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Enhancing Pre-Primary Education in Bangladesh: A Critical Examination of the School Readiness Curriculum and Insights from the Curricula of Neighboring Countries

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Abstract

This study examined the school readiness and pre-primary education curriculum developed in 2011 as part of the Bangladesh Government's collaboration with UNICEF. This initiative aimed to improve the quality of pre-primary education and establish a strong foundation for primary and subsequent education. This curriculum is still in use in every government pre-primary class in Bangladesh. As of now, no new curriculum or policy for pre-primary and early childhood education has been published. This article offers an analysis of the curriculum for a school readiness program designed for five-year-old children. A comprehensive curriculum analysis of the government-run school readiness program in Bangladesh would inform its implementation, substantiate its significance, and provide feedback on effective practices, areas for improvement, and aspects requiring emphasis. Furthermore, it will provide an understanding of the country's contextualised strategy to meet pre-primary education goals. The curriculum analysis used a critical approach to evaluate school readiness program goals and objectives. The school readiness curriculum has been compared with preschool curricula in India and Nepal, as these neighboring countries share similar Early Childhood Education goals. Lessons from their curricula are being used to develop a high-quality early childhood education sector in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Curriculum, School Readiness Program, Pre-Primary Education, Early Childhood Education.

1. Introduction

The "National Education Policy (NEP) 2010, Bangladesh" accorded substantial significance to pre-primary education and the necessity of preparing pupils for the initial year of primary school. In response to NEP 2010, Bangladesh formulated a curriculum for school readiness and pre-primary education in 2011. This curriculum constituted part of the Bangladesh Government's initiative, in collaboration with UNICEF, to enhance the quality and relevance of pre-primary education as well as to establish a robust foundation for primary education (GoB, 2010).

Whitebread (2015) asserted that robust and credible evidence indicates that high-quality Early Childhood Education (ECE) exerts a more profound impact on children's educational achievement and socio-emotional growth than any other phase of schooling. The ECE calibre provided to a child directly influences the child's developmental trajectory. Various curricula or pedagogical approaches can potentially enhance learning environments for children's benefit. A curriculum should incorporate specific

learning objectives for children and should be grounded in the latest research on child development. Alternatively, well-structured classroom activities may also form part of a distinct philosophy or ECE approach, such as those employed in Montessori, Reggio Emilia, or Waldorf Schools (Corpuz et al., 2016). The foundation of classroom instruction and curriculum development should be predicated on students' interest and intellectual curiosity. Multiple theoretical frameworks have been employed to analyse school readiness.

2. Rationale for Undertaking Curriculum Analysis

An effective curriculum should be practical, continuous, advantageous, and long-lasting (Stabback 2016). For pre-primary education, the curriculum must be appropriate for the children's age group and incorporate familiar elements from their environment and daily activities (Whitebread 2015). Furthermore, the preschool curriculum should emphasise learning approaches centred on play (Whitebread, 2015). It was posited that a comprehensive curriculum analysis of Bangladesh's government-administered school readiness program would facilitate its implementation, establish its significance more rigorously, and provide input on its function, or necessitate a more prominent display. Furthermore, it would yield an enhanced understanding of the nation's contextualised approach and methods to fulfil the objectives and vision of pre-primary education. An appropriate curriculum is a fundamental element of any educational system. The present study endeavoured to examine the pre-primary education curriculum currently being implemented in pre-primary classrooms in Bangladesh. To thoroughly assess the aims and objectives of the school readiness program in Bangladesh, a critical analysis methodology was employed to undertake the curriculum study. Given that India and Nepal are neighbouring nations with comparable early childhood education objectives, the School Readiness Curriculum has also been compared to their pre-school curricula.

3. Methodological Approach

This article is grounded in a comprehensive desk review of secondary data complemented by qualitative research methodologies. The data were sourced from government curricula and policy documents published in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. Thematic analysis was employed to determine the essential characteristics, scope, and quality of curricula and service provisions within the pre-primary sector in Bangladesh. Furthermore, the analysis facilitated a comparative evaluation of government early childhood education (ECE) curricula across these three neighbouring countries.

4. Analysis the Pre-Primary Curriculum 2011, Bangladesh

Prior to the School Readiness Curriculum, early childhood education was delivered through an informal "Baby Class" to prepare children for primary education. Educators conducted sessions based on their interpretations of the content, often without compensation. The 2010 National Education Policy provided support for the establishment of a pre-primary curriculum. In 2011, the National Curriculum and Text Board, with UNICEF's assistance, formulated an official "Pre-primary Curriculum". This curriculum facilitates comprehensive child development and advocates for qualified educators in pre-primary classrooms. It is based on the 2011 pre-primary curriculum and the Pre-Primary Teacher's Instructional Guidebook. As of 2013, all state-operated primary schools had been mandated to implement the 2011 pre-primary curriculum. The curriculum comprises 17 sections covering operational matters, education and care, objectives, principles, theoretical implications, framework, key elements, pedagogical approaches,

assessment, transition strategies, and holistic education guidelines. Bangladesh has strengthened its commitment to sustainable development education. The government introduced a new pilot scheme starting in 2023 to extend pre-primary education to a two-year program. This examination facilitates an understanding of Bangladesh's approach to structuring the pre-primary curriculum for the successful transformation of the pre-primary education system.

Aspects and context of the Pre-Primary Curriculum

Early Childhood Education plays a crucial role in shaping children's overall development and establishing a foundation for lifelong learning. This constitutes the initial phase in constructing a robust basis for formal education. The 2010 National Education Policy of Bangladesh proposes a one-year pre-school program for children aged 5+ as a transitional stage to formal primary education. This initiative aims to establish a groundwork for lifelong learning and holistic personal development. Within the educational policy framework, pre-primary education is classified as preparatory learning with an emphasis on creating an environment that facilitates children's cognitive and physical readiness. The pre-primary curriculum, in accordance with educational guidelines, should cultivate children's academic curiosity and inculcate the values of acceptance and self-discipline, thereby establishing the foundation for their subsequent formal education. To create an engaging learning environment, it is advisable to integrate pedagogical strategies with visual aids, chromatic diversity, varied rudimentary and stimulating materials, artistic endeavours, poetry, narratives, and music while acknowledging children's inquisitiveness and enthusiasm. Moreover, it is proposed that education be imparted through a nurturing approach that emphasises affection, attentiveness, empathy, and warmth.

The National Education Policy 2010 emphasised the importance of pre-primary education and early childhood development. However, when pre-primary education is implemented through diverse educational programs that consider factors such as institutional priorities, geographical location, significance, and areas of focus, there is a notable lack of uniformity and consistency in both educational resources and pedagogical approaches. Consequently, following the provisional introduction of pre-primary education in all state-run primary schools, it became imperative to develop a standardised, high-quality pre-primary education curriculum that could be widely implemented. Subsequently, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh was designated to undertake this responsibility. The primary objective of the school readiness curriculum is to "establish the foundations for lifelong learning and initiate children's educational journey in an engaging and child-centric environment by supporting the pre-primary children's physical, mental, emotional, social, aesthetic, intellectual, and linguistic development." This aligns with the concept that fostering a positive and child-oriented atmosphere is the principal strategy for facilitating the learning process for 5-year-old children. The curriculum advocates for universal access to education in order to realise the vision of "Education for All." The approach emphasises education from the perspective of the student as an active learner and promotes a pedagogical style that respects learners while welcoming, acknowledging, and nurturing them. The curriculum framework is delineated as a diversified contemporary text that defines the essential knowledge that must be imparted to all pre-primary students.

Components of the curriculum

The pre-primary education (PPE) curriculum framework outlines its objectives, aiming to create a child-friendly, play-based learning environment that fosters a positive attitude towards learning and cultural understanding. It values both academic and non-academic learning, using "comprehensive learning" to fully develop each child, beyond just cognitive and socio-emotional aspects. This holistic approach is seen

in various curricula, such as the Finnish National Core Curriculum, which details objectives and core content for all subjects and describes the mission, values, and structure of education, as well as the learning environment, school culture, and methods (Vitikka et al., 2012). These methods bridge disciplines and real-world applications, and promote a well-rounded learning experience.

Bangladesh's pre-primary curriculum envisions "Holistic Development" but faces implementation challenges. Factors such as parental aspirations, socioeconomic conditions, and access to early childhood education programs influence children's enrolment and development (Alam & Ogawa, 2023; Islam & Khan, 2022). Achieving holistic development may require improving teacher preparedness, addressing developmental domains, and ensuring equitable access to quality education. The curriculum recognises many Bangladeshi children, especially in rural areas, as first-generation learners, emphasising the importance of understanding children in the context. Equality, equity, and inclusiveness are the ideals of the educational framework. The curriculum outlines the core principles for implementation, focusing on holistic learner development and a child-centred approach. It views children as engaged learners capable of participating in school readiness programs and advocates school-family collaboration. This curriculum promotes inclusion and recommends adapting the content to the local culture and heritage. Learning should be constructed in settings that promote engagement in various learning processes.

Developing Curriculum Approaches

Physical and mobility, Socio-emotional, Language and communication, elementary mathematics, creativity and aesthetics, Environment, Science and technology, and health and security are the eight knowledge domains (learning fields) that comprise pre-primary education. The curriculum includes a full description of these eight learning areas, together with qualifications that are appropriate for acquisition, learning objectives, planned activities, teaching methods, instructional materials, and development guidelines.

Table 1.1: Pre-Primary Education Key Learning Areas- Pre-primary Curriculum, Bangladesh 2011

Pre-Primary Education Learning Areas
Physical and mobility
Socio-emotional
Language and communication
Elementary mathematics
Creativity and aesthetics
Environment
Science and technology
Health and security

Within the pre-primary curriculum matrix, numerous learning outcomes were delineated for each of the eight learning areas, with multiple learning outcomes allocated to each achievement. This structure suggests that learning outcomes can function as a framework for the development of instructional materials.

The pre-primary education curriculum is structured around specific developmental competencies, including; to cultivate ethical values such as the spirit of the Liberation War, patriotism, equality, compassion, respect, self-reliance, brotherhood, honesty, manners, mutual understanding and

collaboration, responsibility, religious principles, sympathy, and discipline. The curriculum integrates values and ethics throughout the educational process for young children rather than treating them as separate concepts. This approach facilitates the application of research and incorporation of theories related to curriculum design, children's learning patterns, and developmental processes. It examines the effects of theories and research on education, teaching, and learning methodologies. Due to racial and cultural diversity, the effects of theories vary depending on context. Several theories of curriculum development have been proposed. The curriculum development has been influenced by numerous theories, including Arnold Gesell's maturation theory, Skinner, Watson, and Bandura's behaviorist theory, Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, R.C. Anderson's schema theory, Freud and Erikson's psychoanalytic theory, and Barbara Rogoff's community of practice theory. These theories contribute to the conceptual clarification of early childhood education and facilitate the effective creation of curricula for pre-primary school children. Examining theories and current data describes children's growth and learning processes. The curriculum provides insights into children's learning and development, emphasising the uniqueness of the students and their environment. To ensure its implementation, it underscores the necessity of conducting individual studies on each child. It posits that the fundamental aim of the pre-primary curriculum is to provide opportunities for children's learning activities to be managed according to their developmental stage, and based on their learning experiences and requirements. The curriculum emphasises understanding children's learning processes and advocates active learning methodologies. Play-based learning is recommended as the primary instructional approach for pre-primary students. The curriculum outlines fundamental educational methods, including experiential and play-based learning, learning motivated by curiosity and play, utilisation of sensory activities, and incorporation of crucial learning modes, such as observation, enquiry, reasoning, and imagination.

These competencies were interwoven throughout the pre-primary curriculum to enhance knowledge, develop skills, and reinforce principles and ethical conduct. Each section explains the importance of competency development through a comprehensive analysis of the requisite outcomes of general and specific competencies.

Teaching and learning methodology

The curriculum describes the teaching-learning philosophy, proposing a novel approach to instruction, and abandoning traditional methods in Bangladesh's education system. Pre-primary education generally does not use traditional teaching-learning methodologies. Traditional methods often involve fixed learning structures, theoretical instructions, and a lack of engagement, hindering motivation, creativity, and information retention in young children (Lamrani & Abdelwahed, 2019). It posits that teachers should function as facilitators rather than instructors, assisting children in enhancing their learning processes instead of merely imparting content. Research indicates that teacher leaders can integrate experiences from various life domains to construct a facilitator’s identity, drawing on academic, professional, and social experiences to develop skills for effective facilitation (Allen, 2015). This approach allows teachers to move beyond their traditional roles and become catalysts for group processes, fostering collaborative learning environments.

This curriculum advocates diverse pedagogical approaches for heterogeneous learner groups, and delineates comprehensive instructional materials and learning strategies. It elucidates the "Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)," encompassing eight domains and learning areas contextualised for Bangladesh. The ELDS, applicable to children aged 0 to 8 years, is a fundamental document for assessing

child development and learning progress. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh publishes an "instruction guidebook for pre-primary teachers" explicating most learning competencies and pedagogical practices.

The teaching-learning process is fundamental to curriculum development. The curriculum in Bangladesh addresses key factors impacting pre-primary education: 1) learning environment, 2) teachers as facilitators, 3) children as active learners, 4) family engagement, and 5) societal involvement. The curriculum emphasises providing adequate pre-primary education orientation to all involved individuals and underscoring comprehensive training programs for pre-primary school teachers and education officers. One component addressed teachers' professional development, making teacher training crucial for successful curriculum implementation. Continuous professional development and learning communities are key factors for success (Yulianti, 2023). However, a single training session is insufficient for enhancing teachers' professional development. This study addressed the need for long-term development plans. The pre-primary education (PPE) curriculum emphasises regular refresher training for teachers to facilitate their growth and encourage reciprocal dialogue and idea exchange. It includes a supplementary training program for teachers and administrators implementing the "Mother Tongue Enhancement Multilingual Education Program". Despite the significance of these factors, the methodology for conducting the teacher development process and responsible institutions remains unclear. The document exhibits limitations regarding pedagogical practices and teachers' educational background, stipulating a diploma in "education" but lacking specific recommendations for teaching methodologies and roles for stakeholders in curriculum implementation.

Assessment and Evaluation

The pre-primary education (PPE) curriculum details assessment and evaluation, dividing it into "Assessment for Learning and Assessment of Learning," emphasising the former for preschoolers. It stresses structured and consistent pre-primary-level assessments, discouraging formal examinations from being ineffective. Assessments should be child-friendly and occur in proper learning settings. Studies show that child-centred approaches and teacher autonomy are preferred in PPE curriculum planning (Stralczynská et al., 2023). Observations and data gathering should be used to assess a child's aptitude and learning abilities. Data were gathered from parents, teachers, peers, siblings, and close relatives. The curriculum suggests that information can be gathered by talking to children, playing with them, or expressing thoughts.

This document discusses assessment and evaluation from a strategic perspective. It argues that both formative and summative assessments are flexible. Pre-primary education assessments are often formal and ongoing, with formal assessments allowing teachers to apply their opinions when making decisions about students' progress. Strategies for continuous assessment include observation, oral assessment, written verification, portfolio creation, and assignment assignment. The pre-primary teacher was primarily responsible for the assessments. However, the curriculum emphasises that teachers cannot solely evaluate pre-primary learning outcomes. The involvement of the family and parents is crucial. The curriculum states that effectively analysing learning outcomes requires direct assistance from children's parents or guardians. Therefore, in pre-primary education assessments, the family plays a distinctive role alongside the teacher.

This document also addressed the timely assessment of the curriculum and the development of a more comprehensive, practical curriculum. Current curriculum development is an ongoing process. The world system, society, individuals, and state are all dynamic entities. The concepts of early childhood education

and child development have evolved concurrently. The curriculum must be updated to keep pace with the changing world. It is crucial to assess the current curricula to evaluate how well they foster a child's growth at a particular time. The review process often begins on the day of implementation. Curriculum evaluation is essential, as it identifies implementation flaws and measures program efficacy.

5. Strengths and Weakness of the 2011 Pre-primary Curriculum

The 2011-pre-primary education curriculum covers a lot of essential topics, which is commendable. However, there are also a few necessary items to remember that were not added correctly and clearly, giving the curriculum a poor tone.

Strengths of the 2011 pre-primary curriculum

The 2011 pre-primary curriculum was created to lay the groundwork for children's long-term learning in a fun, kid-friendly setting. This disproved Bangladesh's traditional approach to teaching and learning, introducing a fresh perspective on child education. The curriculum supports children's overall growth and aims to help them adapt to the school environment for a smooth transition to Class 1. This curriculum shapes the program for children aged five years. In Bangladesh, pre-primary education is required a year prior to formal education. It was designed for each young child, supporting "Education for all" and addressing diverse learning needs. The curriculum emphasises learning about the environment through eight learning areas, using play-based methods. This suggests that facilitators adapt classroom and teaching strategies to children's abilities. The 2011 pre-primary curriculum targeted play-based learning, breaking from established teaching paradigms. It promotes child-centric education, with teachers as facilitators setting up classrooms to meet students' needs. This groundbreaking initiative in Bangladesh has fostered the overall development of young children. The curriculum primarily focuses on rural children, who often lack access to quality pre-primary education, in order to bridge the educational gap with urban children. This pre-primary curriculum identifies the guiding principles for its development, including child-centredness, children as active learners, and family involvement, contributing to children's holistic development. The 2011 pre-primary curriculum extensively emphasised educators' roles as facilitators and active participants in the learning process alongside children. It advocates collaborative engagement in educational activities, fostering positive and enduring relationships between educators and students, thereby enhancing the curriculum's efficacy. Early childhood educators play a pivotal role in integrating diverse learning experiences across curricula (Bingham et al., 2018; Gehris et al., 2014). The successful preparation of children for school requires collaboration between educational institutions, educators, and parents. Schools, teachers, and parents work together to facilitate children's learning and achievements. The pre-primary curriculum values parental participation in school readiness, emphasising their active involvement in children's education. Research has consistently shown that parental engagement is crucial to children's school readiness and long-term academic success. For instance, a study on Chicago Child-Parent Centers found that parental involvement in school activities was independently associated with positive child outcomes, including school readiness at kindergarten entry and reading achievement in later grades (Graue et al., 2004). All government primary schools' pre-primary programs in Bangladesh conduct monthly *"Maa Shomabesh"* (Mothers' Meetings) to encourage parental and guardian involvement. The pre-primary curriculum features an appropriate matrix for teaching, including details on eight development and learning areas, implementation of teaching-learning strategies, classroom materials and their development, learning progression, and suitable qualifications for acquisition. The document also covers in detail the key factors of teaching learning.

Some areas where the 2011 pre-primary curriculum falls short are as follows

In Bangladesh, government pre-primary education offers one-year education to children, primarily those under five years of age. The curriculum for 3- and 4-year-old children is not included in the guidelines. Children below five are occasionally allowed to participate in school readiness programs, but no set curriculum exists for them. Consequently, children below five years of age cannot access learning opportunities that are suitable for their age.

One section of the curriculum document addresses ethics and values that are somewhat related to some political and historical aspects that seem out of context and unsuitable for learning by preschoolers. The curriculum guidelines recommend identifying children with special needs and providing them with the appropriate care, but they make no mention of teaching-learning strategies or how to support these students' learning so that children with special needs can also complete school readiness and further study. This crucial component is completely absent from the curriculum recommendations. However, inclusivity is discussed in the curriculum. The curriculum could have been more forthright on this dimension. If the curriculum is modified and a distinct portion is created for the education of children with special needs, this will benefit them and encourage the special needs children to attend school. The curriculum was created with UNICEF's assistance. The curriculum guidelines mention a lot of important details. However, some sections of the curriculum mindlessly adhere to western patterns, which may not be appropriate at the field level, particularly for children from Bangladesh and remote areas. The curriculum has to be modified further in accordance with the national context for greater efficiency and benefit. The issue needs to be investigated by curriculum developers and stakeholders in order to create a more realistic curriculum that can be successfully implemented at the grassroots level. There are no explicit requirements for ECE of pre-primary teachers in curriculum guidelines. Only graduates from any discipline were required for their educational background. No pre-service training requirements for educators linked to ECE have been mentioned. The document suggests only a 15-day basic training program for pre-primary school teachers. Although it proposes a refresher training program, it does not specify when it will occur, which organisation will manage it, or what kind of program it will be. There was no mention of caregivers or other personnel managing the classrooms. The curriculum guide recommends one pre-primary teacher per classroom, which is typically insufficient. The importance of family and community involvement in the school readiness program is highlighted in the curriculum, but it is not made clear how to encourage this involvement or what arrangements should be made to do so. The quality of pre-primary education is still affected by how well the community, family, and school are bonded. Only a monthly meeting with mothers or guardians is advised by the curriculum. Otherwise, the curriculum guideline makes no mention of any effort to boost the family and community's active participation.

6. Comparison of the Pre-Primary Education Curricula of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in India has released "The Preschool Curriculum, 2019", while Nepal's Department of Education published "Early Childhood Development Curriculum (Early Childhood Development Handbook), 2005", approved by the Ministry of Education and Sports. Bangladesh's National Curriculum and Textbook Board introduced its "Pre-primary Curriculum, 2011". These frameworks are the result of a lengthy process that involves inputs from various stakeholders and multiple studies. In India, preschool education is a three-year program for children aged 3-6, aiming to prepare them for primary education and establish foundations for overall growth and lifelong learning. Nepal's pre-primary curriculum provides learning experiences through

activities that are adapted to children's social environments. It recommends pre-primary education for three- and four-year-olds, with a one-year pre-primary class mandated by law and a provision for a two-year early childhood development centre. The program aimed to enhance children's communication, listening, and environmental learning skills.

Bangladesh offers mandatory one-year pre-primary education for five-year-olds before formal schooling at age six. The curriculum aims to create a foundation for lifelong learning by nurturing children's overall development according to their age and level. It emphasises joyful learning and a child-friendly atmosphere to facilitate entry into primary education. The curricula of all three countries emphasise lifelong learning through play-based teaching, child-centred learning, and a child-friendly environment. They prioritise a smooth transition from preschool to primary school, and address comprehensive learning for holistic development.

Three of the country's curricula describe various components of the pre-primary curriculum frameworks. Key learning areas, anticipated learning outcomes, objectives, particular knowledge, values, abilities, and competencies are outlined. The contemporary preschool curriculum in India incorporates specialized content and pedagogy appropriate for the children's age and the developmental needs of the various stages. Its theoretical and conceptual underpinnings take the form of guiding principles. Bangladesh's pre-primary curriculum also offers a variety of fundamental core principles that support the theme of "Holistic Development" in the curriculum. Nepal's preschool curriculum has incorporated a few characteristics to fulfill the goals of the curriculum framework. The three curriculum frameworks cover remarkably similar topics, including child-centered learning, active learning through play, family and community involvement, using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, inclusiveness, utilizing indigenous materials, relationships with adults, and so on.

All three curriculum framework approaches emphasise helping children develop their skills. The play-based approach is legitimised throughout all sections within learning areas, recognised as the foundation of the three curriculum frameworks and countries' curriculum transformation. Pre-primary education in Bangladesh comprises eight main learning areas. The "Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS)" recommended by the United Nations have been considered in the development of the pre-primary curriculum. Eight learning areas/developmental domains are part of the ELDS for children aged 0–8 years. The Indian preschool curriculum promotes essential concepts, pedagogical approaches, and early learning outcomes in three preschool divisions (Preschools I, II, and III). English is taught as a second language in India, while Bangladesh's curriculum only requires instruction in its home language. English is not mandatory for preschoolers in Bangladesh. All three country curricula prioritise the development of children's language skills, with the mother tongue as the primary instruction medium. The Indian curriculum provides detailed pedagogical techniques to include children with disabilities and ensure their integration.

The teaching-learning approach in Nepal promotes "learning to learn.' The environment and plays are considered in teaching-learning processes. The Nepali preschool curriculum designs educational and developmental goals based on age and geographical region. Six learning areas are covered daily for 4 to 4.30 hours for children aged 4 and 3. Flexibility was demonstrated through the Nepali curriculum. Classes may be held in the morning or afternoon depending on the circumstances and community needs. The early childhood development centre committee must decide on community and parent support to improve preschoolers' attendance and reduce pre-primary education skipping.

The Indian preschool curriculum emphasises assessing young children and providing vital information about their learning and developmental phases. It enables early detection of developmental delays, special educational needs, and unique skills. Assessment should be based on qualitative evaluations of children's play, activities, health, nutrition, and physical and social well-being. Each child was evaluated individually through both informal and formal observation. There is no written or oral evaluation system, test, or pass/fail grade focusing on the child's strengths. The evaluation tools include anecdotal recordings, portfolios, observations, checklists, rating scales, photographs, and video clips. The curriculum provides a comprehensive explanation of the methodology, and covers periodic evaluation and midterm monitoring to assess program performance and individual child progress.

The Nepali early childhood development curriculum emphasises evaluation and assessment. There is no pass/fail or ranking system similar to the Indian curriculum. The facilitator supports the children's learning as needed. Observations were primarily used for assessment, with parental assistance acknowledged. Evaluations were based on observations of activities and age-appropriate learning outcomes. The Bangladeshi pre-primary curriculum also emphasises continuous assessment, such as the Indian and Nepali curricula. No examination system was allowed at preschool level. Assessment is described as "Assessment for Learning," crucial for young children. Both "Formative" and "Summative Assessment Procedures are recommended. The curriculum suggests formal and ongoing assessments that use observations, activities, portfolios, and assignments. Parents in both countries can participate in evaluating children with teachers. Nepal and India's curricula detail pre-primary teachers' roles, while Bangladesh does not. Studies have demonstrated that preschool teachers' knowledge and attitudes are critical for implementing inclusive education and supporting children's literacy development. Research also indicates that preschool teachers frequently lack the requisite disciplinary knowledge to effectively promote early literacy (Cunningham et al., 2009). This finding suggests the need to enhance professional development programs for pre-primary educators. For teacher guidance, Bangladesh's national curriculum and textbook boards have developed separate manuals.

7. Conclusion

The School Readiness and pre-primary curricula were examined using comparison and content analysis methods. This critical review aims to encourage policymakers, practitioners, and others in the ECE sector to learn about and reflect on their own ECE programmes, drawing from the identified good practices of other countries. Each nation has created its curriculum framework based on specific requirements, settings, and purposes, while incorporating patterns and concerns shaping the global educational agenda (Opertti et al., 2018). Pre-primary and early childhood education is becoming increasingly necessary. Providing children with high-quality foundational early childhood education is a top priority in every country. Universal access to high-quality ECE is paramount. The National Education Policy 2020 in India aims to ensure universal access to high-quality early childhood care and education for children aged to 3-6 years by 2030 (Choudhury et al., 2023). Empirical evidence suggests that high-quality early childhood education (ECE) is a priority for numerous nations as it has the potential to significantly influence children's physical, cognitive, and academic outcomes (Donoghue et al., 2017). An in-depth analysis of a country's pre-primary curriculum helps understand the existing framework, identify areas needing improvement, and inform stakeholders to ensure high education standards. Policymakers must adopt a comprehensive approach to address access, quality, and equity in early childhood education. By implementing these strategies and monitoring their effectiveness, policymakers can work towards reducing social inequality

in education and ensuring that all children are offered the same life chances regardless of background (Morris et al., 2016). Analysing the curricula of three neighbouring nations also aids in understanding present pre-primary education and provides perspective on the school readiness program, the main aim of this research.

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