

Review of Curricula in the Context of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in Nepal, 2014

Background

Status of adolescents in Nepal

In Nepal, adolescents aged 10-19 constitute 24.19% of the total population.

19% (Boys: 16%, Girls: 22%) are dropping out from school education. Among the girls, 35% dropped out from school due to child marriage (NAYS 2012).

48.5% of women aged 20-49 were married before age 18. (MICS 2014).

Adolescent birth rate is 71 per 1000 (MICS 2014).

41.6% of married adolescents have an unmet need for contraception (NDHS 2011).

Only 36.4% of young women aged 15-24 can correctly identify ways of preventing the sexual transmissions of HIV and reject major misconception about HIV transmissions (MICS 2014)

1 in 6 married girls experience physical violence and nearly 1 in 3 are forced to have sex by their husbands. (UNICEF ADAP baseline study 2014)

Nearly 1 in 10 adolescents experience physical violence during pregnancy. (NDHS 2011)

Six key concepts

- Relationships
- Values, attitudes and skills
- Culture, society and human rights
- Human development
- Sexual behavior
- Sexual and reproductive health

What is CSE ?

CSE provides a full range of information, skills and values to enable young people to informed choices about their health and sexuality. It is rights-based, age appropriate and gender-sensitive education that covers six key concepts as per International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE) –II (2009):

Why is it important?

Research shows that good quality sexuality education, particularly education that integrates gender and human rights in a meaningful way, can lead to a decrease in unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections and does not encourage young people to initiate sexual activity earlier.

A multi-country review of HIV AIDS National Strategic Plans (NSPs) of 19 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, including Nepal, shows that there is inadequate inclusion (often neglect) of adolescents in the NSPs, even in those countries with concentrated epidemics (e.g. Nepal); a concern, given that it is estimated that more than 95% of all new infections are occurring among young people. To address this, countries like Nepal need to focus on prevention, particularly by ensuring an appropriate policy and education system (UNESCO 2014).sexuality education. Clear sectoral and school policies and curricula help teachers in this regard. Teachers who teach sexuality education should have professional support and

Pre-service Training:

Findings:

Teachers with relevant academic qualification majors (Health and Physical Education; Population Studies by Tribhuvan University) are decreasing trend and are often seen teaching different subjects even if they are retained in the teaching profession. This is because of lack of opportunities and absence of compulsory quotas for CSE teachers in public schools.

Recommendations:

Prioritize hiring qualified teachers in Health and Physical education (who have received pre-service training/degree) to teach the subject.

Also a compulsory quota should be provided for CSE teachers.

Out-of-school Programme:

To provide out-of-school young people with the knowledge and skills for better sexual and reproductive health, it is important that the Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) includes CSE.

Currently, two types of Non-Formal Education exist; 'Flexible Schooling Program' (FSP) for out of school children of 8 to 14 years and 'Adult Literacy' for out of school adults to address this crucial issue.

Findings:

There is a 'flexible schooling program' for out-of-school children, but limited to HIV and AIDS education only in level three. This programme currently excludes many other important CSE components.

Recommendations:

The flexible school program for out-of-school children needs to be aligned with the formal school curriculum cycles and revisions on CSE as per the ITGSE standards.

The NFEC should ensure that out-of-school young people also benefit from the Social and Financial Skills package (SFSP-2014), which has been recently developed and pilot tested.

The SFSP-2014 is designed to reach out to out-of-school children through multi-ministerial sectors such as Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Health and Population with the technical and financial support from UNICEF and UNFPA Nepal.

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opportunities for pre-service and in-service teacher training on comprehensive sexuality education.

Besides contributing to better sexual and reproductive health, CSE equips young people with communication, critical, analytical and negotiation skills that contribute to the strengthening of overall academic progress and empowers adolescent and young people to advocate for their own rights (UNESCO 2014). Therefore, the importance of quality CSE should be widely accepted and promoted.

Nepal's commitment to CSE

Nepal is a signatory of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and has been an active supporter of it. Nepal has endorsed the ICPD beyond 2014 review document, where the need for CSE is highlighted.

Nepal is one of the countries in South Asia, where CSE has been introduced formally in the school curriculum training on a meaningful way (Amatya, C. FPAN, 2007).

In 2014, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) together with Ministry of Education (MoE) commissioned a study to review the status of CSE in Nepal against the six standards set out in the ITGSE UNESCO 2009 .

Methodology of the review

The main objective is to review students' curriculum and teaching materials in both the formal and non-formal settings, identify gaps and provide recommendations. An in-depth desk review of the existing curriculum, text books and teachers' guides for Grade 1-10 formal and non-formal education curriculum, and teaching materials for pre-service training (B-Ed)

Consultative meetings and validation/ finalization workshop were held with CSE and education experts.

Additional review of recent articles on CSE and government documents on CSE and ASRH and publications/reports of development partners.

Findings:

At the time of the review, CSE topics were found in different school subjects for different grades. These are given below:

Grades 1-5: CSE topics were integrated into the subjects of 'My Social studies and Creative Arts', and 'My Science Health and Physical Education'

Grade 6: CSE topics were integrated into the subjects of 'Social Studies and Population Education' and 'Health and Physical Education'

Grades 7-8: CSE topics were integrated into the subjects of 'Social Studies' and 'Health and Physical Education'

Grades 9-10: CSE topics were integrated into the subjects of 'Social Studies' and 'Health, Population and Environment (HPE) Education'

Nepal has CSE related topics from grades 1-10 curricula that are to a large extent in line with the ITGSE.

Key Findings & Recommendations

CSE in curriculum:

The study shows that the inclusion of CSE topics in lower secondary and secondary levels in the formal school system in Nepal is encouraging even though it is not as comprehensive as given in the ITGSE. There are notable gaps at the primary school level. (CSE topics are rarely included in out-of-school programmes. The most concerning gap in CSE implementation in Nepal is the scarcity of trained teachers delivering CSE).



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There are inconsistencies in the CSE topics and their links to each grade/age appropriateness, in the six major areas assessed: i. relationships; ii. values, attitudes and skills; iii. culture, society and human rights; iv. human development; v. sexual behavior and; vi. sexual and reproductive health.

There is good coverage of the key concepts relating to 'human development', 'sexual behavior' and 'sexual and reproductive health' in lower secondary and secondary levels (grades 6-10).

Inclusion of concepts such as 'relationships', 'values, attitudes and skills' and 'culture, society and human rights' was limited.

Almost no CSE concepts and topics were covered in the primary school level (grades 1-5).

Recommendations:

There is a need for curriculum revision to ensure consistency of the CSE topics linking each grade with age appropriate and culturally accepted information at the grades specified by the ITGSE.

The revision could be ensured during the regular revision program of the MoE (5 years cycle), Curriculum Development Center (CDC) against the ITGSE.

Textbooks and teachers' guides should also be revised to reflect these changes after revision of curriculum.

CSE coverage in pre-service and in service training

Teacher training is a critical component of CSE implementation. Teachers who run CSE classes must have adequate training to deliver all components of CSE education using the right pedagogic techniques. Findings from the desk review show that the most concerning gap in CSE implementation is the lack of trained teachers delivering CSE.

In-service training:

Findings:

While CSE topics are included in the school curricula, it is not included in teachers' training (In-Service training), and is currently being taught by teachers with no formal training in CSE.

The current in-service training carried out by the National Center for Education Development (NCED) is basically demand-driven with only few critical supply side trainings of 10 days provided in 3 sets over 5 years.

Recommendations:

NCED requires introducing provision of in-service training on CSE as a supply subject and should not be limited by a demand driven approach.

Teachers who are teaching CSE without having any pre-service training should be included in NCED regular in-service CSE training programs.