

**THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN NEPAL: A
NEGLECTED AREA OF DISCUSSION**

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ABSTRACT

In Nepalese context, the rural economy should continue to be a principal tool for the development and sustainability of the country. Curriculum plays an important role in providing people with skills for positive transformation, but a number of important questions remain as to what kind of curriculum can be conducive to the strengthening of skills for rural transformation. So, I formulated research questions as to how contextual curriculum plays the role for the rural transformation. Contextual curriculum can help in multiple ways to rural transformation for national development. This paper is derived from the review of literatures with substantial evidences. I have tried to see this issue through the lens of resilience theory. Moreover, this paper also aims to serve as a fundamental literature based research to show and raise the neglected issue. I believe that paper contributes to the both field in curriculum and rural transformation.

Keywords: *Contextual curriculum, rural transformation, competencies, resilience theory.*

INTRODUCTION

Rural transformation is about human development and is not limited only to the development of infrastructure (Bremen, 2014). In Nepalese context, the rural economy should continue to be a principal tool for the development and sustainability of the country. Curriculum can be envisaged from different perspectives as a course content, learning experiences, educational vehicle, roadmap, blueprint document and so forth. In some cases, people see the curriculum entirely in terms of the subjects that are taught and tested, and as set out within the set of textbooks and forget the wider goals of *competencies* and individual development. In literature there are varying types of curriculum; written, taught, tested, hidden, technical, non-technical, objective based, *competencies* based, process model, system model are the some of them(Aoki, 2005).

Curriculum plays an important role in providing people with skills for positive transformation, but a number of important questions remain as to what kind of curriculum can be conducive to the strengthening of skills for rural transformation. The idea of rural transformation is not a new one. But the concept of curriculum has changed frequently (Slattery, 2006) and how concurrent perspective of curriculum plays a significant role in transformation of rural society is the major concerns of this paper. The purpose of this study is to explore how contextual curriculum contributes to rural transformation of remote area of Nepal. More precisely, this paper aims to find out the roles of curriculum for rural transformation in Nepal. So, I delimited the issue by raising the only one concerns of issue and formulated research questions as to how contextual curriculum plays the role for the rural transformation.

Paper is more focused on the needs of contextual curriculum for rural transformation by identifying its roles to improve the rural social standards of Nepal. There is numerous form

of curriculum (Kriedel, 2010). However, contextual curriculum is learner based which fosters the rural transformation and insists the students providing platform to utilize their learned skills, knowledge and attitude in daily social as well as personal activities. So, this mixed model of curriculum incorporates contextual matters and help in multiple ways to rural transformation for national development. Moreover, contextual curriculum is interactive and it engages learners socially through regular opportunities to share experiences, problems, ideas and view points, and work together toward solutions of rural problem (Marion, 1981).

Rural transformation normally gives value for opportunities to learn from and with one another. In this respect contextual curriculum serves the purpose rightly. So, this paper is derived from literature review with substantial evidences. I have tried to analyze this issue through the lens of resilience theory. In short, resilience is best defined as the ability of a system to absorb disturbances and still retain its basic function and structure (Carlson 2012). More specifically, the study is intended to look into how contextual curriculum contributes, if it does, to rural transformation of Nepal.

I believe that this paper contributes to the both field in curriculum and rural transformation. Additionally, this paper also aims to serve as a fundamental literature based research paper to show and raise the neglected issue. And it is my conviction that it will fill the literature gap in the field and bridge between curriculum and rural transformation of the country.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Resilience theory: The term “resilience” originated in the 1970s in the field of ecology from the research of C.S. Holling, who defined resilience as “*a measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables*” (Holling, 1973). This theory essentially believes that it determines the persistence of relationships within a system. There are two

glacial in this theory-- the first resilience and the second is stability. Stability is an equilibrium state after a temporary disturbance. In short, resilience is best defined as the ability of factors to absorb disturbances and still retain its basic function and structure. Transformation lies in between resilience and stability stage.

Moreover, resilience is “the capacity to change in order to maintain the same identity” (Carlson, 2012). In Nepalese society, there is a wide-ranging gap between haves and have-nots; this is due to the improper distribution of resources and basic needs including education. The present curriculum has insufficient unification of inclusiveness, which is almost dysfunctional. So the contextual curriculum and its role are important for stability and to gear from the resilience to rural transformation. As Fiksel presents resilience is “*The capacity of a system to survive, adapt and grow in the face of change and uncertainty*” (Fiksel 2006). In Nepal, it is frequently documented that mass inhabitants have inadequate literacy skills and still out of formal schooling. Despite, increased spending on education with recent high enrollment rate in primary level. But the working populations of the country who are from the deprived community, ethnic proportions are still illiterate and have no satisfactory formal education and training on their working field i.e. agriculture. These kinds of mismatch between improper education and work environment always will lead the condition of resilience not the situation of stability. So, the appropriate and contextual education through the properly designed curriculum is needed to join two equally important components of transformation.

Moreover, resilience theory has their three crucial characteristics: at first, the amount of disturbance a system can absorb and still remain within the same state or domain of attraction; secondly it is the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization; and the third is the ability to build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation (www.resilience.org). It is also very interesting to note that resilience is not only

about being persistent or robust to disturbance. It is also about the opportunities that disturbance opens up in terms of recombination of evolved structures and processes, renewal of the system and emergence of new trajectories (Carlson, 2012). So, the contextual curriculum can address rightly for current resilience to the rural transformation of Nepal. And bring to the stage of developed, prosperous country with long term progress and stability. Curriculum should incorporate following factors in it to attain the progressive stability for rural transformation.

- A. We can't manage transformation or social systems in isolation. Their strong interactions, education and rural transformation, mean that feedbacks between them must be taken into account. So, contextual curriculum must have the feedback loop.
- B. When taking account of resilience it's important to know what phase of the adaptive cycle system is in: Is it nearing a change to a different phase? What kinds of interventions are appropriate, or inappropriate, in the current phase? Is contextual education and curriculum addressing the problem?
- C. An understanding of what is happening in the scales above and below the scale at which you are working is important: What effect do these contextual educations exert over the transformation in which you are interested?
- D. It is also important to identify contextual curriculum that may have transformation effects.
- E. Identify the key points for intervention that can avoid undesirable alternate regimes.
- F. Invest in trust, leadership, networks and promote desirable learning environments.
- G. Design or modify existing educational structures so that key intervention points can be addressed at the appropriate times and pace.

- H. Acknowledge that there is a cost to maintaining resilience.
- I. When transformation is the only one option, the sooner it is recognized, accepted, and acted on.

In essence, we should remember that resilient gives their values on diversity, social variability, modularity, acknowledging slow variables, tight feedbacks, social capital, innovation, overlap in governance and systematic services (Fiksel, 2006). So, these factors are important to incorporate while constructing and implementing the contextual curriculum to address the current problem of resilience for rural transformation.

METHODOLOGY

This study is intended to look into how contextual curriculum contributes, if it does, to rural transformation of Nepal. Methodologically, this paper aims to serve as a fundamental literature based research to show and raise the neglected issue. To fulfill this objective I have collected corpus i.e. related secondary sources of data such as articles, reports and research documents. After collection, I have intensively read, analyze the contents and those crux ideas are put accordingly in the paper. This indicates that paper derives from literature review with substantial evidences.

LIMITATIONS

Here are some parameters of this study, at first, basic needs should be fulfilled like food, shelter and clothes before to giving interventions of the contextual and quality education to current resilience stage. Although UN reports say that education also lies in the list of basic needs. By only ensuring the three essential needs as stated above we can go for contextual education to cater the problem of rural transformation. So, three basic needs must be fulfilled before hitting the issue of education for rural transformation, which in this paper is the limitation. Secondly, there must be the assurance systems or mechanism for the equal access

of education. Due to the resources constraints it is hard to manage it in developing nations. This is also the limitations of this research. Thirdly, there is not a single country which claims that their curriculum is contextual, so making contextual curriculum is also a big concerns or limitations.

CURRICULUM AND TRANSFORMATION

Curriculum

The term *curriculum* has numerous definitions. Some educators see the diverse definitions as a problem, while others suggest that when analyzed carefully, these definitions differ little. Curriculum theory is a complex, sometimes cacophonous, chorus, “the sound of silence breaking” (Jardine, 2006). *Curriculum theory is the interdisciplinary study of educational experience* (Pinar, W.F, 2008). Curriculum theory is a distinctive field of study, with a unique history, a complex present, an uncertain future. Curriculum influences from disciplines across the humanities and the arts, and, to a lesser extent, from the social sciences (Pinar, 2008).

D.F. Walker (2003) offered a clear and straightforward explanation for multiple curriculum definitions in relation to the growth of the curriculum field. For him, new definitions represent efforts to change or embellish the traditional meaning (and the one still commonly used) of course of study. John Dewey expanded upon this notion by introducing the learner’s experience into the definition. For Dewey, the child and her or his experience would inevitably provide meaning to the curriculum. Later, Bobbitt suggested that a curriculum is an entire range of experiences in its broadest sense and that only some of those experiences fall under the auspices of schooling. Herbert Kliebard expanded upon Bobbitt’s notions of curriculum by acknowledging undirected curriculum experiences such as the null or hidden curriculum. For more than a century, curriculum scholars produced new working definitions of curriculum, creating the field’s definitional largesse.

However, definitions do not come from curriculum scholars alone: every pedagogue, parent, pundit, policy maker, and politician has one, too. Today's conflicting definitions reflect different vantage points from which curriculum is engaged as well as different philosophies. Moreover, the field is complex and understood in contradictory ways. In other words, the real value of a definition is its ability to clarify and explain one's understanding or position regarding curriculum. This suggests that a curriculum conversation is constantly taking place among not only those with differing definitions of curriculum, but also those with differing vantage points and forums of engagement with curriculum. The more important questions in relation to curriculum definitions (and their respective arguments) have to do with which curriculum workers are actively participating in this larger conversation and toward what ends.

Thus, curriculum definitions cannot be seen outside the contexts of the work of those defining curriculum. In short, curriculum workers must recognize the ways in which their definitions and conversations invite the participation of others in the field. Sometimes contradictory curriculum conversations can generate meaningful definitions to inform the field. Hollis Caswell and Doak Campbell defined curriculum as all of the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers. Ralph Tyler focused on selecting, organizing, and evaluating experiences based on deliberate purposes. Joseph Schwab challenged curriculum scholars in particular to renounce the field's retreat into theory and to create experiences through the art of the practical. The contemporary discussion of curriculum is largely focused on standards, reform models, and prescriptive practices of mapping and aligning rather than definitions of curriculum. With this in mind, the significance of the fields can be reflecting by discussing the contextual curriculum, which helps to make curriculum more matured.

Nepalese educational policy is often blamed as a donor driven or donor based. Our curriculum is not on the basis of Nepalese context, it is almost designed by the so called experts from the developed country. The key concepts are derived from their mindsets. In most of private and public school teachers they are not well trained and educated. Major schools are facing infrastructure problem like buildings, labs, playground etc. ; teaching learning material problem, in service training, and very low no of students in government public schools especially in major cities (Standing, 2011). In addition, TSC has taken very good initiation in 2070 BS, the only one teacher recruiting agency in the country. Although it seems unfair and not autonomous due to the internal and external causes (Education Act, 2059). Tactlessly, there are around 20 types of teachers in the country and most of them are appointed from the culture of nepotism, political influence and halo effect. This type of practice is even seen in the University's VC, rector and dean's appointment. There are nine university and none of them are out of this practice (Standing, 2011). In this scenario, we must put the effective effort to implement the contextual curriculum in our nation, if we able to design and develop. Also, if implemented is it bring the rural transformation, the doubt is still not tested. These are the big concerns about the role of contextual curriculum for rural transformation. It can be also seen as challenges of contextual curriculum.

Similarly, it is common in Nepal that every year school textbooks are not available in the market on time. At this mechanism how we can assure that contextual curriculum will implemented effectively. As per my understanding, commissions and power queue are the major reasons for this. At present, there can be seen outdated curriculum, slow updating, slow changing and low competitive capacity of curriculum or education in the world market. There is a serious problem even in monitoring, supervision and inspection. These functions are not on the regular basis and not systematize yet (Speech, 2008). One teacher who takes appointment as a permanent teacher will retire without reading or seeing the single

curriculum. They are not interested to read or analyze the issues and matters because they pre assume these documents are theoretical and lacks contexts. So, why should we read?

In this scenario, is existing practices of education and curriculum can make the rural transformation of Nepalese society? This is the big question. If no then what should we do? The answer will probably be the same that we should make curriculum contextual in order to benefit from education for rural transformation. Apparently, we should not ignore the how part of this concern that is how can we embed the contextual curriculum for rural transformation.

The literature itself is not clear about the types of curriculum. There is a wide disparity regarding the forms and sorts of curriculum. According to the Bobbit () there are mainly two types of curriculums: technical and non-technical. Objective based, core curriculum lies in the technical curriculum and where competency based curriculum, input process output models lies in the non-technical curriculum. In Nepalese scenario, the objective based model of curriculum has been practicing from the initial stage of formal education in Nepal. From the beginning to present it has not given the sufficient effort towards the contextual curriculum. So, such malpractice of curriculum has created the present condition in the rural society. It is observed that almost all sectors like political, social, economic, cultural and so forth are in dire condition due to the not contextualizing the education and curriculum.

There may be a massive debate that which curriculum is the best solution to meet the twenty first century's expectations. The new generations obviously have emerging hopes. But literature suggests different models of curriculum which have their distinct features. On the basis of context, they are all important sometimes technical and later on non-technical models. Even the objectives model of curriculum is very much applied where the learners normally want to fulfill their theoretical knowledge. So, the challenge is that choosing the

right curriculum for the right context is difficult. For example, the capital city, Kathmandu, is totally different in comparison with Jumla and Humla. That's why we must develop, choose, and implement the exactly right curriculum on the basis of contextual factors. By discussing this issue it is needed to embed different curriculum according to the settings of context. By talking this we should not forget the market demand and voices from the local people. So, fitting curriculum in the real context and making contextual curriculum is practically hard work. It needs larger and in-depth participation of the stakeholders in all the stages of curriculum that is from design to implementation.

In Nepal, the process of formal curriculum development was started in 2028 BS. From that time we construct four different curriculums. In Nepalese context, political change is the major factor for the curriculum reform. That can be seen in 2007, 2038, 2048 and 2064. The current national curriculum framework is guided by the mass movement-II, 2063. Furthermore, the existing curriculum is directed by the interim constitution of Nepal, national goals of education, objective of education, curriculum framework 2007 and so called global standards (CDC, 2007). The existing document of curriculum seems international standard but lacks the contextual objective, content, methods and evaluation system. So, it is facing the problem of effective implementation. It is observed that stakeholders are not interested to implement it, because it lacks contextual matters with ignorance of the stakeholders' voices and demand.

RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Transformation is the process in which the condition or stage shift from one stage to another stage. It is believed that transformation is normally shifted from negative to positive stage (Alsagoff & Low, 2007). Transformation can be classified in two broad types. Those are:

1. Positive transformation: The level of development increase while going through this process

2. Negative transformation: The level of development decrease while going through this process

As we all know that change is an inevitable process of nature. We must go some sort of transformation, either that is positive or negative. It is compulsion to move from one stage to another stage. So, transformation is important process through which we must go either formally or informally. We can take some example of transformative change of the countries like Chinese transformation and Indian transformation. These countries only gain its visionary rural transformation after the successful implementation of contextual education (Weekly, 2014).

Basically, the rural areas are symbolize as a remote, under developed and have mass poverty; where the basic infrastructures like transportation, education, electricity, communication are not easily accessible (Scientist, 2014). More specifically, we can classify rural areas in four categories highly organized service delivery system, minimal service delivery system, and nonexistent service delivery system (ERT, 2011). The following contents and strategies should include in contextual curriculum along with the relevant contents, pedagogy and evaluation techniques to target the rural transformation.

- Rural-urban continuum and linkages,
- Rural finance (access, integration, alignment),
- Strategic thinking and planning,
- Rural transformation,
- Environmental sustainability (local/adaptation, global/mitigation)
- Decentralization and democratization - rural/urban interests
- Global engagement –trade rules, intellectual property rights, technology transfer, climate change etc.

In essence, the buzzwords' change, development and transformation have not exact rapidity and halt phase they go hands on. To attain these standings we need competent and positive human resources (Benedict, 2014). These changes occur by reason of awareness of the learner, demand and trend of the society, globalization, privatization, democratic practices and so forth.

CURRICULUM CHANGE AS CONTEXTUAL CHANGE

Sociology, anthropology, psychology, economics, political science, geography, ecology, cultural studies, and other areas of study that enable understanding of contexts in which curricula are going to embed. In the earlier time, contextual factors were studied for the purpose of overcoming them in order to efficiently implement already determined curricular purposes. Scholars in the era resisted this instrumentalist purpose of research, seeing context not as enemy or impediment, but as a source of understanding. Hence, today curriculum studies hails study of contexts of schools or any other institutions of education as sites of critique and sources of understanding. Moreover, curriculum holds multiple dimensions of context as curricula worthy of intensive study-forces that interact with human agency to shape lives and relationships with the world (Author nd., 2014). It is believed that contextual factors have strong influencing power on criteria and selection of purposes, learning experiences, organizational patterns, and modes of evaluation. The contextual parameters within which schools operate shape the nature of the curriculum work done within them.

Constructing curriculum for equity is a consistent and dynamic process requiring not only awareness of the contextual realities of students with different linguistic, ethnic, racial, cultural, and gender backgrounds, but also commitment to diversity, pluralism, multiculturalism, respect, dignity, and high expectations (McKernan, 2008). In Nepal, many students today continue to have inequitable opportunities and do not experience quality learning due to curriculum inequity. More importantly, constructing a curriculum of

equity necessitates (a) the courage to address and dismantle systems of oppression and (b) a revolutionary resolve to remove the barriers to the achievement of a truly just distribution of power and opportunity.

It is documented from long time that Nepalese curriculum is not contextual. The outcomes of education also depict this fact. Consequently the whole education is not going on its right track. If education is a contextualized social process, then curriculum change is a function of contextual change. Curriculum is unlikely to change in the absence of supportive structural changes, which are questionable to be initiated in the absence of external pressures. This line of reasoning indicates the futility of trying to bring about curriculum reform by substituting one curriculum document for another (Author, 2011). Instead, we should answer questions such as the following to inform curriculum change efforts:

- What are the demographic, social, political and economic conditions and trends that seem to shape the existing curriculum and seem likely to affect the desired changes (contextual curriculum)?
- How is the desired curriculum change compatible with rural setting and prevailing practices? What influential areas are affected? What are the potential sources of support and opposition? What historical, recent, or continuing initiations are appropriate to influence the curriculum change effort?
- Which curriculum ideologies components or subcomponents could mediate transformation? How are past experiences with curriculum change likely to influence the present effort?
- What roles, relationships, and patterns of activity are needed? At which levels? How is the desired curriculum change compatible with the prevailing trend of transformation? What are the bureaucratic operating procedures and

the channels of formal and informal control of the transformation? What and where are the contradictions within the curriculum that might become vital for transformation?

To put curriculum in context, we must reformulate curriculum conceptions and reconstruct curriculum practice, including the practice of curriculum theorizing, research, design and change. Further, we must consider the above mentioned concerns to make curriculum contextual for rural transformation. Contextualization avoids the reductionism and impotence of technocratic models of curriculum. But contextualization has problems, such as complexity and situational contingency (Behar, 1992). These human, social-structural problems are not amenable to technical solutions. We may not be able to resolve them. Coping with complexity and contingency requires tolerance of ambiguity, flexibility and responsiveness imagination and persistence as well as further understanding of the interaction of curriculum and context (Cronbleth, nd.).

In general, while the developer committee submits their final draft to the curriculum development center (CDC) they further take the suggestions from the experts. After that they initially test it in selected area through pilot project. If the result shows positive result then it will implemented in the whole country. But, it is a reality that there is a lack of teaching and learning environment in villages. The school going children don't open their books at home, busy as they are helping with household work or in the farm. Parents are unaware of curriculum, what the government is selling in their kids' education. Simply curriculum is what the school and government offer to sell. Whatever the good curriculum made, if we fail to develop the right mechanism with rightly order system we can't implement it effectively. So, all the implementation phase is needed aware stakeholders, conscious parents and participation of concerned agencies, bodies and civil society.

Implementing curriculum needs the group effort or need expert to stakeholders' participation along with proper coordination. Moreover, the positive commitment of such agencies, body and stakeholders are mandatory for the meaningful implementation of the curriculum. The wide arena of researchers perceives contextual curriculum is milestone for the attainment of vision, mission, goal and objectives of the education that finally leads to acquire the ultimate goal of rural transformation.

Evaluation goes hands on in each and every step. We should follow this process from pre-implementation to post-implementation. Evaluation is labeled as a feedback loop in entire process of curriculum. This certainly helps to achieve the motto of rural transformation. Transformation is positive change, which could be social, political, religious and economical field. To gain the positive change in Nepalese society, rural transformation is prerequisites. Rural transformation can't happen in the way of magical, it only occurs when our education system assures the qualitative as well as quantitative standards through the implementing contextual curriculum. For this purpose iterative action is needed, and evaluation fosters the iterative activities like going forth and coming back with correction.

CURRENT CONTEXT OF CURRICULUM AND RURAL TRANSFORMATION

Globalization has dramatically influenced national policies and practices of education for rural reconstruction around the globe. Educational and developmental agencies are trying to cope this liberalization and globalization issues in their programs/projects to foster the rural transformation in concerned area. United Nations and their agencies like UNICEF, WHO, FAO, ILO and UNDP are incorporating this issue in their document along with recent practices. Similarly, other organizations such as World Bank, Asian Bank, IMF and different bilateral agencies are interested and investing their huge resources for betterment of rural area through the name of rural transformation (Benedict, 2014).

Similarly, Nepal also receives a large amount of financial and technical support in terms of grants and loans to transform the rural areas. The poverty alleviation fund (PAF), the apex body for rural transformation, under the prime minister of Nepal is a central agency along with national planning commission and line ministries to eradicate the rural poverty through the transformative interventions. However, these agencies are not reached to the grass root level yet. It is a global acceptance that curriculum is the blueprint or roadmap document of education. It is also seen in the past as well as at the present that curriculum is not contextualized according to the Nepalese society (Speech, 2008).

Additionally, all the concerned agencies including the government of Nepal are neglecting the mass demand of contextual curriculum. They are somehow habitual to construct as usual document in the name of curriculum. Recently, during the Maoists insurgency and twelve years revolution in the nation; the issue of caste, religion, gender, culture and inclusion are raised haphazardly. Due to these mass voices from the political cadres, these agencies (curriculum making) are forced to take initiations of comprising different languages in curriculum which is perceived through making varying languages textbook. But, those starts are ineffective and worthless to address the issue of contextual curriculum for rural transformation. A large number of students are going abroad for competitive and qualitative education; these groups of students have been lost their hopes from the Nepalese education (Standing, 2011).

Moreover, the twofold terminology transformation and change have been using widely interchangeably. Literally, to transform something or someone means to change them completely and suddenly so that they are much better or more attractive (Cremin, 1964). In literature, there are three different modes of changes or transformation namely traditional, transitional and transformational. The whole transformation process is believed essentially motivated and guided by survival factor, environment factor, impact of global development

and contemporary break through needed of the society (ERT, 2011). Further, the degree of change depends upon the necessities of the concerned people and society. The transformations fundamentally rely on the radical shifts in mindsets, thinking and actions (Richard, 1983).

Likewise, in the transformation process, major actions involved are whole system change, complete overhaul of mindset, and paradigms shift. In addition; cultural shock, shifts on communication strategy, structural reform, use of data, and system of profound knowledge are the further actions intricate in the progression of transformation. The destination of transformation is continuing and has no particular end point. Also it needs senior leadership committed to new thinking, learning and actions, coaching from outside, and courage to gear the transformation. It is believed that sustainable conversion and new value system are the major outcomes of transformation (Morgan, 1990).

However, the ineffective or inoperable curriculum theory into practice mostly comes from handling curriculum conceptually and operationally out of context. So, the context is more important than the vast inputs in both education and curriculum. Conceptually out of context has meant separating curriculum as product and treating curriculum as a contents, syllabus, course of study, a package of materials from curriculum designer, developer and implementers. Operational out of context has meant treating curriculum apart from its structural and sociocultural contexts as if it were independent of its location in an educational system, society, and politics. When confronted, the isolation of curriculum from its multiple, inter acting contexts is an irrationality, yet isolation remains another conventional place in curriculum discourse and practice for the thinker, designer and developer (Jardine, 2006).

Therefore, let me be contextual. Nepal is known as a predominately rural society as nearly 80 percent of its population lives in rural area (CBS 2068). Such remote society is even seen in the periphery of the capital city. The rural conditions of Nepal is often

characterized as a massive poverty, underdevelopment, detach from urban and national mainstream activities, economic and political isolation. Despite this, there are some potentialities in the new context of Nepal, due to the wide spread of media and telecommunication, aware mass population, new government policy of decentralization and assurance of federal system in constitution. Geo political situation of this beautiful country in between China and India also shows some opportunities in the sector of economy as well as in rural transformation. Also, the links of people, people to people in between these countries signifies the future radical shift in this territory (Weekly, 2014).

But, on the other hand, there are some challenges, like political instability, rooted and unnecessary caste issues, interference from developed countries, eco globalization impact, environmental issues; haphazard and instable decentralization policy, unstable democratization of governance, pro-rural development coalitions, and failure of targeted welfare programs for the poor. To convert these threats into opportunities, we should systematize the education sector with contextual curriculum. Education and curriculum are the two sides of the same coin. Contextual curriculum leads the whole education system and assures the educational alignment in accordance with societal demands. Likewise, transformation demands more relative, contextual education. And it is true that the process of transformation does not go in a positive way without having proper human minds. Thus; education, contextual curriculum and transformation are interrelated, there must be congruence to target the rapid rural transformation (Programme, 2014).

Furthermore, to understand the role of education in the transformation of lives it is necessary to refocus on education from the point of view of its impact on the individual. The more education that we have, a stronger positive paradigm emerges about the nature and role of transformation. Apparently, people go through a paradigm shift and a change in understanding about rural transformation itself. They take on new ideas and their values and

perspective adjusts. When this happens *people are transformed!* In this process also contextual curriculum has its own role. Because curriculum determines the objectives of education and clarifies about where we intend to go. It also gives the detailed about contents, what contents will meet the desired set of objectives. Similarly, curriculum suggests the pedagogical strategies and instructional techniques. It also outlines the evaluative rubrics to assess the learning outcomes of the learners. If we fail to make the contextual curriculum then it will be hard to manage coherence between these elements and this inevitably leads to make our curriculum outdated and irrelevant. From these realisms also it is vibrant that curriculum has the big role to produce the contextual human resources (Null, 2011).

Similarly, in current years, thousands of Nepalese youths are wandering to the foreign countries for the sake of employment. On the other side, Nepalese agronomy segment is demanding more labors and fronting the shortages of agriculture worker. These inclinations are trendy because of the unfortunate, enacted imported curriculum and not contextualized education practices (Vantassel-baska, 2013). Nepalese curriculums are often blamed as a donor based and imposed curriculum. Some of educationist believes it is still in the phase of colonial education arrangement. So, these kinds of problem can be addressed through envisaging and implementing the contextual curriculum. Only then we will reach the terminus of prosperous and new Nepal. At that time the two digit growth rate will be normal for us due to the transformation of rural area.

In the history of education, the concept of curriculum is started with formal education. It has a very long history and their literatures are vague. In the west, they attain their targeted and standard literacy rate, educational attainment in early 2000. They boost their agricultural activities and go through the industrial revolution. Now, they are in the stage of constant economic development, some researchers say that it is the stage of saturation. There is no step ahead and they are maintaining their economic standard at the same level. And now they

only believe in the knowledge based industry and society (Richard, 1983). It is totally a new discourse for the poor and developing nations like Nepal.

In Nepalese case, we are still in the stage of rural transformation. We have agro based economy, deficient budgeting practice, fuelled national economy by remittance, high foreign loans. The massive effort is necessary to step toward the industry based and knowledge based society. Having 85 percent population involved in agronomy sector, we should go through the agricultural revolution. After that stage, we can compete with developed countries. So to attain these different stages we must need contextual curriculum with timely revision. Without contextual education we can't create our own solution for our own problem. I think we don't need more imported and imposed ideas and program of others, we can create it ourselves.

LINKING CURRICULUM IN TRANSFORMATION

The other important part of the discussion of this issue is that linking curriculum in transformation. Fortunately, we are far behind to link our donor driven curriculum to the rural transformation. This is the key cause that made our country's education ineffective and little competent. So, we should immediately think these two components linked by designing and implementing the appropriate curriculum. We should consider different elements when linking these factors (Pinar, 2008). Curriculum should be constructed on the basis of societal demand, learner demand, and transformation approachable. Also, it should clearly show the intended destination i.e. where we want to go, what we are putting in children minds and hands; which methods we are applying to stimulate the transformation process. The M&E system should be strengthened to mitigate the errors. If we succeeded to make contextual curriculum then it will unescapably lead to the transformation of the rural areas.

Moreover, media is the mode or tools of instruction in the field of education. Educationist believes that media and the learners' effort are crucial in learning process, where

curriculum serves as a master plan. Curriculum address the why, what, how, when and by whom questions of education. In contemporary practices, web based technologies are broadly used to attain new knowledge, skills, attitudes and training. These skills are essential to transform the rural area and we should incorporate it in the curriculum. By ignoring ICT or internet based learning approaches we cannot transform sustainably, and it will not go for lasting change for rural area. ICT for rural transformation means joining alienated rural communities to the rest of the world. In short, ICT should be employed as a catalyst to boost the rural transformation needed for the 21st century (Marian, 1981).

ROLE OF CONTEXTUAL CURRICULUM FOR RURAL TRANSFORMATION

The issue of this paper demands the roles of contextual curriculum for rural transformation in Nepalese circumstances. The prosperity of country is associated with rural transformation. And there is no such means except education to attain the rural change in any context. It only happens with quality and contextual education. The motto of quality education can't be achieved without having contextual curriculum. So, it will be fruitful to discuss the roles of curriculum in broad and roles of contextual curriculum in specific. This section will address the concerns of the proposed issue i.e. how does contextual curriculum play the role to rural transformation?

At the beginning stage of this paper, I found the literatures on this issue in varying dimensions. (Aoki, 2005) says that in practice, curriculum mostly comes from treating curriculum out of context both conceptually and operationally. The isolation of curriculum from its multiple and inter acting contexts is an absurdity. Cornbleth (nd.) argues that the prevailing conceptions view curriculum as a tangible product, usually a document or plan for instruction in a particular subject. Cremin (1964) explains that it only talks about the contributive role of curriculum for rural transformation. But unfortunately I couldn't find the

worthy scholastic work on contextual curriculum for rural transformation in the Nepalese setting.

Standing (2011), presents that it has been long practice in developing nations to uplift the rural status. Those practices are focused on elevation of the socio-cultural, economic, political status. Different initiatives were implemented in Nepal to attain the rural transformation like *GAU FARKA AAVIYAN*, *AAFNO GAU AAFAI BANAU*, *GARIB SANGA BISWESHOR*, *SWO ROJGAR KOSH* and so forth. These actions have little impact on rural transformation because they were not all research based program, no one properly tried to analyze the role of education and contextual curriculum for rural transformation during these program. I personally observed it as a political agenda for the popularity of the parties and their leadership. So, this is still a burning issue for research and exploration that in what extent contextual curriculum play the role to rural transformation. In Nepal, all the government agencies, INGOs, NGO believe that there is significant role of education to transform the rural community. But they lack the adequate knowledge about curriculum and they totally forget the role of contextual curriculum for rural transformation. Thus it is somewhat neglected issue in Nepalese academic diaspora.

Cylke (2010) clearly mentioned that the Nepalese educator, students and stakeholders have very low awareness about curriculum. They perceive it as a short book, which has no exact meaning for them. All most all the literatures raise and discuss the role of education in the sector of poverty alleviation, quality of life, massive awareness and resolving the concurrent concerns. Unlikely there is no such, so neglected issue, significant discussion on the role of contextual curriculum for rural transformation in the Nepalese context. This study will respond to some of the questions about the roles of contextual curriculum in a Nepalese context that is at the heart of that controversy.

As mentioned earlier, little research and study is undertaken specifically focused on contextual curriculum for rural transformation. The study report prepared by CTEVT points out that contextual curriculum should prepare to fulfill the expectations of students and stakeholders. In this regard W.F Pinar clearly mentioned that curriculum in general and contextual curriculum in specific must designed to enhance transformation process of rural areas. Richard and Bonniesay all the components of education are directly and indirectly driven by the curriculum so this document is suggested to make accordingly on the basis of context. Saleth (2014) says that discussing contextual curriculum is easy but practically it is hard to design and implement. The developer must interact with concerned stakeholders intensively. Bobbit defines curriculum as a map of education by emphasizing the need of contextual curriculum (Slattery, 2006).

Moreover, Bremen (2014) presents three concepts about the rural transformation imposed, supply based and demand based. As Droz (2014) say India and China, neighboring countries of Nepal, gains their targeted status in rural area through the contextual curriculum. Further he mentioned India's apex curriculum body has a list of curriculum model with rural transformation strategies. Fuller asserts that rural transformation does not go separately it must linked with nearby urban economic activities. Benedict (2014) notes that only unnecessary discussion and putting the issue of contextual curriculum in debate is a kind of impractical work, there should be two concerns that how to make contextual curriculum and how to implement it successfully.

However, Behar (1992) explains that there is no such solution as contextual curriculum for rural transformation. Cremin (1964) supported this idea that to construct and implement the contextual curriculum there must be democratic practices in the national and local system along with elected bodies from bottom to top. What is the exact role of contextual curriculum to hit the problem of low and slow rural transformation in the country?

What may be the solution? Who should participate in the process of curriculum development and implementation? Why there is no such worthy documentation about contextual curriculum for rural transformation? How the curriculum plays the roles for? There must be these core concerns of contextual curriculum for rural transformation.

Education implies a discipline and development by means of study and learning which also means helping people to learn how to do things and encourage them to think (Lynham, 2002). Formerly education is provided through the schools, colleges and universities (McKernan, 2008). In other words, education is a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skill (Pedagogy, 2008). It is widely believed that knowledge, skills and attitude are developed through the process of education. In Nepalese context, its development is started from the different forms of school like Sankrit Bhasa Pathsala, Buddhist Bihar and Madarasha (Sharma, 2005). Curriculum plays an important role in providing people with skills for rural transformation, but a number of important questions remain as to what kind of curriculum can be conducive to the strengthening of skills for rural transformation (Fuller, 2014).

The process of rural development will be very high if the levels of educated people are very high. All the social and economic activities are depends on the quality of education system (Vantassel-baska, 2013). Rural transformation can't be happen without edge learning and quality education. And the whole components of education are bond by the curriculum. The more contextual curriculum we can implement the more effectiveness and efficiency of education for rural transformation achieve (Richard, 1983).

Moreover, it is believed that a curriculum offers learners a guideline for progress in their skillfulness, knowledge and attitude. In addition it is formal document of what is required to obtain a degree or qualification. It also leads to prepare students to be confident

and responsible citizens. Curriculum is broadly known as an outline of roadmap document of all levels and grades of education. Curriculum is deliberate on the center of national goals of education. Curriculum clearly outlines that what, how and where we intending to drive. The curriculum is known more effective if it combines the context, local standard, integrates ICT, modern and practical matters, real life problem, creative learning, critical thinking and learner centered approach (Kriedel, 2010).

Furthermore, in curriculum there are mainly four elements namely general and specific objectives, content, teaching and learning strategies and evaluation. In Nepalese context, parents are not interested in sending their kids to school by reason of the improper awareness, education level, poverty, and institutions' infrastructure. And also have inadequate community demand for general education (Kriedel, 2010). More precisely they believe that our education, curriculum is not linked with their daily life, it is not contextual; so they do not eager to send their future economic assets to the school. But they are interested to have their kids with technical skills. There is a wide gap between what our curriculums (selling services) offer and what the guardian/society expects (buying services) from the existing education (Kriedel, 2010). It is antiquated due to the absence of contextual curriculum in the country.

Moreover, education is the life light of human being and the curriculum is only the means to achieve that light. Education certainly plays the significant role to cultivate new norms, values and develop the human resources which country need in future. The demand of qualified and skilled manpower is not affected by politics or cultures or economy system which country agreed to apply. All capitalist or socialist or mixed economy equally has the high demand of competent workforce (Marion, 1981). Information and Communication Technology has changed the role of education and the transformation process as well. So is

the curriculum and contextual curriculum, which feels easy to implement if they incorporate the ICT (Null, 2011).

However, in Nepal, rural transformation is not seen as noticed in the developed countries. Fortunately, a couple of decades ago, Nepal were in equal or forehand condition in comparison with today's some developed country like Korea, Japan, China and India. But now the case is different, we are in the bottom most and they are in top most. For this, we have substantial evidence that the democratic republic of Korea (South Korea) and Nepal have almost same stand in education. Unluckily, Korea has gained the global standard and we are still fighting for regional standards. As a result, Koreans are in forefront in the list of education and we are at the back (Author nd, 2014). The only one reason behind this is they invest heavily on education, make their curriculum contextual. But we fail to do so neither we invest on education nor made contextual curriculum. They have completed the stage of rural transformation through her education and contextual curriculum while we are giving our full effort on it (Droz, 2014).

Moreover, it is a bitter truth that despite the rural transformation we can't progress on economic development. Because 80 percent people are living in rural areas and 85 percent people are involved in agriculture sector including both part time and full time. In this context also we need contextual education through contextual curriculum for rural transformation. So, it is important to incorporate concurrent issues of curriculum to leverage the slogan of rural transformation and to meet the two digit economic growths for the development of new Nepal (ERT, 2011). The question still remains unanswered that how can we make contextual curriculum for rural transformation. For this purpose we must assure the participation of stakeholders in the stages of curriculum development, design and implementation. Further, the government must set the mechanism to evaluate effectiveness of contextual curriculum i.e. the coherence in between written, taught and tested curriculum.

Personally I perceive that in the context of Nepal we should immediately design, develop and implement the demand driven curriculum. MoE (2013) report claims that many Nepalese youths look for better jobs, as soon as Nepalese education system trained them they prefer to go abroad. Why these situations arise? It is clear that this is due to the ineffective and outdated curriculum. So, we face the problem of brain drain which is the hindrances for rural transformation. The youth or young blood is compulsory to sustainable transform of our rural areas. The past practices from developed countries also suggest the same.

Nepalese political parties and leaders appear incapable of solving our educational problems. More than that, they have not even begun to identify the core issues and problems of education to be addressed. Educational leadership seem to be absent of effective leadership, clear vision, creativity, innovation and ethical behavior. On the other hand, Nepal has adopted a rote learning approach since the formal education system started in 1910 BS. This kind of problem is seen even in other developing nations, which has remained unchanged. It is believed that the education system of Nepal is not designed to develop rural transformative leaders, original thinkers, learners, creators, inventor or innovators (Standing, 2011). The actual and real problem is in the curriculum, more precisely in contextual curriculum.

In addition, Nepalese curriculum components are not set for the generate society demanded human resources. The curriculum is almost outdated and they are the only evidence of majestic practices, which will never going to address the contextual problem (Slattery, 2006). Our religious, social and cultural values are also distressing educational activities. This can be perceived in our education system by observing the evaluation practices, which only tests students' memory while ignoring their skills and attitude. In this scenario also, there is mass demand of contextual curriculum to address the issue of rural transformation in Nepal.

Similarly, Nepal's education system is unable to develop leadership qualities, moral values, self-confidence and creativity. This fact is not just true at primary level, but also, sadly, at our country's universities and even in technical education institutions. Life problems are can't be solved through Nepalese education. All these problems are rooted around the curriculum. The current practices of textbook oriented instruction, traditional lecture pedagogy, old evaluation system are the result of outdated curriculum or not contextualizing the curriculum (Marion, 1981). It should be change immediately to foster the rural transformation because today is not yesterday.

Additionally, we are living in twenty first century; never in the past has learning become so absolute, so quickly, as today. As in such condition how the curriculum helps to boost the rural transformation should investigate, do research and find out the solution. It is my conviction that the formula what worked yesterday will work today should be avoided in the context of curriculum. So, the chances of making and implementing the contextual curriculum are high at this time. As discuss above, due to the lack of contextual curriculum, Nepal's education system is still following the same traditional learning approach at all levels of the education. This is not just true of schools, colleges and universities but also of the major technical institutions. Imposed education trend, examination-oriented learning system, whether students like it or not is the major characteristics of Nepalese education (Speech, 2008). Examination driven curricula demote teachers from scholars and intellectuals to technicians in practice. From this it is clear that our leaders, politicians, government officials seem they have nothing new to offer in curriculum for rural transformation.

In addition, faulty curriculum and its implementation are symptoms of a disease, more intense and deeper than it appears (Pinar, 2008). Blaming others is easy. But in Nepal the actual fault is in the curriculum which must be corrected fast. Truly speaking, Nepal's education is like a fatal disease which can not address the transformative agendas in any

forms. We must move from traditional curriculum to contextual curriculum, adaptive learning to creative learning or outcome based or competency based learning and from a convergent to a divergent problem solving approach (Speech, 2008). We must let go of our negative approaches and perceptions, and embrace the positive practices through contextual curriculum.

Moreover, the quickest way is to take a fundamental look at the education system of this country. If we improve it how we may expect a result after 15-20 years. It may sound like a long time, but in the national context it is very brief. We need an education system that is responsive to the contextual national vision and value system that we want to promote. We don't need any dream of Switzerland, Singapore or other from the so called politicians and political parties. We must promote divergent and creative thinking through contextual curriculum. If we miss the opportunity, we put our children's future at risk and break the rural transformation process. Children, future of country, will experience the results of the choices we make today (Vantassel-baska, 2013). Also, the trend will continue that instructors always spent their 95 percent classroom time to impose their unnecessary garbage lecture, which will be always a serious problem unless contextualizing the curriculum.

A Case: South Asian Context

We can learn from Muhammad Yunus, who was a primarily banker, economist, civil society leader. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank. One day he thought that Bangladesh transformation would not reach the stage of developed economic stage without jotting or interrelating the rural finance. Then he started to map how financial activities could be made and linked with rural communities.



He conceptualizes and implemented microcredit and microfinance practices to transform the rural society in Bangladesh. In his personal career he played different roles as manager, promoter and investor.

He conceptualizes the contextual micro finance concept, microcredit & microfinance, and act upon it. It becomes gradual success; in the later stage the government also takes initiation to promote rural transformation through micro finance. The national and international agencies were with Yunus and his concept. He succeeds in his mission and is known to the world as a vibrant innovative economist and nominated for Nobel Laureate in 2006 by the Norwegian Nobel Committee. He gains internal as well as external recognition with appreciation for his outstanding effort. He received the United States Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009 and the Congressional Gold Medal in 2010. At present his works formed as a role model for linking micro finance to rural transformation for the national development of the country(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Muhammad_Yunus).

In essence, education with the tools of curriculum, other social agents and government body has broad objectives to fulfill the learners need with societal expectations. It helps to attain the basic knowledge and skill for overall development of the individual. The ultimate goal of education is to reach the stage of self-actualization. Cremin (1964) says that the attainment of national educational goals the only and significant means is the learner based curriculum i.e. contextual curriculum. Government, ministry of education, ministry of finance, ministry of industry, civil society, CDC, educational line agencies, school, teachers and curriculum itself are the strategic contributors to the field of rural transformation. But the real implementers are the instructors and students who live in rural areas, if implemented benefited with quality education through the contextual curriculum.

IMPLICATIONS

This paper is hoped to fill the little ahead in the field of rural transformation and curriculum. In Nepalese context, it is a new matter of discussion, more exactly a neglected area of discussion. Also it serves future perspectives of contextual curriculum to rural transformation. This study has developmental and educational implications regarding how to design contextual curriculum for rural transformation. The focus on quality education should be on improvement by implementing contextual curriculum. Based on the roles of contextual curriculum for rural transformation from this study, the following implications are made for any future research of this nature in Nepal.

- To rediscover rural transformation, need to strategic thinking and planning in curriculum,
- To make contextual curriculum, need focus on big numbers especially on mass population living in rural areas,
- In order to grasp the “development significance of agriculture” curriculum must focus on multi functionality,
- Contextual curriculum gives priority to products in domestic demand and markets those areas may be food crops and value added,
- Unlock the country’s regional hidden rural promise -value added, post-harvest, ecosystem services through education in general and contextual curriculum in specific.
- Promote regional integration as an economic but also political strategy in curriculum
- Build rural equities in the full range of natural resource sectors –public goods, ownership through contextual education.
- Restructure public authorities-decentralization and democratization to insure the implementation of contextual curriculum.

- Secure participation to, and power of representation for civil society-restore balance in practice,
- Help rural people to engage more on the global stage by recognizing global to local linkages
- Common understanding of the rural condition and vision for its future promotion through coherence of development activities and national-international integration,
- Deconstruct the principle of ‘one size fits all’ mentality, need reform both of centralized model of curriculum and rural transformation
- Integrated development models should introduce by spreading the education with contextual curriculum.

CONCLUSION

There is still much to be done in achieving the egalitarian society that we, Nepalese, aspire to have. Poverty is still rampant in our country. The rural poor are a significant and a large group of people that suffer and live lives that we consider to be unacceptable. In many rural communities there is an urgent need for transformation, of the communities, and the people that make up these communities. This paper takes a different view of rural transformation through contextual curriculum. Further it helps to make a plea to re-engage with the intimate process of learning. While we might, and should, develop and encourage policy for the positive transformation of rural areas. We need to do this while focused on the contextual curriculum which has a significant role to play in the transformation of rural communities. Through contextual curriculum we can achieve transformation of individuals who can themselves proactively contribute to the transformation of their rural community. For this purpose, the more important need is for educators to make thoughtful, deliberate, and informed decisions about rural transformation due consideration given to localized and contextual curriculum.

In short, rural areas, where most of the population lives, are characterized by poverty, ignorance, disease and lack of basic services. Efforts to transform rural areas have met with little success after twelve years of mass conflict between the state and Maoist rebellion. Nepalese dream unfortunately is still not fulfilled. Contextual curriculum is actually on the rise, and more worryingly, the schools and colleges are producing unfortunate manpower. Education with contextual curriculum was seen as a tool for transforming rural areas. Has Nepal failed the battle of producing contextual human resources for rural transformation?

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