

**Curricular Intervention In Peace Education In The Post-Conflict Context
In Nepal: An Interpretive Study**

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*Master's Thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation-SVF 3901
May 2018*



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May 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many supportive hands have made it possible to complete this study. I heartily thank my thesis supervisor Associate Professor Mohammad Salehin for his constant encouragement and constructive feedback in various stages of the study. Similarly, I thank Associate Professor Nils Vidar Vambheim for his constructive feedback in the proposal of this study. I am also grateful to Benjamin Schaller for organising several seminars in order to improve study and research of 2016-2018 batch at CPS. Likewise, I remember my classmates for their support in many ways. Besides, I am indebted to Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) and National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) in Sano Thimi, Bhaktapur, District Education Office (DEO) in Pyuthan district and research participants from these institutions and schools in Kathmandu and Lalitpur districts in Nepal. To make this volume free from critical errors, my friend Tara Sapkota had been kind enough to me. I am very thankful to her. Last but not the least, I thank all staffs at Centre for Peace Studies, teachers who came to my voyage to education, family members and friends.

ABSTRACT

Curricular intervention in peace education is a positive trend in the post-conflict contexts. This provides teachers and learners with the opportunity to engage in not only contents of peace and conflict but more importantly examine problems of peace. Furthermore, meaningful engagement with peace curricula enables teachers and learners to identify structural violence and prepare a foundation for structural peace. In this regard, Nepal also materialised peace education by integrating adequate contents in pre-existing Social Studies and Moral Education curricula. However, violence in schools and the society is rampant even after years of its intervention. Thus, the present study concentrated on exploring the contents of peace education and examining key stakeholders' (teacher, teacher trainer, school inspector/DEO representative and curriculum designer) understandings of both the significance and the challenges of peace education intervention.

Having document analysis and qualitative interview as methods of data collection, the study found out that the National education policies, curricula and textbooks have recognised the significance of peace education and created ample space for its intervention. Furthermore, the learning materials not only problematised violence linked with socio-cultural beliefs and practices, but provided 'unity worldview' for peace and social justice in multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic society. Despite stakeholders' positive views regarding the impacts of peace education, schools lacked teachers with related university education/professional training and refresher course. In addition, the school-based mechanisms for creating a culture of peace were also found barely functional. The situation has clearly undermined the significance of peace education in Nepal. Thus, a serious action needs to be taken before it is too late.

Key words: violence, teacher, learner, peace education, critical consciousness, social empathy/justice, and Nepal.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDC = Curriculum Development Centre
CERID = Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
DDC = District Development Committee
DEO = District Education Office
ILO = International Labour Organization
I/NGO = International/Non-Government Organization
INSEC = Informal Service Sector Centre
MoE = Ministry of Education
NCED = National Centre for Educational Development
NCF = National Curriculum Framework
NORAD = Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
OHCHR = Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
SAARC = South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SD = Sustainable Development
SSDP = School Sector Development Plan
SSRP = School Sector Reform Plan
TSC = Teacher Service Commission
UN = United Nations
UNCHR = United Nations Commission for Human Rights
UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF = United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
VDC = Village Development
WHO = World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter sets the scene by incorporating background information related to context, theme, problem statement, research questions and significance of the study. It also presents limitations of the study and the structure of this volume.

Background

Nepal is a multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic country as it is a home for people of more than ten religious identities, 123 languages and 125 ethnic groups (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015). This relatively peaceful Himalayan nation experienced a decade-long civil war between the Government of Nepal and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) during 1996-2006 that resulted in the death of more than 13,000 people (OHCHR, 2012). The Comprehensive Peace Accord 2006 brought the war to an end but unrest continued due to road protests, strikes and political deadlock in the country. The Maoists, considering Monarchy the cause of inequality, discrimination, and people's vulnerability, led people's movement in favour Federal Democratic Republic for which different political parties joined and succeeded to overthrow long-lived Hindu Monarchy¹ in 2008. This marked not only the "end of an era for world's last Hindu Monarchy" (The Guardian, 2008 May 28) but an appropriate time to eliminate caste hierarchies, discrimination and inequalities groomed in the face of the Hindu Kingdom (Bhattachan, Sunar & Bhattachan, 2009). In the transition from war to peace, and the Monarchy to the Democratic Republic, the country witnessed elections for the Constituent Assembly and the Parliament succeeded to formulate a new constitution in the year 2015. This political development, as some believe², provided the ground for addressing people's grievances and building lasting peace.

In this context, education sector has a crucial role to play: The role to produce not only politically and ideologically conscious masses that recognised the conflict of the past as a legitimate way to abolish structural violence but critical citizens with positive attitudes and peace values (Pherali, 2011) who can contribute to the creation of structural peace. The

¹ The Kings from Shah dynasty ruled Nepal for about 240 years. See The New York Times (2008, April 3). <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/03/world/asia/03nepal.html>.

² (ibid.).

structural peace, as argues Galtung (1969), is the absence of inequalities and discrimination from the society, which he refers to as social justice or positive peace. For this reversing task (changing violent attitudes into peaceful behaviours), improvement in education is inevitable as in different sectors and apparatuses of the government. While improvement in education can be realised in several ways, reforms in existing curricula remain equally important (McCulloch, 2009). In the context of Nepal, reform in school curricula is considered “peace dividend” as it claims to have incorporated people’s aspirations and needs in the changed local and global realities (MoE, 2009). In order to find out whether the school curricula are a peace dividend, it is necessary to examine core documents in educational policies developed in the post-conflict context in Nepal. For this purpose, I review the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP) and School Sector Development Plan (SSDP).

Policy Perspectives

NCF is the core document for curriculum development and implementation in school education that is divided into Basic (grades 1-8) and Secondary (grades 9-12) levels. The Basic level is further divided into the First Stage (1-3), the Second Stage (4-5) and the Third Stage (6-8). Similarly, the practice of the Secondary education also shows its division in grades 9-10 and 11-12 because of the provisions made before the formulation of NCF. As a matter of fact, NCF recognises the need to impart peacebuilding education in both the Basic and the Secondary levels in order to promote unity in diversity, cross-cultural cooperation, human rights, moral values, social justice and peace (MoE, 2007). Further, it necessitates an “integrated approach” to the school curricula in order to foster “interpersonal skills, self-conscious skills, critical and creative thinking skills, decision-making skills and conflict and stress management skills” (ibid., p. 44) in learners of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, SSRP implemented in 2009-2015 identifies additional areas associated with the implementation of peacebuilding education. Basically, two provisions: “All teachers must have received teacher preparation course and in every five years they must receive refresher course” and “peace negotiation and reconciliation skills as part of teachers’ qualification” (MoE, 2009, p. 84) are noteworthy. Because related education background equips teachers with theoretical knowledge and methodological skills and the refresher training updates them with innovations within the discipline. Likewise, SSDP, an ongoing educational policy (for the years 2016-2023), also claims to have incorporated a transformative approach in the school curricula and teacher development programmes (MoE, 2016). Broadly, it has two directives, one of which is to address the spirit of the newly formulated constitution and the

other is to support Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4, which include Education for Sustainable development and Global Citizenship, among others (MoE, 2016; National Planning Commission, 2017). Notably, both directives have a similar interest, which is to eliminate problems to peace, human rights and an equitable society. Thus, it is evident that peacebuilding education (or peace education) is supported through curricular process. However, I, as a peace scholar, was interested to find out what actually is in peace education in the post-conflict Nepal. Therefore, I considered analysing peace education designed for school education in Nepal.

Conceptualising Peace Education and Examining Research

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” (UNESCO, 1945).

This opening statement of the constitution of the UNESCO recognises the necessity to cultivate seeds of peace in humans. UNESCO (2008) further states, “peace education equips individuals with knowledge and skills needed to actively promote and establish a culture of peace and non-violence” (p. 3). Similar is the understanding of different humanitarian organizations and peace scholars. UNICEF (1999) recognises it as an enabling education for individuals in order to help them root-out both direct and structural violence and create peace in intrapersonal and supranational level. Literature in the discipline shows that these comprehensive definitions of peace education are put in practice dominantly through the education of Western values of human rights, the international system, environmental issues, development activities and conflict resolution (see Harris, 2004). However, teaching moral principles and values either through religion, spirituality or indigenous cultures are also a part of peace education (see Brantmeier, Lin & Miller, 2010; Nwaubani & Okafor, 2015; Yablon, 2010). Moreover, different religious and cultural practices are themselves the source of critical peace education as they provide a realistic or an authentic learning opportunity so as to enable learners to resist not only direct but structural violence (Bajaj, 2008, 2015; Brantmeier, 2011, 2013). While there is plenty of space to justify themes and nature of peace education, what is more important is the socio-political context (Salomon & Nevo, 2001) where peace education is to be implemented either that is a formal or non-formal educational setting. This awareness provides peace practitioners with a meaningful ground to design and intervene contextually sensitive/responsive peace education. In order to further our understanding of how peace education occurs and how they impact on the target groups, I review a few relevant research.

Following the violent conflict, there is a (positive) trend of integrating peace education in existing school curricula, especially in Social Studies. A study by Nwaubani and Okechukwu (2015) show that peace education is adequately reflected in the Basic School Social Studies curricula in Nigerian schools and teachers are positive about the need to provide such education. However, teachers lack awareness to the moral relevance of peace education. Moving little further, Najjuma (2011), in the context of Northern Uganda, reports positive changes in learners' attitudes to violence and awareness of non-violent conflict resolution alternatives as a result of an integrated approach to peace education in schools. However, Lauritzen's (2013) study reveals contrasting results regarding peace education in Kenyan primary schools. This scholar reports profound gaps between peace education policies (including curricula and learning materials) and actual practices in schools. Similar is the case of Zambian Secondary Schools where teachers are reported to have problems in identifying peace values and they result in teaching minimal scale of peace curricula (Mulaisho, 2016). Nevertheless, the most current study by Clarke-Habibi (2018) discloses impacts of integrated peace education in four dimensions of personal, social, political and educational in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, the impacts in different dimensions, as the study reports, are positive affect towards reconciliation, breaking down inter-ethnic barriers, policy integration in several areas, and new perspectives and pedagogies, respectively, among other impacts of peace education intervened through adequately trained teachers (*ibid.*).

Similarly, evidence from South Asian countries, namely, Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri-Lanka show that despite the integration of peace education in school curricula, low priority for peace education, weak coordination among stakeholders, traditional pedagogy and evaluation etcetera are major challenges (Thapa, Dhungana, Mahalingam & Conilleau, 2010). Though these scholars show comparatively better achievements in Nepal's case, a further study by Smith (2015) shows insufficient contents, inadequate teacher training and resources for schools as a hindrance to peace education intervention.

This review of research in peace education intervention of different contexts reveals fewer opportunities and more challenges linked with its implementation. Many of the challenges are related schools and teachers rather than the policy and learning materials. But, a gap in research is apparent also in the case of Nepal. Because, to my knowledge, there is no study that examines existing policy/curricula and stakeholders' understanding and their experiences of peace education. Thus, an interpretive research was considered worth carrying out.

The Problem Statement

Evidence shows that peace education has received considerable attention in the post-conflict context in Nepal. By integrating peace elements (diversity, human rights, civic sense, conflict resolution etcetera) in existing school curricula, educational policymakers in the country seem to have strong commitments for creating peace and justice in the multicultural society. Even more appealing are the contents responsive to ethnic/indigenous cultures, minority religions, marginalised and socially discriminated groups (UNICEF, 2011; Smith, 2015). It is also clear that those contents in the policy make less/no sense until recipients realise the change and experience it in their everyday lives.

However, studies reveal that violence is rampant in schools and beyond (see Khanal & Park, 2016; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2018). Inter-ethnic tensions, domestic violence and crimes are widespread leading to human vulnerability (The Diplomat, 2015, September 9; The Himalayan Times, 2017, August 27). Of the cases, a more striking is the violence in schools that include acts or threats of sexual, physical or psychological violence occurring in and around schools (see also UNESCO, UN & EFAGMR, 2015). This has generated many critical questions in peace education in the country. It is also a question of common sense that how learners acquire seeds of peace when they are physically and psychologically punished by their teachers. Further, building peace in schools and communities depends on the decision made by its actors (Kotite, 2012). In this context, understandings of active stakeholders of peace education (teachers, school inspectors, teacher trainers and curriculum designers) seem to have profound implications in bringing about changes in schools and the society. Considering the issues raised above, a qualitative study was worth carrying out at its earliest. The present study is the result of the same orientation.

Objectives of the Research

The main objective of the research was to analyse curricular components in peace education and to explore the understandings of the key actors involved in the design and implementation of peace education in schools the post-conflict Nepal. Here, the key actors include curriculum designers, school inspectors, teacher trainers and teachers.

Research Questions

The overarching research question was: What are the scenarios of peace education in the post-conflict context in Nepal?

Based on the key research question, I framed some subsidiary research questions that are:

- i. What are the significant curricular components in peace education and how do they contribute to creating peace?
- ii. In what ways, actors at various levels³ understand both the significance and the challenges of curricular intervention in peace education in Nepal?
- iii. What are other mechanisms than curricular intervention deployed to create a culture of peace in schools?

The Significance of the Research

To my knowledge, except regional reports/studies of peace education by donor organizations, i.e., UNESCO, UNICEF and Save the Children, curricular intervention in peace education in Nepal has not been the focus of research for scholars. This significant but underrepresented dimension of school education needs to be researched not for the sake for representation in research and academic discourse but to make different stakeholders aware of the direction that peace education undergoing in schools in Nepal. Further, such awareness may provide them with the opportunity to shape the future of peace education so as to contribute to peaceful future of the young learners who are in school today.

I believe that the insights of this independent research may be significant for a few reasons to different actors concerned with peace education. First, the researchers in the same field may benefit from the research findings because of its unique context and research design that includes diverse participants. Second, the research findings may provide insights to peace educators in different contexts and particularly peace educators and teachers of Social Studies and Moral Education in Nepal. Because it incorporates voices from important actors (teachers to curriculum designers). As a result, local and national efforts in peace education may concentrate on the direction of need. Not a surprise, I have believed that the research process has enabled me, as a peace scholar, to understand and act in the field of peace education in order to contribute to sustainable peace in the area, at least, the place where I work.

Delimitation of the Study

This study has some limitations of both theoretical and methodological types. Theoretically, the research concentrated on peace curricula integrated into the Social Studies (grades 1-10) and Moral Education (grades 6-8). Due to pragmatic considerations⁴, the study, however, did not focus on all six levels of curricula, namely, (1) the ideological (2) the political (3) the formal (the text itself) (4) the received (5) the realized and (6) the experienced (Goodlad, 1979). Instead, it concentrated on the levels 3 and 4 which required me, as a researcher, to

³ Local schools to National centre of Educational Development and Curriculum Development Centre

⁴ Here, pragmatic considerations denote research objectives and questions.

examine the formal (peace curricula, textbooks and teachers guide) and conduct interviews with those who received peace curricula; the teachers of Social Studies and Moral Education. But, in the context of Nepal, Curriculum Development Centre, National Centre for Education Development and District Education Office are teacher supportive mechanisms. Therefore, I involved representatives from those institutions along with teachers. Similarly, the study depended on a small sample size in which 5 out of 6 were male participants. And, the teacher participants were from urban settings with a very long experience in teaching Social Studies, Moral Education and other related subjects such as History and Geography.

Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter 2 offers an analytical framework of Peace Education Theory, Critical Peace Education and Multicultural Education which provides insights into issues raised by the participants and documents. Chapter 3 incorporates the research methodology used in this study and my reflections into different aspects linked to it. Similarly, chapter 4 and chapter 5 analyse and interpret data obtained from documents (curricula, textbooks and supportive materials) and qualitative interviews, respectively. The chapter to follow discusses key findings and concludes the study with recommendations for future peace research and practice.

CHAPTER II

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Regarding the necessity of theoretical understanding, I am in the line with Kaufman and Mann (2010) who argue that “theory has the potential both to inform practice and to be informed by it” (p. 16). This means that an informed educational practice is shaped by a theoretical foundation which is further enriched by practices of different contexts. As a matter of fact, various social, cultural, political and economic aspects are connected to peace, inquiry inclined to examine such practice might need to incorporate different perspectives. But, being aware of the scope and limitation of my present study, initially, I relied on two theoretical constructs of *peace education theory* (Harris, 2004) and *multicultural education* (Banks, 1993, 2010). During data analysis, however, I realized what Zembylas (2018) argues, “the complexities of peace education cannot be captured by any single approach, no matter how critical it alleges to be” (p. 3). Therefore, I incorporated addition theory of *critical peace education* in order to illuminate my data and enrich the discussion. In this regard, the study relied on three different analytical frameworks.

Peace Education Theory

The first chapter conceptualised peace education as a theme but it is also a theory with its dimensions and modalities potential to guide practice. For Harris (2004), human rights education, international education, environmental education, development education and conflict resolution education serve the purpose of peace education theory. The contemporary practice in peace education also supports the idea (see Burns & Aspeslagh, 1996; Harris, 2004; Save the Children 2010; UNICEF, 2011). In the following section, I discuss how different dimensions of Peace Education Theory were applicable in my study.

Human Rights Education

Knowledge of human rights enables individuals to be aware of their rights and others connected to them. Different legal documents, the Constitution and treaties in the domestic and the international level provide valuable information which is the base of human rights education (Harris, 2004). Similarly, awareness about functions of different humanitarian organizations may also be significant for individuals to protect their rights. McLeod (2014) argues that human rights education inculcates knowledge and skills in individuals that enable

them to act peacefully in their contexts. Appropriately selected materials not only provide information but also engage learners in the quality interaction between teachers and learners that may encourage them to be change makers in schools and home which impacts in a broader society (ibid.) This idea facilitated my inquiry of peace education because of the fact that learning materials included not only national and international provisions of human rights but also and even more importantly, the socio-cultural issues that violate human rights.

International Education

In literature, international education has been defined and discussed with reference to different notions such as international relations, world community, global order, global citizenship, world citizen and alike. Though different forms used, their meanings are identical to each other which imply that the citizens of the world are connected; hence they responsible to protect each other. The historical context of international education is based on the lessons learned from the two major world wars which are now in practice and research in different institutions including schools. In fact, UNESCO (2004) states that “a true educational process, that includes learning materials, must teach international education...”, and “...understandings of the United Nations system” (p. 95). In addition, UNESCO (2014) further emphasises the similar elements through the notion of global citizenship education for peacebuilding. The ideas of connectedness, brotherhood or global citizenship added a new lens to my inquiry.

Environmental Education

Environmental education, also known as green pedagogy (Preston, 2011) is among the most attractive theme in the educational activity. The increasing threat of global warming, pollution, deforestation and the extinction of endangered animals from their natural habitat and their potential consequences to human beings have warned the global community. In this premise, environmental education is considered as a viable means to aware individuals not only about the problems but the strategies and opportunities of conserving natural heritage. Harris (2004), argues that it makes an individual committed for taking positive actions. In the same strand of thought, UNESCO (n. d.) states that knowledge and awareness of various aspects of the environment inculcates values and commitments for ethical action compatible with sustainable development goals. The sustainability of environment is similar to the idea of deep ecology (Palmer, 2003) that recognises human beings and the natural world essential parts of the environment. This perspective should be well-articulated in learning materials so that learners demonstrate the environment-friendly behaviours.

Development Education

As the notion of development itself is contested, it may be a narrow perspective to depend on a single definition. In other words, development can be defined from different perspectives and have multiple interpretations and meanings. Such as human development has a different meaning than that of infrastructure development, social, cultural or economic development. These areas are well established in both the scholarship and the practice in the developed or developing world. My meaning of development is the state of full realization of human and non-human resources without distorting them. And any effort that tends to make individuals aware of it either via formal or non-formal educational activity may be considered as development education. This idea is similar to Harris (2004) who argues that developmental education must provide the individuals with insights of structural violence that persists due to power exercise and oppression in both the human and the environment. This somehow overlaps with Palmer's (2003) notion of deep ecology. Thus, development education in peace curricula needs to be aware of multiple perspectives that make learners aware of what sorts of change they require in order to live a peaceful life. Again, theoretical inconsistencies have created a problem in outlining development education because issues of human rights, social justice, gender, culture, conflict, poverty, climate change, transformation, to name a few, are directly linked to development (IDEA, 2013). For a practical reason, the concept of sustainable development which is sensitive to people from diverse backgrounds and the physical and natural environment is used more often in my study. This has resolved a practical problem which was to limit the scope of peace education integrated into school education.

Conflict Resolution Education

The term 'conflict resolution' has been used interchangeably with different names such as conflict management, conflict transformation, conflict prevention, violence prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, peace-making and more. Though there exists some level of difference, the crux of these different wordings remains similar which refers to the process of working towards a peace culture in the target region. Garner (2008) states that programmes aimed at conflict resolution equip individuals with conflict resolution skills that may have a profound influence not only on the learner but school and the society. In order to foster desirable skills, Davis and McCoy (2016) suggest that peer mediation, change in school climate via psychoeducation programme and individualized coaching are useful strategies for reducing conflicts in schools. Both the curricular and extracurricular approaches may successfully be used to facilitate evidence-based learning which is more relevant to the

individual learner's life (Bickmore, 1997). From this argument, it is clearer that the methodology used in conflict resolution education holds more explanatory power than the theoretical instruction which is relatively difficult for the young learners to grasp. Garner (2003) argues that a multiple intelligence approaches to conflict resolution provide profound insights for the teachers to consider the areas of strengths of each learner and effectively use the resources each learner brings to the class. As a matter of fact, this approach is based on Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence (1995, revisited 2017) which identifies eight intelligences, namely, linguistic intelligence, logical or mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, interpersonal/social intelligence, intrapersonal/ emotional intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence and naturalist intelligence. The meaning is that conflict resolution education may prove to be more effective and efficient when considered the areas of strengths and weaknesses of the target population.

The continuum of peace education theory proposed by Harris (2004) is narrow in the sense that it, largely, concentrates on what different areas of thematic knowledge to be integrated into peace pedagogies. Brantmeier (2013) is also one of them who realizes such limitation in peace education theory. The limitation is because of the lack of critical view on "how power operates in and between cultural groups and between human beings and the planet" (Ibid., p 244). In doing justice to one of the facets of peace pedagogies, namely, contents, it lacks clarity on how methods/forms and contextual conditions (Haavelsrud & Stenberg, 2012) may change the dynamics of peace practices with even not yet critically developed learners. In other words, the lack of a clear vision and relevant skills may, simply, undermine the true nature of peace education and result into merely the transmission of knowledge and passive memorization as opposed to developing a critical consciousness in learners (Freire, 1970). Drawing on contributions of P. Freire, J. Dewey and M. Montessori among others, peace scholars have enriched the discipline with newer models and analytical frameworks of peace education. Critical peace education being one of such frameworks deserved attention in my inquiry because several curricular components and participants' responses were found leaning towards its core assumptions.

Critical Peace Education

Different scholars have different opinions about what qualifies an educational activity to be identified as critical peace education. For Diaz-Soto (2005) critical perspective to peace education integrates varied angles that facilitate understanding of the complex issue. She proposes nine different postulates of critical peace education in which issues related to power relations, critical pedagogy, unity world view and spirituality are noteworthy. Not a surprise,

Freirean notion of consciousness-raising education is among the most attraction for educators and researchers in different disciplines including peace education and that is true in this study as well.

Bajaj's (2008) use of the term critical peace education also seems inspired by the advocacy of Freire, Dewey and Montessori in the sense that she argues for the recognition of transformative potentials of learners. Something striking in Bajaj's (2008) argument is that she points out to the need to address "structural and micro-level constraints" in order to "advance equality, participation and social justice" (p. 143). For Brock-Utne (1989), the former type of constraint is organized violence as a result of inequality and dominance whereas the latter is unorganized violence likely to resent in family and communities. The point I am making here is that in order to enable learners to identify both organized and unorganized violence, relevant learning materials and appropriate classroom methodologies are inevitable. The debate, discussion, inquiry, investigation, search, research, question and challenge status quo may serve as valuable means in empowering learners to disrupt constraints of both micro and macro level. In addition, Bajaj (2015) also identifies "pedagogies of resistance" as a strategy to promote "greater critical consciousness about unequal conditions" that learners of minority and disadvantaged groups are likely to experience in their social lives. Such pedagogies, she further argues, offer various insights to critical peace educators because of their emphasis on three aspects, namely, raising learners' awareness of their positionality in an unequal society, participatory learning approaches and action-oriented educational processes that orient learners for greater social justice (ibid.).

In the quest of realising engaged change through peace education, scholar Brantmeier (2011, 2013) proposes five distinct but interrelated notions. Of the notions, Freire's idea of raising learner's consciousness is the initial one while Schon's (1983) notion of reflection and action (re-engagement) is the final concept. In addition, imagining nonviolent alternatives, providing specific modes of empowerment and an idea of a transformative action make a complete cycle in the process of empowering learners for peaceful change. As these various notions are potential to guide practice, they are worth incorporating into the study. Furthermore, based on these various stages, critical peace educators may envision core competencies to be developed on the part of the learners. Bajaj (2015) identifies seven different competencies required for both educators and learners. They include: (1) critical thinking and analysis (2) empathy and solidarity (3) individual and coalitional agency (here, cross-cultural solidarity) (4) participatory and democratic engagement (5) education and communication strategies (6) conflict transformation skills and (7) ongoing reflective practice

(p. 163). Though some of these competencies are generic and applicable to different contexts and purposes, they provided me with relevant lenses to examining learning materials as well as understandings of the research participants in relation to peace education intervention.

Moreover, discussion shows that critical perspective into peace education provides an emancipatory vision for working towards a just and fair society where individuals live in peace and harmony with the social, cultural and natural environment. Therefore, I suggest that critical peace education should be viewed as a “bridge” (means) for learners to reach another end (full realization of one’s own rights, responsibilities and potentials) in the society they live in. This further requires a sound understanding of other people, cultures, traditions, values and norms. In a way, learning to stand in other’s shoe and feeling from their perspectives may increase social empathy and tolerance, prerequisites of peaceful co-existence among diverse cultural and identity groups. Therefore, I incorporate the paradigm of multicultural education also in the inquiry of peace education. Though less recognised, scholars like Brantmeier, Aragon, and Yoder (2009) among others, have explicitly recognised the value of this strand into the praxis of peace education.

Multicultural Education

Banks (1993, 2010) argues that multicultural education is a reform movement as much a concept and a process that aims to create equal opportunity for learners regardless of their backgrounds (class, gender, race, language and culture). As this is a comprehensive project, advocates of multicultural education suggest making revisions in curricula in order to reflect the diversity, and contribute to change oppressive social structure (Dilworth, 2004). However, Banks (2010) considers that multicultural education is not limited to curriculum reform, therefore, he proposes five dimensions related to curriculum, pedagogy and school and social culture. In particular, the dimensions include content integration, the knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture and social structure. Some of these facets have been very useful for the discussion in the study.

Content Integration

The first and foremost assumption of multicultural education is the integration of relevant contents in courses/teaching-learning process. Banks (2010) suggests that teachers who provide multicultural education may facilitate the process by using concepts and examples from diverse cultures that is what we begin with multicultural education. However, I consider that it is equally important to consider adequacy and appropriacy of the selected contents for the target group of learners. A systematic analysis may provide answers to some crucial questions such as what are the scopes of proposed contents? How much content to be

integrated into which level? What would be the short-term objectives and the long-term goals to be achieved? What would be the nature of contents? And alike. Further, content integration paves a path for “discourse intervention which is an effort to change our social reality by altering the discourses that help constitute that reality” (Karlberg, 2005, p. 1). Thus, it is not only an intellectual exercise but a deliberate effort to change attitudes, mindsets and behaviours of the learners and alter hierarchical social schema that persists among cultures. As a result, teaching-learning of multicultural elements would provide chances for transformative actions in the society. This idea has been articulated in Banks’ model of content integration.

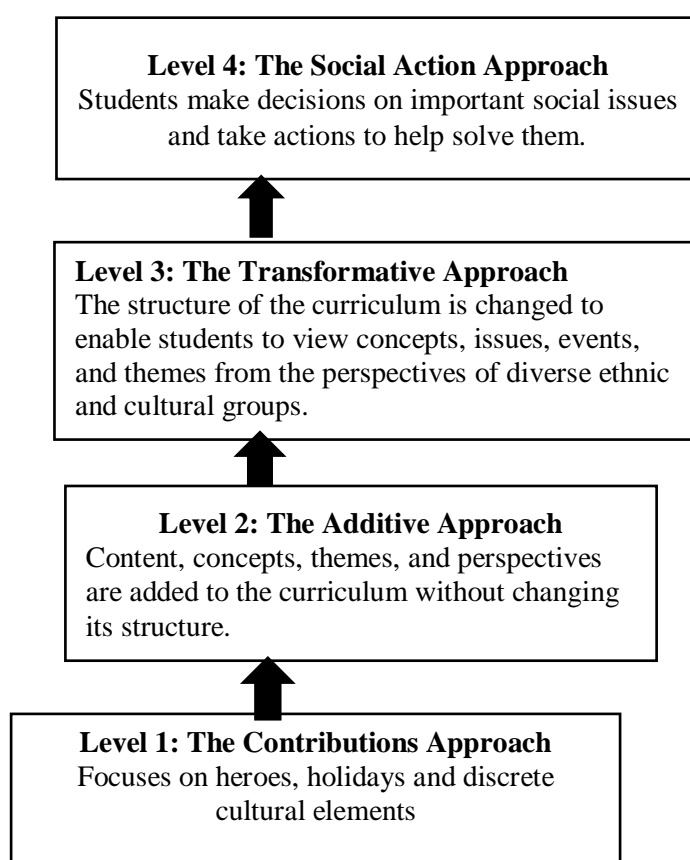


Figure 1 Bank's Four Level of Integration of Ethnic Content (Banks, 2009, cited from Banks, 2010, p. 238)

The present study has considered all four levels while examining teaching-learning materials. Interestingly, all levels except social action approach were of particular importance.

The Knowledge Construction Process

Construction of knowledge is a complex cognitive practice; an activity far beyond the comprehension of the recommended contents within the curricula. Therefore, it is clearer that teachers’/educators’ role is central in this process. Furthermore, it is inevitable that learners use various materials to understand, question, investigate and critique underlying structures,

assumptions and prejudices prevalent in the society (Banks, 1996, 2010). These intellectual exercises are potential to empower the learners by providing authentic learning platforms as well as voices to the issues that undermine peace and social justice. This further leads to the idea of Foucault and Gramsci who see power associated with knowledge. Therefore, Banks (1993) suggests that the learners should be prepared as critical thinkers who can “identify types of knowledge that reflect particular values, assumptions, perspectives, and ideological positions” and “create their own interpretations of the past and the present” (p. 5). This emancipatory approach, however, requires meaningful learning platforms and teachers dedicated to transformative pedagogy. Because, transformative pedagogy, as views Freire (1970), opposes banking model of education that takes learners as passive recipients and teachers as the authority of knowledge. In order to fully realize the teachers’ potentials as a change agent (Dewey, 1938), it is necessary that learners are prepared to construct new knowledge. When different streams of knowledge: (a) personal/cultural knowledge; (b) popular knowledge; (c) mainstream academic knowledge; (d) transformative academic knowledge; and (e) school knowledge (Banks, 1993) influence the process, it was necessary to examine how learning materials assumed learners’ positionality.

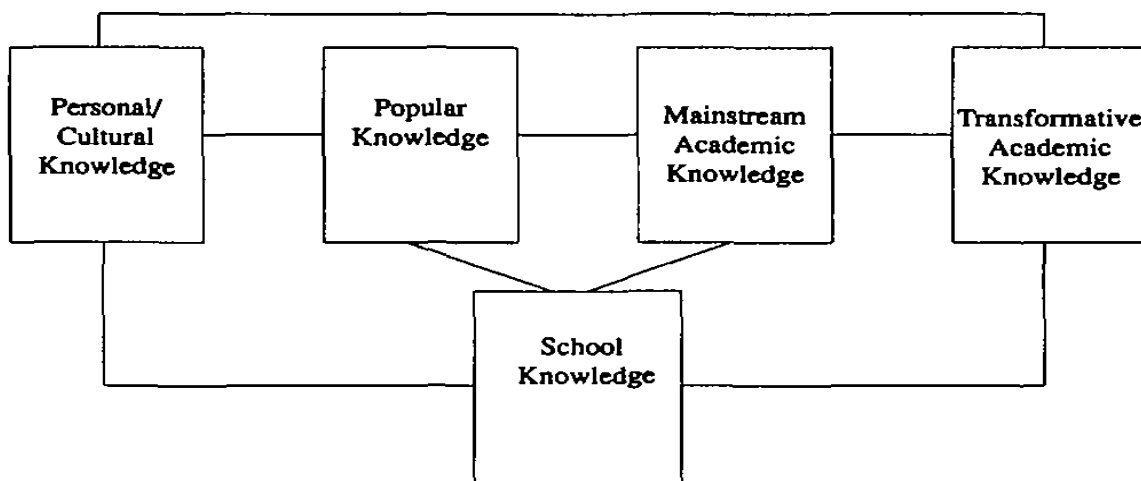


Figure 2: Interrelationships of the Types of Knowledge (Banks, 1993, p. 6).

Though there are multiple strategies of evaluating the knowledge construction process at school, such as analysis of classroom discourse and pedagogical practices, examination of teaching-learning materials (curricula, textbooks and teacher’s guides) provided such opportunity. Texts and exercises integrated into textbooks of Social Studies and Moral Education provided such opportunity.

Prejudice Reduction

According to Banks (2010), “prejudice reduction describes lessons and activities teachers use to help students develop positive attitudes toward different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups” (p. 21). Not a surprise that a classroom in my study context involves learners of diverse socio-cultural, educational, religious and economic background and each of them brings their own perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. Many a time, these facets collide with each other and create tensions among children. Moreover, the psychology of prejudice; ingroup love and outgroup hate (Brewer, 1999) favours the maintenance of boundaries which may even challenge social relations and social cohesion. Though, Allport (1954) argues that ingroup love does not necessarily imply outgroup hate, the reality, however, is different and the violent crimes of the last two decades present ample evidence to it. Therefore, teachers should be aware of the schematic knowledge of learners, so that they may design and implement multi-ethnic learning materials that support positive image formation of the outgroup (Banks, 2010). Besides, school practices also may bridge the interpersonal and intercultural gap. In this regard, curricular and extra-curricular activities may be integrated to promote mutual understanding, collaboration and positive interdependence in multicultural contexts. This is where prejudice reduction dimension is interconnected with the first dimension of content integration and the fourth dimension of an equity pedagogy in multicultural education.

An Equity Pedagogy

This dimension of multicultural education is exclusively concerned with classroom methodology which ranges from a selection of an appropriate teaching method to providing timely feedback on learners’ achievement. In order to implement an equity pedagogy, Banks (2010) suggests that teachers should use a variety of teaching strategies, techniques and learning materials that create a conducive environment for the learners of diverse socio-cultural, gender and social strata. Banks (2010) also indicates towards the use of culturally responsive pedagogy. This philosophical foundation provides a ground for critical, analytical, reflective and transformative thinking on the issues that teachers and the learners encounter in which cultural diversity is viewed as a rich resource for learning (Gay, 2010). Most importantly, the central concern of both of these scholars is to create the classroom context that identifies learners’ socio-cultural diversity as an opportunity to facilitate not only communication and collaboration but also high academic achievement on the part of the learners. Banks and Banks (1995) consider that an equity pedagogue must empower the learners as active and reflective democratic citizens who can question and critique stereotypes

and hegemonic power relations, not merely read, write and perform complex arithmetic. By discussing these ideas, I confess that equity pedagogy is dominantly concerned with classroom methodology and requires observation method in my research, but my experience is that methodological considerations enlisted in the peace curricula were worth considering.

An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure

A culturally sensitive and responsive school culture may be categorized in this dimension. For Banks (2010), an empowering school culture gives due respect to the learners and staffs from a diverse background in both academic affairs and non-academic activities and practices. This may imply a number of strategies ranging from recruiting teachers and staffs from different social backgrounds and social strata, involving parents, teachers and learners in clubs and decision-making bodies, organizing cultural programmes, friendly-sports programmes, co-picnic and similar activities that promote interaction, cooperation and collaboration among the stakeholders of a school. These sorts of programmes may be helpful in creating a positive image towards outgroup and promoting social cohesion through schools and other educational institutions. A case study by Totic (2012) also indicates that linguistic incorporation, cultural incorporation, teacher collaboration, parental involvement and pedagogical considerations (modifications) are central components in multicultural education in the Norwegian context which is viewed as a viable strategy to achieve social justice in education.

The five dimensions of multicultural education discussed in preceding section are interrelated to each other which means that knowledge on a single dimension is insufficient to analyse multicultural components integrated into the school curricula. Besides, qualitative interviews that I conducted with curriculum designers, teacher educators, education officers/school inspectors and teachers generated rich information that draws from theoretical foundations to ground realities (policy and school provisions). In this context, I believe that the discussion of peace education theory and multicultural education have illuminated the data and discussion of the study.

In sum, *peace education theory* facilitates thematic understanding whereas *critical peace education* provides meaningful grounds to engage learners in issues that matter the most and foster transformative potentials in them. In other words, the former notion spots light on with theoretical underpinnings of peace education while the latter equips with methodological skills required for teachers and learners of peace pedagogy. While they seem to be rooted in contrasting beliefs of whether theory or methodology, they both supplemented each other in the study. Similarly, *multicultural education*, in this context, served the purpose of understanding contextual conditions (social composition and characteristics) of the Nepali

society and exploring facets that contribute to peace and harmony among culturally diverse groups. Integration of three different lenses in my inquiry enabled me to examine peace curricula from multiple perspectives.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented *peace education theory*, *critical peace education* and *multicultural education* as analytical frameworks of my study. In relation to five different notions of human rights education, international education, environmental education development education and conflict resolution education I discussed Harris's (2004) peace education theory. Similarly, though it is difficult to pinpoint the exact origin of critical peace education, its emancipatory vision is clearly articulated giving reference to the Freirean idea of raising the consciousness of learners in relation to various postulates of peace. Furthermore, the former theory is considered for its thematic strengths whereas the latter is for indoctrinating engaged change at learner's disposal. In addition, multicultural education is incorporated to facilitate contextual understandings linked, mainly, with curricular components. However, the data showed more evidence with the first three elements of multicultural education. Chapter four articulates the most relevant facets.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I discuss the philosophical and methodological considerations relevant to my research project. In particular, the chapter highlights epistemological and ontological grounding on one hand, and research method, data collection and ethical dimensions on the other.

Interpretive Research Paradigm

The evolution of interpretivism is understood as a humanistic turn in social research because that enables researchers to explore human perceptions, beliefs, emotions, lived experiences and their understandings of the different phenomenon of their interest. In order to achieve this, researchers immerse in the natural setting, establish rapport with the research participants, observe their everyday practices, engage in meaningful interactions, interpret them and explore the local knowledge (Taylor & Medina, 2013). Further, the researchers' prolonged engagement with the research participants facilitates the process of understanding different perspectives which are treated as multiple realities. Bryman (2012) argues that interpretive paradigm is facilitated using different logics of research procedures than of natural science which provides the opportunity to understand human behaviour. Moreover, interpretive tradition enables the researchers to understand the social context and construct meanings in relation to the close interaction with the researched. In this regard, the purpose of interpretive researchers is intersubjective knowledge construction (Neuman, 2011) that necessitates interactions and interplay with the research participants, their contexts and the research tools (Costantino, 2012). With this theoretical orientation, I, as a peace researcher, delved into the natural setting to understand how do the actors of peace education understand its significance in the post-conflict context and the factors that are challenging them to implement peace curricula in school education. In this regard, I used qualitative interviews and documents to capture a comprehensive understanding and the scope of peace education. Furthermore, I transcribed interviews, analysed the scripts/school curricula and related documents, and tried to give them meanings in the context. I interpreted what my participants interpreted and shared during the interviews which are "double interpretations" (Bryan, 2012)

considered in the research. In the section below, I discuss how I approached knowledge that I strived to generate through this humanistic paradigm.

Epistemology

For Neuman (2011), “epistemology focuses on how we know what we know or what are the most valid ways to reach truth” (p. 93). It basically deals with the means of production of knowledge, as well as scepticism about different knowledge claims. The knowledge and its characteristics are defined by the way knowledge and the basic foundations of knowledge are found (Soini, Kronqvist & Hube, 2011). Hence, my epistemological orientation was Interpretivism (Bryman, 2012) which enabled me as a researcher to build local understandings (Taylor & Medina, 2013) of peace curricula in school education. Furthermore, meaningful interactions with the research participants and engagement with the peace curricula facilitated the process of knowing “the unknow”. Hence, interactions and interplay with the people and the texts produced by them enabled me to explore the contextual realities, which I consider to be unique knowledge for my research.

Ontology

According to Neuman (2011), “ontology asks what really is and what the fundamental categories of reality are” (p. 92). The central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2012). In this way, my ontological orientation in this research project was constructivism which means I valued multiple perspectives generated by the research participants. As I strived to explore what others think of curricular intervention in peace education, different stakeholders used their worldviews to interpret the same phenomenon. Hence, my thirst to capture multiple layers of realities was satisfied. My role as a researcher was to unfold such layers through interactions with people and documents (teaching-learning materials) produced for them in their context. Therefore, the aim of understanding contextual realities was fulfilled.

Research Design

This research design includes the various sources that I considered for my data, the process of selecting research site and participants, the techniques of data collection and my strategy of making sense of my fieldwork. In this regard, I discuss these elements separately in the following sub-sections.

Data Sources

I used two dissimilar sources in order to collect data for my research. I used interview as the primary source whereas document analysis as the secondary source of data required for my research. Moreover, in relation to the former source of data, I engaged in the context and performed meaningful interactions with the research participants whereas, in relation to the latter, I studied peace curricula, analysed and synthesised them for finding the essence. In the section below, I discuss data sources in details.

Research Site and Participants

In order to meet my research objectives, I included two curriculum designers, two trainer and school inspectors and two experienced teachers. Due to limitations of master's thesis, the study included only six participants, nevertheless, important actors from top to bottom were considered. This allowed me to understand and explore the horizon of knowledge possessed by some of those who are involved in formulation and implementation of peace education in schools. Hence, my research site was the Curriculum Development Centre, Bhaktapur, the National Centre for Educational Development, Bhaktapur, District Education Office, Pyuthan and two high schools from Kathmandu Valley. Regarding curriculum designers, school inspectors and teacher trainers, I did not choose them as individuals but as the position they hold. However, I purposefully chose experienced teachers who had used old as well as the new curricula of Social Studies and Moral Education in which peace education is integrated at present. This strategy was useful for my study as it facilitates an in-depth investigation (Neuman, 2011). Furthermore, the participants included in the sample were the focal persons (of course, except teachers) who had some years of experience working with peace education, hence relevant to be interviewed.

Methods of Data Collection

Interpretive tradition allows such methods that enable the researcher to explore realities that are bound to the contexts shaped and reshaped by beliefs and actions of the social actors. In this regard, qualitative interviews and document analysis were compatible with my research objectives. In the following section, I discuss how they were useful in my study.

Qualitative Interview

Bryman (2012) states that an interview facilitates the elicitation of information from interviewees and when it comes to the qualitative interview, it allows the investigator to generate rich information, moving back and forth during the interview. This process enables the interviewer to get responses to as many probes as he/she poses to the interviewees. Being aware of it, I conducted qualitative interviews with my research participants. These interviews

were conducted face-to-face and audio recorded. Even after the face-to-face interview, I contacted those participants as new concepts/questions emerged during interview transcribing. I wanted further responses related to what had been said during the face-to-face interviews which were not addressed by the immediate questions that I raised to the interviewees. For this purpose, I wrote e-mails and received participants' response. In the analysis, however, I give reference to the same context where the particular interviewee was contacted. During my fieldwork, I realised that every next interview generated more information. Because, in the post-interview session, I played-back the recordings and also transcribed them. As I completed my engagement with one interviewee, my understanding of the phenomenon was deepened which improved my way of organising and raising questions to further interviewees.

Document Analysis

I used document analysis as another method of data generation within the interpretive tradition. Bryman (2012) argues that documents are a valuable source of information which are "out there waiting to be assembled and analysed" (p. 543). In my case, both the Basic and the Secondary school curricula, textbooks and teacher's guides were useful documents to assemble data for my study. For Cargan (2007), "this method of examining available data is referred to as a secondary analysis since, the material was not originally produced for the current researcher" (p. 64). Analysis of school curricula enabled me to find the scope of peace education and the nature of peace anticipated to be established in the society through schools. Similarly, as I had data from different sources that helped me to triangulate research data. Furthermore, I considered documents as data because the material that exists independently of the research process provides a ground for authenticity (Cargan, 2007) in research. Moreover, a unique combination of both the Primary and the Secondary data sources facilitated my attempt to explore a comprehensive picture of peace education in Nepal. I believe that this process enriched my data as well as my understanding of peace education which ultimately addressed the research objectives and provided ample information to my research questions. Moreover, as my research questions were exploratory, they demanded the exploration of conceptual clarity on the part of the actors about peace education intervention and in documents they produced for the same purpose, in which humanistic paradigm facilitated meaning-making in the context being researched.

Field Experiences of an Insider Researcher

I agree with Unluer (2012) in the sense that qualitative researcher's position has to be clarified in order to make research credible. It implies how I identified myself among the research participants, how I probe questions during the interviews and how I negotiated

meanings in relation to what had been expressed by those participants. As I conducted my fieldwork in my home country, I consider myself an insider/native researcher who shares linguistic and cultural knowledge that contributes to enhancing rigour criteria in research (Irvine, Roberts & Bradbury-Jones, 2008). I also agree with Costley, Elliott and Gibbs (2013) in the sense that researcher's situatedness and context lead him/her not only to in-depth knowledge exploration but also and even more importantly enable to challenge to the status quo. Though I was not familiar with the participants in person, I could understand their situations as well, which supported me to negotiate time and context for interviewing. Moreover, as I was a researcher with some years of teaching experiences in the same context, I shared the background knowledge (not only professional but also socio-cultural and political scenarios) with the participants. It supported me to make clearer sense of what was being mentioned in the particular context of an interview or teaching-learning materials.

However, I did not find one of the participants open enough during the interview, so I sensed a kind of hierarchy being created. S/he may have exercised "power of knowledge: who is a knowing and approving expert" with me as "a vulnerable knowledge seeker" (Edwards & Holland, 2013, p. 78). Nevertheless, I achieved my purpose being polite and careful in probing interview questions. Overall, I consider that my positionality added value to this interpretive study.

Reflections from the Field

Generally, social researchers encounter a number of challenges during the field work. Such challenges may range from physical risks to psychological instability and ethical dilemmas. Further, coping with the physical environment and dealing with unfamiliar people and culture may also prove to be difficult for social researchers. Begley (2009) notes that physical, psychological and emotional stress as the part of field-based research necessitates awareness and sympathy on the part of the researchers. Similarly, Neuman (2011) also argues that "direct, personal involvement in the social lives of other people during field research introduces ethical dilemma" (p. 457). I agree with these arguments because seemingly simple behaviour may drag researcher to complex psychological and ethical issues leading to the counterproductive situations for both the researcher and the researched. This awareness helped me to complete purpose and leave the field peacefully. However, my fieldwork was not free from challenges.

One of the major challenges for me was to cope with physical risk due to heavy rainfall and landslides on the way to my home and the research site. The continuous rainfall leading to landslides also blocked roads for several hours that put me under physical and

psychological stress. Though I brought up in the same environment, many of those obstacles had already left me as I left the place for years. Further, the time that my department considers perfect for the fieldwork turned imperfect for me because of the weather. As a matter of fact, every year thousands of people in Nepal suffer devastating consequences of floods and landslides and some hundreds experience the loss of family and/or property (European Commission, 2017). This demands civil society institutions, humanitarian organizations and the Government to concentrate on rescue and relief camps. During such period, one would not morally feel comfortable in research activity. And that is what I experienced. But, my participants' kind considerations supported me to complete my fieldwork on time.

Similarly, although some of the officials occasionally referred to some programmes related to peace education intervention, gaining access to reports and documents was a challenge. The only reason was the practice of traditional storing system where in spite of the help of the store-keeper, some documents were never found. Nevertheless, school curricula and textbooks were easily available on the website of related offices. This made me comfortable in organizing and using documents in my convenient time.

Ethical Considerations

Research ethics involve the principle of “do no harm”. This may apply to people involved in the research and/or context being studied. Neuman (2011) argues that a researcher's considerations to ethical issues enable him/her to balance research objectives and rights of the research participants. In the process of balancing my position, I considered a number of things in research design and its implementation. First, I received the consent from my department as well as the Norwegian Centre for Research Data prior to my departure for the field work. Second, I received the consent from all the research participants included in my study. The consent letter had all necessary information (see Appendix) about the research project and the participants were also informed about the purpose prior to interviews. Third, the research participants were made anonymous in order to protect their identity and self-respect. This can be realised where pseudonyms are used in chapter five. Fourth, I was aware of the fact that the research data must be handled only by me and destroyed when the research project comes to an end. Fifth, I was also equally sensitive regarding the use of the recorded interviews and about giving the voice for each research participant during data analysis. Similarly, I also provided interview transcripts to the interviewees where they got the chance to verify their responses. I believe that these considerations and activities enabled me to respect myself as a

researcher and the research participants on one hand and improve the quality of my research on the other as emphasized by Bryman (2012) regarding research ethics and quality.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented my considerations to interpretive research and the idea of intersubjective knowledge construction. For me, school curricula in Social Studies and Moral Education, as well as the participants' responses, provided grounds for knowledge generation. Though some challenges in the field, researching peace education through the perspectives of multiple actors was an insightful endeavour. Being aware of "do no harm" and possibilities and limitations of a qualitative researcher, the research participants and materials were treated fairly.

CHAPTER IV

CURRICULAR INTERVENTION IN PEACE EDUCATION

In this chapter, I explore contents of peace education integrated into Social Studies and Moral Education curricula. In doing so, the purpose of this section is to present a comprehensive picture of peace education designed for school education in the post-conflict context in Nepal. To put it in another way, this is an attempt to address the first research question: What are the significant curricular components in peace education (in Social Studies and Moral Education) and how do they contribute to creating peace? In order to reach the depth, curricula, textbooks and teacher's guides on Social Studies and Moral Education are carefully synthesised and analysed.

As discussed in the section of the analytical framework, several facets of *peace education theory, critical peace education and multicultural education* provided unique lenses to investigate curricular practices. Further, different facets of these theories were potential to illuminate the data and further my understanding of the issue being researched. As a result, I envisioned several themes based on similar and dissimilar codes and categories which are discussed in the following section.

Human Rights Education

The evidence shows that human rights education is one of the pillars of peace education in the context of Nepal. In the pillar, several provisions of human rights based on national and international conventions and mechanisms are integrated. In the national level, the government through different commissions; National Human Rights Commission, National Women Commission, National *Dalit*⁵ Commission, National Inclusive Commission, Indigenous/Ethnic Commission, *Madhesi*⁶ Commission, *Tharu*⁷ Commission and Muslim Commission has demonstrated its commitment to ensuring rights of indigenous people, ethnic and religious minorities. These commissions may play a significant role to address grievances of people from respected identity groups. This may also be considered as an inclusiveness in the national policy. Similarly, judicial bodies, as we know, play a noteworthy role in the protection of rights of anyone who is proved to be a victim. Different I/NGOs such as Plan

⁵ *Dalit* refers to people in the lowest hierarchy in the traditional Hindu caste system.

⁶ A group of people in the Eastern Terai region of Nepal who were considered to be out of mainstream political power.

⁷ One of the Indigenous communities, especially, from Mid and Far-Western Nepal.

International, INSEC, Save the Children, ILO and UNHRC also make efforts for the protection of rights of people under difficult circumstances. And teaching-learning about different national and international human rights mechanisms (judicial and non-judicial) make learners aware of different mechanisms that protect rights and serve interests of underprivileged, may they be young or adults from different communities. The concern is that human rights curriculum, as argues McLeod (2014), facilitates quality interaction between teachers and the learners and the impacts spread beyond the school community. This may be potential to make a difference in the society. Even the self-study of functions of different judicial and non-judicial organizations may enable learners to be aware of the issues like violations of child rights/women rights, gender discrimination, domestic violence, human trafficking and malpractices such as Dowry, *Deuki*⁸, *Jhuma*⁹ and *Chhaupadi*¹⁰. Likewise, knowledge about malpractices such as *Chhuwachhut* (untouchability) and *Boksi, Dhimi-Jhakri* (witch, witch doctor) also make learners aware of not only physical violence and psychological torture on the part of the victims but also legal consequences for the perpetrators. Moreover, these socio-cultural beliefs and practices have not only deprived fundamental rights of, especially, girls and women but also threaten their lives.



Furthermore, as we can see in the picture¹¹, illustrations are used in textbooks for effective message delivery which also tend to touch emotions of the learners. In the exercise after the text, it reads, “I do not eat if you touch my food. Don’t touch me. Also, you do not enter my home. How do you feel if someone says these statements to you?” (CDC, 2010, p. 23). This may be a proper example to teach not only humiliation but discrimination and structural violence. Because a poor man from the so-called lower caste¹² is excluded from eating together with rest of the

friends of a higher caste. As a matter of fact, the “caste-based hierarchy in Nepal affects the

⁸ A custom of sending a child girl to the temple in far-western Nepal is called *Deuki*. Such girl children are not allowed to marry or engage in any physical relationships in her life time (My Social Studies and Creative Arts 4, 2009, p. 26).

⁹ A religious practice of sending a girl child to Buddhist monastery in Nepal.

¹⁰ A tradition in western Nepal that forces girls and women during their menstrual period to spend time in cowsheds or huts away from home. The tradition is gradually abolishing due to law enforcement in 2005 but it is still practised in traditional family and community.

¹¹ The picture shows untouchability in which a man from the lower caste is not supposed to touch other people from higher caste, especially during meal. This is based on traditional Hindu caste system. See CDC, 2010, p. 22 for more illustrations.

¹² Subedi, M. S. (2010). Caste system: Theories and practices in Nepal. *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, IV, 134-159.

people by constraining them to accept lower positions and conditions of work embedded with oppression and exploitation” (Subedi, 2010, p. 156). Well-reasoned classroom discussions may help learners to critically think over unjust social practices and bring about changes in their home and neighbourhood.

Even more importantly, by showcasing negative sides of different social, cultural and religious practices, attempts have been made to prepare learners to resist traditional taboos and malpractices prevailing in the family and society. For scholars like Brantmeier (2011, 2013) and Bajaj (2008, 2015), such issues (Dowry, *Deuki*, *Jhuma*, *Chaupadi*, *Chhuwachhut*, *Boksi* and *Dhami-Jhakri*) into school curricula and textbooks provide dual opportunities, i.e., authentic learning and taking positive actions against such cases. As included the role of learners, teachers, schools, different social institutions, civil society organizations and I/NGOs in both the Basic and the Secondary Social Studies curricula, learners are connected to social movements and community change initiatives. This further seems to create an opportunity to eradicate both structural and micro-level constraints (Bajaj, 2008). For Brock-Utne (1989), the former type of constraint is organized violence as a result of inequality, discrimination and dominance whereas the latter is unorganized violence likely to present in family and communities. It shows that the issues mentioned above referring to Social Studies curricula are not limited to providing information but are thought-provoking and evoking learners’ potentials to act for social change. As a result, there is a chance that both teachers and learners realise themselves as transformative change agents (Freire, 1970) at both micro and macro level.

It is also evident from the study of Amnesty International (2010) that human rights education in the formal curriculum is potential to empower not only learners but also and even more importantly parents who are in the vicious circle of conservatism and superstitions as practised especially in rural areas in Nepal. As a matter of fact, learners in grade three onwards are provided with the opportunity to learn about child rights, social evils and malpractices, which shows a positive sign working towards social change and justice.

International Education

In school education in Nepal, International education is provided from grade four with the introduction of neighbouring countries, India and China. Afterwards, this strand of peace education includes countries from South Asia and the development of South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC)¹³. Even more importantly, social, cultural, religious, economic, and geographical aspects of the South Asian countries are the learning materials for the young and young adolescent learners. This shows that it is vital to teach the early graders the interconnectedness among people of this civilization. In the meantime, it also implies that there are many similarities in the socio-cultural aspects, which make the lifestyles of people in this region and therefore, they must be recognized and respected in the midst of others. Whether the Biblical expression of “love thy neighbour as thyself” (Gray, 2015) or Huntington’s (1993) idea of cultural conflict entails that an individual is more loyal towards people who share the land and/or have similar characteristics. Though Freud (1962) pointed out to human struggle within the civilization, he also accepted the fact that religious/cultural needs are psychological; hence stronger than other traits in bridging or dividing people. The point to be mentioned is that it is significant to disclose an individual’s connection beyond his/her family kinship so that they may follow codes and conducts and establish healthy relationships and cooperation with people. In other words, it is necessary to disclose both inter-cultural and intra-cultural issues and challenges, so that individuals become more aware and understanding.

Evidently, the third stage of the Basic level (grades 6-8) covers socio-cultural and economic lives of the European, Australian, African, as well as North and South American. In the latter grades, bilateral and multilateral cooperation, diplomatic relations, international development agencies, international humanitarian organizations and international financial institutions cover much space in curricula (see CDC, 2012). It shows that countries across civilization also have the (moral) responsibility to protect rights and cooperate in projects of common interests. International education, on one hand, teaches the importance of partner organizations/countries to the receiving countries, on the other, responsibilities of both sides. Further, it is the process of promoting mutual understanding and diminishing the gap likely to have between/among countries/cultures around the globe. As a result, one would not wage a war against the other party who is connected to his/her welfare. Besides, learning about people and their social, cultural, religious, economic, political and even geographical lives may enhance cultural understanding among people of diverse regions.

There is no doubt that international education is significant, but it is highly emphasised that the issues of “false impression” and the concern for “neutrality” (Marks,

¹³ The member countries of the SAARC are Nepal, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

2002) should carefully be dealt by the instructors. Because, in different sections of exercises for the Basic and the Secondary level, learners are asked to collect information about the contribution of international organizations but there is no significant space for evaluating whether or not the international organizations have changed the objective conditions or livelihood of people. For example, these exercises in grade ten demand learners to “illustrate with examples the role of the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) in bilateral development”. And it also asks to “make a list of functions of International Nepal Fellowship in Nepal” (Khatri, Bhandari & Adhikari, 2018, p. 69). These are mere exercises of cognitive level and may help learners only to reproduce what has been in practice for long. The concern is that learners need to engage in critically assessing the role of I/NGOs rather than merely “banking the information” (Freire, 1970) about which organization does what because as Werker and Ahemed (2007) revealed, “NGOs vary substantially in quality and effectiveness” (p. 26) and not every organization discloses its ideology/hidden agendas. Therefore, learners should be engaged in assessing multiple interpretations of different actors and agencies. As a result, curricular intervention may prove to be more significant in regard to the creation of critical discourse through the classroom. This may contribute to positive changes in the way national and international agencies functions.

Besides, the Social Studies curricula provide multicultural flavour in contents by incorporating socio-cultural aspects, food, festivals and lifestyles of diverse groups even outside the country. But, understanding to the vast contents that cover several continents seems a challenging task for learners who are still on the process of acquiring Nepali as a second language. As a possible remedy, scholars, Bertrand and Lee (2012), suggest that a more multicultural perspective with flexibility (use of learner’s native language) and balance in curricula may help them interpret the message. From the latter mentioned perspective, multicultural view into curricula and instruction in mother tongue seem essential. This may provide learners with the opportunity to better understand learning materials, examine power dynamics and provide voices where required. As a result, secondary learners would not, at least, suffer from limited understanding to obligatory subject matters and issues assigned for their level. Because, reports (e.g., CERID, 2002; Poudel, 2014) show that learners’ have unsatisfactory performance in Social Studies in school level in Nepal.

Environmental Education

From the theoretical viewpoint it is clear to us that the focus of environmental education is not merely on natural environment per se, but the interrelationship with human cause and consequences in social, cultural and economic aspects. In this regard, it is inevitable to

understand Harris's (2004) point of view as he states environmental education as an approach to comprehend social and ecological challenges of the planet and contribute to making a difference. This is more towards deep ecology that recognises human as a part of the natural whole of the environment rather than shallow ecology which isolates human beings with the environment and provides space for environmental exploitation (Palmer, 2003). To my understanding, the environmental education integrated into the curricula considers the former type of ecology as raised concerns for conserving national heritages and resources for sustainable development.

Our country's forest is being destroyed. The destruction of forest may cause landslides and flood, it takes fertile soil away and as a result, there will be less production. There will be no habitat for wild animals. There will be less rain. The sources of water will be dried. There will be problems of grass, firewood and timber. The herbal plants will be destroyed. The air for inhaling will be impure and pollution will be increased. You can help in preserving the forest in the following ways: Do not cut trees and grass unnecessarily. Do not leave your cattle everywhere. Plant trees around the farm. Protect the forest from fire. Make everyone understand the importance of the forest. Let you and we protect the jungle. The forest is our asset.

Adapted from My Social Studies and Creative Arts, Grade-4 (CDC, 2009, p. 40).

This extract is a radio notice included in the lesson of Natural Resources. In order to make the lesson more meaningful, there is an instruction for teachers which reads: "Make students visit the natural resources such as forest, rivers and streams, etc. and involve them in activities of preserving such resources" (CDC, 2009, p. 40). This seems more sensible because knowledge components are integrated with practical skills. By involving learners in the conservation of natural resources of their area, schools not only teach curricular components but pave a path for collaboration between school and community for bringing about desirable changes in both places. Further, these types of exercises may cultivate positive attitudes and develop environment-friendly behaviours in learners.

Interestingly, the Social Studies curricula from grade two onwards incorporate concepts of natural resources, heritages, environment-friendly behaviour and economizing resources use. By the end of grade ten, learners are provided with the opportunity to study not only physical but social, cultural and economic environment of different continents of the world. Further, contents of deforestation, pollution and climate change are reoccurring from grade six. In the meantime, social and cultural diversity, globalization and its negative influence on local culture are also focused. In this context, an interesting story is included

which presents *Mohanlal*, a decent boy from a village in Nepal, as a representative character to follow Western tradition and talk ill of his own traditional food and clothing, lifestyles and livelihood (CDC, 2010). These types of contents provide awareness of the value of preserving not only natural but social and cultural environment.

Similarly, the curricula have significant space for demonstrating how people in different contexts, especially, indigenous people make their daily bread and butter in the natural environment. Moreover, human interconnectedness with nature is emphasised. This is more towards multicultural environmental education, because, as argues Marouli (2002), it advocates for recognizing the relationship of diverse cultures with the environment, community involvement and environmental justice. Additionally, it may be recognised as a holistic approach to environmental education aiming to “enable individuals and communities to understand the complex nature of the natural and built-in environments resulting from the interaction of their biological, physical, social, economic and cultural aspects” (Deshmukh, 2014, p. 142). As evident with the contents presented above, an environmental strand of peace education in the context of Nepal seems informed with a holistic approach that has a multicultural understanding. Further, a model of implementation also matters in the outcomes of an educational activity and it is found to be consistent with existing educational practices which integrate cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of learning (Micklich, 2014). This implies that learning materials including lectures and tasks should contribute to intellectual, emotional and skills development in learners. As a result, learning in the classroom may have profound implications for individuals and the society.

Development Education

In order for a society to develop, a total transformation in structural and cultural violence is inevitable (Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Harris, 2004), however, an infrastructure development remains equally in the centre. Because, lack of basic facilities such as pure drinking water, health, education, transportation or communication may undermine enormous human and non-human potentials of a society. This is where the society may be trapped in not only poverty but also malpractices, superstition and conservatism. It may be a potential reason to focus infrastructure development in the curricula of school education in Nepal. The subject matters of Village Development Committee, Municipalities and District Development Committee are integrated as service providing/development agencies from the early grades to the Secondary level (see CDC, 2007; CDC, 2009a).

However, the scope of the curricula is not limited to physical (infrastructure) development. There are well-articulated subject matters of social, cultural, political, economic

and human development (see CDC, 2012; Adhikari, 2014; Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015; Adhikari, Thapa, Adhikari, Dahal & KC, 2017). Importantly, contents on promotion and creative use of indigenous knowledge, skills and technology are also noteworthy. Because, it is potential to break the tendency of overemphasising modern concept of development (industrialization, marketization etc.) over traditional one that is more sensitive to its culture. Texts and exercises provide learners with the opportunity to compare and contrast the traditional and the modern technologies. In the section for practical activity in Social Studies of grade nine, learners are asked: “investigate traditional technologies used and/or being used in your community and discuss their structure, functions and importance”... “Prepare a report based on your inquiry about traditional skills and technologies used in the past” (self-translation of Adhikari, et al., 2017, p 37). These exercises familiarize learners with local traditional practices but seem inadequate for the Secondary learners. The reason is most of the exercises are confined within memory exercises which means that there is limited space to search, research and discuss notions of culturally responsive development.

Similarly, the importance of civil society organizations and social institutions, public involvement in social/political movements and decision making, democratic culture and good governance have added value to the understanding of development. Correspondingly, a few challenges such as poverty, corruption and the consequences of unstable central government are presented as major challenges of developing country like Nepal. Decentralization, industrialization, human resource development, creating employment opportunity are associated with strategies of development without undermining the value of peace. Notably, human development and facts and figures of educated migration from Nepal to developed countries and its long-term consequences seem more appealing in development education. Unlike tradition concept of development as physical and economic advancement (Barder, 2012), possible areas that may cause structural violence are introduced with the learners. Moreover, the concept of sustainable development (SD) has important space in grade eight onwards which introduces learners to the following concepts.

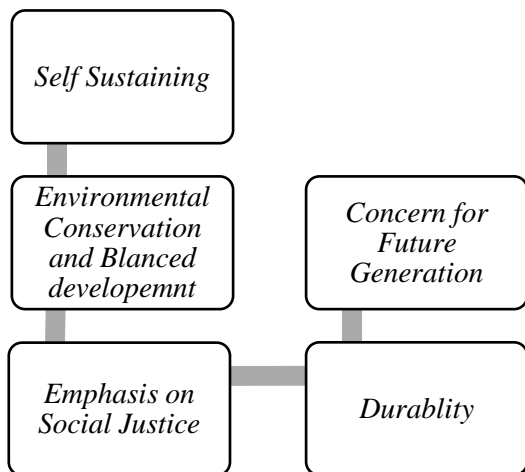


Figure 3: Concept of Sustainable Development (Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015, p. 40).

For teachers, it is recommended to involve learners in activities that enable learners to act according to the principles of sustainable development as mentioned in the figure. In the meantime, it is interesting to see social justice integrated into the

framework. In grade ten, subject matters are developed with a clear indication of different areas to be focused for SD. The specified areas are governance, economy, social, cultural, environmental, political and human development (Adhikari, et al., 2017). Evidently, multi-model development is presented which may be considered as an opportunity to reveal the need for the country to the learners who are occasionally called “the future of the nation”. Although several areas discussed above overlap each other in many respects, they show the areas to be focused in order to reverse structural violence into structural peace which is noteworthy.

Conflict Resolution Education

There are several areas where contents of problems of peace and solutions are suggested. Conflict resolution is clearly articulated through Social Studies curricula of school education in Nepal. Awareness raising against physical and verbal violence is apparent content in early grades (see CDC, 2007; CDC, 2009a). Along with the progression in grade level, conflict resolution education involves sources of conflict both at the micro and macro level. At the micro level, consumption of alcohol and drugs, theft and robbery, and bullying are presented as potential sources of conflict. Similarly, involvement in malpractices, social evils and superstition also invite violence including domestic violence and these areas are integrated in the way they promote resistance. In other words, such themes are a clear indication of ‘pedagogy of resistance’ which is one of the facets of critical peace education (Bajaj, 2015). In addition, gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse, discrimination against lower caste and social exclusion are also described as potential sources of conflict at the micro level. The point to be noted is that some learners might already have some experiences of violence at home, community or school and a serious engagement of teacher and learners with these issues may help them to heal the wound and/or prevent themselves from experiencing further violence. Because, teachers’ and school community’s support results

positive impacts in the way the learners understand and handle violence and critical situations in the family or beyond (Cousins & Callary, 2009). In the macro level, on the other hand, contents on boundary conflict with neighbouring countries, (global) terrorism, atomic energy and armed conflict contribute to the understanding of complex challenges that the contemporary world is facing. Teaching the causes and consequences of the major two world wars are also significant in the time when global powers are challenging each other. Further, meaningful discussions with teachers and peers may uncover micro and macro level problems of peace that have devastating human consequences. Arnaldi and Hudson (2009) argue that critical exploration of moral and ethical issues involved in war prepares learners for human security and peace in the 21st century.

In the study of conflict resolution, strategies for peace are vital. Though the curricula below six grades have significant space for concepts of empathy, cooperation with neighbours, equal behaviour with people of diverse background, mutual understanding and alike, the study of conflict management is adequately articulated afterwards. In grade six, the scope of conflict study is limited to family, classroom and school while in grade seven and eight it is extended to neighbour and society respectively. But, the role of positive/effective communication is highly emphasised theme in all these grades. Interestingly, causes of conflict, conflict analysis and solution are integrated with conflict management (see CDC, 2012). The causes of conflict enlisted in grade seven are: 1) delivery of a wrong message/notice 2) misunderstanding in family and neighbourhood 3) unresentful behaviour 4) clash of interests 5) ignorance of responsibility 6) discriminatory behaviour 7) use of force 8) social inequality 9) lack of positive thinking and 10) lack of good political culture (Adhikari, 2014, p. 46). There are some exercises which tend to make learners think of consequences and solutions to family and neighbourhood conflict. In the same context, different conditions for peace are suggested which are:

<i>-Participation of all</i>	<i>-Common understanding</i>	<i>-Cooperation</i>
<i>-Active listening</i>	<i>-Rule of law</i>	<i>-Respect</i>
<i>-Equity and equality</i>	<i>-Social justice</i>	<i>-Transparency</i>
<i>-Consensus</i>	<i>-Positive thinking</i>	<i>-Security</i>
<i>-Democratic culture</i>	<i>-Tolerance</i>	<i>-Realization of fundamental needs</i>

Elements of Peace (adapted from Social Studies 7, see Adhikari, 2014, p. 50).

In order to supplement the lesson, the learners are advised to organize an oratory on “Peace is a Foundation of Development”. This type of extra-curricular activity may be more effective than providing huge information about peace to young adolescent learners. Because platforms like this facilitate reflection and critical thinking skills which are in line with Schon’s (1983) and Freire’s (1970) assumptions.

While teaching causes and consequences of violence and war, curricula incorporate knowledge, strategies and skills components to create peace. The lesson on conflict and conflict cycle seems to enable learners to be aware of different stages of conflict, so that they can compare and contrast relatively peaceful and conflicting situations and be cautious about it.

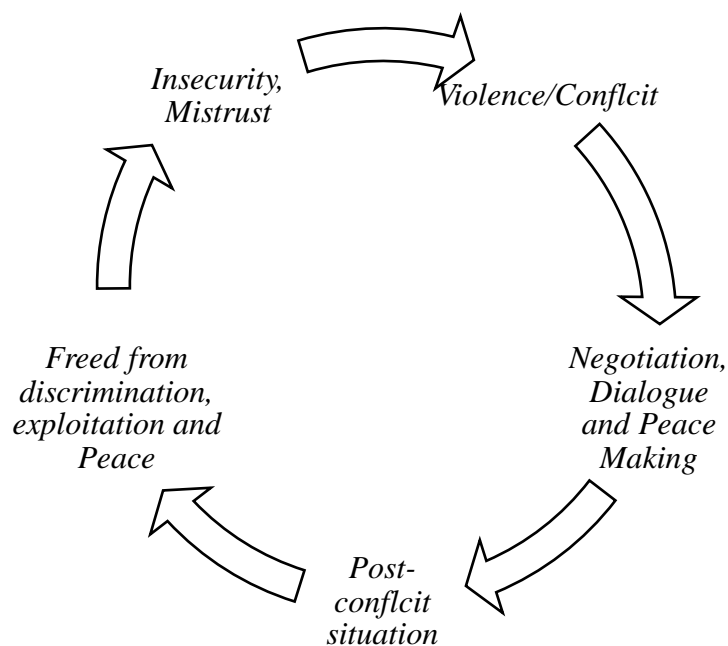


Figure 4: Conflict Cycle (adapted from Social Studies 9, see Adhikari, et al., 2017, p. 75).

Besides knowledge components, skills for conflict management are also suggested. Interestingly, peace strategies introduced in grade eight are relevant for not only local but also supranational level and widely been used in different contexts. For example, dialogue, negotiation, mediation, judiciary and external involvement are widely adopted strategies to maintain peace and security in both micro and macro level.

<i>Solution by those Involved in Conflict</i>	<i>Third Party Involvement</i>	<i>External Intervention</i>
<i>Self-management by controlling the causes of conflict such anger, stress, greed, etcetera</i>	<i>Seeking solution with the help of a skilled mediator</i>	<i>Judiciary medium</i>
	<i>Decision by Pancha Valadmi¹⁴</i>	<i>Use of armed force</i>
<i>Use of Dialogue</i>		



Less ←  *use of force and possibility of win or lose* →  *More*

Table 1: Strategies for Conflict Management adapted from Social Studies 8 (see Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015, p. 39).

In addition, exercises and project works are potential to involve learners in exploring local experiences in managing conflicts. Such as: 1) inquire with local people, find out what strategies were used in different types of conflict and present in class. 2) Discuss what type of conflict are more likely to happen in school, family or society, find out the causes of conflict and suggest what types of measures could be taken to prevent future conflict in your society. 3) Play a role of a mediator in conflict between two friends and share your experiences in the classroom. 4) Prepare a report based on your interview with somebody involved in conflict resolution in your society and 5) discuss which strategies of conflict management are potential to create win-win situation of those involved in conflict (Self-translation of Adhikari, et al., 2017; Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015). Even more importantly, learners are asked to fill the self-evaluation form and submit to the teacher which may be considered as a thoughtful practice to improve learners’ behaviours. These elements directly support at least two competencies i.e., conflict transformation skills and ongoing reflective practice (Bajaj, 2015, p. 163). In order to understand and apply peacebuilding knowledge and skills in personal life, these sorts of activities may be more meaningful because practical education provides “educative experiences” (Dewey, 1938) that are potential for individual and societal transformation.

¹⁴ *Pancha Valadmi* are village leaders and “intellectuals” who play a significant role to manage conflicts through grievances hearing in a public meeting. This is still in practice in rural areas in Nepal.

Value Education

In literature, this stream of education is synonymously used as moral education that enables learners to demonstrate traits of love, kindness, honesty, respect, hard work, cooperation, compassion and forgiveness in their lives (Aneja, 2014). Though it is believed that family and society transmit such values in children through various social, cultural and religious practices, teachers are confronted with challenges to cultivate positive attitudes and shape behaviours of the 21st-century learners. This is more relevant for teachers in the multicultural contexts which is why value education has received a greater importance in school curricula in different contexts including Nepal. To put curricula in action, classrooms, schools and communities are considered responsible for providing such education to the younger generation. The figure below illustrates the importance of classroom, school and community collaboration in providing greater exposure of and an opportunity to learn and practice values of particular social contexts.

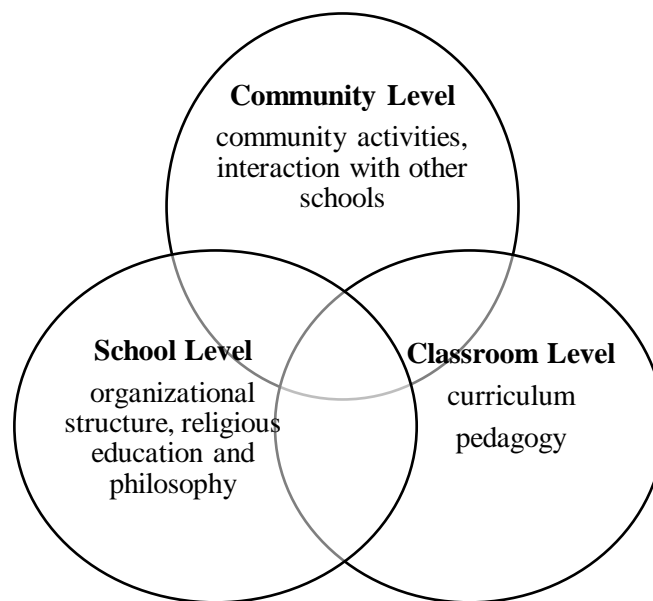
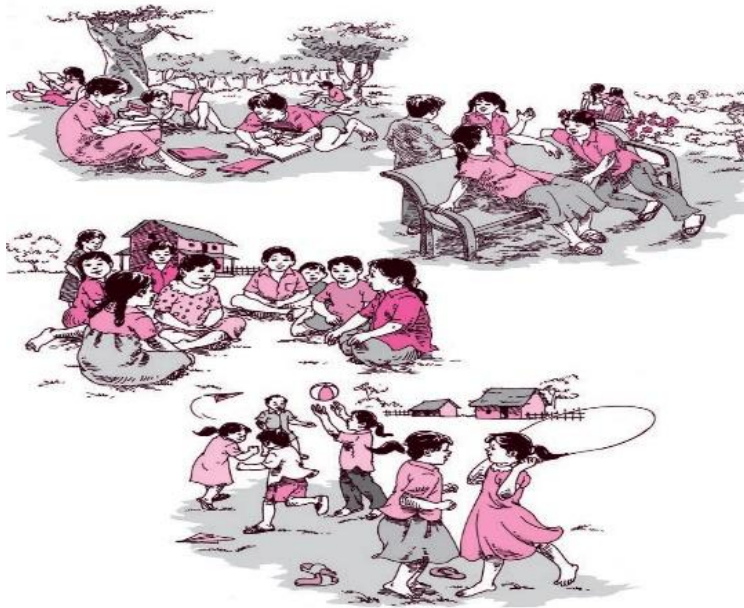


Figure 5: Three Levels of Value Education (DeNobile & Hogan, 2014)

As the current purpose, my discussion is limited to components of value education integrated into school curricula which means that only one of the tires of the diagram is studied. The school curricula on Social Studies and Moral Education have plenty of space for teaching-learning of values of Nepali society. Further, the Social Studies curricula of grade 1-10 have a separate unit for the study of traditional, social beliefs and practices, which provide insights of codes and conducts, dos and don'ts and even more importantly the moral principles. In particular, formation of positive attitudes, good habit, love, respect, appreciation, social life, mutual understanding and cooperation, equal behaviour and empathy

are common themes of value education in grade 1-5 (see CDC, 2010a; CDC 2010b; CDC, 2010c; CDC, 2009a; CDC, 2009b; CDC, 2010d).



Moreover, concepts of sharing, caring and togetherness are encouraged through pictures and texts. Teachers are instructed to encourage such behaviours in everyday lives of the learners. Similarly, the exercise, for example, “what should you do to live with your friends? How do you respect your parents, teachers and seniors? Act out” (CDC, 2010, p. 11) cultivate concepts of

mutual understanding and respect in young learners. Importantly, teachers are instructed to explore different ways of paying respect to people, cultures (language, customs and festivals) and their occupations/professions. An orientation to the responsibility of helping the needy ones, caring juniors or fulfilling duties at home or school in different contexts is also highly emphasised. This sort of curricular and pedagogical coaching may help the young learners shape positive attitudes towards self and others and build interpersonal relations in the school and society. This relation may further help children to fulfil the physical and emotional needs that provide a sense of safety, security and wellbeing (Cavazos, 2015) to them.

In addition, socialization, its process and medium are highlighted for middle school learners which are appropriate contents for that age group. This component is significant in the sense that it makes learners conscious of who to engage with and how. As the medium of socialization, primary and secondary agents are introduced which is synthesised in the following figure.

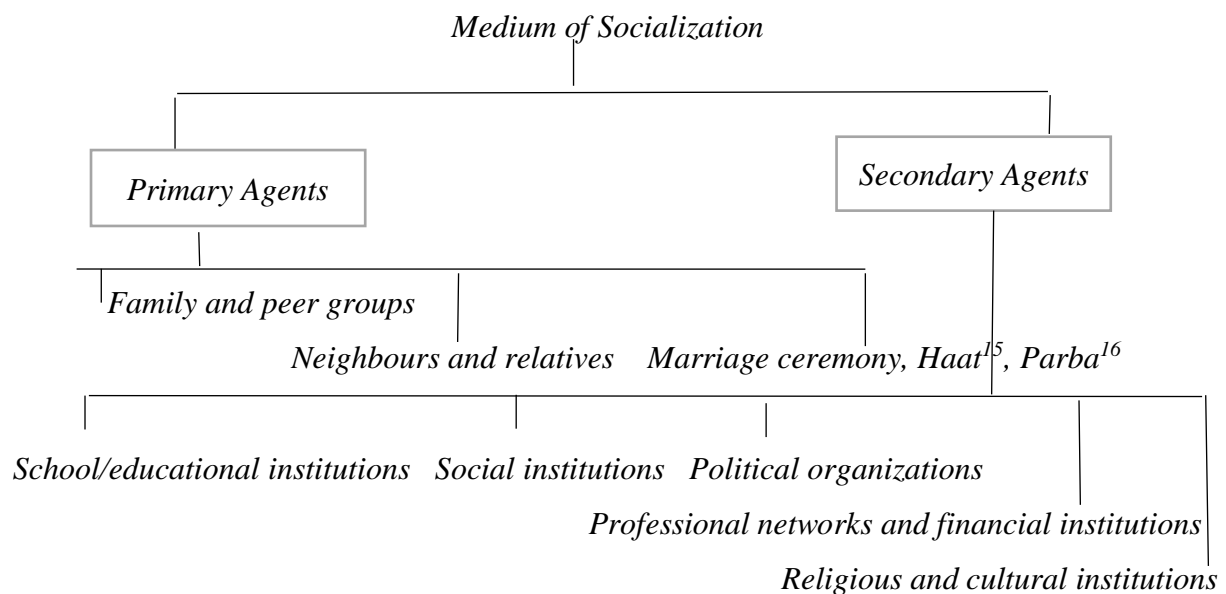


Figure 6: Medium of Socialization (text adapted from Social Studies 7, Adhikari, 2014, p. 8).

In addition, an exercise under the section of social work “conduct an interview with intellectuals in your society, identify problems related to socialization and offer solutions based on your findings” (self-translation of Adhikari, 2014, p. 9), engages learners in not only academic tasks, but transformative vision in the society. Because, such engagement is community-based and authentic which is highly stressed by Brantmeier (2011, 2013) and Bajaj (2008, 2015) in their model of critical peace education.

But, as it is possible for an individual to be heavily influenced by external agencies including networks of shared identity, peer groups and media, different measures of precautions should be discussed and explored in the classroom. Because even peer group may turn out to be counter-productive for some of its members. Mistry (2013) argues that alcohol and drug use are serious problems caused by peer pressure. Especially in the context of Nepal, this argument is more relevant because such habits often increase conflict, organised violence and crime in the society. WHO (2004) reveals violence, physical and mental abuse, deprivation from education, theft, robbery, gang-fight, rape and additional social problems caused due to alcohol and drug use. Similarly, Hirachan and Limbu (2016) also report that the young adults are the most vulnerable in the cases of violence including sexual ones. They further point out to the dire need of proper coaching from early grades at school. The point to be noted is that school curricula should also provide space for discussing such dark sides of socialization, so that learners may become more thoughtful.

¹⁵ Local practice of weekly/monthly bazar in order to buy/sell local products.

¹⁶ Cultural celebrations, festivals etc.

Similarly, the topics of equal behaviour and empathy introduced in grades four and five respectively develop as social empathy in grade eight. Importantly, social empathy is presented as a way of living in Nepali communities. Social empathy for positive interdependence, tolerance, respect, mutual understanding and unity in diversity are core lessons included in social empathy (see Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015). In addition to textual messages, learners are asked: “how do you behave with people from different cultures while respecting your traditional identity?”... “Visit your community, find out social composition (ethnicity, mother tongue, religion, disadvantaged) of at least 20 households and prepare a report on *Social Empathy in My Community*. The latter mentioned task somehow deviates to quantity rather than quality/result of social composition in the learners’ community. In other words, the study of the sequence of social events and consequences would provide more meaningful opportunity to reflect the past and prepare for a more peaceful community in future. Nevertheless, familial, societal, cultural and religious values and interdependence of people from different social strata show the crucial role of interpersonal/intergroup empathy which is, for Segal (2011), a foundation of social justice.

Civic Sense/Awareness

As civic sense is a separate unit in the curricula of Social Studies in grades 1-10, it is easier to measure its weightage. This area of study covers the most weightage in Social Studies curricula in grades 1-5. The weightage of civic sense in the national curricula is 14.58% and 15% in grades 1-3 and 4-5 respectively. Similarly, it covers 10.85% in grades 6-8 whereas 11.17% in grades 9-10 which is the second most weightage after a unit on *Our Earth* (see CDC, 2007; CDC, 2009a; CDC, 2012; CDC, 2015). In the first stage of Basic education (grades 1-3), the civic sense is limited to the use of polite language to introduce and give and take help with even an unfamiliar person. But in the second stage (grades 4-5), it is widened drastically as it incorporates several lessons on fundamental rights/human rights, equality, obeying social conducts, duties and use of rights, and preservation of public/national heritage. Structure and function of local government is also a part of the study in this level. Similarly, in the third stage (grades 6-8), introduction to the constitution, government, state sovereignty, the concept of a federal democratic republic, civil rights and duties and nation and nationality are prominent concepts. In addition, lessons on social rules, democratic culture and inclusiveness make civic sense wider. When it comes to grades 9 and 10, this strand of education heavily concentrates on constitution, constitutional commissions, state apparatuses, civic duties and responsibilities, governance system of Nepal, political parties and power balance (see CDC, 2007; CDC, 2009a; CDC, 2012; CDC, 2015). From these many

components, it becomes clearer that civic sense is borrowed from insights of political science in which active citizenship is assumed to stabilise democracy, create peace and flourish development.

Besides textual information, some exercises in the Social Studies textbooks also demand learners' critical engagement. Tasks such as: "why do you need rights? Write down thinking it deeply" ... "Rights and duties are two sides of a coin, explain with examples" (CDC, 2009a, p. 37), "why do you think that sovereignty is the heart of the state?" (Adhikari, 2014, p 57) and "discuss, prepare a questionnaire and conduct an interview with an executive officer of your village development committee or municipality about their practice of good governance" (Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015, p. 42) are praiseworthy. Likewise, "work in a group and find out how people in your community have realized fundamental rights granted by the constitution of Nepal. Present your report in the classroom and discuss with your teacher" (Adhikari, et al., 2017, p. 92) and "prepare and demonstrate a street drama based on civic role in election" (Khatri, Bhandari & Adhikari, 2018, p. 92) might be more productive tasks for learners. Because, these types of activities promote experiential learning (Dewey, 1938), critical consciousness (Freire, 1970), participatory and democratic learning (Diaz-Soto, 2005; Bajaj, 2015) which prepares the ground for social justice (Diaz-Soto, 2005). Several competencies, i.e., (1) critical thinking and analysis (2) empathy and solidarity (3) individual and coalitional agency (here, cross-cultural solidarity) (4) participatory and democratic engagement (5) education and communication strategies (6) conflict transformation skills and (7) ongoing reflective practice (Bajaj, 2015, p. 163) may be fostered through meaningful engagement in inquiry-based/community-based and authentic learning projects (Bajaj, 2008).

Researcher Bayeh (2016) argues that the rationale of civic and ethical education remains at whether it contributes to producing active citizens for democratic governance. On the contrary to theoretical understanding, practice, however, may be un/less productive for learners. Because, as found in Ethiopian context, poor academic and non-academic management at school in which community involvement was one of them, undermined potentials of civil and ethical education (ibid.). This finding is consistent with the study of Tovmasyan and Thoma (2008) that suggests academic improvement and stakeholders' involvement as crucial strategies to improve impacts of civic education in Armenia. In the following section, I explore and analyse curricular components based on theoretical premises of a multicultural education and discuss whether it has implications for peace education.

Multicultural Education

As explored in theoretical section, multicultural education has five different dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, an equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture and social structure (Banks, 2010). In order to find out the depth of such education in reality, it might be necessary to study these dimensions separately which is beyond the scope of the present study. However, a careful examination of school curricula, textbooks and teacher's guide/manual provided the chance to study at least first three dimensions of multicultural education. In the following section, I explore those facets based on the analysis of Social Studies curricula.

Content Integration

The task of content integration, for Banks (2010), is based on contribution approach that enables curriculum designers and teachers to insert contents excluded from the mainstream ideology. This might be the reason that Social Studies curricula have important space for contents that reflect Nepal's multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic composition. From the first stage of elementary education, contents of food, dress, language and festival have got the entry. The scope of these components is limited to family and neighbourhood but it is potential to make learners aware of the fact that different people have a different lifestyle and that is their uniqueness. Among those components, festivals are introduced in more lucid manner. *Dashain*¹⁷, *Tihar*¹⁸, *Teej*¹⁹, *Lhosar*²⁰, *Chhat*²¹, Eid and Christmas are introduced in grade two without the disclosure of religious backgrounds of who celebrates what festivals. Similarly, in grade three, the focus is given on how Holi²², Eid and Buddha *Jayanti* (Buddha's birthday) are celebrated by different people in the society. In this level, exercises are basically comprehension types, but they reflect multicultural contents (see CDC, 2010a; CDC, 2010b; CDC, 2010c).

Similarly, in grade four, languages such as *Nepali*, *Newari*, *Maithili*, *Rai*, *Dhimal* and *Bhojपुरी* are defined along with customs of respective groups. Different rituals such as

¹⁷ The biggest festival of Hindus in Nepal in which elder members of the family and relatives offer mark (Tika), Jamara and blessings to younger members.

¹⁸ The second biggest festival of Hindus in Nepal in which sisters put mark called *Tika* on foreheads of their brothers and vice versa.

¹⁹ A festival of Hindu women in Nepal.

²⁰ A festival of indigenous people including Tamang and Sherpa in Nepal.

²¹ A festival celebrated in the Terai region of Nepal in which people worship the setting Sun.

²² A festival of colour for Hindus in Nepal, India etc.

*Chhewar*²³, *Bratabandha*²⁴ of *Brahmin* and *Chhetri* (the so-called higher castes) and *Gaura*²⁵ festival of people from the far-western Nepal make an interesting read (see CDC, 2009). For the first time in grades 1-5, the curriculum of grade 5 classifies rituals, festivals and customs according to religions and cultures. It also shows that there is a great tolerance among people of different identities, therefore, people from one culture participate in rituals and festivals of other cultures (see CDC, 2010d). In addition, religious and cultural heritage, rituals and festivals are well-articulated in grades 6-8 curricula. Notably, religious beliefs, performances, god/goddess and holy books of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, *Kirat*²⁶ and Jain are integrated in grades six and seven while the religious, cultural, linguistic, gender, race, class and geographical diversities and secularism in Nepal are apparent contents in grade eight (CDC, 2012; Adhikari, 2014; Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015). Finally, the secondary curricula also integrate the constitutional provision of secularism, interdependence, brotherhood and tolerance among people of different religious, cultural and social backgrounds (Adhikari, et al., 2017; Khatri, Bhandari & Adhikari, 2018). Besides the insertion of cultural artefacts and responsive elements into the curricula, Banks (2010) considers that space provided to the study of heroes/heroines of other than mainstream cultures is another characteristic of contribution approach. From this perspective, Social Studies curricula of grade four onwards are sensitive to it. Because some imaginary characters from ethnic minorities/lower caste are also presented as district heroes and heroines in grades four and five. Similarly, as national heroes, heroines and luminaries, there is an attempt to represent political leaders, martyrs, educationists, artists, and social mobilizers from diverse cultural backgrounds. *Pasang Lhamu Sherpa*²⁷, *Gautam Buddha*, *Prithvi Narayan Shah*²⁸, *Bhimsen Thapa*²⁹ and *King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah*³⁰, to name a few, are inserted. But, it still remains somehow loyal to the *Shah* dynasty that made Nepal the Hindu Kingdom some

²³ Chhewar is an important ritual among different castes including Tamang people in which a male child gets his hair cut for the first time since birth. The exact age of hair cutting varies according to casts in Nepal. See Ghimire, M. (2014). Socio-cultural and economic conditions of Tamang. An unpublished bachelor's thesis at the university of Diaconia University of Applied Sciences, Pori, Finland.

²⁴ Bratabandha is a ritual performed over men that qualifies them for other rituals to be performed in their life time.

²⁵ The day of worshipping goddess Gauri, especially in mid and far western Nepal.

²⁶ An ancient religion of Nepal.

²⁷ The first woman in the world to climb the Mount Everest. She belonged to one of the minorities groups in Nepal.

²⁸ The king of Shah dynasty in ancient Nepal who unified fragmented Nepal. He is also known as the father of modern Nepal.

²⁹ The first Prime Minister of Nepal who fought with East-India Company in order to save Nepal from being colonized.

³⁰ The last King of Rana regime who sacrifice his position to accompany people for democracy in 1951.

240 years ago. In addition, short biographies of international figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Kailash Satyarthi³¹, Florence Nightingale and Martin Luther King are included (see CDC, 2012; Adhikari, 2014; Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015; Adhikari, et al., 2017; Khatri, Bhandari & Adhikari, 2018). Thus, it is sensible to mention that attempts have been made to represent aspirations in changing scenarios but political and ideological resistance (Banks, 2010) might need to be revisited in terms of lessons on national heroes and heroines. This revision/changes in curricula from mainstream focus to minority, which is the transformative approach, may enable policymakers and teachers to value diverse identities and perspectives. Further, this action may lead to the social action approach, which the highest level of content integration, that advocates learners' involvement in social issues (ibid.). Otherwise, content integration for the sake of it may not be productive in terms of teaching tolerance, mutual understanding and interdependence of culturally distinct people.

There are at least two major points to be noted in the discussion of content integration in curricula or teaching-learning. First, learners who do not have any idea about educational policy and ideology of the curriculum (Goodlad, 1979) may feel that their cultural aspects are significant as integrated into textbooks. This might be more appealing for learners of minority groups. In other words, learning about own's culture and traditions may be a matter of self-respect and pride for learners. This may help teachers to motivate their learners, which is one of the major challenges for schools in Nepal (Neupane, 2014; Khanal, 2017). Similarly, curricula/ pedagogy that values diversities may help the construction of multiple identities in the classroom (Hjörne, Aalsvoort & Abreu, 2012). Nevertheless, it also depends on whether pedagogical practices are empowering, which may be realised in knowledge construction process.

Knowledge Construction

It is an intellectual activity that demands persistent engagement with critical thinking skills. In order for learners to be able to produce knowledge, they need to engage in debate, discussion, question, search and research issues that matter the most not only in academic but also social lives. Banks (1993) argues, "Teachers should help students to become critical thinkers who have the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and commitments needed to participate in democratic action to help the nation close the gap between its ideals and its realities" (p. 5). Therefore, comprehension matters but what matters the most is whether learners are taught to evaluate

³¹ A 2014 Nobel Peace Prize winner child rights and education activist based in India.

mainstream interpretations, multiple narratives and stereotypes and give their voices to learning materials.

The Social Studies curricula, as a course for academic practice in school education, incorporate different methods and techniques to facilitate effective learning. By effective learning, one should understand learners' engagement with not merely different versions of knowledge presented to them, but importantly investigation of issues of common interest in the classroom and outside. As grades 1-5 curricula explicitly mention educational philosophies of child-centred teaching-learning and learning by doing (experiential learning), there is a possibility that methods such as role play, project work, field trip/excursion, problem-solving and search/research (see CDC, 2007; CDC, 2009a) may be implemented. But, exercises integrated into the textbooks of this level are exclusively comprehension items: simple question-answer, gap filling, fill in the table, true-false, preparing a list and alike. And, minimum space is provided for collaboration, creativity and creation. This undermines assumption of knowledge construction in a multicultural setting.

Similarly, the curricula in grades 6-8, in addition to previously mentioned methods and techniques, introduces several new techniques of critical thinking method such as brainstorming, structure overview, jigsaw, think-pair-share, semantic map, peer review, quick write, value line and alike (CDC, 2012). These strategies are considered innovation, but it is necessary to examine how these different methods and strategies are used to enable learners in the demanding task of knowledge construction. Some exercises, from the Social Studies of grade seven, for example, (1) identify problems related to socialization and offer an appropriate solution (2) what type of plan and program would you formulate if you were in the District Development Committee? Make a model plan and 3) investigate social evils, identify victims and prepare a report based on their experiences (Adhikari, 2014). Likewise, some representative exercises from grade eight (1) divide your class based on religion, discuss about your culture and give a presentation (2) compose a poem or a song that reflects unity in diversity your society (3) how can you and your family contribute to maintain social empathy, etcetera are more meaningful activities (Gnawali, Bista & Gnawali, 2015). In addition, a few exercises for the Secondary learners: (1) Visit to a religious place, museum or art gallery, conduct interviews with stakeholders and find out why they were made and what they mean for the society, prepare a report and present in the class. 2) The earthquake of 2015 has destructed religious, historical and cultural site of Nepal. Discuss and prepare suggestions in order to help reconstruct world heritage sites in Nepal and (3) prepare an editorial on *Folk Musical Instrument: Nepalese identity* (Adhikari, et al., 2017; Khatri, Bhandari & Adhikari,

2018). A point to be noted is that these sorts of exercises integrated into school textbooks facilitate the process of examining individual learner's cultural beliefs, assumptions and experiences, generating peers', teachers' and community members'/stakeholders' responses on social/cultural issues and providing their own interpretations. Importantly, the entire process leads to subjective knowledge construction (Taylor & Medina, 2013) that may be potential to improve not only understanding but social condition by offering multiple perspectives generated at learners' disposal.

Camicia (2007) argues that the opportunity to construct knowledge is the chance to deconstruct stereotypes, a hegemonic discourse that perpetuates hierarchical social structure and inequalities. Further, learners capable to generate responses, narratives and interpretations; hence knowledge may examine several types of personal knowledge, popular knowledge, mainstream academic knowledge, transformative academic knowledge and school knowledge (Banks, 1993). And classroom methodology and learning materials should provide such freedom to learners in which knowledge can be constructed. For Foucault (1984a) freedom, knowledge and power are interlinked (cited in Taylor, 2014) in which the former creates the opportunity for an individual to realise free speech which facilitates "thinking beyond the box". This means that individuals can pose problems to established knowledge and create a new version of reality which social scientists recognise as subjective knowledge construction. Furthermore, to be able to provide voice is opposed to being powerlessness and curricular/pedagogical approach should contribute operate monolithic and dominant narratives and prejudices.

Prejudice Reduction

It is not surprising that intergroup develop certain prejudices towards each other. Family and community beliefs, perceptions and practices may shape prejudice attitudes towards culturally different others which may even present in cognitive, affective and behavioural forms (Camicia, 2007). As different scholars have realised that prejudices create barriers to children's learning and development (Levy, Rosenthal & Herrera-Alcazar, 2010), concern for prejudice reduction has increased. In order to help children to overcome such problem, it is inevitable that educational activities support them to de-learning of prejudices in an appropriate time.

Different scholars have different arguments on how to reduce prejudices in learners. Banks (1993, 2010) and Camicia (2007) stress on inculcating multicultural knowledge, i.e., food, festivals, customs, language and cultural practices, whereas Allport (1954) advocates for the promotion of intergroup contact. Whichever intervention approaches we prefer, it is

noteworthy that school curricula have potential to help learners combat prejudices by imparting necessary knowledge, skills and prosocial attitudes.

As discussed in the preceding section, the Social Studies curricula from the first stage of elementary education have incorporated lessons on respect to people, languages, foods, festivals and customs of the neighbourhood. By presenting untouchability, superstition and social evils, learners are made aware of the dark side of different cultures (CDC, 2007). Similarly, curricula of the second stage of the same level show that it is important to build positive relationships by collaborating in community work, participation in fairs and festivals and demonstrating empathy and equal behaviour with people irrespective of their language, culture, gender, race and class (CDC, 2009). Likewise, the third stage also covers social, cultural and religious traditions of the mainstream and minority communities. Further, a lesson on unity in diversity shows respect, empathy and tolerance among people of diverse identities. In order to eliminate social problems, evils and malpractices, collaboration with people and the social institutions is highly stressed (CDC, 2012). Finally, the secondary curricula have provided significant space for values such as socialization, religious tolerance, secularism, empathy and collaboration and the development of peace culture in the society (CDC, 2014). A crucial note is that the curricula of grade 1-10 have repeatedly emphasised human values such as respect, collaboration, tolerance and social empathy which may be understood as a deliberate effort to facilitate de-learning of potential prejudices that learners of diverse groups bring with them.

Chapter Summary

This chapter was an attempt to analyse and interpret data, i.e., curricular components integrated into Social Studies and Moral Education in school education in Nepal. It explored several concepts compatible to as discussed in the analytical frameworks of peace education theory, critical peace education and multicultural education. Of the concepts, human rights (rights of children, women, marginalised and minority groups and civil rights in terms of the national constitution and international convention and law) education has received considerable attention. Similarly, international education is incorporated as texts and exercises are based on multiple spheres of lives of people in neighbouring India and China. In addition, the SAARC countries and their social, cultural and economic lives make an interesting section of international education. Moreover, the importance of the UN system and different bilateral and multilateral countries to Nepal's and International peace and development is highly stressed. Environmental education is found more towards deep ecology as several contents present inseparable relationship of human beings with the natural environment.

Likewise, holistic development (not only infrastructures and economic but social, cultural and human development) is presented as a necessary condition for peace.

In the same manner, curricula are found responsive towards violence of micro and macro level (physical, structural and cultural). They have provided ample opportunity to the study of conflict, conflict cycle and preventive measures applicable for interpersonal, cross-cultural and national and supranational level. Though kept in shadow from mainstream peace education, value based education and civic sense are found to be inevitable strands for peace education in Nepal. In terms of providing multicultural education in the multicultural setting of Nepal, curricula have achieved some success in terms of content integration and creating space for subjective knowledge construction and prejudice reduction likely to present in distinct identities groups. Thus, from the curricular perspective, much has been done in terms of theories (in peace education). Unless stakeholders put it in action, the theory may be of no sense. Therefore, in the next chapter, I explore different actor's understandings regarding curricular intervention in peace education in schools in the post-conflict Nepal.

CHAPTER V

CONTEXTUAL REALITIES IN PEACE EDUCATION

This chapter reflects an understanding of experienced teachers, teacher trainers, school inspector/DEO representatives and curriculum designers in peace education in the context of Nepal. In order to present a realistic picture of peace education intervention, I incorporate voices of multiple actors, then analyse whether they are conceptually clear and practically prepared for implementing peace education in a multicultural society. Further, stakeholders' understandings of and experiences with peace supportive mechanisms for schools provide additional information to the inquiry. In doing so, I attempt to address two research questions: In what ways, actors at various levels understand both the significance and the challenges of curricular intervention in peace education in Nepal? And, what are other mechanisms than curricular intervention to create a culture of peace in schools in Nepal?

Stakeholders' Understanding

I considered that understandings of various actors from teachers to policymakers matter because incompatibility in their conceptualisation of peace education would undermine its value. It would even result in inconsistencies in school practices as per teacher. In the following section, I thematise participants' responses and also place them in theoretical grounds and disciplinary knowledge. In doing so, I present and analyse themes that are compatible with the significance of peace education then resume the same process for understanding and exploring the challenges of curricular intervention in peace education from the perspectives of the participants.

Peace Education Intervention: Context

In relation to the context of the emergence of peace education in Nepal, several participants of my study had similar views. They stressed that though peace education was not organized as is, the trend of imparting knowledge and skills of moral values, social norms, respect, tolerance (religious/cultural), cooperation and social empathy is age-old in the context of Nepal. A few participants referred to *Gurukul*³² education system as well as

³² Gurukul is a Sanskrit word that refers to the residency of ancient teachers. When there were no schools, learners (called disciples) would stay with Gurus and learn spirituality, moral behaviours and practical lessons based on Hindu and Buddhist philosophies.

teaching-learning of Sanskrit in schools as deliberate efforts to teach such values and behaviours in children. Moti Lal, who has been teaching Social Studies for about 36 years now, has also witnessed several curricular reforms and experienced impacts. He says:

We have a long trend of teaching what has been called peace education today. Either through Gurukul system or Sanskrit as a compulsory course in schools, human values, social norms, duties and responsibilities were provided to learners. The learners who received such education would model the learning in their behaviour. Thus, it was a practical education to be a good human being. But, during the conflict the Maoist considering Sanskrit as a language of the high class directly restricted schools to teach it. It created a gap in teaching human values and social behaviours to children. Behavioural problems increased in home and school. With this realization, school curricula gradually incorporated different lessons related to peace (Lalitpur, July 2017).

There were other participants who expressed similar opinions. Yesodha, the school inspector mentioned that teachers, parents and other stakeholders realised more behaviour problems in learners in the transitional period with the end of teaching-learning of Sanskrit in schools and before making revisions in Social Studies curricula. She further says, “Social Studies was drastically revised after the conflict which has incorporated people’s inspirations in the changed period. It has supported to bring about positive changes in learners’ attitudes and behaviours towards others”³³. Similarly, Sarbottam, another teacher with 33 years of experience in teaching Social Studies, mentioned that this subject has been a better replacement of Sanskrit and other old subjects like history and geography because it is more sensitive to different social and cultural aspects of the society. According to him, religious/spiritual beliefs and practices and diverse social and cultural aspects of ethnic people emphasised in informal settings have well-integrated in Social Studies and teaching-learning of such parts has been more meaningful since the curricular amendment in the post-conflict scenario³⁴.

Similarly, curriculum designers also referred to the post-conflict period regarding the inclusion of more peace components in school curricula. Khusiram being one of them said that though there were various angles and components to deal with peace, it was after the conflict that Social Studies curricula witnessed more relevant topics such as inclusive policy,

³³ Bhaktapur, July 2017.

³⁴ Kathmandu, July 2017.

identities, rights of ethnic and religious minorities, secularism, conflict management and resolution and more³⁵. He says:

From the past, contents reflecting characteristics of a good citizen and a society, civic consciousness, rights and responsibilities, our relationship and co-operation with national and international organizations, social norms and values were important topics in school education. But, Social Studies witnessed a drastic revision after the conflict. The revised curricula have incorporated new themes that have made it unique than before". He continued, "learning lessons from national and international experiences, we focused on peace, human rights and development in order to address the need of the transitional period. We can see the similar practice in an international context as well.

The responses of the participants cited above indicate that though peace education was in practice based on religion/spirituality and local knowledge, the current form of peace education was materialised only in the post-conflict context. And it has been hoped to address aspirations and experiences from local and global scenarios. In the following section, peace education significance is explored as understood by the participants of the study.

Peace Education Intervention: Significance

According to the participants, curricular intervention in peace education has been of worth for some specific reasons in the context of Nepal. The reasons (here themes) emerged from the analysis of their responses are presented below.

Improved Awareness

All participants from bottom to top (school teachers to curriculum designers) realised that there is a vast difference in the level of consciousness of learners with those who were not provided with the current form of peace education. While there is a plenty of space to question the claim, some responses were more convincing. Sarbottam opines, "Today's learners are more conscious about their rights as learners in schools and members in the society. They have become more aware because they know different provisions made for them at the national and international levels which are mentioned in their textbooks". He further mentioned that general knowledge about human rights was a part of the study but there was no specific topic for the study of rights of ethnic and religious minorities,

³⁵ Bhaktapur, July 2017.

indigenous people, disabled persons, third gender, and socially marginalized and disadvantaged groups³⁶.

Similarly, Khusiram claimed that curricular process is one of the reasons for growing consciousness of people in Nepal. According to him, those who have not received any formal education are more vulnerable than that of the others of the same age. For him, the reason is that through school children become more aware of problems and possibilities of the society which shape their individual, social, political and economic lives³⁷.

In a different query, Khusiram confessed that media and social institutions played a significant role in bringing about positive changes in individuals. But he asserted that curriculum process should not be undermined because of the greater influence of teachers in children's behaviours. His idea supports Khanal and Park (2016) who found the operation of power theories in discursive practice between teacher and learners. Here, the point is that teachers have a greater influence over children. In addition to knowledge and skills practice, Khusiram stressed that curriculum functions as a medium to bring learners from diverse backgrounds to school promote their communication, collaboration, cross-cultural understanding and relationships through classroom tasks and projects. As a result, for him, it provides learners with the opportunity for social, psychological, emotional and academic development and well-being. In order to maximize the benefits, Khusiram suggested that it is necessary to integrate curricular and extra-curricular activities and projects that support the all-round development of learners irrespective of their class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or any other aspect.

Yeshodha also stressed that learners through curricular process engage in not only reading texts but the inquiry of different social problems and their solutions. She says:

Different stories, facts and figures, extracts of law, constitutions and treaties of different national and international conventions make learners aware of moral values and rights and responsibilities. Moreover, as they involve in field trips and social work, they find out realities about various aspects of their society which promotes their awareness. Therefore, the generation that is in school today is more advanced in thinking about not only rights and duties, but establishing an interpersonal relationship with people from different communities (Bhaktapur, July 2017).

³⁶ Kathmandu, July 2017.

³⁷ Bhaktapur, July 2017.

Likewise, Motilal attributed different strands of peace education as crucial aspects of Social Studies to develop knowledge horizon of learners. He said, “As different branches of knowledge are included in Social Studies it has become an interdisciplinary course. They (learners) learn about human rights, human values and traditions, governance system, democracy, peace and development in both developing and developed countries. As a result, they can compare their situation with others around the globe and find out reasons. It makes them critically aware of what they should do in their personal, professional and social lives³⁸. Moti Lal further shared an interesting account in this context. He says:

It's my experience that even illiterate parents become more aware along with the gradual progression of their children at school. This is because when children go home after school, many parents have the tendency to ask what they learned at school. Some parents have even reported that they stopped drinking alcohol and/or smoking just because their innocent children talk about negative consequences. This means that the impacts of the curriculum are beyond individual learners³⁹.

From the participants' point of view, knowledge about different facets of peace education has enabled them to reflect on their own situations, as well as their relationships with people and structures of the society. Otherwise stated, being ignorant of power relationship of social structures may mean for learners to be vulnerable in the society. In this context, peace education has cultivated critical consciousness in learners as emphasised by (Freire, 1970). But the value of peace education is not limited to it as it has potentials to provide voices and emancipate learners from powerlessness (Foucault, 1984a, cited in Taylor, 2014) and enable to take positive actions for individual and social change.

Change Experienced

Another theme emerged from the responses of the participants was the change in both individual and social behaviours in the context of Nepal. Teachers and curriculum designers claimed that widespread social and cultural taboos, malpractices, superstition and conservative traditions are ever decreasing. According to them, both the access to and the quality of education has played a pivotal role to bring about the change in the society.

Khusiram mentions:

Compared to the past, there are rare cases of malpractices such as child marriage, dowry system, Chhuwachhut (untouchability), social and cultural discrimination and exploitation of poor and marginalized people. Because, the rate of school going

³⁸ Lalitpur, July 2017.

³⁹ Lalitpur, July 2017.

children from all different communities has dramatically increased and school curricula, especially Social Studies, are more sensitive to the issues of equality, equity, inclusiveness, human rights and democratic culture (Bhaktapur, July 2017).

In my query regarding different social and cultural problems that occupy Nepali media, Khusiram claimed that many problems are created due to illiteracy and economic vulnerability. He further says, “Those who have not received any formal education are more likely to promote and suffer whether that is child marriage, dowry or any other social problem”.

In the same context, Motilal shared his personal experiences regarding the change that he observed in learners. He further shares, “some of the learners, especially young adolescent girls asked for my help in order to convince their parents and grandparents for not to pressurise them for early marriage. I called their parents at school and we discussed for an hour on the issue. Later, they were happy that they listened to me. Besides, there are also similar incidents in which children themselves have convinced their parents from wrongdoings. Because they have learned to resist social evils”.

However, Chudamani has contrasting opinions in relation to change behaviours of learners. He says, “The growing influence of media, technology and globalisation has resulted in the loss of local culture, traditions and values. Therefore, it was inevitable to teach such things through school”⁴⁰.

In addition, Chudamani concentrated on three key elements of value based education, culture-based education and spiritual education. For him, these different approaches serve the goal of peace education because they contribute to the promotion of humanity, social empathy and conscious being in learners. He further said, “Holistic education is what the children of the 21st century need because only the training of mind is not sufficient. The training of the mind, according to him, is merely the acquisition of contents knowledge without critical reflection to its application for humanity. In contrast, the training of heart, as he said, enables learners to join with people across ethnic, cultural, and religious borders and realise world brotherhood. He claimed that the holistic education (here, integration of mind and heart) provides the opportunity to yield sustainable results on the part of learners and broader society. He also claimed to have observed significant behavioural changes in learners who are provided such education in a conducive environment. Thus, he believed that peace education contributes towards positive changes in individual and the society.

⁴⁰ Kathmandu, July 2017.

In the quest of similar and dissimilar patterns in participants' responses, Sarbottam was notable among those who clearly articulated the significance of religious dimension of peace education. According to him constitutional provision of secularism and teaching-learning about not only Hinduism but Buddhism, Islamic, Christianity, Sikh, Jain and Kirat have made people more understanding towards others who follow different religions. He observed more religious tolerance among people because of their participation in each other's functions, ceremonies and cultural celebrations. He further disclosed, "In the past, priests would not accept if Dalit and Muslims went to the temple where Hindus worship. But, you do not find that discrimination today. Similarly, you can see Hindus participating in different *Jatras*⁴¹ and festivals of Buddhists, Christians and Muslims. At least, you do not find overt discrimination just because of religious faith".

Sarbottam further claimed that schools and universities in the home and abroad have begun the practice of *Vedic Gyan* (wisdom based on Hindu scripts) and Buddha's philosophy in order to promote peace and non-violence. He stressed, "Yoga comes from *Veda* which trains not only body but also mind and heart of people. Similarly, Buddha's *Upadesh* (teachings based on his Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Paths) has also been realised by many people across religions. Therefore, training of Yoga, Mindfulness and non-violence are conducted as movements in different contexts".

Different individual and corporate authors have also argued in the line of Sarbottam. Narayanan, 2011; Tessema, 2017; Kishidaa, Mamaa, Larkeyb & Elavskyc, n.d.) have clearly articulated the significance of Yoga for physical, mental, social and spiritual health with implications for inner and outer peace which denotes improved intra-personal and interpersonal relationships. Narayanan (2011) is also the one who identifies Yoga's implications for sustainability and conflict resolution.

Similarly, the Four Noble Truths and Eight-Fold Paths⁴² of Buddha provide an opportunity to coach not only truth and non-violence but morality, wisdom, freedom, mindfulness and liberation (UNHCR, 2012). In the last decade, peace education in different contexts witnessed such values (see Jing, 2007; Ennis, 2012; Nwaubani & Okafor, 2015) and are potential to remain the focus in further peace education programmes. Because, even

⁴¹ *Jatras* are cultural celebrations of Buddhists in Nepal.

⁴² The Four Noble Truth include Dukkha (suffering exists), Samudaya (there is a cause of suffering), Nirodha (there is end to suffering) and Magga (in order to end suffering, you must follow Eightfold Path which incorporates Samma ditthi (right Understanding of the Four Noble Truths), Samma sankappa (right thinking), Samma vaca (right speech), Samma kammanta (right conduct or right action), Samma ajiva (right livelihood), Samma vayama (right effort), Samma sati (right mindfulness) and Samma samadhi (right concentration). See UNCHR (2012) for explanations: <http://www.unhcr.org/50be10cb9.pdf>.

mindfulness only has attracted the attention of psychologists and educators in different contexts because of its social, psychological and academic values. Leland (2015) is one of those who found the instruction of mindfulness effective in decreasing behavioural problems and increasing emotional wellbeing and academic performance of learners. This scholar found out that even mentally challenged learners were more likely to perform better and he further suggests that mindfulness training should be a part of school/university curriculum.

Above and beyond, ethnic and indigenous contents (cultural aspects) integrated into the Social Studies curricula are viewed as significant part of revisions in school curricula. Two of the participants (Khusiram and Chudamani⁴³) emphasised that multicultural contents not only support identity construction among marginalised but promote cross-cultural understanding, harmony and empathy.

The responses of teachers, trainers and curriculum designers show that peace education in Nepal is compatible to contextual realities developed in the post-conflict setting. It has supported to incorporate religion/spirituality, morality, civic sense, human rights, multicultural identities, conflict resolution and peace culture. It is more towards the holistic education.

Different scholars have recognised the value of holistic education. Miller (1990) is one of them who argues, “holistic education recognizes the need to educate the whole person”. He further states, “beyond teaching basic skills and prevocational subject matter, education must recognize the emotional, psychological, aesthetic, creative, physical, and social and spiritual facets of human development and strive to nurture them” (p. 316). Similarly, other scholars (Forbes, 2003; Darken, 2009) have also placed importance on holistic education due to its philosophy of learner-centeredness in pedagogy. In addition, Carter (2013) identifies empathetic, reflective, nurturing and creative potentials of this paradigm. It shows that the training of mind and heart, as believed by participants including Chudamani, bears transformative possibilities for learners and society.

Realising the fact that impacts of peace education are dependent to pedagogical as well as parental support, Khusiram further mentions, “*a proper teaching of peace education and guidance in schools and home help to shape positive attitudes and behaviours in children*”. This idea leads to further exploration of stakeholders’ understanding and experiences about pedagogical practices in schools.

⁴³ Both of them are curriculum designers as mentioned in earlier sections.

Pedagogical Significance

In addition to awareness raising and behavioural value of peace education on the part of the learners, participants viewed that it has also pedagogical value. It means that teachers and other stakeholders have experienced improvements in the way learners were behaved in the classroom in the past.

In this context, Yeshodha reflected on her school days and distinguished with the present school scenario. She mentions:

Every time, they (teachers) used to carry a stick and beat us when somebody did not listen to them carefully. But the situation has changed. Now, there are rare cases of punishment in schools. Only one or two traditional teachers may beat students and teach. But this has come to a minimum level. This basically happens in private schools in the name of “disciplining” students. But, if a teacher gives a severe punishment to students, they go home and report their parents. The other day the news comes out and many people discuss the issue. One incident makes many other teachers aware. And if you compare the data every year, you will definitely find improvements on it⁴⁴.

In addition, Sarbottam claimed that even the learners in primary level are aware of their rights. He remembered his school days and compared with today’s learners. He opines, “Today’s learners are not like us. We were very submissive to our teachers. Either the teachers put benches and bricks over bending us down, scolded or even sent out of the class, we never dared to oppose them. Because we were taught not to go against teachers and elders. But the situation has changed and the children do not tolerate even I punish them”⁴⁵. From his use of the phrase “...even I punish them”, it becomes apparent that as a teacher one would automatically possess rights to correct learners by whatever means. Furthermore, it signifies deeply rooted belief in Nepal that corporal punishment and scolding are lawful if such actions are performed in order to discipline and/or teach children at home and school (see Owen, 2015).

Similarly, Moti Lal claimed that learners, parents, teachers and other stakeholders have realised that to give a corporal punishment to learners is to violate their rights. Teachers have also realised that it is not a solution. He further says,

⁴⁴ Bhaktapur, July 2017.

⁴⁵ Lalitpur, July 2017.

We can increase the fear level by punishment, but that is not the long-term solution. Now people's attitudes have changed. In city areas, you hardly hear about punishment in schools. In schools of rural areas, still some teachers may do so but media is everywhere and it reveals news soon. Now parents are also more aware. They do not say punish our child and teach, they say I did not send my child school for you to punish. It has made teachers reflect on what they were doing so far (Lalitpur, July 2017).

Besides awareness of child rights and improvement in the situation of corporal punishment, Bhimsen, the teacher trainer in social studies, revealed that there have been significant changes in the way contents are delivered to learners. He stressed teacher training, on one hand, and environment (also media and technology) on the other, have played a significant role to decrease punishment use while teaching. He further disclosed, "The government of Nepal has a policy for child-friendly teaching which identifies physical or psychological punishment as a violation of the right to education in a peaceful environment"⁴⁶. In order to help schools to adopt the child-friendly approach, Bhimsen said that different I/NGOs are supporting the actions by providing training to all stakeholders and supplying educational resources for classrooms. But, at the same time, he also confessed that teacher trainings and resources are scarce for schools in rural areas.

Peace Education Intervention: Challenges

The participants revealed several constraints that have still undermined the value of peace education intervention even after a decade of its materialisation. Those constraints are both internal and external to the school system. The internal constraints are related to policy ambiguity, teacher preparation and supply and assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes. Whereas, external constraints are mainly created due to deeply rooted malpractices in Nepali society and political parties' interferences in schools.

In relation to internal challenge, the first and foremost is to delimit the scope of peace education in school curricula. Khusiram says, "there are some dilemmas such as when to start peace education (which level and class), what to teach, how to teach, how to measure outputs etcetera. The scope of peace education is too broad. How to limit?"

For stakeholders, the second challenge is teacher education and training. Yeshodha mentioned, "In the whole country, we do not have many teachers who come from the related educational background. Because, Teacher Service Commission (TSC) has made a provision

⁴⁶ Pyuthan, July 2017.

that anyone with a bachelor degree in English, Nepali, Science, Mathematics or any other subject can apply to teach Social Studies in the Secondary level”. For her, this provision is irrelevant since general knowledge of Social Studies is inadequate for effective teaching-learning. Similarly, Moti Lal also identified two major problems associated with it. He said that many teachers find Social Studies difficult because they lack professional knowledge and skills. He said, “Neither all teachers who teach Social Studies in the Secondary level come from related university education nor they get adequate training on it. As a result, they cannot go into the deeper level as demanded by the curriculum. Consequently, many learners fail both to realise the value of peace education and pass Social Studies in standardized tests”. Likewise, Bhimsen revealed that like earlier policies, SSDP⁴⁷ has also made a provision of TPD⁴⁸ in which in-service teachers receive 10 days of face-to-face training in teacher training centres and 5 days of school-based self-teaching. According to him, the school-based self-teaching includes the tasks of regular teaching in the respective school/class, projects works and case studies upon classroom issues and learners. Bhimsen further says:

After one year, those teachers who earlier received in-service training go through the same process as earlier which is refreshment training for them. Afterwards, they do not come under training consideration. Again, this training scheme applies only to the Lower Secondary⁴⁹ and the Secondary⁵⁰ teachers of the government schools.

But, what about the teachers teaching Social Studies in grades 1-5? Does general training provided to them qualify them as expert teachers of social studies? And, what about the teachers of Social Studies who do not come under any training considerations from the government?⁵¹ Do not they require any training at all?

However, Sarbottam had contrasting opinions on the issue. He reveals:

I do not think teachers need a separate training to teach peace education. Because all contents integrated into Social Studies are a matter of self-study. Students can read themselves and understand easily. But, he confessed that many teachers and students find it among the demanding school subjects in Nepal.

⁴⁷ School Sector Development Plan

⁴⁸ Teacher Professional development

⁴⁹ Until recently, grades 6-8 would count as lower secondary. In this study, I have referred to these grades under the third level of elementary education.

⁵⁰ Grades 9-10.

⁵¹ In Nepal, two types of school system exist. The government “takes responsibility” for the government schools but not for the privately established by individuals. The number of such schools is about 6,000. (Source: personal communication over phone with an educational officer, B. Khanal, 2018, February 24).

Basically, these responses indicate two major problems. First, schools in Nepal lack teacher who have adequate professional education and training in Social Studies/peace education. Second, even the so-called experienced teachers lack understanding in terms of the value of teacher training and learner training in Social Studies.

In the same context, Chudamani and Khusiram, however, agreed that many teachers of Social Studies and Moral Education deliver contents to learners but they lack professional skills to transfer bookish knowledge into the practical level. Chudamani said, “transformation in learners’ behaviour is a major challenge because peace is not only about teaching its definitions”. Khusiram also added that the lack of experts and resources to implement peace education in schools is a challenge for them.

The third challenge, according to stakeholders, is an evaluation of learning outcomes and assessing the impacts of peace education. Yeshodha revealed that there is no monitoring and evaluation of peace education as such and behavioural changes on learners. Moti Lal, taking on learners’ perspective, says:

Learners take contents of Social Studies vague. They have to read a lot and memorize for the exam because our examination system requires them to write their knowledge in three hours paper-pencil test. There is no practical examination to assess behavioural change in students. Therefore, they take it as a burden rather than an opportunity. So, I think there is defeat in our education system⁵².

Though external constraints are less, some stakeholders understand that political interference in schools is among the major challenge that has underscored peace education intervention. Khusiram disclosed, “Schools are politically influenced because parties want to keep schools under their control. They want to use the school in their favour. They may have a good philosophy but their actions are bad. They do not act according to the public interest, instead, they serve their interests. They create tussle on the ground without contributing to making policy level. When it is time to recruit a new teacher, elect the school management committee, or even make a school building, school leaders must experience external pressure by political leaders or their cadres”. Similarly, Bhimsen revealed that conflict among political parties and political instability has provided the ground for some to call for a strike across the country. As a result, schools and transportation also close. He further says:

⁵² Lalitpur, July 2017.

*It creates a huge problem to run schools for 220 days in a year which is a cause that many teachers neither complete their course on time nor teach children in a fearless environment*⁵³.

In addition, Chudamani also realised that social and cultural taboos, evils, malpractices and superstitions are prevalent in traditional communities. For him, lack of awareness (illiteracy) on the part of senior members of the society is the push factor for continuing stereotypes, conservative beliefs and violence upon a new generation. Moti Lal quoted a Nepali proverb “*Jaha Garib Teha Harip*”. The proverb means that where there is an economic crisis in the family, is a source of conflict. He further clarified that children from lower social strata continue experiencing different forms of violence at home and in the society. According to him, what they teach in peace education may mean less/nothing for children who continue experiencing social stratification and violence due to lower socio-economic strata (see Joshi, 2013; Do & Lyer, 2007). In the following section, I present approaches other than curricular intervention in relation to peacebuilding in schools.

Peace Supportive Mechanisms in Schools

Different stakeholders claimed that there are different layers of mechanisms built to support the creation of peace culture in schools. Khusiram is one of them who made such claims. He says, “School as Zone of Peace⁵⁴ has made a provision of establishing Child Protection Committees in schools. In order to create a fearless environment and promote child-friendly behaviours in schools, those committees, in coordination with the school Principal, teachers, parents, students, child clubs and child rights defenders from the local community, work to ensure peace in school premises”⁵⁵. However, Yeshodha, the school inspector, revealed her doubt regarding whether such committees work according to the mandates given to them. She adds,

⁵³ Pyuthan, July 2017.

⁵⁴ School as Peace Zone is a decision made by the cabinet of Nepal on May 25, 2011 in order to protect schools from political interference, armed activities, violence, discrimination, misbehaviours (physical, psychological, emotional, ignorance and sexual harassment), exploitation and any other type of misconduct that deprives children from their rights to education in a peaceful environment. The ministry of education has made School as Peace Zone National Framework and Implementation guideline (2011). The framework has given the mandate to form a Central Coordination Committee under Director General of the Department of Education, District Coordination Committees under the District Education officers or representatives and Committees in schools under a teacher selected by the respective school Principals. There is a provision of involving child right activists in all committees and journalists in district and central committees, along with other stakeholders of education. See Ministry of Education (2011). School as Peace Zone National Framework and Implementation guideline. Kathmandu: Author.

⁵⁵ Bhaktapur, July 2017.

Such committees in schools are more concerned towards infrastructure development rather than supporting to create child-friendly school behaviours.

But, Yeshodha realised the need to strengthen relationship and coordination with all school stakeholders in order to address actual needs of learners.

Khusiram further adds, “There is also the provision of making a gender focal person to hear grievances of the girl child in schools”. He further claims, “We have tried to reach to children through curriculum, school, child protection committee and district peace committee. There is a clear provision for all schools.” But, he finally confessed that though some internal requirements make schools and the District Education Office submit different progress reports to the Department of Education, there are no additional mechanisms to supervise implementation and monitor the progress of both child protection committee and gender focal person.

As both the teacher trainer and school inspector (Bhimsen and Yeshodha respectively) agreed that the responsibility of gender focal person is given to a female teacher without providing an adequate training to her. Even surprising is that the teacher who is given such responsibility is supposed to teach regular classes as other teachers without additional incentives. This seems that the responsibility of the gender focal person is an additional burden on the part of those who are assigned with such responsibility. It shows that this provision is likely to be less/(in) effective in schools in Nepal.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented stakeholders’ (teacher, teacher trainer, school inspector/DEO representative and curriculum designer) understandings and experiences in relation to curricular intervention in peace education in Nepal. In doing so, it has categorised their responses under three broader themes: context, significance and challenges of that process. Regarding the context, it was revealed that though peace education was a part of schooling in both the *Gurukul* and the pre-conflict contexts, the materialisation of peace education was done only after the conflict. Because, components such as secularism, inclusiveness, conflict cycle, conflict resolution, peace culture etcetera were integrated into the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2007) and are substantially focused in corresponding curricular revisions. Similarly, different sub-themes: raised awareness (knowledge), change experienced (behavioural) and pedagogical improvements show that the participants have realised the value of peace education. However, inadequate human resource and professional development activities on one hand and persistent social/cultural stereotypes and malpractices

on the other have been understood as major challenges. Peace supportive mechanisms in schools are also less/ineffective.

CHAPTER VI

DISCUSSION, FINDING AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I present the key insights that I developed through an interplay among analytical frameworks, research methodology and data obtained from interview transcripts and documents. First, I reflect on my data analysis and present the gist as a summary of findings. In doing so, I follow the chronology of my analysis and interpretations. Again, this is an attempt to answer my research questions in brief. Then I synthesise the findings and place them into the context and attempt to make sense out of them. Finally, I draw a conclusion and highlight implications of the study for further practice and research in the discipline.

Summary of Findings

In the present study, I explored several curricular components in peace education and categorised them in different themes. The first theme was human rights education which included fundamental rights, rights of children, women, ethnic and indigenous groups, socially marginalised, religious minorities and the third gender. Importantly, different socio-cultural traditions (*Deuki, Jhuma, Chhaupadi, Chhuwachhut, Boksi* and *Dhami-Jhakri*), and malpractices (dowry, child labour, human trafficking, theft and rubbery and corporal punishment) that violate human rights were part of both the Basic and the Secondary Social Studies curricula.

Another theme of peace education was outlined in terms of its focus on international education. In this strand, different social, cultural, religious, economic and geographical aspects of all seven different continents were focused. Furthermore, the bilateral and multilateral cooperation of Nepal with countries in the South Asia and beyond, and UN system, international humanitarian organizations and financial organizations were found notable components.

Similarly, through the framework of environmental education, the Social Studies curricula was found sensitive to it. Because it incorporates not only natural resources and heritages but human cause and consequences on natural/physical, social, cultural and economic environment. Some prominent challenges such as deforestation, pollution and

climate change on one hand and issues of diversity and globalization on the other were a significant part of this theme.

In addition, the study found out that development education is a part of peace education in Nepal. This area of education has focused not only on infrastructure development but social, cultural, political, economic and human development. Importantly, some concepts of culturally responsive (traditional and indigenous practices) and sustainable development are highlighted from grade 8 onwards. Likewise, contents on corruption have established that it is among the major obstacles to development in the country.

In the same manner, the study found out that conflict resolution education is provided from early grade (third grade) with awareness-raising components against physical and verbal violence. Significantly, different causes of violence in micro level (consumption of alcohol and drugs, theft and robbery, bullying, gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse and discrimination against so-called lower castes (e.g. *Dalit*) are included. Whereas, contents on macro-level violence involved structural one. Besides, high scale violence and war such as boundary conflict with neighbouring countries, (global) terrorism, armed conflict and causes and consequences of WWI and WWII were also problematised. In the same theme, the study found out that below five grade Social Studies has incorporated conflict preventive measures (respect, cooperation, tolerance, equal behaviour, empathy, mutual understanding and alike) whereas conflict management and resolution in grade six and onwards.

Similarly, the study, based on the analysis of Social Studies and Moral Education found out that this strand of education was the second most emphasised component after civic sense in peace education in Nepal. A separate unit in Social Studies in grades 1-10 and the whole book of Moral Education was found potential to cultivate positive attitudes and prosocial behaviour in learners. In particular, the formation of positive attitudes, good habit, love, respect, appreciation, social life, mutual understanding and cooperation, equal behaviour and empathy are common themes of value education in grades 1-5. Whereas socialization, social empathy and unity in diversity in multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual Nepal were found apparent contents in grade six and onwards.

Likewise, civic sense (awareness) was found in the mostly emphasised area of study in the framework of peace education. The civic sense in junior grades (1-3) was found limited to the contents teaching polite language, respect and care. But grade four onwards, it was drastically widened covering fundamental rights, civic duties, social codes and conducts, nation, nationality, sovereignty, democratic culture, equality and inclusiveness. By the end of

the secondary, it covered constitution, constitutional commissions, state apparatuses, civic duties and responsibilities, governance system of Nepal, political parties and power balance.

Of course, the analysis of Social Studies curricula revealed that multicultural education is a noteworthy theme in peace education in the post-conflict context in Nepal. Evidence showed that this theme is potential to minimise prejudices likely to develop among different ethnic and religious groups. As reflected Nepal's cultural diversity in contents (learning materials) and integrated critical thinking skills and knowledge construction process through experiential (community work, role play, drama etc.), inquiry-based, project-based and problem-based learning, Social Studies curricula were found culturally responsive. In addition, the study has resulted several insights based on the analysis and interpretation of research participants' understandings and experiences.

A majority of the participants revealed that the foundation of peace education goes back to *Gurukul* system of schooling (teaching *Vedic* or Buddhist philosophy). However, the current form of peace education (education based on human rights, the international system, environment, conflict resolution, development, values, civic sense and multiculturalism) was materialised only after the conflict in Nepal. They believed that the existing curricula in Social Studies and Moral Education are potential to (1) fill the gap created due to the absence of Sanskrit teaching and (2) incorporate multiple identities (different ethnic, indigenous, and religious groups) in the changed socio-political environment.

The participants from bottom to top (teachers, teacher trainer, school inspector/DEO representative and curriculum designers) claimed that curricular intervention has improved consciousness of the Nepali society through schools. While they confessed the role of other agencies, teachers revealed their experiences that some learners have made illiterate parents stop (bad) habits (e.g., consumption of alcohol and drugs) and malpractices (e.g., child marriage and domestic violence).

Likewise, most of the participants also reported changes in individual and social behaviours. They indicated that cross-cultural understanding has increased whereas conservatism (e.g., child marriage, dowry system, untouchability, inequality, discrimination and exploitation to poor and marginalized people) has decreased.

In addition, teachers, teacher trainers and school inspectors disclosed that human rights education has pedagogical value in the context of Nepal. Because, as they reported, the concern of human rights has promoted child-friendly teaching-learning in schools. As a result, learners are less/not likely to experience school-based violence.

Though not a focus of the present study, stakeholders referred to the role of media technologies and I/NGOs also in order to decrease corporal punishment and violence in schools. This may also be linked to human rights education. However, the researcher is aware that I/NGOs have played a significant role to promote teacher development and resources for schools in Nepal.

In addition to the significance, the present study explored some notable challenges experienced by stakeholders in course of peace education intervention in schools. According to one of the curriculum designers (Khusiram), policy ambiguity, such as when to start peace education (which level and class), what to teach, how to teach, how to measure outputs and how to limit the scope, is a major challenge. The second challenge, as reported by the stakeholders, was the lack of subjective teachers (teachers with related professional education and training in Social Studies and Moral Education) in schools. According to the school inspector (Yeshodha), Teacher Service Commission's provision that allows any discipline bachelor degree graduate to be eligible for a teacher in the Secondary level in Social Studies has created the problem. Also, the in-service teacher training which covers one month in total (20 days face to face and 10 days performance-based) in the whole teaching career of a teacher was found inadequate. Both of the curriculum designers also agreed with this fact. But even the so-called experienced teacher (e.g., Sarbottam) was found undermining the value of teacher and learner training.

Third, the participants mentioned that traditional evaluation system i.e., the paper-pen based test is irrelevant in assessing impacts of peace education in learners. Likewise, political interference in schools, road protests and strikes, deeply rooted socio-cultural taboos, superstitions and malpractices and poverty were also reported as sources of violence in schools/society in Nepal. Finally, the Child Protection Committee and Grievance Hearing Mechanisms in schools, as reported by the teacher and the school inspector, are barely functional due to lack of human resource in schools and training to the responsible teachers.

Discussion

As mentioned above, several curricular components integrated in peace education curricula in Nepal communicate with theories, practice and research carried out in different contexts. The peace curricula have problematised different socio-cultural beliefs and practices that violate human rights in Nepali society. Further, by introducing socio-cultural taboos, superstition, conservatism and malpractices, the curricula have facilitated "pedagogy of resistance" which is one of the facets of critical peace education (Bajaj, 2015). This researcher has found such pedagogy efficient in combating caste-based discrimination in the neighbouring country,

India. Lauter and Perlstein (1991) also argue that curricula sensitive to inequality, racism or similar problems do not only provide texts but “an idea of a culture that fosters change” (p. 5). Similarly, international education, that integrated socio-economic aspects and interconnectedness of people around the globe has also significant space in the curricula. With this, the Social Studies curricula confirm what UNESCO (2004) states, “a true educational process must teach international education...” (p. 95). Though a different term used “Global Citizenship Education”, UNESCO (2014) emphasizes the similar elements as in international education in order to empower learners to fight with global challenges to contribute to “more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world” (p. 15). Likewise, environmental education has encompassed deep ecological perspectives that consider human beings as an essential part of the environment and provides no/less freedom for its exploitation (Palmer, 2003). Rather it has oriented learner for ethical actions in order to achieve sustainable development goals (UNESCO, n. d.). In the meantime, development education incorporated holistic approach because of its sensitivity towards indigenous and modern approaches to the development of not only infrastructures but social, cultural, economic, political and human. Additionally, conflict resolution education was developed on the basis of approaches to peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peacemaking which are widely used in educational settings and beyond (Harris & Morrison, 2003). Likewise, both micro (unorganised) and macro (structural) level violence were focused. Thus, it was confirmed that all five facets of *peace education theory* developed by Harris (2004) were incorporated in the Social Studies curricula. This confirmation also denotes that peace education in Nepal is interdisciplinary that draws insights from the distinct field of studies.

Correspondingly, value based education integrated in both the Social Studies and the Moral Education was notable because of its pace value. Different areas of study, such as building positive attitudes, the formation of ethical behaviours and promotion of mutual understanding, cooperation, social life and empathy create a meaningful ground for peace to sustain. For the scholar like Segal (2011), these values including social empathy are significant because they support to prepare a foundation for social justice. Likewise, civic sense/awareness, which is the most emphasised area of study within the framework of peace education in Nepal, cultivates values and norms of democratic culture and equality and inclusiveness in state apparatuses. This strand was noteworthy in the sense that it has clearly shown the areas in which learners have to practise active citizenship.

Of the five dimensions of *multicultural education* as discussed in the analytical framework, dimensions of content integration, knowledge construction process and prejudice

reduction (Banks, 2010) were reflected in learning materials. By making contents responsive to Nepal's multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic identities and involving learners in examining pluralistic views, curricula have encouraged positive interdependence, tolerance, and unity in diversity. With this, culturally responsive pedagogy (Gay, 2010) or diversity education seems to contribute to the construction of multiple identities in the classroom (Hjørne, Aalsvoort & Abreu, 2012). However, much depends on how teacher's guide through the process, for which observational research would provide more insights. In my case, teachers were found not adequately informed about the value of guiding through the process of peace education as mentioned, "...all contents integrated into Social Studies are a matter of self-study"⁵⁶. This sort of understanding seems to overlook the areas that demand through engagement of both the teachers and the learners of diverse backgrounds. In order to change texts and exercises into knowledge, teacher's facilitation and learners' meaningful engagement are inevitable. But, the task remains tough in my study context because schools lack teachers with related professional education and training in peace education (Social Studies and Moral Education). Based on rich qualitative data (study period 2014-2016), Novelli and Sayed (2016) also revealed several challenges including teacher management and training peace education intervention in post-conflict contexts in Pakistan, Uganda, Myanmar and South Africa. In such scenarios, peace curricula may provide a bulk of information in many different areas but barely succeeds to bring "community into the classroom" (Lowe & Reisch, 1998) and enable learners to examine direct, structural and cultural violence (Galtung & Fischer, 2013; Harris, 2004). What it does then undermine the idea of teachers as a change agent (Dewey, 1938), agents of sustainable peace, social cohesion and development (Novelli & Sayed, 2016). Instead, it reproduces inequalities (Mills, 2008) and fuels conflict as argued by Bush and Saltarelli (2000) in the notion of the negative face of education.

Further, lack of expert teachers, lack of monitoring and evaluation of peace supportive mechanisms, rigid evaluation of learning practices⁵⁷, and political interference in schools are challenges related to policy ambiguity and accountability on the part of stakeholders. In order for schools in Nepal to realise the strengths of peace curricula, a clearer vision in the policy level including Teacher Service Commission and accountability of all stakeholders is unavoidable.

⁵⁶ Sarbottam, Kathmandu, July 2017.

⁵⁷ Traditional evaluation system of using paper-pen even in measuring outcomes of peace education in schools.

Furthermore, in spite of high level policy directives, curricula and textbooks, peace education in Nepal has deserved less attention of its stakeholders. As schools lack professional teachers and trained human resource, learners are deprived of both an effective coaching in the classroom and a proper guidance by the Child Protection Committee established in each school. Lack of monitoring and evaluation in school activities by the stakeholders has added problems in schools. While there are other constraints as well, but these constraints are created by the internal stakeholders themselves. This shows that peace education is not among the priorities in school education. This may be a potential reason for the direct and structural violence in school premises and the society in Nepal (Khanal & Park, 2016; Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, 2018).

The results of curricular intervention in peace education are not satisfactory in some other contexts as well. Consistent to Nepal's case, the prime example is Kenyan primary schools that demonstrate a huge gap in policy and practices in peace education (Lauritzen's, 2013). The gap between policy (curricula and textbook) and school practices is evident also in Zambian Secondary Schools where teachers due to the lack of expertise ended up teaching the minimum level of peace curricula and undermined its potentials (Mulaisho, 2016). Clarke-Habibi's (2018) study also supports the argument because adequately trained teachers experienced impacts of peace education beyond raised consciousness and improved intercultural relations in Bosnian-Herzegovinian contexts.

The contexts that failed to realise the potentials of peace education have, nevertheless, provided an enormous insight for not only peace educator and researchers but scholars in social sciences who see value linked with teaching-learning of subjects other than "hard subjects" like geometry, algebra, physics or chemistry. Peace education as an area of "soft subject" has deserved less attention even in the post-conflict contexts where such education is undeniable. The present study documents that in spite of recognition of peace education (through curricula and textbooks), stakeholders are not serious enough for its effective implementation. The lack of human resource in schools and accountability of stakeholders prove the claim.

Finally, theoretical inadequacy is also a challenge in peace research. Why I am arguing this is because, *peace education theory* (Harris, 2004), critical peace education (Bajaj, 2008, 2015; Brantmeier, 2011, 2013 among others) and even Banks's (1993, 2010) *multicultural education* do certainly contribute to peace praxis but neither of them fully address some of prominent themes and modalities of peace education. The analysis of my study show that value/moral based and civic awareness based approaches have enormous

potentials for peace education even in multicultural contexts. But, they lack space in those theorists' models. I consider that this worldview limits us from incorporating multiple perspectives into peace education and research. Thus, a comprehensive theoretical framework needs to develop which is also realised by Diaz-Soto (2005) as included postulates of spiritual aspect, identity politics and love paradigm, among others, in her suggestions for critical peace education.

Conclusion

The present interpretive study aimed at analysing curricula and examining stakeholders' understandings in relation to curricular intervention in peace education in the post-conflict context in Nepal. By incorporating theoretical constructs of *(critical) peace education and multicultural education*, the study analysed Social Studies and Moral Education curricula and textbooks (grades 1-10 and 6-8 respectively). A few teacher's guides available during the study also accompanied the materials studied. The findings showed that those materials have provided plenty of space for peacebuilding education. Because, human rights education, international, environmental education, development education and conflict resolution education are the mainstream themes in peace education in the beginning of the 21st century (Harris, 2004). Though value-based education and civic sense/awareness education have received less attention, these two strands were found mostly emphasised in the context of Nepal. Similar is a case of multicultural education. In the time when multicultural education is still waiting for the consensus in peace education theory and practice, it has built a solid ground in the context of Nepal. In order to arrive at this conclusion, three different facets of content integration, knowledge construction and prejudice reduction were analysed and found ample grounds for them in Social Studies Curricula. As learning materials reflected Nepal's multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual realities, peace education curricula are, considerably, sensitive to its culture. I consider this feature as an asset in peace education because it makes interveners aware of learners' needs and strengths. Moreover, the reflection of Nepal's diversity into curricula has provided space for identity construction among learners of mainstream and minority cultures. Again, educational policies, curricula and textbooks have created a solid ground for peace education.

However, due to the lack of stakeholder's focus on peace education, intervention has not been effectively carried out. Qualitative interviews with some key stakeholders revealed ample evidences to it. Further, it needs to be realised that the transformative potentials of peace education cannot be truly realised without adequately trained teachers and supportive school mechanisms. In order to bring about positive changes in schools and the society, local

to central actors, i.e., teachers, parents, rights activists, political leaders, teacher educators educational officers and policy makers need to collaborate. Such collaboration may create opportunities for seeking long-term solutions related to teachers and other stakeholders of peace education/school education in Nepal.

Recommendations for Future Research

As a general educational practice, peace education in schools is an integrated whole of curriculum, teacher and learner. The present study concentrated on curricula and teachers' understandings which means there are many other areas to be researched such as instructional practices, classroom communication and learners' experiences of peace education. Similarly, it is also interesting to look at how stakeholders other than a teacher, school inspectors, teacher trainers and curriculum designers understand the significance of peace education in Nepal. They may have lived experienced the phenomenon that might be different from how my study participants presented. Further, the realities might be different from what teachers say they do in peace education classrooms. Similarly, it is also interesting to see whether school and the social structures are empowering to learners from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, according to the interests, ethnographic, discourse analysis, phenomenological or any qualitative design may be used to better understand some of the issues raised by the present study.

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APPENDIXES

Informed Consent Form

Title: Curricular Intervention in Peace Education in the Post-Conflict Context in Nepal: An Interpretive Study
Researcher: Ganesh Kumar Khanal
Contact: gkh000@uit.no
Institution: UiT-The Arctic University Of Norway, Tromsø
Supervisor: Associate Professor, Nils Vidar Vambheim, PhD
Contact: vidar.vambheim@uit.no

Propose of the Research: This research is being carried out in order to explore understandings of key stakeholders in peace education in Nepal.

What you will be asked to do in this research: To provide necessary time and views based on interviews questions.

Risks and discomforts: The research participants will be kept anonymous and the interview will be used only for academic purpose. there are no potential risks and discomforts in the research participants that are associated with this interview in any way.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time.

Confidentiality: Responses of the research participants will be kept confidential to the fullest extent. The researcher is aware of the research ethics and will provide full respect to people involved and their opinions expressed during interviews.

Legal rights and signature:

I,consent to participate in an interview to be conducted by Ganesh Kumar Khanal. I have understood the nature of the project and want to provide my opinions. My signature below indicates my consent to participate in this research.

.....
Signature of the Participant

.....
Date

.....
Signature of the Researcher

.....
Date

An Interview Guideline

1. I am eager to know about the practice of peace education in Nepal. Could you please reflect on the phenomenon?
2. The school curricula have been revised after the conflict. Especially, social studies course has seen new components in it with the changed scenario in Nepal. What are the areas of changes in social studies?
3. Peace education is implemented both as a separate program and curricular intervention in different contexts. In your view, what are the rationales behind implementing peace education as the curricular intervention in Nepal in the post-conflict setting?
4. What are the significant components of peace education in our context? How do those components influence or affect attitudes and behaviours of Nepali students?
5. In your opinion, what are the short-term objectives and long-term goals of peace education in Nepal? Where can we see the results?
6. To what extent do you believe that peace education in schools addresses the cause of the conflict that occurred in (1996-2006) in Nepal?
7. News reveals that there are different kinds of violence in schools in Nepal. In such scenario, I think it is difficult to have positive impacts of peace education in schools. What is your view in this regard?
8. What are the strategies/efforts to make peace education intervention effective in schools?
9. How are the impacts of peace education assessed? What are the specific tools used to assess the impact of curricular intervention in peace education?
10. What are the specific challenges of curricular intervention in peace education in Nepal? What are your experiences?
11. What role do the environmental factors (cultural norms and values, ideologies, interests) play in peace education? How do these factors support or hinder the objectives of the curriculum? How supportive is the environment?
12. In your opinion, what could be done in order to make peace education more effective?

Thank you very much for your time and response!

