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PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM IN NEPAL

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Abstract
The major aim of the present study is to study the expectation of the parents regarding the primary education curriculum. Descriptive survey method has been adopted in the present study. Conducted through survey model, this study involves semi-structured interviews with 205 parents of the primary school'schildren of Ramaroshan Municipality-4, Achham, Province no. 7, Nepal. According to data were analyzed through descriptive analysis technique. Results of the present study indicate that parental expectations on the objectives of primary education are mostly in conformity with the general objectives of primaryeducation. Accordingly, majority of them even suggested teaching moral behaviours, health habits, and other as subjects. Parents complaints there is lack ofdiscipline in schools; low academic qualification of teachers; lack of dedication on the part of teachers; loose administration in the school; lack of supervision from the office concerned; teaching not usually done through the whole period and the school hours; ineffective teaching; too many holidays; no regular teaching in the school due to irregularity and negligence of teachers; and no emphasis on cultural and physical development of children. But a majority of the parents are unawareof interesting area of their children, interesting area of children, and reading subjecting of their children.

Keywords: contents, objectives, primary education curriculum, teaching learning

Introduction

Development of education took place only after the establishment of democracy in Nepal. It was only 1971 that a permanent mechanism for planning, developing, and improving, the school curriculum was introduced when the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) was established under the Ministry of Education (MOE). Actually, Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) wasestablished in Nepal in 1971 with the technical responsibility of planning, drafting, developing, improving and revising curricula of all levels of school's education. During the early years of the implementation of the National EducationSystem Plan, a section on textbooks and curriculum in the Ministry of Education functioned as primary administrative mechanism to formulate policies on

curriculum and textbooks. The curriculum Development Center was engaged in the activities related to the development and improvement of curriculum and curriculum guides. Later on in 1979, the Curriculum and Textbook Section of the Ministry of Education and the Writer's Division of the Janak Educational Materials Center were merged with the curriculum Development Center and itwas renamed as curriculum, textbook and Supervision Development Center. After the introduction of the National Education System Plan (NESP) several changes were made in the education system. On the basis of modern scientific principle of curriculum development, primary education was designed for first time in Nepal. National goal of education, general objectives of primary education, level wise, grade wise and subject wise objectives, weightage and full marks were also fixed. According to the plan, prevailing education system was elitist biased and not able to serve the need of the people and the plan called for unifying education into one productive system that serve the country's needs (Parajuli, 1999).

During 1971 to 1980, different efforts were made from the government side to implement the new system of education in the way it was intended. But from the very beginning of the implementation of the plan, many teachers, found the new system somewhat confusing. The mid-term and full term evaluation of National Education System Plan implementation observed a big mismatch between the intended and implemented curriculum. The full term evaluation team examined the plan thoroughly and their report suggested some necessary measures on the very plan itself. Accordingly, a decade old education system was revised in 1981. This was done with a view to widening the base for ordinary people to have an education more easily and by extending the duration of primary education the possibility of children's retaining the literacy they acquired was expected to be higher.

The popular movement that brought to an end the feudalistic Panchayat polity has created a climate that lends itself to openness in thinking. Consequently, the country felt the need for reshipping the whole education system. Taking into consideration the changed context of democracy, social customs and values, multiple demands of knowledge and of science in the world and the changing needs and aspirations of the people, a new primary education curriculum had been introduced from the academic year of 1991/92. Higher Level National Education Commission (HLNEC) 1997, a study on the effectiveness of primary education curriculum 1998, and different regional and national workshops of stakeholders on primary education curriculum pointed out insufficiency in primary education curriculum 1992. Curriculum of primary education 1992 was revised in 2003 and piloted. There have been some minor changes made in 2005 on the basis of outcomes of piloting. The revised curriculum was found to have considered the following aspects: (i) Trimming of the curriculum to reduce content load, (ii) stating guidelines for instructional methods and evaluation, (iii) provision of local curriculum, (iv) language of instruction, (v) incorporation and guidelines regarding life skills, and (vi) reiteration of child-centered approach in the classroom teaching learning (Singh, 2008:18).

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The revised curriculum was found to have considered the following aspects: (i) Trimming of the curriculum to reduce content load, (ii) stating guidelines for instructional methods and evaluation, (iii) provision of local curriculum, (iv) language of instruction, (v) incorporation and guidelines regarding life skills, and (vi) reiteration of child-centered approach in the classroom teaching learning (Singh, 2008:18). This is how new primary education curriculum 2005 has been implemented all over the country. The primary education curriculum 2005 has formulated six aims of primary education which are-to develop social and moral qualities such as morality, discipline and self reliance in children and develop the feeling of own nation, national unity and democratic culture; to develop fundamental linguistic and mathematical skills; to develop fundamental knowledge and life in science, communication technology, environment and health; to develop creative skills and keen interest in art and aesthetic; to develop inclusive society by uplifting all caste, religion, language; to be aware of human right and social norms and values (MOES, 2005).

Curricular and pedagogical arrangement of the existing curriculum sounds relevant, appropriate, and enough to do more activities. But the actual classroom scenario is different; the expected learning achievements are not attainable as it was predicted. Different study reports about the effect of existing curriculum on the achievement of the students show the low achievement of the students. There are certain components in each subject in which students under the new curriculum have not been able to achieve better than that under old curriculum. Although curriculum, textbooks, and teacher manual suggest practice oriented activities, the teacher did not pay more attention to transfer suggestions into action. The relevance of any curricular materials depends upon the needs and interests of pupils. These needs and interests are not reflected in the prevailing curriculum. In the beginning, it was hoped that Primary Education Curriculum 2005 would be a relevant for teacher, parents and students concerned persons. Butdifferent studies criticized the existing curriculum on the several grounds. Different studies which are carried out at CERID indicate that content, teaching learning process; student evaluation procedures are still unsatisfactory. Although PEC 2005 has made some changes in the prevailing primary education curriculum1992, different aspects such as grade wise intended learning outcomes, teaching learning and student evaluation procedures are somehow unsatisfactory.

First of all, sufficient studies have not been carried out on parental expectations on primary education curriculum. Secondly, all of the studies laid more emphasis on content areas only. Formulations of grade wise intended learning outcomes, corresponding pedagogical practices and evaluation procedures have been somehow neglected by these studies. Thirdly, research in primary education curriculum is neglected by the government, concerned bodies and authorities. Fourthly, there was a widening gap between the curriculum planners and the people at grass root level with reference to the need of the learners. This calls for a further detailed study on appropriateness, relevance, shortcomings of the existing curriculum.

Rational of the study

Parents may observe students' activities after school hours and know about their children's attitudes towards a variety of activities in school. Therefore, the parents should be considered as a reliable source of information about students' learning. Some issues upon which parents may report to evaluators are : difficulties children encounter in understanding certain parts of the program; difficulties children encounter in preparing homework; support materials such as reference book that children use at home; help students require in performing homework; interest students reveal in the subject; interest reveal in preparing homework; spontaneous reports of children on what is going on in school; students' enthusiastic talk about experiences related to a program; initiatives taken by students to increase their knowledge in a given field; application of principles learned in school in various out of school situations Lewy (1977). The issues mentioned are general in terms. The curriculum evaluators should formulate questions related to these areas in terms of that fit the unique features of aparticular program (Lewy, 1977).

Parents are regarded as the first agency of the education. In order to make primary education more qualitative, suitable, and competitive, its curriculum must be relevant to the needs, interests and aspiration of parents' as well as society. A curriculum is relevant only if it can incorporate people's expectations from education. Accordingly, to make education useful to people, it is necessary to find out, at first, the kind of perceptions, attitudes, and expectations that the parents hold towards education. Parents can offer suggestions and encouragement for changes and provide support when changes are introduced in education system. Keeping this in view, Nepal has made several attempts since 1950s to find out the opinions of parents of different parts of country on the type of education. Education commissions such as the Nepal National Education Commission (NNEPC, 1956), All Round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1961), National Education Commission (NEC, 1992) and Higher Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 1998) have forwarded several recommendations to make primary education oriented to national needs, functional and focused on all round development of children. Despite these recommendations of these commissions, a number of attempts have been made by the curriculum designer to incorporate the needs, interest and views of the parents in the primary education curriculum.

If curriculum is to be made as relevant to the people as possible so as to provide maximum benefits to the mass. It is important to reduce the discrepancies that exist between the expectations and the actual practices. For this, it is necessary to find out what kind of perceptions, attitudes and expectations the parents hold towards primary education curriculum. Parents can offer suggestions and encouragement for changes and provide support when change comes (Sparkman and Carmichael, 1975:110). So, there have been several efforts made after the first half of this century in this century. However, it is still the elite who are mostly from urban areas that influence and decide on the nature and the contents of education for the rural mass. As a result, even after four decades of curricular changes, the syllabus was found irrelevant for the majority of children

who live in rural areas (BPE Master, 1991; NEC, 1992). Keeping in view of the past experiences, an effort is made here to see relevancy or discrepancies between parental opinions towards the existing curriculum and the performed curricular practices.

The major purpose of the present study is to study the expectation of the parents regarding the primary education curriculum. The basic research question raised here is whether the existing primary education curriculum is according to the expectations of parents.

Literature Review

Sufficient studies have not carried out on parental expectation and primary education curriculum. In the context of Nepal, none study has been conducted on this topic. In this section, six topics namely parents' expectations of primary school students; parents' expectations of teachers; race/Ethnicity and Parent Expectations; socio-economic Status and Parent Expectations; parent's Level of Educational Attainment; and barriers to achieving expectations have been presented.

Parents' expectations of primary school students

According to the (EW, 2015; Rabadi, 2014), parental involvement is an important and essential to make a good performance in education to their children. However, parents are guardians, care takers, directors for improving and developing their children physically, mentally, socially and educationally. There is a strong positive relationship between parental education, or parental involvement and time spent with children (Guryan & Hurst & Kearney, 2008). However, parenting education programs offer multiple benefits to parents as well as to their children like new skills that increase competence and positive parenting practices. Parents are socialized to change the society (Dubow & Paul & Huesmann, 2009). However, parent involvement in the education is necessary. There are many ways like parents guide their kids during studies, play with children, aware on wrong habits, socialized with children in community and involving in schools' activities but mainly from school size they are not giving more important on parental involvement among their children in schools.

Parent expectations have been investigated far less often than those of teachers and yet may be similarly influential. Indeed, Ma (2001) argued that parent expectations about whether their children would go to university had more effect on students than either teacher or peer expectations. Parent expectations have been posited as affecting student outcomes both directly through interactions with their children and indirectly through parental beliefs and perceived efficacy in providing academic support to their children (Wentzel, 1998). It is conceivablethat the longer a student stays at school, parent aspirations (and student self- conceptions) will alter in line with grades the student gets from teachers. In other words, originally optimistic parental expectations could decline when parents received student grades that were lower than their expectations for their children. Wentzel (1998), however, studied parents' expectations of their grade 1-6 children's achievement and did not fi nd a declining pattern of aspirations across

the elementary grade levels even after parents received test results consistently indicating lower achievement than expected. Indeed, researchers have found high parent expectations positively influence older students' achievement and self-perceptions above what standardised test results may have indicated (Bornholt & Goodnow, 1999; Visser, 1987). Bornholt and Goodnow (1999) found parent perceptions of their eleven-to-sixteen-year-old children's academic achievement were closely related to children's self-perceptions because the perceptions and expectations of parents contributed to students' self perceptions (after controlling for examination marks and achievement). Similarly, in a study of seventh and ninth-grade students, Visser (1987) found parents could be encouraging of their children and have high expectations of their performance in mathematics even when they were not competent themselves.

Parents' expectations of teachers

The study of parent expectations of teachers has been largely neglected in the literature. Tatar and Horenczyk (2000) found parent expectations were greatest for the assistance and help they expected teachers to provide, followed by teacher competence and then fairness towards students. There were some differences between mothers' and fathers' expectations, however, with mothers placing more emphasis on fairness, assistance and help than fathers.

Race/Ethnicity and Parent Expectations

An examination of parental aspirations for their children's education showed that the ethnicity of parents along with their education level play an important role in defining their expectations of educational attainment (Spera, Wentzel, & Matto, 2008). In an examination of parental aspirations over time, Raleigh and Kao (2010) found that differences in parental aspirations existed between immigrant parents and native-born minority parents. Immigrant parents were found to maintain high aspirations consistently over time, from Kindergarten to Third Grade to Fifth Grade, when compared to minority parents (Raleigh & Kao, 2010). Both African-American and Hispanic parents view education as a priority, are concerned about issues that surround education, and have educational aspirations that are similar to those of non-minority parents (Stevenson, Chen, & Uttal, 1990). An example of this similarity is found in a comparison of mother's expectations for their child's future. Hispanic mothers' "expectations for their child's future were lower than those of the black and white mothers, but nevertheless were high" Stevenson et al., p.520). The importance of education to minority parents is also attributed to the perception of education as means of upward mobility (Delgado-Gaiten & Trueba, 1991). The historical precedence set by earlier research which emphasizes the importance of parental expectations and its effects on student achievement is reinforced by Spera et al.'s (2008) research which concluded that all parents, regardless of ethnicity had high expectations of their children. These high aspirations correlated positively with parental education and children's level of academic performance (Spera et al., 2008). Interestingly, Spera et al. (2008) also found that how parents perceive factors about the school such as "quality, safety, and climate… may also influence the educational aspirations they develop

for their children" (p. 1141). This finding supports the necessity of determining parents' perceptions and expectations of the school since these factors play an important role in parental aspirations for their children, which research has shown to be positively correlated to student achievement.

Socio-economic Status and Parent Expectations

Social and cultural differences of parents must be taken into account when school professionals make decisions about how to facilitate the development of the home-school relationship (Phillipson, 2009). Phillipson (2009) found that when attempting to facilitate the home-school relationship, parents who had a lowsocio-economic status level needed to be approached differently from parents whohad a high socio-economic status (SES) level. Berthelsen & Walker's (2008) research found that parents in low socio-economic status families often have fewer years in education than parents in high socio-economic status families and conversely have had more school experiences that were negative. Parents with low socio-economic status who come from variant cultures find it more challenging to become involved and maintain involvement in their child's educational experiences (Lee & Bowen, 2006). The diverse social and cultural backgrounds possessed by some parents with low SES is accompanied by diverse expectations concerning the education of their child (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008). This research is similar to Phillipson (2009) in that it emphasizes the need to recognize and address the differences that exist among parents of low socio- economic status in a manner conducive to forming a strong home-school relationship. Research by Jacob & Lefgren (2007a) has shown that parents in high-poverty schools value the teacher's ability to improve student performance more than parents in low-poverty schools. According to Jacob & Lefgren (2007a),parents with higher socio-economic status prefer teachers who have the ability to improve student satisfaction. Jacob & Lefgren (2007a) attribute parent expectations to the specific situation in which they find themselves. In a subsequent study of what parents' value, Jacob and Lefgren (2007b) reflect on the reason that parents of varying socio-economic status tended to be homogeneous in their preference for the type of school that their child attends.

Jacob and Lefgren (2007b) believe that a homogeneous school choice indicates the parents' preference to associate themselves with other families whichhappen to have the same priorities and the socioeconomic status to which they aspire. Parents tend to make educational choices for their children depending upon what is perceived as a need. They expect the school to provide what is lacking in the child's educational experience (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007b). School leaders, teachers, and staff who are knowledgeable about parents' expectations are better equipped to address the needs of the students. Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) has shown that there is a vast difference in the parental expectations of children from lower socio-economic status backgrounds (Rouse & Barrow, 2006). Roper (2008) acknowledged that in African-Americans, parents with a higher socio-economic status had comparable expectations for theirchildren.

Magnuson and Duncan (2006) conducted a comprehensive review of studies that examined the achievement gap between families with varying socio-economic status levels. The results of their review showed family income levels were partly attributable to but not necessarily causal of the racial achievement gap. Fryer and Levitt's (2004) research is referenced in the review as one study that builds a strong case for socioeconomic background as the cause for achievement gaps but is unable to deny the possibility that other family characteristics may contribute tothe racial achievement gap. (Magnuson and Duncan, 2006). Fryer and Levitt (2004) attribute the growth in the achievement gap in the early years of a child's education to attendance and lower quality schools. Admittedly, although thishypothesis receives empirical support, additional data is needed to study the schools and the general environment that the students encounter as part of their daily life before the hypothesis can be substantiated (Fryer and Levitt, 2004). Magnuson and Duncan (2006) conclude that although an examination of SES as a factor in student achievement reveals a .4-.5 standard deviation, this does not qualify SES to be isolated as the cause for achievement gap among Black and White students. Research is unable to isolate SES as the single causal factor in the student achievement gap due to family characteristics which can affect student performance as well (Magnuson and Duncan, 2006).

Conversely, Mandara, Varner, Greene, and Richman (2009) concluded that the socio-economic status of the parents contributed to the achievement gap. The "direct path between ethnicity and parents' socio-economic status" explains the reason that White children enjoy a higher achievement level than Black children since parents with higher socio-economic status levels were found to be more likely to use parenting practices which center on the academic achievement of the child (p. 276). Ultimately, Mandara et al., (2009) concluded that the factors that contributed to the Black-White achievement gap were social and therefore modifiable. This finding reinforces the need to examine the expectations of parents. Identifying the expectations of parents could provide insight into their needs. Therefore, schools will be equipped to address the challenge of improving academic achievement through working to alleviate the effects of parental barrierswhich may occur during their child's academic experience.

A home environment that encourages learning along with high expectationsfor educational attainment most accurately predicts a child's achievement in school (Grace et al., 2012). Grace et al., (2012) identifies parent involvement as the factor which has a major influence on the student's educational attainment level. Parent involvement is defined as "a catch-all term for many different activities including at 'home,' good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, through to taking part in school governance" (p. 196). Conversely, Do and Mancillas (2006) concluded in their examination of Latino children and their parents that SES plays a major role in school performance. They emphasized that although the role of SES in student achievement is influential, many low socio-economic status children can and do overcome the barriers to academic achievement which often accompany their socio-economic status level (Do & Mancillas, 2006). Finally, Do and Mancillas (2006) found that the parents' level of expectation communicated to the children

is often attained by the children and is critical in determining their level of academic achievement.

Parent's Level of Educational Attainment

A landmark study by Berlin and Sum (1988) identified the underlying causes of the achievement gap. The two causes identified in the study are 1) the amount of time that students spent on vacation and 2) the education level of the mother. In a study on family predictors of the Black-White Achievement Gap, Mandara et al., (2009) determined adolescent achievement was affected by the mother's education level which was in turn influenced by the mother's Socio-economic status. Berlin and Sum (1988) noted that an increase in the mother's education level, even if that increase occurred during the child's academic experience, had a positive effect on the child's level of educational attainment.

In Phillipson' (2010) study of a Hong Kong primary school which compared student ability levels in relation to parent's roles in achievement found that parents who had lower expectations of academic achievement for their children were less likely to be involved in school activities. Phillipson' (2010) study revealed that Chinese parents who held high expectations emphasized the importance of effort in achievement to their children on a daily basis. Phillipson' study is supported by Davis-Kean's (2005) research which found that parents with higher educational levels had higher levels of expectation for their children's educational attainment. Additionally, Asian-American parents were found to be more actively involved in their child's education at home and at school (Phillipson, 2010). Subsequently, parent's educational level has been proven over time to influence the educational attainment level of the child. The existence of a mother's low educational level has been shown to contribute to the achievement gap (Berlin and Sum, 1988). A positive correlation exists between higher educational levels of parents and higher levels of expectations for student performance (Davis-Kean, 2005).

Barriers to achieving expectations

A number of barriers to achievement of expectations have been identified in the literature. Among these are financial barriers (Ali and McWhirter, 2006;Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001; McWhirter et al., 2007); lack of parental support (Ali and McWhirter, 2006; McWhirter et al., 2007), low teacher expectations and support (Haynes et al., 2006), ethnic and gender discrimination (Luzzo and McWhirter, 2001) and barriers associated with student ability and motivation (McWhirter et al., 2007). A further barrier to the achievement of expectations that might be considered is the practice of streaming. Streaming (or tracking, as it is commonly known in the United States) has often been associated with teacher expectations. Indeed, Gregory (1984) argued that low teacher expectations for low-ability students were the most pernicious problem associated with streaming. Oakes has consistently shown how streaming can impact negatively not only on the learning opportunities provided for students considered low-ability but ultimately, and more important, on their life opportunities (Oakes, 1985, 1988, 1990; Oakes et al., 1992). It has been shown such negative effects particularly

applied to children from ethnic minority groups and those from low socioeconomic groups, who tended to be unequally distributed in the lower streams and to receive a 'dumbed down' curriculum, compared with middleclass students of similar ability (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989; Virginia State Department of Education, 1992; Jussim et al., 1996; Persell, 1977; Winn and Wilson, 1983). Despite the contentions about the negative effects of teacher expectations on student achievement, the practice of streaming continuesin several secondary schools in New Zealand.

Method

Research Design

As this study intended to expectation of the parents regarding the primary education curriculum, it was difficult to gather information by the census method (i.e. studying the whole population). In the situation like this, Kerlinger (1978) suggest personal interview as the best example of the survey research and use of personal interview as a principal methods of gathering information. Hence, in the present study, parents were directly contacted and essential data and information were collected by using interview. It clearly indicates that the present study may be termed as a survey study.

Participants

Participants of the present study consist of the parents of the children who are studying at primary schools in Ramaroshan Municipality-4, Achham, Province no. 7, Nepal. Opinions of 205 parents were collected using interview. Parents were selected on the basis of purposive sampling methods. In general, the selected parents were those who had keen interest in the education of children. This sample of parents consisted of illiterates to graduates drawn from various ethnic and cultural groups.

Instruments

First of all, a questionnaire was prepared through a thorough literature review by the researcher in order to develop the questionnaire. A draft of this questionnaire was presented to five experts who were in the field of curriculum evaluation. The experts were requested to criticize the questionnaire in terms of whether or not it served the purpose and had any validity. In accordance with the feedback obtained from the experts, the draft was revised and brought to the final form. As a result, the prepared questionnaire is a good representative of the population in terms of the quantity and quality of its question. All the questions in the form are open ended. There were eight sections in the questionnaire. The sections are: primary school teachers; parental opinion towards of the objectives of primary education; parental Expectation on the contents of learning; parents Opinion on the activities of the school; parents' opinions on the inclusion of religious and culture contents in the curriculum; parents' experiences on subjects of their children in the school; parents' experiences on Interesting activities of their children in the school; and types of work skills as wished by parents

Result and Discussion

This section presents expectation of parents on primary education curriculum in Nepal. Parental expectations on various aspects of primary education curriculum have been presented in this section.

Parental Opinion towards of the Objectives of Primary Education

Contents, teaching learning activities and student evaluation procedures are based on the objectives of the curriculum. Thus, objectives are considered important element of the curriculum. In this regard, most of the respondents of the present study were not well educated and they could only read and write. At the same time, they did not understand special terminology such as objectives, contents and pedagogy and so on. As the parents were not able to give their views on the objectives of primary education, they were asked to tell their expectations regarding skills and competencies they want their children to be able to do after the completion of primary education.

In order to find out expectations regarding the objectives of primary education, they were asked to report their expectations regarding the understanding, skills and competences they would want in their children. In response to this query, most parents (more than 80 percent) reported that primary education completers must be able to: be able to write correspondence letters and application; be able to read books and newspapers, letters of correspondences and legal papers; be able to solve daily life problem related to the operations of the four fundamental rules in numeracy and calculate interest; development a disposition of being obedient, respectful, and religious minded and have good moral standing, and helpful to parents in doing the household chores.

In addition, they wanted their children to help in the household chores. Parents of the disadvantaged children wanted their children to be skilled enough to work and earn (Mathema, 1993:35). Parents of the disadvantaged children wanted their children to be skilled enough to work and earn. When asked about the reasons for sending children to school, they (the disadvantaged children's parents) wanted their children to have a job as that of a peon or a soldier (Mali, 1993:8).

In the present study, some parents wished their children to be able to communicate in English as a result of schooling. Hence, the parental reasons for educating their children at the primary level is to make them able to solve daily life problems related to reading, writing, and calculating as well as to have good moral standing and also help them acquire knowledge and skill and to secure job. These parental expectations on the objectives of primary education are mostly in conformity with the general objectives of primary education which are stated as the development of inborn abilities of the children under the child centered system, development of skills in three R's (3Rs: Reading Writing and Arithmetic) so essential to daily life, inculcation of qualities like honesty, self-reliance, and industry in the broader context of pragmatic values, moral and beliefs and development of civic, scientific, and environmental sense (PEC, 1992:2). In brief, the reason for educating their children is to make them wise, smart, and happy in their lives and help them acquire knowledge to secure job (CERID, 1982:16).

Parental Expectation on the Contents of Learning

As mentioned before, some parents of this study were unaware of all subjects taught at school and the activities they do at the schools. Although some of the parents were unaware of all the subjects their children learn at the school and the activities they do there they vocal regarding the subjects to teach in the school. Parents were found to be unanimous in their desire for the school to teach their children to read, write and do the arithmetic. In addition to this, majority of them even suggested teaching moral behaviors, health habits, and English language. Very few of the parents (6 percent) who were aware of the removal of Moral Education and Sanskrit Subjects from fourth and fifth grades objected to this decision. The utility of subjects such as Social Studies, Science, Work Skills, Physical Education, Creative and Expressive Arts was beyond the comprehension level of most parents. But parents showed their acceptance when specifically asked about these subjects. Some parents who were living on the highway side of some districts saw the need for teaching about safety measures against road accidents (traffic rules, regulation and other measures). When asked specifically about socially useful work skills, an overwhelming majority of parents (more than80 percent) felt the need for learning work skills by their children. Just 5 percentof the parents objected to teaching such skills on the ground that the children are too small to learn these skills. Approximately 12 percent of the parents werefound in a state of indecision.

Parents Opinion on the Activities of the School

A majority of the parents (80%) in this study expected that children must be learning something good in the school. This implies that they do not seem much concerned with whatever activities are going in the school-they do have a high stake. For example, one third of the parents were found to be dissatisfied with the functioning of the school itself. They had many complaints against teachers and their teaching. Their main complaint is related to the teachers and their teaching. They are of the opinions that the programmes of the curriculum have not been delivered to the required extent by teachers including their concerned people and authorities. Regarding school activities, the main observations of the unsatisfied parents are: lack of discipline in schools; low academic qualification of teachers; teachers involved in politics; lack of dedication on the part of teachers; lack of supervision from the office concerned; loose administration in the school; teaching not usually done through the whole period and the school hours; ineffective teaching; too many holidays; no regular teaching in the school due to irregularity and negligence of teachers; and no emphasis on cultural and physical development of children.

Parents Opinions on the Inclusion of Culture Contents in the curriculum

To find out opinion regarding the representation of their culture in the curriculum, parents were asked whether they had got their children taught matters related to their religion and culture. Children of the parents (60%) children have learnt something about their religion and culture. Ten percent of the parents were found to be unaware about the issue. However, thirty percent of the parents

indicated inadequate provision of their religion and culture matters in school learning. Ethnic parents, particularly from Gurung, Tamang, Lumbu, and Muslim communities, were found to have the conviction that there is little or no information being given about their culture and religion. They complained that there is more information about Hindu religion and culture. On the opposite pole, some Hindu parents were concerned with inadequate teaching about the Vedic culture and discipline. In addition, some parents from the Far Western, Mid Western and Terai religious perceived gross under representation of local culture and religion in the school curriculum. For example, the popular festival called Gaura Chad of the Far Western region and the famous Bhagabati Mandir and Kubinde Daha of the Far Western religion go simple missing in the curriculum. Their resentment was that nothing is mentioned in the primary school textbook or taught about these culturally important festivals and temples. They questioned the practice of teaching only about the Gaijatra Parba, which is exclusively the festival of the Newar community Kathmandu valley. Voices of resentment of the present curriculum were also sounded in the Terai region for neglecting teaching about the Chhat and Holi festivals. Such reactions indicate the awareness of local people on the need for providing years ago is still true. According to Mali the schools' textbooks have always had a heavy cultural bias towards the Indo- Nepalese upper castes and to a lesser extent, towards the Newar of Kathmandu (1979:227).

Parents Experiences on Subjects of their Children in the School

Regarding academic subject of interest to their children, a large majority of parents (65%) were unaware about them. Most of the parents, who knew the subjects, reported Nepali as the most interesting subject to their children. Out of 21 parents who had some knowledge about their children's subjects of interest, about one fifth and one seventh reported English and Mathematics as the most interesting subjects of his/her child. Besides no parents mentioned Science in the category of most interesting subject to the children. This may imply that parents are less concerned with their children's interest and the activities that are organized for them in the schools.

Parents Experiences on Interesting Activities of their Children in the School

The majority of the parents are unaware of interesting area of their children, and more than one third do not know about the interesting activities of the school. This may imply that parents are less concerned with their children's interests and the activities that are organized in the school. Parents, who have some knowledge of the activities of the school programme, have found their children interested either in cultural programmes or sports activities or in both. Very few parents (2%) found the quiz contest interesting to their children. No parents had reported the liking of literacy programme of the school. The reason may either the school had no such programmes or the students had not reported it as interesting.

Parental Opinion towards Primary School Teachers

Most of the parents expect a lot form primary schools teachers. Nearly 50 percent of the parents expected that primary school teacher should be modern, creative, and open to innovation, patient, cheerful, sincere, honest. A small number of parents (7%) in this group expected teachers to love their jobs, be decisive and be well organized, and to have a well developed sense of selfsteem. In terms of the profession-specific expectations parents were found to have low expectations. In this regard, most desired traits for parents were to have a background in child development and psychology, the ability keep the class undercontrol and to provide discipline (44 %). Having the ability keeps the class under control, providing discipline, following technological and current developments, and passing on these developments to students were expectations for more than half of the private school parents.

Types of Work Skills as Wished by Parents

Parents of all regions wanted that children be taught about vegetable gardening and knitting, sewing and printing skills. While parents from the Mountains preferred horticulture and parents from the Terai region gave preference to agricultural skills. They did not see any point in teaching skills otherthan related to farming and home skills. It is obvious than any attempt to teach children other skills will remain a thankless task until a greater variety of occupations exist in rural Nepal. As the reality goes, the present curriculum lacks in the provisions made for teaching any work skills at the primary level.

Knowledge of Information communication technology

A majority (65%) of the parents indicated the urgent need of information and communication technology. They suggested that subject matters related to computer should be incorporated in the course of upper primary education and it should be core course for the children of upper primary education.

Conclusion

Results of the present study indicate that parental expectations on the objectives of primary education are mostly in conformity with the general objectives of primary education. There is satisfactory resemblance between their expectations on the objectives of primary education and the actual provision made in primary education curriculum. Moreover, most of the parents indicated the needfor teaching some work skills and for making their children more obedient, respectful, and religious. But the voices of one third of the parents indicate that there is under representation of their religious and cultural in the curriculum. Suchexpectations of parents comply with the recommendations of several national commissions (NNEPC, 1956; ARNEC, 1961; NEC, 1992) as well as with what has been practiced in most of the developing countries of the world. At least, the high level High Level National Education Commission (HLNEC, 1998) states, ‘one of the basic objectives of primary education should be the development ofthe life skills necessary for livelihood.

Accordingly, majority of them suggested new subject and contents areas for primary education curriculum. This opinion of the parents is supported by the various studies. On reviewing the current status of primary education, both the Basic and Primary Education Master Plan (1991-2000) team and the National Education Commission (NEC) of 1990 found the syllabus of primary education irrelevant for the majority of children who live in rural areas (BPE Master Plan, 1991:237). It was also observed that the curriculum could not take into account the learning needs of ethnic and cultural minorities. Expect for cosmetic changesin the curriculum, there has been no systematic effort in revision the primary education curriculum to make it integrated, meaningful and relevant (BPE Master Plan, 1991:237). The subject and contents taught in primary school were considered elitist and urban biased. The reason behind this may be attributed, to a larger extent, to the faulty process of curriculum development. The members of the elite class, who were mostly from urban areas, influenced and decided on the nature and contents of education for the rural masses. All the education commission appointed from time to time, have considered primary education as basic need of all children and terminal education for many. The curriculum shouldalso provide opportunities to learn capability-the capability to deal with the crises of the time. Such a concern has been well reflected in BPE Master Plan (1991:241). National priority such as health and nutrition, population and environment, and productivity could be taken as bases for selecting contents for primary schooling. Literacy and numeracy will be vehicle for teaching concepts, knowledge and skill in these important areas of national concern. Similarly, the NEC (1992) recommended to pay attention to providing practical knowledge about agriculture and environment through the medium of Kitchen garden, flower garden and plantation of fruit sapling as these activities have practical bearing on human life at the most formative stage. It is also suggested to allow a school or a community to create and a new Primary Education Curriculum (PEC) in 1992 with expectation that it would improve the relevance and quality of primary education.

In order to meet the parental expectations and the national requirement, provisions should be made for incorporating some socially useful work skill in the primary education curriculum. For this, present provision of elective subject to allow room for local and regional variation in the national curriculum must be used for the development of such skills. The potential work skill areas for the primary school children of Nepal are kitchen gardening, handicrafts and horticulture. Secondly, the integrated textbooks 'Social Studies should have some flexible adaptive structure in the first three grades of primary level so that local culture, religion and Geography can be put into practices effectively in order to develop discipline among children. In addition to adjustments in curriculum, it is also necessary that the functioning of the school also should be improved in order to have better achievement on the part of students.

Parents (52%) complaints there is lack of discipline in schools; low academic qualification of teachers; teachers involved in politics; lack of dedication on the part of teachers; lack of supervision from the office concerned; loose administration in the school; teaching not usually done through the whole period

and the school hours; ineffective teaching; too many holidays; no regular teaching in the school due to irregularity and negligence of teachers; and no emphasis on cultural and physical development of children.

The majority of the parents are unaware of interesting area of their children, interesting area of children, and reading subjecting of their children. Parents of all regions wanted that children be taught about vegetable gardening and knitting, sewing and printing skills. About a third of the parents were not satisfied with the functioning of the school due to the same reason. A majority of parents were not aware of the academic subjects interesting to their children, indicating the need for launching parental education along with schooling progrmme for children. Accordingly, a majority of the parents suggested for the inclusion information and communication technology in the upper primary education. Hence, the overall situation suggests the need for making some adjustment in primary education curriculum.

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