

Community Based Learning in Teacher Education Curriculum of SAARC Countries: A Comparative Evaluation

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Abstract: *The concept of Community based Learning skills have been incorporated to the curriculum of many developed and developing countries of present world at different levels of their educational systems and the authority concerned are trying to implement those in large scale. Community based learning is related with skills, values and all-round development of pupils' personality. Re-balancing of curricula to give more space for skills and values alongside textual knowledge and up-gradation of 'extra-curricular activities' as mandatory facets of higher education. Community based learning is related with lifelong learning and 'life-skills', including social skills and emotional balance, first aid and disaster response training, physical fitness and entrepreneurship, logical thinking and legal literacy and inculcation of community service and civic values besides sports. SAARC, a consortium of some South Asian nations based on regional economic, socio-cultural cooperation is trying to minimize the gap, formed between the intended curricula with that of the implemented one. In spite of little bit variations, to keep pace with modern global trend of educational system all the SAARC Countries are in a process of incorporating Community based Learning in the secondary teacher education curriculum. A secondary teacher, trained in Community based Learning not only can use it for self-help and for the solution of health and sexual problems of adolescent students, rather can implement the same to improve quality of life of young population by helping in overcoming various obstacles faced by them in their daily life. This paper is focussed on the comparative estimate of secondary teacher education curricula of SAARC countries with special reference to the status of Community based Learning. The method used for the present study is interpretative, analytical and comparative in nature. In this paper we can found that community based learning is better facilitated in decentralized settings.*

Key Words: *Community based Learning, Teacher Education Curriculum, Teaching-Learning, SAARC Countries.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Community-based learning deliberately integrates community service activities with educational objectives. It is not the equivalent of Voluntarism. It fills a real need in the community— students perform a valuable, significant, and necessary service which has real consequences to the community. High Quality Community-based learning courses successfully blend academic rigor with Community Service. The student learns from the community & the community benefits from the student service. Powerful, real-life experience wanted to give students that same experience. Community-based learning is a valid academic pedagogy helps in teaching learning process. If done correctly, it challenges students cognitively, and affectively – the unique blend of cognitive and affective learning often makes a lasting impression on students.

Five Models of Community-based learning

Discipline-Based Community-based learning : Students are expected to serve in the community throughout the semester & to reflect on their experiences on a regular basis using course content as a basis for analysis and understanding Problem-Based Community-based learning.

Problem-Based Community-based learning : Students relate to the community as “consultants” working for a “client”. Presumes that students will have some knowledge they can draw upon to make recommendations to the community.

Capstone Courses : Generally designed for majors & minors in a given discipline. Usually used in senior level. Appeal on knowledge students obtained throughout their coursework & associated with related service work in the community.

Community-based learning Internships : Like traditional internships, more intense than typical Community-based learning courses with students working as many as 10-20 hours a week in a community setting. Students charged with producing a body of work that is of value to the community. Unlike regular internships, have regular & on-going reflective opportunities that help students analyze their new experiences using discipline-based theories.

Under-graduate Community-Based Action Research : Students work closely with teachers to learn research methodology while serving for communities.

The Learning Objectives of Community-based learning : To engage students in learning outside of the academic classroom – for the rest of their lives they are going to be in that community. Hands-on practical experience (boards, service clubs, interacting with school districts etc.). Knowledge with application. Helping students to actualize the tools that are needed to navigate the world (part cognitive, part affective), e.g., Mission Statement of the College

The Do’s of Community-based learning Pedagogy :

- Academic credit is for learning, not for service
- Do not compromise academic rigor
- Set learning goals for students
- Establish criteria for the selection of community service placements
- Lay out your learning strategies
- students learning from the community
- Reduce the difference between the students’ community learning & classroom learning

SAARC was set up with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 1985 with a view to promote and develop various fields of education, culture, science etc. of the member countries in a platform of mutual understanding and collaboration. Afghanistan joined the forum in 2007 as its eighth member (Munsi and Guha, 2014).

All the countries belong to SAARC share common legacy of colonial culture with almost common educational structure and issues in primary, secondary, tertiary and professional levels. Education Ministries of all the countries in this region try to produce competent and professionally sound teachers for secondary level. So they have developed need-based, rational curriculum frameworks for teacher education at secondary level which is guided by their national philosophy, goals and value system and are trying to implement them within their capacity. All the SAARC Countries are in a process of integrating community Skill Based learning to their secondary teacher education curriculum in various forms for individual growth and optimal living in a community (Munsi and Guha, 2014).

The global literacy rate for all people aged 15 and above is 86.3%. The literacy rate for male is 90.0% and the rate for all female is 82.7%, throughout the world. The rate varies throughout the world with developed nations having a rate of 99.2% (2013); Oceania having 71.3%; South Asia having 70.2% (2015) and sub-Saharan Africa at 64.0% (2015). Over 75% of the world's 781 million illiterate adults are found in South Asia, West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and women represent almost two-thirds of all illiterate adults globally. To overcome the situation and to create lifelong learning for the adult education in the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Countries : India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanaka, Maldives, Pakistan and Afganistan, they incorporate community learning in their Teacher Education Curriculum. These counties re-evaluate its teacher education and training policies and practices for the adult education, thereby being in a better position to implement systemic reforms with increased stakeholder participation.

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) : The South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) is an economic and political organisation of eight countries in Southern Asia. It (SAARC) was formally established on December 8, 1985 by Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in order to strengthen regional cooperation to promote the socio-economic development in the region. In terms of combined population of its member states, its spheres of influence are one of the largest of any regional organisation. In April, 2007, Afghanistan became the eighth member of the Association. So, at present the eight SAARC countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and India. Their common aim was to respond to overcome the huge illiteracy rate and poverty in this region.

SAARC in 2015

Country	Population (Million)	Literacy Rate
Afghanistan	32.007	28.1%
Bangladesh	159.857	57.7%
Bhutan	0.779	52.8%
India	1276.20	74.4%
Maldives	0.38	99%
Nepal	28.4	66%
Pakistan	190.4	55%
Sri Lanka	21.7	98.1%

Teacher Education : A Nation is built by its citizens, citizens are moulded by teachers and teachers are shaped by teachers-educators. No people can rise above the level of its teachers and for the development of the country, it is very important to have good teachers and good teachers can be produced only if we have a good system of teacher education. Now days our society changes very fast due to changes in the sphere of science, technology and economy, which in a gestalt form leading to development. The teacher education curriculum plays an important role in shaping and moulding the habits, manners and above all the character of student-teachers to become an effective teacher. Teacher education generally deals with increasing trainee teachers knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are to teach; pedagogy and understanding of children and learning; and development of practical skills and community based learning.

Community-based learning in Teacher Education : Inclusion of community-based learning in the corresponding secondary teacher education curriculum is now a global trend. At present community-based learning has played an important role in better life throughout the world. In the Delors Report “Learning: The Treasure Within” (1996) pointed out that, education was considered as an agent which can promote learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be. Community-based learning is often treated as an attitude related to different issues of development programmes. SAARC countries have incorporated community-based learning to the secondary school curriculum and accordingly kept touch of these in corresponding secondary teacher education curriculum also. To keep pace with contemporary global trend, all the SAARC Countries are in a process of integrating Community Based learning to their secondary teacher education curriculum in varied forms for individual growth and ideal living in a community. Community-based learning creates opportunities that locate pre-service and in-service teachers inside communities where they can learn about local conditions and concerns. At the same time Community-based learning can introduce children as members of families and cultural groups with a wide range of interests. Community-based learning can be used to inform an awareness of cultural diversity and assist pre-service and in-service teachers in seeing students as cultural beings situated in communities other than their own, and who by existing in these communities have strengths and resources that need to be experienced. A community-based pedagogical model allows pre-service and in-service teachers to step outside their own life experiences, see children as community members, regard communities as educational resources, and adapt learning to children’s life experiences. Embedded in the values of Community-based learning are community-centered ideas related to collaboration, reciprocity, social change, and empowerment.

In teacher education the relationship between community and student teachers who co-constructed a culturally responsive informal learning experience. The developing of the Community-Based work responsive informal learning experiences of student teachers are the focus of this study.

Need & significance of the study : This article is an attempt to outline a comparative estimate of teacher education curriculum of SAARC countries with special reference to the status of the inclusion of Community based learning in their teacher education curriculum.

2. METHODOLOGY :

The method used for the present study is explanatory, analytical and comparative in nature.

3. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION :

Community based learning in Teacher Education in SAARC Countries

Afghanistan : Secondary teacher education curriculum of Afghanistan in the past did not properly represent social and economic needs of the Afghanis. After the Taliban Regime in 2002, the Transitional Government was allowed to rebuild entire education system of the country taking support from the international agencies. CTD of Ministry of Education (MoE) with the help of Organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO initiated a modification of the curriculum in June 2003. The objective of the modified curriculum of teacher education was to shifting from knowledge based curriculum to competencies based curriculum. In Afghanistan, community based learning deals with adult education, gender issues, human rights, etc. The subject has immediate relevance to the objectives of new curriculum such as “fighting against any kind of discrimination”. Afghanistan has established community based learning within their school curriculum as a subject area in itself. Recently teachers are participating in several workshops organized throughout the country in topics like adult education, gender issues, human rights, peace education, health education, value education, moral education etc.

Bangladesh : The Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) (April-2005) and National Education Policy-2010 were framed with a view to prepare quality teachers for secondary level. Curriculum of secondary school education and secondary teacher education were reformed accordingly. In Bangladesh community learning was incorporated in the secondary education since March 2004. The ultimate aim of secondary teacher education programme is to advance the quality of learning in secondary schools through improved teaching quality. The strength of Teacher Education system in Bangladesh is marked by the provision of practice teaching by trainee teachers and community based learning.

Bhutan : A Strategic Plan (2004-2012) was framed by the Royal University of Bhutan and a National Education Framework 2010 was set up by the Ministry of Education (MoE), Royal Government of Bhutan to direct the educational system of the country in right way. In the secondary school curriculum, areas related to personal development, including adult education, value education, moral education etc. Teacher education programmes gives importance on community learning along with mastery in the core subjects. Teacher education helps to produce resourceful teachers able to participate fully in the community and willing to play an active part in at least one area of national or community development (Munsi and Guha, 2014).

India : Historically, India has been the land of teachers and learners. Knowledge has always been regarded as the highest virtue in Indian society. The concept of teacher learner resembles to that of the forest ashrams of the ancient Hindu tradition of teaching where a 'Guru' used to disseminate knowledge to his resident-disciples. In India, the development of teacher education has had a tremendous boost during the post-independence period. In India there is two year B. Ed. programme for preparing teachers at secondary level of school education. The National Curriculum Framework-2005 was framed for the secondary level of Indian school education and accordingly National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education-2009 was formulated. As per the NCTE Regulation 2014 the new secondary teacher education curriculum was formed with keeping close liaison with national secondary school education and global need of the time. NCTE considered subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and competencies to implement the knowledge in specific contexts of teaching in structuring the secondary teacher education programme in India. Different community based learning like Adult Education, health, literacy, involving with people, and living a healthy life have been acknowledged by the NCF, 2005 as important areas in school education and included accordingly in secondary school curriculum. The most effective part of two year B.Ed. course is school internship. Having gained some experience with the child, the community and schools in Year 1, the second year would offer intensive engagement with the school in the form of School Internship. During the Internship, a student-teacher shall work as a regular teacher and participate in all the school activities, including planning, teaching and assessment, interacting with school teachers, community members and children. In Teacher Education Curriculum School Internship Programme helps to develop conceptual and practical understandings about teaching and learning in school environment. And Participation in School Activities i.e. Literary, Dramatics, Fine arts and sports.

Maldives : The new Government of Maldives has also prepared a National Development Plan (2009-2013) keeping pace with the modern global educational progress in all level. Institute for Teacher Education (ITE) and Educational Development Centres (EDCs) have shared the responsibility of Teacher Education in Maldives over the years which have been working within the newly established Maldives College of Higher Education since 1999. It took the initiative to promote community learning as a co-curricular sector and the projects were practiced in several schools. Teachers were trained accordingly to execute the community based learning programmes. The existing curriculum, pointed out a wide range of community based learning programmes like thinking critically and creatively, involving with people, and living a healthy lifestyle (Munsi and Guha, 2014).

Nepal : Teacher Education Programme started its journey in Nepal in 1948 with the set up of Basic Teacher Training Centre. A Teacher Education Project (2002-2008) was also administered by the MoE for betterment of professional teaching in the country. Provisions of community based learning are kept in the secondary curriculum and corresponding teacher preparing curriculum. The same has been integrated to the secondary teacher education curriculum and the teachers are being trained accordingly.

Pakistan : One of the strategic visions of Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan according to its Medium Term Development Framework (2005-10) was to focus on 'Teaching' to 'Learning'. Secondary Teacher Education curricula have been reformed by the Higher Education Commission in 2005. In the Bachelors of Education incorporated community based learning in their course, topics like social issues in education, drug abuse and its prevention, environmental education, population education, moral or religious education and value education are incorporated along with core subjects. In Pakistan, community based learning is often delivered in informal way in the education sector as in-school extra-curricular activities. Community based learning Programmes on illiteracy, sexual abuse and exploitation, juvenile justice, corporal punishment, empowerment, HIV/AIDS, etc. performed by the students with the help of community members.

Sri Lanka : In Sri Lanka, as per National Education commission, teachers have to function as 'change agents' for operationalization of the policies adopted. Sri Lanka has incorporated community based learning within their secondary curriculum. Training to In-Service and pre-service teachers also given on community based learning. The program has an innovative curriculum that places strong emphasis on providing pedagogical knowledge, supervised practice and follow-up, pupil-centered teaching, and experiential learning. Teacher education requiring three years of course work carried out through self-study as well as visits with tutors, group activities, and support from peers in teaching. It

emphasizes knowledge about teaching and subject matter and, like pre-service training, uses supervised practice and follow-up visits by faculty to schools where their graduates have been placed. Distance education also works with experienced teachers. It gives training and considers supervised practice and follow-up important elements of its program. Within 3 to 5 years Candidates complete their course work. They also make use of discussions, team-teaching, community development projects, and field trips.

Comparative Evaluation : All SAARC member countries have felt the importance of incorporating community based learning into their secondary teacher education curriculum to intrude these skills within secondary school students in a varied way. Country wise status of community based learning in the teacher education curriculum of SAARC region is like:

Names of Countries	Community Based Learning in Secondary Teacher Education Curriculum
Afghanistan	integrated community based learning within their curriculum as a subject area in itself
Bangladesh	integrated its secondary school curriculum with respect to community based learning
Bhutan	provided the knowledge of community based learning to the teachers at the initial teacher education programmes to the four years programmes to make them sound in all respect
India	community learning become an integral part of teacher education and the responsibility of transacting community based learning to secondary school students are fixed up on secondary teachers
Maldives	United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the community learning project as a co-curricular activity
Nepal	National Curriculum Framework 2005 stated that community based learning incorporated in the present curriculum by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) are mostly generic community based learning related to all aspects of life
Pakistan	A flag ship project on community based learning was taken by World Population Foundation during 2006-10
Sri Lanka	community based learning Programmes are conducted to train the secondary teachers

Where Afghanistan has integrated community based learning within their curriculum as a subject area in itself, Bangladesh has reviewed its Secondary curriculum to identify gaps with respect to community based learning. In Bhutan mastery on community based learning is being provided to the teachers at the initial teacher education programmes to the four years programmes to make them sound in all respect. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported the community based learning in Maldives as co-curricular activities. In Nepal, National Curriculum Framework 2005 has stated that life skills programme incorporated in the present curriculum by Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) is more related with all aspects of life. Community based learning project followed by teacher education in Pakistan where community based learning training arranged by the secondary teachers in Sri Lanka. India in NCF 2009 clearly outlines community based learning should become an integral part of teacher education and the responsibility of transacting community based learning to secondary school students are fixed up on secondary teachers.

4. CONCLUSION :

Community based leaning influence in the development of not only student learning in informal settings, but particularly the development of an in-service novice teacher-student. Along with providing the basic academic skills of literacy and numeracy, a quality education capable with Community based learning offering to secondary school students of the region to help them tackle the challenges in their Communities. Some activities in the community based learning areas like preventing of illiteracy, poverty alleviation, health, education, human resource development, population stabilization, drug addiction, rehabilitation, status of women, rights etc. Current literature abounds with declarations that teacher-students need to develop trust and relationships with students to move education in thoughtful directions and community based leaning used to form a mutual relationship development among students, teacher-students, and community. Community based learning is vital to a teacher preparation program and a firm norm of reflection must be instilled in prospective teachers. The increased call of beliefs are being supported internationally which was stretched also in SAARC member countries. Some has considered community based learning as co-curricular activities, some kept those in core curriculum as stand-alone and others have considered these as integral part of

curriculum. community based learning should be framed as a well structured programme to satisfy needs and outcome based participatory learning which aims at increasing positive and adaptive behaviours among individuals on different psycho-social skills. Social structure, sense of equality, school realities and teacher capacity of a country can only determine ways to integrate community based learning into formal education systems of that country. Training of community based learning is an effective means to empower the youth to act sensibly, to take initiative and take control over the adverse situations. The method generally used in teaching of community based learning in secondary level involves the process of participatory learning using four basic activities like practical activities, feedback and reflections activities, consolidation and reinforcement activity and practical application in day to day life situations. These actions will surely help the national processes of policy making, policy implementation and their evaluation with respect to secondary education and teacher education of the country concerned.

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