

## LOCAL CURRICULUM IN NEPAL: PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION

Assistant Lecturer Sital Adhikari  
Dibyajyoti Multiple Campus

### Abstract

*The purpose of this article is to identify the issues and challenges seen in development and implementation of local curriculum. For this, as primary data, the education officers of the municipality, including the members of the local curriculum development committee, the principals and the teachers of the schools where the curriculum is Implemented were taken as sample. The data is analyzed using descriptive style and qualitative research design. Secondary data is also used to fulfill the needs of this research. The challenges seen in curriculum development and implementation are mainly the lack of development of institutional mechanism and capabilities , the lack of competent and skilled human resources in local body, lack of commitment ,lack of competent teachers, parents' obsession with English language ,not being able to explain its importance to parents' others stakeholders, lack of trained teachers, absence of a body providing technical support required for curriculum development at the local level. Similarly, after development and writing the textbook ,the publishers don't want to print or publish it so the municipality has to print it with its own budget, just like that there is not any mechanism to monitor in school after implementing local curriculum etc are the issues and challenges of development and implementation of local curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *Local curriculum, local government, stakeholder, basic level school, orientation guide.*

Local curriculum is the curriculum prepared by local people and stakeholders including local needs, problems and environment. After the formation of the local government, now

the education branch of each local government takes initiatives for the development and distribution of local curriculum. Such local curriculum prepared by including local subjects, arts, skills, cultural, religious, historical and archeological importance areas will help the children to learn about the local community. Along with this, it also develops the ability to fulfill those needs or solve problems by using local skills and knowledge.

According to the Local Curriculum Development Guidelines (2007), "Local curriculum is a curriculum that is developed and implemented at the local level with the participation of local stakeholders and includes local subjects according to local needs."

Even the curriculum developed at the central level doesn't cover the common needs and common characteristics of the entire country, it cannot cover the needs, characteristics, skills, culture, art, and customs of a particular place. Therefore, local curriculum is prepared by local intellectuals, teachers-students and parents by keeping the local needs and issues in mind. Since it will be prepared by giving priority to local knowledge, skills, perceptions and values, on the one hand, it solves the problems encountered in the daily life of the learners, and on the other hand, it also transfers local costumes, art, culture, knowledge and skills from one generation to another. As a result, local knowledge, skills and beliefs are conserved and preserved. Keeping this in mind, many parts of the world have developed and implemented local curricula. In Indonesia, Mongolia and Vietnam, a percentage of the local curriculum has been set aside and implemented.

### **Review of the related literature**

According to (Glatt horn, 1987), "The curriculum is the plans made for guiding learning in schools, usually represented in retrievable documents of several levels of generality, and the actualization of those plans in the classroom, as experienced by the learners and as recorded by an observer; those experiences take place in a learning environment which also influence what is learned"(Cited by Print, 1988, P. 8). This definition has elaborated the

concept of curriculum more widely that it has given emphasis equally to the learning environment and the educational outcomes with the planning

The report of (CDC, 2071 BS) mentioned that the 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).

This shows that the constitution has provided the right for the implementation of the local curriculum, but according to Subedi(2018), very few schools are implementing the local curriculum. The Nepali constitution (2072BS) 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.

The Primary Education Curriculum 2062 has stated that the effort to make rights, authority and accountability at the local level will be decentralized. Similarly, according to the curriculum of local subjects 2062, it has been clearly emphasized on the development of local curriculum that the curriculum that is built and implemented by including local subjects is a local curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum that addresses the local needs is the local curriculum.

The booklet "Samvikas Shiksha 2065" published by the Department of Education states that the concept of local curriculum is a decentralized program. It is believed that sustainable returns will come from this. In this, it is said that local resources and means are circulated on the basis of adoption, inclusion and need. For this reason, it can be said that for the overall development of the nation, it is necessary to start from the local area itself.

The local curriculum can play an important role in ensuring the inclusion of every individual in education.

According to John F Kerr (1968), curriculum theory is not like a pure scientific theory, but curriculum theory can be developed on the basis of experimental spirit. Curriculum theory can be developed through a combination of ideas. According to him, the development of the curriculum theory is done through two processes, the arrival method and the incorporation method. The model of curriculum theory in terms of curriculum development, the 4 stages presented by Kerr are respectively knowledge, learning, experience and value.

Learners who comprehend the language they are instructed in are more likely to engage meaningfully with content, question what they do not understand, and even enjoy the challenge of learning new things, according to a 2000 UNESCO report citing the Dakar Framework for Action, which recognized the need to use basic education in mother tongue as local curriculum.

### **Research and methodology**

This article is prepared in a qualitative research design, in which exploratory research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) is also used. This study has been conducted in Bardaghat Municipality among the 7 municipalities in Nawalparasi District (Bardaghat, Susta West) where local curriculum has been developed and implemented. Similarly, 3 schools in Bardaghat municipality have been selected on the basis of purposive sampling. Primary as well as secondary data have been used to complete this article. And data has been collected with the help of interviews and questionnaires with the officers and employees of Bardaghat Municipality, Education Branch as well as members of the Local Curriculum Development Committee, head teachers and teachers who teach the local curriculum in school. Various study reports, directories, articles and books have been used as secondary data.

### Local curriculum policy in Nepal

For the development and implementation of the local curriculum, the Primary Level Curriculum 2005 arranged students to choose their mother tongue or local subject according to the local environment. But due to the current situation and lack of clear policies and procedures, it could not be implemented. After that, the revised curriculum of Primary Education Curriculum 2062 made the following provisions about the local curriculum.

**Table 1**

Local Curriculum in Different Subjects

| s.n. | Subjects           | Part of the Content to be Determined by the Center | Part of the Content to be Determined by the Local Level |
|------|--------------------|--|---|
| 1    | Local subject      |  | 100%  |
| 2    | Social studies     | 80%  | 20%   |
| 3    | Physical education | 80%  | 20%   |

*Note. The local level determines 100% of the content for the local subject.*

In this way, one of the subjects prescribed for the primary level is a local subject which is to be selected from the local level. Likewise, there is a provision to build and implement 20% of the curriculum for social studies, physical education and creative arts at the local

level. The curriculum as mentioned in the table above has been implemented from the year 2063 for classes 1-3.

There was a policy provision that local curriculum can be developed at any level between the district, resource center and the school level. If the local needs and problems across the district are the same, then the district education office can developed local curriculum for schools across the district. After the federalism was implemented each municipalities and rural municipalities have developed their own laws. According to which, the local municipalities are now doing the work of developing the local curriculum based on the instructions given by the Curriculum Development Center. Local municipalities have a branch called Education Branch, which takes initiative for local curriculum development and implementation in basic schools based on the instructions or guidelines of the local curriculum development center.

Currently, there is a policy provision to develop and implement local curriculum at the basic level, but there is no such provision at the secondary levels. Although it is mentioned in the original document of the secondary education support program that 10 to 15 percent of the curriculum in secondary education should be based on local needs, it has not been put into practice until now. Therefore, at the initiative of the local municipalities, the local curriculum has been implemented only in the basic level of Nepal i.e. classes 1-8.

### **Local curriculum development process**

A local curriculum is a curriculum that is prepared by the locals to include local content in order to provide education based on local needs and to protect and develop local skills, resources, tools and diversity. The need of education based on local curriculum has been included in its report long ago. Local curriculum is very important for schools. Different opinion are also found among curriculum scholars about the local curriculum development process. Different local municipalities have mentioned the following processes of local curriculum development in the guidelines for developing local curriculum 2007

**i. Identification of needs:** Identification of needs is part of the first step when developing local curriculum. The needs of the local group, community or society should be taken into consideration. Local needs should be identified in consultation with the local teachers, industrialist, social workers, educators, parents and other stakeholders.

**ii. Determination of objectives:** After identifying the need, objective should be developed. For this, children's IQ level and their psychology, class, nature of subject matter should be considered. Similarly, local art, culture, profession, skill and availability of resources should also be taken into.

**iii. Selection of the subject:** After developing the objectives, the subject should be selected to fulfill those objectives. For this, different topics should be chosen according to different subject areas. Also, the content should be elaborated. While choosing the subject matter, the local environment and available resources should be considered as much as possible.

**iv. Determination of classroom learning achievement:** Classroom learning achievement should be determined based on the ability, level and class of the children. In the developed local curriculum, it is necessary to determine what kind of behavior is expected from the children or what kind of achievement is expected from the children.

**v. Educational material:** After the selection of the content that fulfills the specified objectives and after the development of the local curriculum, the selection of the educational material for teaching those content is also an important issue. According to the local curriculum, the resources available at the local level should be used when selecting educational materials. In this way, materials should be concrete or model.

**vi. Learning Facilitation Process:** After the development of the local curriculum , it is relevant to use the following methods according to the guidelines for Developing local curriculum 2007 for the learning facilitation process.

- a. Discussion method
- b. Questionnaire method

- c. Observation method      d. Field visit method
- e. Performance Method      f. search method
- g. Research method      h. Research Methodology
- i. Problem solving methods j. practice method
- k. Jigsaw method

**vii. Student evaluation:** As the learning of the students will be ensured based on formative evaluation, it has been mentioned that the implementation of this curriculum and the student evaluation will also be followed. It emphasized on continuous assessment system.

**viii Timing:** According to the modified primary education curriculum 2005 (classes 1-3) and 2008 (classes 4-5) , there is a provision to make 80% course of social studies, physical education and creative arts in classes 1-5 are taught by the center and 20% by the local curriculum in our country and accordingly it has been implemented in most of the schools. In the same way, the local level is also given the responsibility of developing and implementing the curriculum of 100 marks in local subjects or in mother tongue with 4 lessons per week (128 hours per year).

### **Result and discussion**

The result and discussion has been presented in the following paragraphs.

The local curriculum covers topics that the central curriculum cannot cover. In some local levels, the curriculum has been developed and implemented, while in some local levels, the curriculum is in the process of being developed. Even though the local curriculum includes local art, culture, profession, business and local needs, many challenges have appeared in the development and implementation of the local curriculum.

### **Problem and challenges of local curriculum development:**



According to the Orientation Guide for Local Government Agencies 2020 for the development and implementation of local curriculum, local curriculum should ensure local participation and use local experts. According to this guide, the local government should lead the local curriculum development process with the involvement of teachers and other stakeholders. A committee should be formed under the chairmanship of the head of the local government. The head of the branch works as the secretary of the committee. All the technical management work were done by the education branch. It is also mentioned in this guide that the committee will be responsible for the overall work of curriculum development. In this context, during the interview of municipal education officer

Since the development of local curriculum is a new subject of the Municipal Education Office of Bardaghat municipality, the human resources including the education branch are insufficient and there is a lack of sufficient experience and efficiency in such a work like curriculum development.

In the first stage of local curriculum development, local intellectuals and stakeholders were invited to collect opinions, advice, and suggestions for the selection of topics under the identification of needs. In the opinion of a member of the curriculum development committee,

The main concept of the local curriculum could not be explained to the local stakeholders, so the stakeholders could not come up with sufficient content. At the same time, there was a lack of efficiency of the stakeholders in such type of task.

As the local curriculum is a completely new subject, the work of this development was found to be very complicated indeed. The National Curriculum framework, 2020 developed the policy guidance of school education has been approved by the Government of Nepal on

September 6, 2019 and has been implemented. The Local Government Operation Act 2017

Provides that the local level can develop and implement local curricula. According to the local

Curriculum guidelines and national curriculum framework. There is a lack of sufficient manpower

for this task along with the lack of capacity and training related to local curriculum development

in the local bodies.

Bardaghat Municipality has become the first municipality of the district to implement the local curriculum with the aim to tell the identity of the city from the school level. A local curriculum called 'Hamro Bardaghat' was implemented from the academic session 2021 for classes 1 to 3, while it was planned to implement the curriculum from class 4 to 8 next year. Not only writing but also the publication was challenging tasks in curriculum development. In this regard, according to another member of the curriculum development committee

After developing the curriculum, there was a lot of problem in the selection of the subject matter. Not only that, the publishers refused to print the textbooks. Since only the children inside one municipality study those books, the publishers did not get much benefit. Therefore, textbooks were printed from the municipality's own budget.

On the 18, November 2021, Bardaghat municipality released a local curriculum called 'Hamro Bardaghat'. This curriculum was developed and made public, but it was also a challenge of monitoring whether the curriculum is being taught in schools or not. Only then the main purpose of the local curriculum will be meaningfully implemented in all schools.

### **Problems and challenges of local curriculum implementation**

Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Curriculum Development Center has arranged important supports and curriculum framework like Basic level (classes 1-3) curriculum 2019, local curriculum framework, 2014 and local curriculum development and implementation guidance (including mother tongue), 2009. In this context, the School Area Development Plan has given special importance to the provision of local curriculum in order to protect and promote local needs and practices of local traditions, culture and people's livelihood by developing and implementing the curriculum.

In this regard, according to the new national policy regarding school curriculum, there is a provision that schools should develop and implement a separate local curriculum of 5 period load for classes 1-3 and of 4 period load for classes 4-8 in coordination and cooperation with the relevant local government.

The local curriculum should cover the local diversity more and more. There are as many problems and challenges in building the local curriculum as there are problems and challenges in its implementation, which are as follows.

**a) Lack of human resources:** In order to develop the curriculum to represent the local needs, there is a problem in the implementation of the local curriculum even though there are no human resources with certain knowledge and skills in the curriculum makers at the local level. In this context, when one of the principals was asked about the impact of the lack of manpower, this was the answered.

The local curriculum belongs to the local environment, skills and arts, culture etc. But there is a shortage of such necessary manpower to teach local skills. There are also some local things which were there before but now they are extinct. How to teach those things?

**b) Unavailability of textbooks on time:** Although the local curriculum is prepared by the local body, the body that implements it is the school. Educational materials are needed to

fulfill the objectives of the children in the school. It is mentioned in the Orientation Guide 2020 that educational materials can be used both concrete and model. Accordingly, the textbook is in the form of solid and printed material. It is considered as an extremely important tool for gaining learning experience, but even after 1 year of implementation of the curriculum, the children still have no textbooks. And how do you teach? In response to the question, one of the teachers said this.

It is compulsory to teach after the curriculum is implemented. Curriculum and textbooks are provided via pdf file to us. We printed it out from the computer and are teaching through it. Since there is no textbook, it has become very difficult to facilitate. It is also difficult to develop the question paper by the help of the same pdf due to the lack of text book. Due to the lack of textbooks, children are a bit confused during exams.

**c. Difficulty in real practice:** The local curriculum is prepared by the local body, but it was done in such a way that although some things are correct in theory, they could not be achieved in practice, one of the teacher said. For example, there was a class book that had to be taught about wild animals and plants, but it was not possible to say with certainty where those wild animals and plants are found, one of the concerned teacher said that there was no main basis for identifying those plants.

**d. Inadequacy of resources:** In the context of Nepal, local curriculum is a new concept. Therefore, it is common that there will be problems and challenges in its implementation. According to the national policy, this curriculum is being implemented all over the country. Various studies have also shown some positive results of this. Local curriculum promotes local identity by covering the entire area including tourist spots, art, culture, natural heritage, language, lifestyle, food production, etc. at the local level. Plants, herbs, animals, birds, pollution, waste management, energy, minerals, climate change, rivers, lakes, mountains and minerals in this area, earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, lightning, storms

and accidents in the local area. Popular languages, festivals, fairs, religious culture, customs, costumes, castes, precious materials, etc. are included in the level.

Teaching methods including field trip, project work should be used to cover all the topics covered in this way. There was a lack of resources for this, according to the principal and teachers of the school. Therefore, it was a problem and challenge of the local curriculum as it actually requires a lot of means and resources to use the learning facilitation methods specified in the guidelines to convey the essence of the curriculum.

**e. Linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity:-**Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multicultural country. And now in the era of globalization, if one or two castes, cultures or skills are included in the curriculum at any local level, the others will be left out. There is also a possibility of depression in other children due to this. Therefore, it is a problem to prepare a curriculum covering all castes, all religions, and all cultures and to implement it at the school level.

In this regard, the words of one of the sample teachers are as follows.

As Bardaghat Municipality is a well-facilitated municipality in the Terai, there are more and more people migrating here every day. In this way, the immigrants are not of a certain caste, religion or culture and costume. Therefore, this curriculum does not and cannot represent everyone's needs.

### **Conclusion:**

There were many problems and challenges in the development and implementation of local curriculum in Nepal .Children receive all the information about their homeland and their environment through local curriculum from their early age. While studying the challenges of local curriculum development and implementation, various problems and challenges emerged in the selected municipality.

At the local level, the resources and tools and management mechanism required for the development of local curriculum were not effective. Likewise, the resources, tools and administrative mechanisms required for this were not sufficiently available. At the local level, due to the lack of available or unprepared human resources to develop local curricula, the environment for developing and implementing local curricula had not been able to develop under the leadership of local bodies. Providing necessary technical support and advice for curriculum development and implementation at the local level was also not developed and there was no mechanism in charge of monitoring the local curriculum after its implementation.

Another challenge was that students did not have textbooks in their hands for a long time even after the introduction of curriculum. Teachers were teaching from the pdf provided in their mail in the lack of text book. Teachers were not trained to address local needs and child-centered teaching. There were a lack of means and resources in the school to use the methods prescribed to facilitate learning. Similarly, there was a wide diversity in the demands, needs, professions and businesses of the community, which this curriculum had not been able to address. In this era of globalization, local skills, strategies and other things had disappeared. Explaining these things to children was also a challenge. Similarly, although some of the subject matter included in the curriculum were good to hear and read, it was difficult to put them into practice or to present them objectively in the classroom.

In a nutshell, Local curriculum should be life itself. Comprehensive training for teachers, school administrators and local government officers on curriculum development and implementation should be provided. Workshop, seminars, and continuous professional development programs can enhance the capability of the personnel.

## Reference

- Bardaghat Municipality. (2021). *Local subject curriculum; Hamro Bardaghat*. Bardaghat Municipality.
- Brinkmann, S. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). (2005). *Primary education curriculum 1-3, 2062 BS*. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). (2007). *Guidelines for developing local curriculum* [In Nepali]. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). (2005, May). *National curriculum framework for school education (PrePrimary-12) in Nepal*. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Ministry of Education and Sports, Curriculum Development Centre.
- Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CEIR). (2010). *A study on integration of local contents in school curricula*. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Curriculum Development Centre (CDC). (2020). *Orientation guide for local curriculum*. Sanothimi, Bhaktapur: Curriculum Development Centre.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Swayamprakash, J. B. R. A. (n.d.). *Curriculum and evaluation*. Pinacal Publication.
- J. W. (2012). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Kafle, M. N. (2010). *Curricular perceptions and pedagogical orientations of school teachers* (Unpublished M.Phil. thesis). Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University.

Suwedi, K. (2018, January). *Local curriculum in schools in Nepal: A gap between policies and practice. Crossing the Border: International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 6(1).