subject, was placed in the concurrent list. Concurrency signifies a meaningful and challenging partnership between the Union Government and the States. According to this amendment, the roles and responsibilities of the States continue to remain intact. However, the Union Government has now a larger responsibility to strengthen the national and integrative character of education, to maintain quality and standards, and to promote excellence at all levels of educational pyramid throughout the country. In the changed circumstances, for the first time in 1986, the country as a whole had a *National Policy on Education* (NPE, 1986). The NPE 1986 envisaged a national system of education based on national curricular framework which would contain a common core along with other components that are flexible. It also envisaged removing disparities and equalizing educational opportunities by addressing to the needs of disadvantaged sections of the society. To achieve these goals, the NPE (1986) called for reorganization of education at different stages. It was against this backdrop that the second *National Curriculum for Elementary and Secondary Education—A Framework* (1988) was brought out. This framework suggested a shift from summative evaluation to formative evaluation. Attempts were made to define minimum levels of learning at all stages of school education.

The 1990s are marked with two important educational concerns. The first is related to the curriculum load on the children—both in terms of the physical load that a child has to carry daily on his/her shoulders, and the burden of non-comprehension of the contents. The report of the Yashpal Committee, namely *Learning without Burden* (1993), focused on this issue in a systematic manner and recommended that "very little, fully comprehended, is far better than a great deal, poorly comprehended". The second step is related to the decentralization of education and recognizing the role of Panchayati Raj institutions in the management of school education. The involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions offers an opportunity to make the system less bureaucratic and the school more autonomous. It also entails the responsibility to localize knowledge and curriculum practices.

The third *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (2000) addressed the such concerns as equality of access to quality education and opportunity, strengthening the national identity and preserving cultural heritage, responding to the impact of globalization and the challenge of information and communication technology, linking education with life skills, reducing the curriculum load, and value development. It also viewed education as a life-long process. A shift from factual knowledge to the process of understanding, thinking, and internalizing was envisaged. It also stressed the mastery learning approach by using diagnosis and remediation for weaker students and enrichment programmes for the brighter ones.

Some Issues

Though these attempts were instrumental in bringing improvement in the school system in many ways, there were important gray areas. For example, the issue of making education child-centered and reducing the curriculum load continues to be a major challenge. Similarly, the country is still struggling to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE), which the NPE 1986 envisaged to achieve by the end of the twentieth century. The latest draft National Curriculum Framework (NCF, 2005) makes an attempt to re-address these and many other related issues.

The new framework aims to bring out improvement in *quality* in school education, which is defined as

"in terms of the resources available for infrastructural needs, professional training of teachers, and provision for monitoring. It relates quality to the experiences provided to children to enable them to construct knowledge" (Kumar, 2005). Thus, the focus is on child-centered learning by recognizing children's creativity and motivation to learn. The child is seen as a constructor of knowledge, and providing space for the child's thinking, curiosity, and inquisitiveness in the curricular practices has been advocated. Here, the language skills of children in construction of their own knowledge assumes significance. The new framework aims to connect knowledge to life outside the school, de-emphasises rote learning, focuses on overall development of children, and makes examinations more flexible and integrated with classroom activities. Areas, such as different forms of arts and heritage crafts, peace education, health and physical education, have been recognized as integral components of school curriculum. The new framework also calls for bringing out radical changes in the teacher training and examination procedures, such as shift in understanding from content-based testing to problem-solving based understanding. It conceptualizes textbooks focused on elaboration of concepts, activities and problems, and exercises encouraging group work and reflective thinking.

It is hoped that the new framework will bring out improvement in the existing scenario of school education, since it is firmly grounded in the Constitutional vision of India as an egalitarian and secular society, committed to self-transformation towards social justice in all its dimensions, covering gender and caste disparities (Kumar, 2005).

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Workshop on Successful School Management: Preparation of Training Modules

A four-day workshop will be organized as a part of the ANTRIEP research study on "Improving School Management" during August 23-26, 2005 to prepare the training modules. The workshop will be held at Centre for Professional Development – Education Management (CPDEM) of National Institute of Education, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Case study writers and the resource persons from ANTRIEP member institutions will participate in the workshop.

The major objective of the workshop would be to turn the findings of a research programme on successful school management into training modules. The themes for training modules will include:

-- Successful School Management: Pre Conditions, Strategies, and Policy Implications;
-- Managing People at Work;
-- Managing Students and Academic Affairs;
-- Managing External Relations; and
-- Developing a School Development Plan.

Curriculum and Textbooks
Issues, Concerns and Formation in Bangladesh

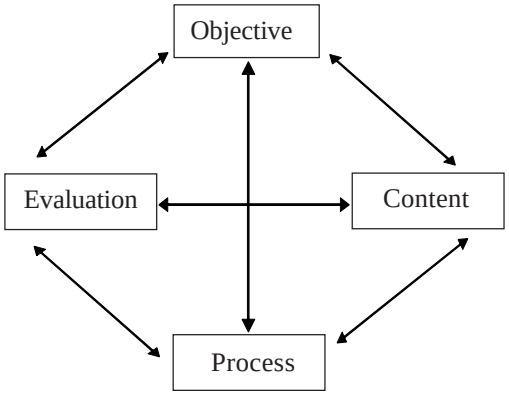
Introduction

The achievement and advancement of a nation depends on the progress of education. The education curriculum determines the features and image of the educational system of a country. In order to meet the changing needs, curriculum development is a continuous and cyclic process. It is reformed, rationalized, and modernized time to time as per the demand of the changing patterns of the country, and the dynamic world as well. And textbooks are the major and pertinent visible tools to carry out the inner thoughts and hidden tones of curriculum.

After Independence, discernible changes have been made to develop curriculum keeping in view the specific objectives to render the manpower requirements focusing on the philosophy (national policies, ideals, goals, etc.) and sociology (social customs, thoughts, demands and ethnicity, etc.) of the country and psychology of the learners' of several levels and sub-systems of educational structure of Bangladesh. Situation analysis has been a pre-requisite in developing curriculum and preparation of textbooks. The situational analysis covers a number of areas and activities like:

i) National ideology, values and existing demands of the society;
ii) Historical, social and economic background, and condition of the country;
iii) Basic, moral, and religious beliefs, and thoughts of the masses;
iv) External and internal environment of the educational institutions;
v) Existing educational system and curriculum;
vi) Availability of the resources;
vii) Development of contemporary knowledge, science and technology;
viii) Cognitive and psychomotor demand of the learners;
ix) Education system, and curriculum of the developed and neighbouring countries; and
x) Overall phenomenon-environment-circumstances of the nation.

Objective based approach is used in developing and implementing curriculum and textbooks as to keep pace with the overall social condition and availability of the educational materials and other resources.



Objective based Curriculum Model

Educational Goals and Objectives

Curriculum perceives and reflects the educational goals and objectives of a country. After Independence of the country, the first Education Commission in 1974 envisaged the goals and objectives of education system as:

i) Nationalism, socialism, democracy, secularism, and patriotism;
ii) Enlightened citizenship, humanism, and world-citizenship;
iii) Ethical values and moral ideology;
iv) Education as weapon for social transformation;
v) Propitious education of pragmatic economical advancement;
vi) Proper respect for manual work;
vii) Multifaceted education stream;

viii) Leadership and organizing power and qualities;
ix) Creativity research and social progress; and
x) Education for political and economic advancement.

The subsequent Education Commissions and Policies retuned and emphasised the goals and objectives of curriculum albeit with necessary changes and modifications. During 1976, the National Curriculum and Textbook forming Committee enunciated eight goals of the curriculum that had been implemented and practised through the course contents of the textbooks and teaching-learning activities. These goals continued to provide guidance and directions in framing the school curriculum in the country. The goals are to:

i) establish the values and morals in individual and national life;
ii) ascribe importance on science and technology based education;
iii) create special space to flourish the human and social quality;
iv) explore special, specific, and separate stream for vocational education;
v) enforce importance on technical education;
vi) manage substantial and surroundings-based education;
vii) develop the creativity; and
viii) widen the activities of family and the whole society.

Policy in Selecting Content of Textbooks

While preparing textbooks, the subject contents are selected relating to the goals and objectives of education considering the timeframe and the syllabus. The themes and contents of the textbooks are chosen taking into account the learners' requirement, capability, acceptance and social demand. The contents in the textbooks are presented in a formative structure to ensure effective learning and to enable the students to adopt the right occupation according to his or her capability in future. In preparing contents, 'rules of flexibility' (keeping in mind the requirements, and viability of the masses) are considered. Manifestation of internationality is ensured throughout the contents of the textbooks.

Content Articulation

At the primary level, contents of the textbooks are articulated according to the learners' mental and psychological capability, adaptability and acceptance. At this level textbook contents are described and analysed following the principle of easy to tough, known to unknown, near to far, and present to past. Logical and sequential approach is used in upper classes as the learners' are able to follow the higher order skills. Horizontal articulation is maintained among the subjects of a grade whereas vertical articulation is adopted to maintain the sequence, and succession from lower grade to upper grade. Again spiral articulation is used so that the learners could confront a given concept again and again during their progress through a course, each time at a more complex or demanding level; viz. to learn about water for science subject, in Grade-One they learn about the necessity and uses of water; in Grade-Two they learn the sources, types and uses (extended version) of water; in Grade-Three about supply and purification process of water, in Grade-Four about uses of water (extended version), water cycle, purification process (extended version) of water, classification of water and its natural purification ways; in Grade-Five and in Grade-Six, they learn various types of uses of water (extended version); several types of nature and status of water in Grade-Seven, and in Grade-Eight, they learn uses of water in producing electricity, atomic formation of water and alike.

Facts and Process to Implement Curriculum in Classrooms

It is said that teacher is the best means to implement curriculum. However, teachers generally depend on textbooks and hardly ever get an opportunity to go through the curriculum framework. Teachers are instructed, trained, and guided to carry out the instructions and ideas of the textbooks following a two-way interaction process between the learners and the teachers. Teachers are trained to adopt several types of teaching methods and techniques, considering the number of learners in the

classrooms, learners' adaptive level, duration of the class, level of complexity of the content and subject. They are directed to use several types of teaching aids according to the age and capability of the learner groups to strengthen and nourish their learning. In teacher, preparation, feasibility and practicability of the curriculum, and usability and acceptability of the textbooks, are scrutinized, and renewal and reformation of these are then completed accordingly.

Curriculum and Textbook Evaluation

Value judgement, quality, accuracy, probability, acceptability of curriculum and textbooks are examined through both formative and summative evaluation systems. These are weighed to find out the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps of different components of curriculum. Continuous evaluation is conducted on implementation of curriculum vis-a-vis its objectives. In this process, evaluation is carried out based on the anecdote, transaction, and outcome stages of curriculum formation. Before beginning the process of formation of new curriculum, implementation of current curriculum is evaluated as an anecdote objectives stage. Curriculum implementation is reviewed against the expectations with which it has been adopted and to find out the need for curricular reforms. Finally, at the end of the curriculum span, effectiveness is examined to ensure reform and changes in curriculum accordingly.

Conclusion

Inconsistencies and ambiguity in formulating curriculum result in the outcomes that are weighed down and overwhelmed. In Bangladesh, formation of curriculum was in vogue with systematic process and procedures. But in course of time, the precision has missed due to lack of proper supervision, monitoring, and gaps in different stages of curriculum formulation. It needs to be reorganized, modernised and updated to ensure sound academic stability. In recent years, the meaning and scope of curriculum has been broadened to encompass student activities, a variety of study materials, learning strategies, implementation strategies etc. The curriculum and education specialists should figure out the inner thoughts and should work to reform and reconstruct curriculum accordingly. If the educational institutions are upgraded with qualified teachers, textbooks, along with a feisty curriculum, educational progress will definitely get a boost. Researches on curriculum and textbooks need to be given importance to delineate conditions and ultimately shape up a vigorous, spirited and dynamic curriculum.

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News from Member Institutions

Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI)
Seoul, Korea

KEDI and NCEDR co-hosted a joint seminar on *Reforms for Higher Education in the Knowledge Economy* during March 7-12, 2005 at Beijing, China.

Seminar on *Financing Reforms for Tertiary Education in the Knowledge Economy* was organized at Seoul Education and Culture Centre, Korea.

UNESCO Regional Seminar on the *Implications of WTO/GATS on Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific* was held in collaboration with Korean National Commission for UNESCO and Korean Council for University Education during April 27-29, 2005.

Thematic **Research Reviews on Tertiary Education** is being undertaken with the assistance of Long-term International cooperation Projects of OECD.

A Study on **Diversification of College Admission Policy and School-College Liaison System** is in progress. The objectives of the study are to examine college admissions policy and to develop plan to improve the policies on diversification of high school curricula, improving/uplifting high school and college liaison system and to form a network in college admission.

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
New Delhi, India

An eleven member delegation from Ministry of Education, Iran visited NCERT to understand the process of integrating human rights education in school curriculum in India.

The former Minister of Education of Iran visited to know the methods of introduction and promotion of Gandhian Ideas in Indian education system.

A training course on *Peace Education for Teachers* was organized during June 6 – July 15, 2005. 35 teachers representing government schools from eighteen states of India attended the training.

The Aga Khan University (AKU) – Institute for Educational Development (IED)
Karachi, Pakistan

A research study on Impact of Academic Inputs on **School Improvement** has been conducted. The study covers in-depth case studies of schools.

An Evaluative Study on the **Impact of Whole School Improvement Program (WSIP)** was conducted in a number of schools of Northern Areas of Pakistan in order to explore the factors facilitating and impeding the sustainability of change processes in the schools.

A research study on **Health Related Experiences of Female Teachers** was undertaken in order to examine how the health education program is instrumental in changing the beliefs and attitudes of female teachers in schools.

The Aga Khan Education Service, Pakistan (AKES,P)
Karachi, Pakistan

Organized an International Conference on *Diversifying Learning* during March 11-15, 2005. The conference was attended by teachers,

principals and school heads, researchers and representatives from NGOs and educational development organizations.

Organized a seminar on *Quality Assurance and Support in Education* on February 15, 2005. The seminar focused on the issues of establishing quality accreditation processes for schools and the value inputs for growth and expansion of schools.

Centre for Multi-Disciplinary Development Research (CMDR)
Dharwad, India

Conducting an evaluative study on **Computer Education Programme in Government Secondary Schools of Karnataka State.**

State Institute of Educational Management and Training
Allahabad, India

An Induction/Foundation Training Course was organized for newly selected Provincial Education Officers of Uttar Pradesh.

A six-month Diploma Programme in Educational Management for Principals of Higher Secondary Schools in Uttar Pradesh was started from May 2005.

A series of 5-day Capacity Building Training Programme on *Educational Planning and Management* were organized for Principals and faculty members of District Institute of Education and Training.

National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA)
New Delhi, India

The XXI International Diploma in Educational Planning and Administration was held from February 1, 2005 to April 30, 2005 at NIEPA, New Delhi. 49 trainees from 29 countries took part in this programme.

A training programme on *Self-reliant Approach to Basic Education Development in Africa: Role of Universities in Basic Education Development* was held at NIEPA during February 16-18, 2005. The programme was sponsored by Hiroshima University & JAICA, Japan. Twelve trainees from four countries of Ghana, South Africa, Malawi and Kenya participated in the programme.

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