

**Content Analysis of School Curricula
From
Gender Perspective**

Conducted for

**The Curriculum Development Center
Sanothimi, Bhaktapur**

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August 2004

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	III
II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	IV
INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Objective of the Content Analysis	1
1.3 Study Process	2
ANALYSIS	
2.1 Primary Level	4
2.1.1 Objectives of Primary Level Education	4
2.2.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation Process	4
2.2 Lower Secondary Level	8
2.2.1 Objectives of Lower Secondary Level Education	8
2.2.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation Process	8
2.3 Secondary Level	11
2.3.1 Objectives of Secondary Level Education	11
2.3.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation Process	11
2.4 Higher Secondary Level	13
2.4.1 Objectives of Higher Secondary Level Education	13
2.4.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation Process	13
3 CONCLUSION: MAJOR FINDINGS	16
4 RECOMMENDATIONS	19
5 LIST OF THE CURRICULUMS REVIEWED	24
6 REFERENCES	24

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BPEP	Basic and Primary Education Program
CDC	Curriculum Development Center
DDC	District Development Committee
DOE	Department of Education
HH	Household
HMG/N	His Majesty's Government of Nepal
HSEB	Higher Secondary Education Board
IIDS	Institute for Integrated Development Studies
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
SESP	Secondary Education Support Program
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School Management Committee
TOR	Terms of Reference
VDC	Village Development Committee
WES	Women Development Section

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education has always been a priority for the government of Nepal. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) guarantees equal right to education to both men and women. Nepal is party to several international conventions and declaration, which call for elimination of all forms of gender discrimination, including in access to education and knowledge. One of the objectives of the Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) of the government has to attain gender equity in education (IIDS, 2002). In spite of the national/international commitments and declarations, the educational status women/girls is still low in Nepal. The Government is making several efforts to enhance educational status of women/girls and reduce gender gaps in literacy and enrolments. At present, the government is committed to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA) by eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015". As a part of the process, this content analysis of the curriculums is being done from gender perspectives.

The primary objective of this activity is to conduct content analysis of the existing school curriculum of the six core subjects, e.g., Mathematics, Science, Nepali, English, Social Studies and Health, Population and Environment from gender perspective. The goal is to make the curriculum inclusive of girl children from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds so that it can properly guide the development of teaching learning materials that are free of gender bias, emphasize gender empowerment and advocate for gender equity.

As per the objectives, it has been assessed whether contents of the curriculums are prepared and/or improved according to the changing socio-economic realities or not. For example, different roles, needs and interest of men and women, access and control over resources and decision making powers within and outside the household (HH) between women and men are properly reflected in the contents of curriculums or not. The information and messages are disseminated from gender-disaggregated manner or not. The words and languages used in the curriculums are gender biased or gender-aware or gender sensitive.

The rationale behind this gender sensitivity analysis is to facilitate the Department of Education, Ministry of Education and Sports (DOE/MOES) identify gender gaps in the contents of the curriculums and develop/improve them from gender sensitive manner. It can contribute the school children to analyze changing social realities (different needs and interest, roles and relations, and access to control over resources) of women and men and develop the capacity to think critically from gender equity perspectives.

The introduction part of each curriculum states that it is "*prepared after an extensive discussion and consultation with subject teachers, educational experts, guardians, students, university professors and other intellectuals*". But the use of gender-neutral words such as *students, teachers, and guardians*, does not give the sense that both male and female were involved in the process of preparing and revising curriculum. Brief summary of findings are:

Primary Level

- Although the introduction part depicts rural-urban bias, use of the term “*to feel and realize gender equity*” shows gender sensitivity to some extent.
- There are uses of few gender responsive words, e.g., *girls and boys and male and female teachers* and frequent use of gender-neutral words, e.g., *students, teachers*.
- Neutral treatment of girls and boys in Nepali, Mathematics, Science and Health and Physical Education by keeping “*students*” at the center of analysis.
- To some extent, Social Studies are trying to address the diversities and inequalities prevailing in Nepalese society.
- Neutral explanation in Health and Physical Education has neglected differential health and nutritional needs of men and women
- Instructional Strategy seems flexible, supportive and facilitating to children, but fails to consider differential position of girls and boys in the family and society.
- Weight given to each subject and in each unit seems quite satisfactory.
- ‘Regular or Continuous Evaluation Process’ adopted for primary level is gender neutral as there is no sex-disaggregated recording system for progress monitoring.

Lower-secondary Level

- Both general and specific objectives are gender-neutral.
- In each subject generally the term “*students*” has been used and the contents are elaborated neutrally.
- In Nepali, the curriculum does not address national/ international personalities in gender responsive way.
- Social Studies on the one side can be considered as few gender sensitive subjects as its objective mentions *equal respect and equal treatment to each other irrespective of class, caste, ethnicity and gender* whereas, on the other side, *in history, only male’s contributions are focused*.
- In Science and Technology, neutral explanation of objectives, contents and instructional strategies do not realize that girls and boys may possess some gender specific practical (indigenous) and theoretical knowledge thus, neglecting the opportunity of mutual learning.
- Neutral explanation of physical education does not realize the need of physical education equally to both sexes.
- Mark allocated to Health and Physical education is only 50, which is not appropriate as compared to its importance.
- Students’ performance evaluation form for physical education has separate column for girls and boys, which is very much necessary for gender equity.
- In English the objectives are mainly gender-neutral
 - In many dialogues the pronouns I, we and you are used.
 - Wherever the nouns are used, they typically portray gender stereotypes (Pg. 14-28) in describing women’s and men’s quality and identity
- Instructional methods are generally explanatory but written in gender- neutral languages.

- For evaluation, regular evaluation and final examination methods are used with marks occupying 40 and 60 to each method respectively. Regular evaluation process mainly benefits those girl and boy students, who are regular in class.

Secondary Level

- A lot of qualities have been expected from secondary level graduates without realizing the need of gender sensitivity.
- In Science, male scientists invented theories and principles are mentioned in the curriculum.
- In English, some of the examples presented through matrix methods are gender reinforcing and some are gender empowering.
- In Health, Population and Environment Education the topics “Reproductive Health” and “Reproductive Rights” are much relevant to the growing age children.
 - Besides, other topics related to population and its characteristics should also be analyzed through gender disaggregated statistics and interpretation.
- In Social Studies, especially History is male biased as it is full of male names and their contributions
- Instructional strategies and evaluation methods are gender- neutral.

Higher Secondary Level

The main objective is to produce middle-level skilled human resources by providing educational opportunities to all.

- Inclusion of gender-responsive words “*son and daughter*,” in the objectives, gives the sense of gender awareness in higher secondary education.
- The contents in English consist of informative topics of global interest and common human concern.
 - The poems, essays and stories prescribed in English are mainly written by Western male writers, which show the presence of dominant world-view and patriarchal social structures in English education.
- The objectives of Compulsory Nepali are gender neutral, but the topic *Review Literature* has lists of poems, stories, plays and essays, *which are written by male authors and no recognition is given to women in literature*.
- Both Mathematics and Science curriculums of higher secondary level are gender-neutral.
- Although the curriculum of Population Education is gender neutral, one of the objectives, i.e., ‘*taking rational decision about desired family size*’ is vague as it is not clear what is the desired family size and who is the decision maker for desired family size inside and outside the household.
- There are topics related to women and their lives, e.g., ‘*status of women and children*’ but inclusion of some topics is not sufficient rather all the population issues should be examined and analyzed from gender sensitive lens.
- Similarly Health Education cannot be generalized in the family health. *Within family, health and nutritional needs, problems and access to health services for*

men, women and children are different. Thus, the objectives should be gender specific.

- There are many inclusions of gender and women's issues including the concept of *responsible parenthood*. But again the inclusion of gender issues in some units is not sufficient.
- In Physical Education, only male centered playing items are mentioned in the curriculum e.g., Basketball, Football, Volleyball, Kabaddi, etc.
- Social Studies curriculum is descriptive and gender-neutral.

Use of gender-neutral words and language in curriculum objectives, contents and instructional strategies are often found misinterpreted against gender equity in the textbooks. The contents and exercises are prepared from men's perspectives, highlighting men's contribution, generally associating men with knowledge, information, power and money and women with long hair, ribbons, ornaments and beauty, confining women/men into the same traditional stereotypical images and qualities.

Recommendations made from gender and rights-based perspectives are:

Use of gender disaggregated words

For gender equity, use of gender-disaggregated words, e.g., girls and boys, male and female teachers and male and female intellectuals should be mentioned.

Use of gender sensitive language

The language used in the curricula should also be very much sensitive to preserve every individual's identity irrespective of their class, caste, ethnicity and gender.

Gender sensitivity among all levels of educational personnel

This is recommended to bring gender sensitivity in every level of educational planning and programming process.

Institutionalization of the process of gender review

The prepared curriculum should be reviewed from gender lens before sending them to the final users. This process needs to be institutionalized so that every curriculum revision or development would go through gender review.

In Nepali, English, Mathematics and Social Studies special attention should be given to the following aspects:

- i. Use of both female and male names while addressing any female or male personalities, e.g. head teacher, principal, chief guest, minister, and so on.
- ii. Family letter should not be addressed to male-to-male such as: father writing letter to son only or a boy writing letter to his male friend only rather it should be:
 - Father/mother writing letter to daughter/son or vice versa,
 - Sister/brother writing letter to sister/brother or vice versa,
 - Daughter/son writing letter to mother/father or vice versa. In order to reflect changing social realities.

- iii. Central figure in biographies and essays should not be only male or only female. It should be both. Some contemporary male or female personalities can also be taken as examples.
- iv. Greed, pride, honesty, cleverness, kindness are all human characters, which should not be biased with male or female.
- v. Women's contribution in literature, science and technology, history, social services and politics should be given recognition according to their importance or value in the society.
- vi. In mathematics, male or female names mentioned in the exercises, illustrations and examples should be proportionately equal.
- vii. While explaining the roles of any social institutions or highlighting about social problems, e.g. violence, theft, drug uses, pollution, waste, etc. any particular sex cannot be blamed.
- viii. While portraying national hero and heroine's contributions or presenting any contemporary images special attention should be given not to disseminate wrong or bad messages against their human rights.
- ix. Similarly fundamental rights should be explained from women/men's human rights perspective, e.g., citizenship rights, property rights, right to work, right to get married, go for foreign employment, etc.

Removal of andocentric biases or male perspective from the curriculum

Removal of andocentric biases is necessary to develop curriculum and textbooks according to changing socio-economic realities and work pattern inside and outside the household. Therefore, in every issue the central figures should be both men and women and their contributions. For this, the issues should also be reinterpreted as:

- Household works and their importance to boys and girls.
- Nutritional needs of boys/men and girls/women in different stages of life. Household methods of making Salt and Sugar Water and its importance
- Impact of carrying load especially the big water pot to women's reproductive health and need of sharing HH work
- Contribution of men, women and children in farm and non-farm production and the and value on their labor contribution
- Women in small-scale business, marketing and other transactions
- Women/ men's participation in planning and decision-making process: household, community and local government bodies.
- Gender roles within the HH across different class, caste, ethnicity and geography. It should also be highlighted how gender roles are changing according to changing economic needs, migration and occupational pattern especially in Social Studies and in Population and Environmental Education.

Extra efforts for girls' regularity at school and good performances in Mathematics:

Mathematics is the subject in which girls are found to be weak (Sinha 2001). Thus, for the time being, special attention should be given to inspire girls in the classroom and extra coaching should be provided in this subject.

Necessity of gender sensitive Health and Physical Education

In order to make children aware of the differential health and nutritious needs of men and women and its differential health impacts, Health and Physical Education should be gender sensitive. For example:

- Need of personal health care and hygiene to both girls and boys
- Need and importance of regular exercise and playing habits for a healthy growth of body to both girls/women and boys/men
- Need of extra calorie foods, sanitation and simple exercises during menstruation and pregnancy for girls/women
- Reproductive system of girls and boys and their reproductive health issues including changes occurring during adolescence

Gender Sensitivity in Population Education

Every population issues, e.g., number and trend of population growth, birth rate, death rate, life expectancy, adult literacy, net enrolments, child mortality, maternal mortality cause and effects of population changes, migration, human resource development and employment should be analyzed through gender disaggregated way by using gender disaggregated statistics and interpretation.

To conclude, the focus of school education of all levels should not be to equip girl/boy students with many concepts and ideas, but to equip them with some basic concepts, theories and practices in more gender sensitive way. At present, this is very much necessary because:

- Gender is a crosscutting issue and it is equally important in class, caste, ethnicity, minority and disability issues.
- To make the students able to think critically about gender discrimination, raise voice against it, and do advocacy for the fundamental rights of women and men.
- To develop gender sensitive human resources who, think critically from gender equity perspectives and cannot discriminate women on the basis of their sex, class, caste, ethnicity and disability.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Education has always been a priority for the government of Nepal. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal (1990) guarantees equal right to education to both men and women. Nepal is party to several international conventions and declaration, which call for elimination of all forms of gender discrimination, including in access to education and knowledge: CEDAW 1991, Beijing Platform for Action 1995, Jomption Declaration 1990.) One of the objectives of the Ninth and the current Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) of the government has to attain gender equity in education (IIDS, 2002).

In spite of the national/international commitments and declarations to ensure gender equity and equality in education, the educational status women/girls is still low in Nepal. According to the Census 2001, the overall literacy of women is 42.5 percent and men it is 65.1 percent. There are still high enrolment gaps at all levels of enrolments (IIDS, 2002). After the restoration of democracy in 1991, the Government is making several efforts to enhance educational status of women/girls and reduce gender gaps in literacy and enrolments. Some of the examples are: provision of at least one female teacher in each primary school (Educational Regulation 1992), continuation of free distribution of textbooks and primary girls scholarships programs, scholarships for dalit and other disadvantaged children, review and improvement of curricular materials, gender trainings to educational professionals, etc. At present, the government is committed to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA) by “eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015”. As a part of the whole process, this content analysis of the curriculums is being done from gender perspectives.

1.2 Objective of the Content Analysis

The primary objective of this activity is to conduct content analysis of the existing school level curriculum of the six core subjects, e.g., Mathematics, Science, Nepali, English, Social Studies and Health Population and Environment from gender and rights-based perspectives. The goal is to make the curriculum inclusive of girl children from all socio-economic and cultural backgrounds so that it can properly guide the development of teaching learning materials that are free of gender bias, emphasize gender empowerment and advocate for gender equity.

The rationale behind this gender sensitivity analysis is to facilitate the Department of Education, Ministry of Education and Sports (DOE/MOES) identify gender gaps in the contents of the curriculums and develop/improve them from gender sensitive manner. It can contribute the school children to analyze changing social realities (different needs and interest, roles and relations, and access to control over resources) of women and men and develop the capacity to think critically from gender equity perspectives. More specifically, they can able to think critically about gender discrimination, raise voice against it, and do advocacy for the fundamental rights of women and men.

1.3 Study Process

Following process was used to perform this study:

- i. Desk study of the curriculum from Grades 1 to
- ii. Analysis of the curriculum by levels and by grades/subjects from gender and right based perspectives, especially in following aspects:
 - Objectives
 - Contents
 - Use of Language
 - Instructional Strategies
 - Student Evaluation
- iii. Identifying gaps and
- iv. Making recommendations

2. ANALYSIS

As per the objectives, it has been assessed whether contents of the curriculums are prepared and/or improved according to the changing socio-economic realities or not. For example, different roles, needs and interest of men and women, access and control over resources and decision making powers within and outside the household (HH) between women and men are properly reflected in the contents of curriculums or not. The information and messages are disseminated from gender-disaggregated manner or not. The words and languages used in the curriculums are gender biased or gender-aware or gender sensitive. Here gender aware mean, conscious uses of gender-neutral words, e.g., 'they' instead of s/he, students, teachers, head teacher, chairperson, chief guest, human being and *Guru, Balak* in Nepali so that it will not show biasness towards any gender.

Therefore, this part of the report presents level-wise analysis of the curriculum. It examines curricular objectives, contents, instructional strategies and evaluation processes of each level before presenting subject-wise analyses of the six core subjects.

The introduction of each curriculum states that it is "prepared after an extensive discussion and consultation with subject teachers, educational experts, guardians, students, university professors and other intellectuals". But the use of gender-neutral words such as *students, teachers, and guardians* do not necessarily imply that both male and female stakeholders were involved in this process. In order to have a balanced gender perspective, equal participation of male and female experts in the whole process of curriculum development is necessary. If there was involvement of female experts, that should be pronounced in the introduction part. The use of gender-neutral words generally perpetuates andocentric bias or male perspective, hence, increasing the risk of developing male biased curriculum and teaching learning materials.

Objectives of each levels of curriculum are prepared on the basis of National Goal of Education. In order to reflect national/international commitments and declarations of the government and achieve plan objectives, the National Goal of Education itself can be modified from more gender sensitive way. Such as:

- In Objectives Ka, Kha and Ga there is mention of "*to develop the personality and inherent talent of each person...(Primary Level Curriculum- 2049, p. 2; Primary Level Curriculum English 2059, p. 1 and Lower Secondary Level Curriculum English 2058, p. 4)*" Instead of using the term "each person" only it would be better to include '*each person irrespective of their class, caste, ethnicity and gender*'.
- Similarly objective 'Chha' mentions that, "*education will facilitate in mainstreaming the individuals ...(Primary Level Curriculum- 2049, p. 2; Primary Level Curriculum English 2059, p. 1 and Lower Secondary Level Curriculum English 2058, p. 4)*". The objective 'Chha' can be modified as, '*Education will facilitate in mainstreaming gender in access to and control over education (knowledge generation)*'.

2.1 Primary Level

The Primary Education Curriculum-2060 is an improved or revised version of Primary Education Curriculum 2049. The introductory chapter mentions that the main objective is to make the curriculum more practical, effective and in accordance with time. It also states that “*still in this 21st century, discriminations on the basis of gender and caste prevails in the rural areas of Nepal*” giving the false impression that urban areas of the country are free of such discriminatory practices. Gender discrimination in the urban areas is taking newer forms such as, sex selection before childbirth, difference in schooling of children (e.g. private school for sons and public school for daughters) and difference in wage for same work.

2.1.1 Objectives of Primary Level Education

The objectives of the primary curriculum-2049 and its revised version of 2060 is to develop sentiments of nationalism and national unity, basic skills in different areas such as language, science, information technology, environment, mathematics, creative arts and life skills. In one of the objectives it has clearly stated that primary education aims at “*developing respect to all religions, castes, cultures and ethnicities as well as gender equity in children*”. This objective is commendable in its emphasis on balanced perspective on gender, class, caste, ethnicity and religion.

2.1.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation Process

The contents of each subject is elaborated *neutrally* according to their general objectives, scope, grade-wise specific objectives, units and sub-units, weight given to each unit, instructional strategies and student evaluations processes by using the term *students* (*bidyaarhi*) in some places and *Bal Balika* (in Nepali) in other places.

In the “Nepali” subject curriculum, it is written that after completion of the primary level, the *students* will be able to listen, read, speak and write Nepali language fluently. The scope of the curriculum is: family, neighbor, community, society, culture, nature and environments. The instruments (*Bidha*) used to deliver knowledge are: story, poem, dialogue, essays, biography, letter, folk story and joke. In all these aspects, e.g., scope, objectives, instruments, etc. there is no gender perspective or any mention of family/community members and their roles and responsibilities. Thus when textbooks are prepared based on this curriculum, gender biases would enter directly or indirectly.

From a gender perspective, the critical issues that need to be raised in the Nepali subject are the following:

- Who is writing the letter or application to whom?
- Whose name is usually mentioned in the letterhead?
- Who are the main characters (men or women)?
- What types of qualities does the main character usually possess?
- Who (men or women) is generally portrayed as cruel, greedy, deceiving or as honest, clever, kind?
- Who is the central figure in biographical essays?
- Who is the writer?
- Whose name is associated with respect?

- Whose names are included in debates, question answers and discussions, e.g., discussion about science and technology, media and information, culture and tradition and issues of deforestation, water preservation, child care and nutrition?

These are the areas where special attention should be given while designing curriculum in the Nepali subject. The objectives, scope, concepts and message of the curriculum are to be properly reflected in the contents, illustrations and exercises of the textbooks. There should be some instructions and guidelines in the curriculum for textbook designers in order to ensure that the objectives of the curriculum are appropriately translated into textbook contents. Furthermore, there should be an evaluation mechanism from gender perspective in order to examine whether or not the process of preparing the textbooks as well as the textbooks themselves are gender sensitive and are founded on principles of gender equity.

The objective of the subject of “Mathematics” at the primary level is to enable students in basic counting, simple calculations, drawing tables and charts and preparing household budget. Simple algebra, arithmetic, geometry and statistics are introduced with their sub-topics, comparative weights, instructional strategies and evaluation methods. Keeping “students” at the center of analysis the curriculum treats both girls and boys neutrally. According to Sinha (2001) basic learning competencies of girls in Mathematics is lower than boys, i.e., 42.9 for boys and 29.0 for girls (Pg. 74). Thus, neutral treatment to girls and boys in the curriculum and instructional strategies do not bring gender equity in mathematical performances. In mathematics, from gender and rights-based perspectives, the issues that should be taken into considerations are:

- Whose names (male or female) are frequently mentioned in the center of exercise, illustrations and examples?
- Whose name is (male or female) related to what commodities (e.g., money, fruits, bread, ribbon, etc.)?

The objective of “Social Studies” at the primary level is to acquaint children with family, community, culture and traditions, social values, civic awareness, history, geography and local government structures. Among the several specific objectives to be obtained upon completion of the primary level curriculum, objective 6: “*equal respect to each other irrespective of their caste, ethnicity, language, religion and gender*” (Pg. 44) and objective 18: *equal treatment to both male and female* (Pg. 45), are gender sensitive and address the diversities and inequalities prevailing in Nepali society.

In the Primary Curriculum of 2049 there are topics related to social values, culture and national tradition, which aim to enable students to “Spell the names of king, crown prince, prime minister and the persons of national prides, e.g. *Buddha, Arniko, Sita, Bhrikuti, Amarshing Thapa, Bahadur Shah, Balbhadra Kunwar, Bhanubhakta, Laxmi Prasad Devkota* (Pg. 36) and explain their contributions.”

Whereas in the revised curriculum of 2060, there are similar topics, which aim to enable students to:

- Give the introduction of national *heroes and heroines* of the country,

- Describe names and contributions of our brave martyrs and national heroes and respect them (Pg. 50), *but there is no hero or heroines' names mentioned in the curriculum.*

Similarly “Our Economic Activity”, a new topic, is added with the sub-topics: role of family members, neighbors and other community members including the roles of VDC/municipality and DDC members, which aim to:

- Respect the works of family members and participate in the economic activities of family,
- Analyze the role of neighbors, community members and local government authorities and support them as possible.

The inclusion of the term heroines in history and analysis of the roles and economic activities of family members, neighbors and community members are evidence of some improvements in line with changing socio-economic contexts, needs and development. However, these efforts are not sufficient to achieve gender equity. From a gender perspective, the major issues that should be taken into consideration especially in social studies are:

- Equal treatment to both male and female is a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for gender equity.
- How different caste and ethnic groups with their cultural identities are portrayed in the textbooks.
- Whether there is any violation of women’s or any other groups’ right while explaining the roles of different social institutions.
- Whether the local governance structure, function and processes are gender sensitive or not, and if they are not, then such realities should be clearly pointed out and critically presented.
- How the contributions of national heroes and heroines are interpreted and how their images have been portrayed.
- Whether fundamental rights are explained from women’s human rights perspective or not.

Too many subjects and topical areas in primary level social studies with a lot of expected learning outcomes may create pressure on the children. Therefore the focus of primary education should be not to equip children with many ideas and concepts, but to equip them with some basic ideas, values and norms in a more gender sensitive way. As gender is a crosscutting issue, it should be the center of analysis across class, caste, ethnicity, religion, disability and minority.

The objective of “Science and Environment Education” for primary level is to impart basic knowledge in science and technology to the children developing their scientific attitude and process skills according to changing time and situations. The scope and grade-wise objectives are elaborated properly by introducing multiple instructional strategies. Keeping “students” at the center of analysis the curriculum treats neutrally to both girls and boys. In our society, generally boys get more opportunity to learn/practice science at home whereas girls are more familiar with surrounding environments because,

since early childhood they are socialized to keep the household and its surrounding clean. Thus the curriculum and instructional strategies should be designed in such way that there should have exchange of ideas, knowledge and skills among girls and boys. At least this should be mentioned in the specific objectives.

Also in “Health and Physical Education” there is no gender perspective. The neutral explanation of health and physical education neglects differential health and nutritional needs of men/boys and women/girls and its differential impact on them. Similarly, the need of physical education is also not equally felt by both sexes in our society. Since early childhood, boys and men are preferred and initiated to play outside and maintain their physical and mental balance whereas girls are found mostly domesticated to household duties. Thus, neutral explanation of health and physical education in the primary curriculum perpetuates patriarchal value system and socialize small children accordingly.

In each subject of primary level, the Instructional Strategy seems flexible, much supportive and facilitating to children. However, it does not consider the differential position of girls and boys in the family and in larger society. Girls’ access to and control over education (knowledge generation) is limited due to various socio-cultural and economic factors (such as less preference to girls’ education, high workload of girls in poor households and poverty combined with high opportunity cost of education for girls (IIDS, 2002).

Weight given to each subject and in each unit seems quite satisfactory.

For primary level, ‘Regular or Continuous Evaluation Process’ has been adopted. For this, a regular progress evaluation format/file has been prepared. On that format/file, annual report of each student, e.g., class work, homework, project work and learning improvements, can be recorded. Up to Grade: 3, provision is made to promote students to next class through this regular evaluation process and for the students of Grades 4 and 5, the assessment covers 50 percent weight and 50 percent weight is allocated to final examination. But, the format of regular learning and evaluation form (shown in the annex 2 of primary curriculum) is gender neutral as there is no sex-disaggregated recording system for boys and girls’ progress monitoring. Such neutral recording system only shows the average of marks scored by the students in different subjects. It will not point out in which subject girls or boys are really poor and need some extra efforts and attention.

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Analyzing from gender perspectives, this regular monitoring and evaluation process has also advantages and disadvantages. On one side, regular monitoring and evaluation process is more flexible and child friendly so that the small children could not feel any burden of final examination and take school as inspiring place of learning. On the other side, due to various socio-cultural factors, such as the primary concern for marrying off daughters early, caste discrimination (which keeps dalit children out of schools), high work load of girls in poor HH, poverty combined with high opportunity cost of education for girls, all combine to keep more girls out of schools than boys (IIDS, 2002 and New

Era, 2001). So through this process, there is less probability of girls getting good score in the class. So, the effectiveness of this regular monitoring and evaluation process on the performance of girls (including poor, dalits and other disadvantaged girls) should be assessed from poverty and gender perspectives. It is also recommended to have some sort of attraction in the schools (e.g., uniform, stationary, playing items, tiffin or lunch at school) especially for girls.

2.2 Lower Secondary Level

2.2.1 Objectives of Lower Secondary Level Education

The main aims of lower secondary level education are “to prepare patriotic *citizens* who are not only sensitive to the nation and democracy but also to social and natural environments. *Pupils* are expected to be well disciplined, healthy, competent in linguistic behavior and assertive to the dignity of labor”. The neutral terms like “citizens” and “pupils” used in the curriculum objectives, may not equally address both sexes in the textbooks and classroom instructions.

2.2.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation Process

The objective of “Nepali” is to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of the students according to their grades. The scope of Nepali curriculum is essays, stories, biography, poem, letter writing, Nepali grammar and vocabularies. The contents aim to familiarize students about the biographies of national and international personalities, artists, literary persons and other intellectuals and their contributions. *But until and unless the national/ international personalities and intellectuals are addressed in gender specific way, the neutral explanation generally perpetuates andocentric (male) biases in the textbooks and other teaching-learning instruments and methods.* There is no screening or monitoring mechanism developed in the curriculum to examine whether the textbooks and teaching manuals are prepared according to the objectives of the curriculum or not. Instructional method for Nepali subject is explanatory but written in gender- neutral languages. The evaluation process is of two types: regular evaluation and final examination processes. Although regular evaluation process occupies some percentage of marks, the final examination carries more percentage of marks.

The objective of Mathematics in lower secondary level is to enhance the mathematical knowledge and skill of the students in five main areas of mathematics, e.g., sets, arithmetic, algebra, geometry and statistics. Further it aims to support the students understanding the importance of mathematics, enjoy doing mathematics and use it in day-to-day life. As in primary curriculum the term “*students*” is used and the contents are elaborated neutrally.

Instructional methods adopted are varied, e.g., discussion, question-answer, experiment, investigation, field visit and problem solving methods. Assuming that girl students are as capable and competent as boys, there is no girls’ specific instruction in Mathematics. As in Nepali subject, regular evaluation and final examination process are adopted to evaluate mathematical performances. The final exam carries only 60 percent of marks and other terminal examinations and unit tests cover 40 percent of marks. As mentioned

earlier such evaluation process mainly benefits those girl and boy students, who are regular in class. Thus, special efforts or sometimes some attracting mechanism should be made to bring regularity of students (especially girls) at school.

Social Studies curriculum of the lower secondary level is prepared to observe and analyze past events and changes occurring in economic, social, and political situation of the country. The subject matters are similar to primary curriculum with some addition: civic awareness, human civilization, citizenship, infrastructure and international relations. As in primary level, subject matters and objectives are elaborated in detail mentioning *equal respect and equal treatment to each other irrespective of class, caste, ethnicity, occupation and gender*.

From gender perspectives, the issues that should be considered while developing Social Studies curriculum and accordingly textbooks are:

- Do men and women enjoy equal citizenship rights in our country?
- Do men and women equally enjoy tradition, culture, religion and festivals?
- During festivals, who does what? Whose workload increases?

For instruction, different methods, e.g., question and answer, exhibition, discussion, presentation and acting, are adopted, treating both male and female students equally.

Evaluation process seems flexible and child friendly. The marks allocated to the terminal examination, unit test and final examination with internal practical exams are also less pressurizing to children but the issue again arises to the regularity of the girl students at school and getting benefiting from this evaluation process.

The objective of “Science Education” is to increase knowledge of the children in science and technology and develop their analytical skills. The scope and grade-wise objectives are properly elaborated introducing multiple instructional strategies, e.g., lecture, question and answer, demonstration, experimental and discussion methods. It is also mentioned in the instructional strategy that whether the students are able to take scientific knowledge according to objectives of curriculum or not. If not, the teachers should identify their problems and appropriate and effective teaching learning methods should be adopted (Pg. 25). But the girls and boys may not have the same understanding or problems in Science. Girls may possess more indigenous knowledge and experiences, whereas boys may possess more theoretical knowledge and techniques. Thus neutral treatment to boys and girls and neutral explanation of instructional strategies in Science may not reflect the social reality and leave the opportunity of mutual learning.

The objective of “Health and Physical Education” is to develop knowledge, attitude and skills about physical health and mental fitness among the students and try to bring some positive changes in their personal and family health behaviors. Assuming equal access to household resources (nutritious food, health care, etc.) among the family members (girls/women and boys/men), the contents neutrally explain the importance of nutritious food, healthy environment, personal and family health care.

Similarly, the need of “Physical Education” is not also felt equally by both sexes in our society. Girls are primarily not initiated to play or do any physical exercise at home, which hampers their physical and mental growth. Thus, neutral explanation of health and physical education in the curriculum perpetuate the same gender stereotypes and patriarchal value system to the girl and boy students. Marks allocated to Health and Physical Education is only 50, which is not appropriate as compared to its importance.

As in other subjects, the evaluation methods are: theoretical and practical 30 marks is allocated for theory and 20 marks for practice. The students’ performance evaluation form for physical education has separate column for girls and boys, which is very much necessary for gender equity perspectives.

The “English” curriculum of lower secondary mentions, teaching English in school level has two purposes:

- i. To enable “*pupils*” to exchange ideas with people of any nationality and
- ii. To expose “*them*” to the vast treasures of knowledge and pleasure available in English

To achieve the purposes, (as mentioned in the curriculum, Pg. 2) this revised curriculum has some improvement, which is advanced and encouraging.

The general and specific objectives in English curriculum are gender neutral. Teaching and assessment processes are also gender-neutral. English Curriculum Elaboration Matrix has been used to describe language function, language/grammar, topics, activities, evaluation etc., where the topics included are varied, e.g., friends, school, job, travel, bus park, conversation between *a tourist and a guide*, sports, kitchen, child labor, library, temple, festival, hospital, *head master’s office*, and so on. Thoroughly the topics seem gender neutral but the use of the term “Head Master” reflects gender insensitivity of the curriculum designer. In many dialogues the pronouns I, we and you are used. Where the nouns are used they typically show how gender stereotype is perpetuated in English curriculum (Pg. 14-28) in order to describe women’s and men’s quality and identity, e.g.,

- *Girl with long hair*
- *Ram with book*
- *Brother reading paper,*
- *Lady riding horse,*
- *Going to uncle’s house,*
- *He went to see a doctor,*
- *If I were a head master, I’d make the school a model,*
- *Ahmed is much taller than his brother,*
- *Radhika is as beautiful as Ramita.*

Here men are associated with knowledge, information, power and resources whereas women are associated with long hair, beauty, etc. The only one example ‘lady riding horse’ shows women’s capability, which shows a change in dominant South Asian perspectives and is thus gender empowering.

2.3 Secondary Level:

2.3.1 Objectives of Secondary Level Education

The main objective of secondary education is “to prepare a capable or an ideal *citizen* who is well known to national culture, tradition and environment, sensitive enough to democratic values and assumptions, perfect in linguistic behavior, have scientific intelligence, helpful, hardworking, independent and can play a vital role in country’s economic development”. Thus a lot of qualities are expected from secondary level graduates, without developing their gender sensitivity.

2.3.2 Analysis of Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation process

While reviewing *neutrally*, the curriculum of each subject is nicely developed with subject wise introduction, objectives (both general and specific), scope and subject matters, instructional strategies, weight given to different topics and evaluation mechanisms.

The objectives, scope and subject matters of Nepali curriculum in secondary level are similar to lower-secondary level and are gender-neutral. The issues are same as lower secondary and no effort has been made to address both sexes.

The objective of “Mathematics” in secondary level is to develop livelihood oriented mathematical knowledge and skill among the *students* and enable them to enjoy in mathematics. As in lower secondary, the instruction and evaluation methods are described properly. There is no any evaluation mechanism developed from gender perspective to examine the effectiveness of the instruction and evaluation methods to girls and boys. Any specific measures are not suggested to enhance the mathematical performances of girls and other targeted groups.

One of the objectives of Secondary level “English” is to “*develop an awareness of cultural and ethical values relevant to Nepal*”. It is very good from human perspectives but from gender perspectives it is more important to analyze:

- Are the cultural values and ethics equally applicable to women and men?
- Who is suffering more in the name of culture and ethics?

The curriculum should be well aware about how these facts would have reflected in the textbooks.

As in lower secondary, the content of secondary level English has presented a matrix where a set of functions, language and periods are given. In the language used, mostly the pronouns I, We and “He” are used. Besides, there are some examples (Pg. 47-51):

- i. This song was written by Ravi Shankar (highlighting men’s contribution)
- ii. If Sita could sing, she would be very popular (singing is women’s domain)
- iii. He doesn’t like being combed (men’s beauty doesn’t matter)
- iv. She didn’t wear jeans then (breaking the tradition of wearing Sari or Skirt)
- v. We pay women who work here the same as men (promoting gender equity and gender equality)

Here, examples 1, 2 and 3 are gender reinforcing thus, perpetuating the same patriarchal value system. Whereas examples 4 and 5 are gender empowering thus, breaking the tradition and promoting gender equity. The curriculum should not bring those examples, which are just gender reinforcing but mention such examples, which are gender empowering. Teaching and assessment methods are explanatory but are gender neutral. As in other subjects, use of gender-neutral terms, e.g., *teacher and students* in the curriculum assumes equal access to learning environments to both boys and girls especially at home.

The objective of “Science Education” is to increase knowledge and skill in scientific laws and principles, natural phenomenon and their effect in human life to the students. All male scientists’ invented theories and principles are mentioned in the curriculum (e.g., Newton, Pascal, Mendal, Oham), which naturally inspire boys more than girls in science and technology. Although female scientists are few even at present, the curriculum writers do not mention or recognize them. As mentioned earlier, there are no instructional strategies and evaluation mechanisms in Science education.

The main objective of “Health, Population and Environment” is to enable *students* understand the concepts, situation and problems related to health, population and environment and identify ways to manage the problems practically. One of the specific objectives, in Grade: 9, is to introduce the concept of “Reproductive Health” and, in Grade: 10, the concept of “Safe Motherhood”.

The contents associated with reproductive health are (Grade: 9, Unit 6, Pg. 96):

- Concept of reproductive health and reproductive rights
- Adolescence and the changes occurring with it and need of sex education
- Reproductive system

Similarly the contents associated with safe motherhood are (Grade: 10, Unit 5, Pg. 102):

- Introduction of Safe motherhood and symptoms of pregnancy
- Mother and child health care: introduction, importance and post-natal cares

Of these, concepts of reproductive system, reproductive health and rights, adolescence and changes and sex education are much relevant to the secondary level age groups. Knowledge about safe motherhood, Anti-natal and Post-natal cares should be provided in such a way that both girls and boys of this age groups can support or inform other family and community members about these services. But without going through the textbooks one cannot say how these concepts are introduced and messages are disseminated. Besides other topics, e.g., characteristics of population (birth rate, child mortality, life expectancy, etc), cause and effects of population changes, environment, family life education, family planning and community health, should be analyzed from gender perspectives with gender disaggregated statistics and interpretation.

Instructional strategy given in the curriculum, especially to this subject, is much more elaborated, but is gender neutral. It seems there should have some uniformity in the

instructional strategies of each level. Evaluation methods adopted in the curriculum are: observation, participation, unit tests and final examinations. The marks allocated to theoretical and practical examinations (75 and 25 marks) are also less pressuring to the children but the issue again arises about the regularity of girls and getting benefit from this process.

For Secondary level the scopes of “Social Studies” are: history, geography, development plans, government structures and national and international relations. The objectives are wide and a lot of outcomes are expected from a secondary level graduate. In History there are topics like (Pg. 76 and 80):

- *Unification practice of king Prithvi Narayan Shah,*
- *Contributions made by brave heroes of Nepal: Amar Shingh Thapa, Bam Shah, Bhakti Thapa, Ranabirshingh Thapa, Balbhadra Kunwar and Ujirshingh Thapa*
- *Development practices of late King Mahendra and Birendra Bir Bikram Shahs.*

Thus, depicting the same traditional reality that history is his-story and the history of power. There is no contribution of women in shaping our history. Beside history, contents of other subjects are gender-neutral. There are uses of gender-neutral words, e.g., *person, citizen*, etc. to address girl and boy students. In Social Studies there is no instructional strategies and evaluation mechanism given in the curriculum. Weights are allocated in different topics in a gender-neutral way.

2.4 Higher Secondary Level

2.4.1 Analysis of Objectives of Higher Secondary Education

The main objective of higher secondary curriculum is to produce middle-level human resources providing educational opportunities to the *sons and daughters* of those people also, who are living in far remote areas of the country. Further it aims to produce skilled human resources, who, after completion of higher secondary level, can get employment opportunities in the open job market”. Although the objectives are gender neutral, due to uses of gender-neutral words, e.g., people, human resources but the inclusion of gender-responsive words “*son and daughter*” ultimately gives the sense of gender awareness in higher secondary education.

2.4.2 Analysis of the Core Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation process:

Both the general and specific objectives of higher secondary Compulsory English are gender-neutral. The contents consist of informative topics of global interest and common human concern. The poems, essays and stories prescribed for the course are mainly written by Western male writers, which show the presence of dominant world-view and patriarchal social structures in English Curriculum. There is no evaluation scheme given in Grade XI English, which is present in Grade XII, but it is gender-neutral.

Similarly the objectives (both general and specific) of higher secondary level “Compulsory Nepali” are gender neutral. Basically the topics included in Nepali grammar and Nepali writing structure parts (*Both ra Abhibyakti*) are gender-neutral. But

the topic *Review Literature* has a list of poems, stories, plays, essays and novels with their writers, who *are all male, as if there is no contribution of women in literature. It shows how the dominant patriarchal structure has reflected in the field of literature.* Further, the reference books prescribed for this subject are also written by male writers only.

The general objective of “Mathematics” is to enable *students* to acquire basic knowledge in mathematics by creating an aptitude for mathematics and developing their skills in applying mathematics in fields of science, engineering and social sciences ... (Grade: XI and XII, Pg. 43 and 24). There are detail course outlines in the curriculum, which are gender-neutral. Generally in college level mathematics, the examples and exercises mentioned in the textbooks are found biased with male, using only male names and the pronoun ‘he’. Such biases are not observed in the curriculums.

Total teaching hours allocated to mathematics are 150 with their unit-wise sub-divisions. Full Marks is 100 for each grades. Beside this, there are no evaluation mechanisms given in the curriculums. All the textbooks and reference books prescribed in the curriculum are written by male writers. Worldwide still, Science and Mathematics are taken as men’s subjects, which nowadays women are breaking gradually. But women writers are rarely found, especially in Mathematics.

For higher secondary level, there is no compulsory science subject. Those who choose Science as their major subject have to study Physics, Chemistry and Biology, each having F.M.100. In order to specify male and female students and male and female teachers the terms *students* and *teachers* are used in the objectives and course contents in the curriculum.

The course “Population Education” is designed to acquaint students with the national and global situation of population, theories, trends, policies, programs, and consequences of population growth and control measures. The general objectives are gender-neutral and some are vague also. For example, the objective “*to develop desirable behavior and attitudes towards population issues and to take rational decision about desired family size*” is quite vague. The desired family size as prescribed by the government is “*two children*” with two months maternity leave (somewhere two weeks paternity leave for father, e. g., in T.U.) without any provision (or very limited) of secure child life. Even there is no daycare and frequent breast-feeding facility for working mother.

There are several specific objectives, e.g., factors affecting composition, distribution and density of population, status of women and children in Nepal and so on. As compared to its level (higher secondary) and course contents, the objectives are more ambitious and need to be specific in gender sensitive way. As 50 percent of the Nepalese population is female, any policy, plans and perspectives related to population should be very much specific to men and women. Any generalized conclusion can affect the status of women and children in Nepal adversely. In order to impart an effective population education, recent changes should be incorporated in the curriculums as well as in textbooks. In this regard, the effort made in the population census, 2001 should also be properly

documented and the students should be made aware of the whole process and achievements.

The objective of “Health and Physical Education” is to enable *students, especially the young people*, know about their body function, concept of family health, major health problems and community health services of Nepal. From gender perspectives health education cannot be generalized in the family health. *Within family, health and nutritional needs; problems and access to health services for men, women and children are different*. Thus, the objectives should be gender specific. The course contents have also focused on family health, health policy and programs, health education in family, school and communities. There are many inclusions of gender and women’s issues including the concept of *responsible parenthood*. But for health education only inclusion of gender issues is not sufficient, there should have gender perspective in each and every health issues, e.g., policy, programs, prospects and problems. Then only the desired goal of gender equity in access to and control over quality health services will be achieved.

In “Physical Education”, there are only male centered playing items mentioned in the curriculum e.g., Basketball, Football, Volleyball, Kabaddi, etc. This does not mean that women cannot play these games, but the curriculum should highlight the importance of physical education and daily exercises to men and women by disseminating the message that playing is equally necessary for both woman and men.

In our society women generally do not play in their growing ages due to their uncomfortable dresses. Parents also do not allow their daughters to play. They wish their daughters would learn HH works. In this situation health education should be more sensitizing, encouraging and initiating to both girls and boys.

The objective of “Social Studies” in Grade XII is to familiarize the *students* about geography, history, culture and economic and political situation of the country and enable them to analyze the social issues and problems effectively. In our south-Asian context, all the political, social, cultural and economic aspects are interrelated to each other. Thus social studies should not only analyze the social issues and problems gender specifically but also try to challenge and address them sensitively.

3. CONCLUSION: MAJOR FINDINGS

Curriculums of all levels are prepared after an extensive discussion and consultation with *subject teachers, educational experts, guardians, students, university professors and other intellectuals*. But the use of gender-neutral words, e.g., *students, teachers, guardians, etc.* do not give the information that both male and female have involved in the process of preparing and revising curriculum. Here is the briefing of major findings according to the levels:

3.1 Primary Level

3.1.1: Objectives

The Primary Education Curriculum-2060 is an improved or revised version of Primary Education Curriculum, 2049.

- The main objective was to make the curriculum more practical, effective and in accordance with time.
- The introduction part depicts rural-urban biases.
- One of the objectives is gender sensitive as it has mentioned, “*to feel and realize gender equity*”

3.1.2 Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation process

- Wide scope and subject matters are included in the curriculum with a lot of expected outcomes.
- Use of few gender responsive words, e.g., girls and boys and male and female teachers in some places and also use of gender-neutral words, e.g., students, teachers in other places.
- Neutral treatment to girls and boys in Nepali, Mathematics, Science and Health and Physical Education by keeping “*students*” at the center of analysis.
- Some objectives of Social Studies are gender sensitive and trying to address the diversities and inequalities prevailing in Nepalese society.
- Neutral explanation in Health and Physical Education has neglected differential health and nutritional needs of men/boys and women/girls and their differential impact on them.
- Instructional Strategy seems flexible, supportive and facilitating to children, but it does not consider the differential position of girls and boys in the family and in larger society.
- Weight given to each subject and to each unit seems quite satisfactory.
- ‘Regular or Continuous Evaluation Process’ adopted for primary level is gender neutral as there is no sex-disaggregated recording system for progress monitoring. Further, the effectiveness of regular monitoring and evaluation process needs to be assessed from gender and poverty perspectives.

3.2 Lower-secondary Level

3.2.1 Objectives

- The objectives are gender-neutral. Use of the terms, “*citizen and pupils*” may not address equally to both sexes in the textbooks and classroom instructions.
- There is no screening or monitoring mechanism in the curriculum to examine whether the textbooks are prepared according to the objectives or not.

3.2.2 Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation process

- As in primary curriculum, in each subject generally the term “*students*” is used and the contents are elaborated neutrally.
- In Nepali, the curriculum does not address national/ international personalities in gender responsive way. Thus possibility of perpetuating andocentric (male) biases in textbooks and teaching processes are very high.
- Social Studies seems quite gender sensitive as it mentions equal respect and equal treatment to each other irrespective of class, caste, ethnicity and gender.
- In Science and technology, neutral explanation of objectives, contents and instructional strategies neglects gender specific indigenous and theoretical knowledge that girls and boys may possess. Need of mutual learning between girls and boys are also not felt.
- The neutral explanation of the contents (e.g., importance of nutritious food, healthy environment and health cares) in Health and Physical Education assumes equal access to household resources among the family members (girls/women and boys/men).
 - Neutral explanation in Physical Education does not realize the need of physical education equally to both sexes.
 - Marks allocated to Health and Physical Education is only 50, which is not appropriate in comparison to its importance.
 - Students’ performance evaluation form for physical education has separate column for girls and boys, which is very much necessary for gender equity perspectives.
- The general and specific objectives of English in Lower secondary education are mainly gender-neutral
 - In many dialogues the pronouns I, we and you are used. Wherever the nouns are used, they typically portray gender stereotypes (Pg. 14-28) in describing women’s and men’s quality and identity
 - The only one example ‘lady riding horse’ shows women’s capability, which shows a change in dominant South Asian perspectives.
- Instructional methods are generally explanatory but written in gender- neutral languages.
- For evaluation, regular evaluation and final examination processes are adopted with marks occupying 40 and 60 to each respectively. Regular evaluation process mainly benefits those girl and boy students, who are regular in class.

3.3 Secondary Level

3.3.1 Objectives

- The objectives are gender-neutral.
- A lot of qualities have been expected from secondary level graduates without realizing the need of gender sensitivity.

3.3.2 Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation process

- As in other curriculums gender-neutral words, e.g., *students, teachers*, are used.
- In Science, only male scientists' invented theories and principles are mentioned in the curriculum.
- In English, some of the examples presented through matrix methods are gender reinforcing and some are gender empowering.
 - In Health, Population and Environment Education the topic "Reproductive Health" and "Reproductive Rights" is much relevant to the growing age children.
- Other topics related to population characteristics, environment, family life education and community health, should also be analyzed from gender perspectives with gender disaggregated statistics and interpretation.
- In Social Studies, especially History is male bias with male names and their contributions
- Instructional strategies and evaluation methods are gender- neutral.

3.4 Higher Secondary Level

3.4.1 Objectives

- The main objective is to produce middle-level skilled human resources by providing educational opportunities to all children
- Inclusion of gender-responsive words "*son and daughter*", in the objectives, gives the sense of gender awareness in higher secondary education.

3.4.2 Contents, Instructional Strategies and Evaluation process:

- The contents in English consist of informative topics of global interest and common human concern.
 - The poems, essays and stories prescribed in English are mainly written by Western male writers, which show the presence of dominant world-view and patriarchal social structures in English education.
- The objectives of Compulsory Nepali are gender neutral, but the topic *Review Literature* has lists of poems, stories, plays and essays, which are *written by male and no recognition has been given to women in literature*.
- Both Mathematics and Science curricula of higher secondary level are gender-neutral.
- Although the curriculum of Population Education is gender neutral, one of the objectives e.g., '*taking rational decision about desired family size*' is vague as it is not clear what is the desired family size and who is the decision maker especially about the number and sex of the children inside and outside the household.

- There are topics related to women and their lives, e.g., ‘*status of women and children*’, but inclusion of some topics is not sufficient rather all the population issues should be examined and analyzed from gender sensitive lens and the whole process should be engendered.
- Similarly Health Education cannot be generalized in the family health. *Within family, health and nutritional needs, problems and access to health services for men, women and children are different.* Thus, the objectives should be gender specific.
- There are many inclusions of gender and women’s issues including the concept of *responsible parenthood*. But again the inclusion of gender issues in some units is not sufficient.
- In “Physical Education”, only male centered playing items are mentioned in the curriculum e.g., Basketball, Football, Volleyball, Kabaddi, etc.
- Social Studies curriculum is just describing the geography, culture, historical event, social problems, social institution and local governance structure neutrally.

Thus, the use of gender-neutral languages and words in curriculum objectives, contents and instructional strategies are often found misinterpreted against gender equity in the textbooks. The contents and exercises are often prepared from men’s perspectives, highlighting men’s contribution, associating men with knowledge, information, power, sports and money whereas associating women mainly with long hair, ribbons, ornaments, beauty, etc. Thus confining women and men into the same gender stereotypical images and qualities.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis presented above, the following recommendations are made in order to make the school level curriculum gender sensitive, founded on principles of gender equity, and appropriately designed such that children develop the capacity to think critically from a gender perspective.

4.1 Use of gender disaggregated words

Generally gender-neutral words e.g., students, teachers, intellectuals, experts, farmers and use of the pronoun ‘they’ are found used in all levels of school curriculums, which seems a conscious effort of avoiding gender-biases. However, our society is still patriarchal, where men/boys are given priority in the distribution of any sort socio-economic and political resources. Culturally also men are superior. In such situation, use of gender-neutral words again perpetuates gender-biasness in the curricular materials. Thus, for gender equity, use of gender-disaggregated words, e.g., girls and boys, male and female teachers, female and intellectuals, female and male intellectuals, etc. should be mentioned. This is necessary to protect the right to be visible and recognized in the process of learning and generating knowledge.

4.2 Use of gender sensitive languages

The language used in the curricula should also be very much sensitive to preserve every individual’s identity and images irrespective of their class, caste, ethnicity and gender. This should be mentioned in the objectives of the curriculum so that the textbook and teaching manual writers would follow the process.

4.3 Gender sensitivity among all levels of educational personnel

Primarily, this is recommended to bring gender sensitivity in every level of educational planning and programming process. Reluctance of using gender disaggregated words and gender sensitive languages, in the curriculum should be eliminated by sensitizing all the concerned educational personnel from gender and rights-based perspectives.

4.4 Institutionalization of the process of gender review

The prepared curriculum should be reviewed from gender lens before sending them to the final users. This process needs to be institutionalized so that every curriculum revision or development would go through gender review. The preparation process needs to be inclusive of gender perspective, which necessities having at least 33 percent women in the team.

4.5 In Nepali, English, Mathematics and Social Studies special attention should be given to the following aspects:

- i. Family-letter should not be addressed to male-to-male but it should be female to male or both or male to female or both, in order to reflect changing social realities.

- ii. Central figure in biographies and essays should not be only male or only female. It should be both. Some contemporary male or female personalities can also be taken as examples like- Dr. Meena Acharya: the senior and renowned gender and development expert, Dr. Bhagban Koirala: the Cardiologist, Saru Bhakta Shrestha: the famous literary person, S.P. Parbati Thapa, Sapana Malla: the famous lawyer, Dr. Krishna B. Bhattachan: the famous researcher, etc.
- iii. Use of female or male names while addressing any male or female personalities, e.g. head teacher, principal, president, DDC/ VDC/ Municipality chairperson, chief guest, minister, manager and so on. There should have some written instruction in the curriculum to follow the instructions while writing the contents of the textbooks and drawing pictures for the content
- iv. Greed, decisiveness, pride, honesty, cleverness, kindness are all human characters, which should not be biased with male or female either in curriculum or in textbooks.
- v. Women's contribution in literature, science and technology, history, social services and politics should be given recognition according to their importance or value in the society like –Rajya Laxmi (mother of king Mandev): Social revolutionist (especially against Sati system), Yog Maya Koirala: the famous social revolutionists (especially against caste system) and poet, Bishnu Kumari Waiba (Parijat): the famous literary person, Chandra Kanta Malla: the pioneer of women/girls' education, M. Laxmi: the literary person especially in Newari Language, etc. (Ghimire and Shrestha, 2002).
- vi. In Mathematics, male or female names mentioned in the exercises, illustrations and examples should be proportionately equal. Both male and female should be shown equally associated with money, food grains, fruits and other kinds.
- vii. While explaining the roles of any social institutions or highlighting about social problems, e.g. violence, theft, drug uses, water pollution or dumping waste, etc. any particular sex cannot be blamed. If the curriculum/textbook wants to show the social realities than it should also present what ought to be.
- viii. While portraying national hero and heroine's contributions or presenting any contemporary images, special attention should be given not to disseminate wrong or bad messages against their human rights.
- ix. Similarly fundamental rights should be explained from women/men's human rights perspective, e.g., citizenship rights, property rights, right to work or choose occupation, right to get married, having children, go for foreign employment, etc.
- x. Dissemination of information about culture, tradition, festival and values is necessary to preserve the culture. By sharing information the negative and

positive aspects of culture, traditions and values and their impact on women and men (of different class and caste) should also be examined. Because through modernization and increasing participation of women in public spheres, men's participation in household spheres has not increased. As a result, women and girls are suffering from excessive workload and cannot enjoy the rituals and festivals as generalized in the textbooks. Thus, improved curriculum should also incorporate these changing social realities and try to bring some positive changes through contents and pictures in the textbooks.

4.6 Removal of andocentric biases or male perspective from the curriculum

Removal of andocentric biases is necessary to develop curriculum and textbooks according to changing socio-economic realities and work pattern inside and outside the household. Therefore, in every issue, the central figures should be both men and women and their contributions. For this, the issues should also be reinterpreted as:

- Household works and their importance to boys and girls for making themselves independent
- Nutritional needs of boys/men and girls/women in different stages of life (e.g., childhood, teenage, youth, adult and old age)
- Household methods of making Salt and Sugar Water "*Noon-Chini-Pani*" and its importance
- Impact of carrying load especially the big water pot to women's reproductive health and need of sharing household work
- Contribution of men, women and children in farm and non-farm production and the issue of reorganization
- Women in small-scale business, marketing and other transactions
- Women/ men's participation in planning and decision-making process: household, community and local government bodies.

4.7 Extra efforts for girls' regularity at school and good performances in Mathematics:

Mathematics is the subject in which girls are found to be weak (Sinha 2001). Thus for the time being, special attention should be given to inspire girls in the classroom and extra coaching should be provided in this subject. For evaluation, regular evaluation process mainly benefits those girl and boy students, who are regular in class. Thus, special efforts should be made to bring regularity of girls and other disadvantaged groups in the class. For example: uniform, stationary, water, separate toilets, playing items, tiffin or lunch at school.

4.8 Necessity of gender sensitive health and physical education

In order to make children aware of the differential health and nutritious needs of men and women and its differential health impacts, Health and Physical Education should be gender sensitive. For example:

- Need of personal health care and hygiene to girls and boys
- Need and importance of regular exercise and playing habits for a healthy growth of body to both girls/women and boys/men

- Types and importance of vitamin-A, green vegetables and other nutritious foods to school going girls and boys
- Need of extra calorie foods, sanitation and simple exercises during menstruation and pregnancy for girls/women
- Reproductive system of girls and boys and their reproductive health issues including changes occurring during adolescence
- Knowledge about safe motherhood, Anti-natal and Post-natal cares and parenthood to both male and female

4.9 Gender Sensitivity in Population Education

Every population issues, e.g., number and trend of population growth, birth rate, death rate, life expectancy, adult literacy, net enrolments, child mortality, maternal mortality cause and effects of population changes, migration, human resource development and employment should be analyzed through gender disaggregated way by using gender disaggregated statistics and interpretation. For this, data generating and analysis processes should be revisited and tried to interlink the available data in development plan objectives. In this regard, the effort made in the population census, 2001 should also be disseminated and the students should be made aware of the whole process.

Therefore, the focus of education of all levels should be not to equip female and male children with many concepts and ideas, but to equip them with some basic concepts, theories and practices with more gender sensitive way. At present, this is very much necessary because:

- Gender is a crosscutting issue and it is equally important in class, caste, ethnicity, minority and disability issues.
- To make the students able to think critically about gender discrimination, raise voice against it, and do advocacy for the fundamental rights of women and men.
- To develop gender sensitive human resources who, think critically from gender equity perspectives and cannot discriminate women on the basis of their sex, class, caste, ethnicity and disability.

Although it is not possible to implement every recommendation in the curriculum, it can be implemented gradually through curriculum, textbooks and teaching manuals. There should have some instructions or guidelines in the curriculum to implement the proposed recommendations in the textbooks and in teaching manuals.

5. LIST OF THE CURRICULUMS REVIEWED:

1. HMGN/MOES/DOE/CDC Primary Education Curriculum-2049, Sanothimi Bhaktpur
2. Primary Education Curriculum-2049, Revised Addition 2060, Sanothimi Bhaktpur
3. Lower Secondary Education Curriculum: Mathematics 2058, Sanothimi Bhaktpur
4. Lower Secondary Education Curriculum: Science 2058, ibid
5. Lower Secondary Education Curriculum: Nepali 2058, ibid
6. Lower Secondary Education Curriculum: Social Studies 2058, ibid
7. Lower Secondary Education Curriculum: English 2058, ibid
8. Lower Secondary Education Curriculum: Health and Physical Education 2058, ibid
9. Secondary Education Curriculum-2055, Grade 9 and 10, Part One, Sanothimi Bhaktpur
10. Higher Secondary School Curriculum, Class-XI - 2056, Higher Secondary Education Board, Sanothimi Bhaktpur
11. Higher Secondary School Curriculum, Class-XII - 2056, Higher Secondary Education Board, ibid

6. REFERENCES

1. Ghimire P. and Shrestha N. (2002) *Changing Profile of Women in Nepal*, Hamro Sansar: A Journal of the Central Department of Home Science and Women's Studies Program, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, pp. 28-31
2. IIDS (2002) *Gender Budget Audit Nepal*, Submitted to UNDP/UNIFEM, Kathmandu, Nepal
3. New ERA (2001) *Gender Assessment in the Education Sector*, Mainstreaming Gender Equity Program (MGEP), Chakupat, Lalitpur
4. Sinha, R.S. (2001), *Shikshyama Mahila Utkrishtata*, Annual production, year 2, Anka 1, Women's Education Section/ Department of Education, MOES, Sanothimi Bhaktapur, pp 69-75