

Situation Analysis of Child Friendly Learning Environment in Community School

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Abstract:

The child-friendly learning environment is the environment where children can achieve a suitable learning environment in school according to their own pace, capacity, and developmental stage. In these schools, students enjoy physically, mentally, and emotionally within a protective environment. These schools correspond with students' level, interest, ability, and capacity. Teachers are fully responsible and accountable to evaluate student learning achievement. Students are taught without any discrimination based on their caste, gender, religion, language, economic status, and physical as well as mental diversity.

The researcher has used the purposive sampling method. This school is supposed to have a child-friendly environment as claimed by the school itself and by the Government of Nepal as the child-friendly model school to fulfill this study's objectives. Chairperson of the School Management Committee, Headmaster, teachers, students, and parents are selected using convenience sampling method and use the focus Group Discussion.

In this study, the researcher has finally concluded that the school does not have a fully child-friendly environment; it's only partially child friendly. The school is running in traditional ways in the aspect of teaching-learning activities. The school is focusing on rote learning even in the Post-modern period. The school follows the curriculum and materials provided by the central government and concerned authorities. Even such materials are not available on time. Teaching strategies and materials, which could be available easily at the local level, are neglected and are not used properly. Thus, the students' learning ability, learning pace, and experience are not addressed properly.

Key Word:*Physical Condition, Health, Safety and Protective Conditions, Teaching-Learning Process, Effectiveness of Teaching-learning*

I. Introduction

"A child-friendly school is not just a child-welcoming school but also a child-seeking school. It works to attract and retain children from different backgrounds, respects diversity and ensures non-discrimination. Some innovations that have helped make schools more inclusive" UNICEF (2009)

Child Right Convention (CRC) 1989 has developed some key principles of the child-friendly school. Child-centeredness, Democratic participation, and Inclusiveness are among them. Child-centeredness refers to child-centered pedagogy in which children are active participants, provided by reflective practitioners, healthy, safe, and protective learning environment. Democratic participation focuses on children, families, and communities active involvement in school's decision-making process. It also seeks strong links among home, school, and community. Besides, this principle also keeps its eye on fair and supportive policies and services, non-discrimination, and participation. Inclusiveness speaks that school must be inclusive and welcoming for all the students of any identity, and it should be gender sensitive and girl friendly. School's policies and services must encourage the students the attendance and retention (UNICEF-2009).

According to this framework, a school that provides a learning environment suitable to the children is a child-friendly school. In such a school, the environment for children is conducive to learning, and their inherent-potentials are developed. In this way, in these schools, children receive a safe and healthy environment physically, mentally and emotionally. Children's aptitude, capacity, and level are respected, and provision is made for the necessary environment and curriculum for their learning accordingly. The teacher bears full responsibility for assessing the learner's achievement in terms of learning. Children are encouraged to enroll in school without any discrimination on the ground of their caste, ethnicity, sex and financial status, physical and mental frailty and be treated without any discrimination both within and outside the school.

Ministry of Education, Department of Education (DOE) has given orientation related to child friendly school environment for all 77 district's district education officers, school supervisors and resource persons. The Department aims to apply for this program all over the country, respectively (DoE). Among the above not mentioned districts, Kathmandu is the center of my study. The main focus of this study is to find out the facts about whether a child-friendly environment exists at a community school or not, whether stakeholders are conscious about such an environment or not, whether teachers have the right perception of the issue of child-friendly environment or not.

Nepal has expressed its firm commitment to key international instruments such as the Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC), Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that honour children's right to basic and quality education. These commitments are being translated into action, particularly through the national School Sector Reform Plan (SSRP 2008), which envisions creating a child-friendly environment in the schools. The Ministry of Education, with the support of UNICEF and NGO partners is operating the CFS in the formal education sector.

II. Statement of the Problem

Nepal has achieved actual progress in primary education sector by increasing its gross admission rate from 87.9 percent in 2007 and 93.7 in 2010 to 98 in 2012. But it's still impossible to achieve millennium development goal-2 of global primary education by 2015. Most of the Nepalese children are out of qualitative primary education because of different reasons, such as lack of physical facility, linguistic varieties, poverty, deprivation opportunities, and religious rigidity. It propels the people from poverty to worst poverty, lack of consciousness, and unemployment. As a result, it causes an increase in high school drop-out and repetition rates.

It is a burning necessity to make schools child-friendly through qualitative improvement to ensure primary education to all children. The main purpose of a child-friendly school is to attract and welcome the children to school without any discrimination. Child-centered curriculum and joyful teaching-learning methods are the main instruments of such schools. Schools must be made safe and healthy along with the continuous co-work with the child's family and local community.

The established institutions for developing the education system are only conducting training, seminar, workshops, and conferences but not assigning and monitoring after completion of those activities. The implementation of these activities at a practical level remains in discourse. Quite a number of education workers, teachers, and parents are not fully familiarized internalized with child-friendly education.

Research Questions

Considering the above described background, it is to explore answers to the following research question.

1. What is the physical condition of the school?
2. What are the health, safety and protective conditions at the school?
3. How is the teaching-learning process at the school?
4. How is the effectiveness of teaching-learning at the school?
5. What are the problems that obstruct creating a child-friendly environment at the school?

III. Literature Review

Critical Analysis of the Reviewed Literature

The documents give different definitions of Inclusive Education. They attempt to clarify the meaning and the definitions of Special Education and Special Needs Education. But even the meeting of policymakers and programme implementers could not clarify. They themselves were confused between the terms Special Education, Special Needs Education and Inclusive Education. Confusion between Special Education and Special Needs Education programmes still exists at the grassroots level. The study tried to clarify the terms of Special Education and Inclusive Education. As it is understood that Inclusive Education means the education, which includes all types of children, whether normal or disabled, marginalized or disadvantaged (socially, culturally, ethnically, linguistically, etc.), and boy or girl in its programme. In this sense, special needs education is a part of inclusive education.

The literature review on Inclusive Education creates some confusion about the programme. If Inclusive Education includes all types of children and thinks of providing education together, will it be possible in a Nepalese context? Schools in Nepal are not in a position to provide education for all types of children together. Special children require a special learning environment, which, at present, is difficult to create in a general school.

Implications of the Review of Literature to the Topic of the Study

The literature discussed above covers the wide areas of ECD scope. Some of them are directly related to my study, and some others just gave me a wide insight about the terminologies and the content. Going through them, It was found some research gaps. These gaps are i) that none of the literature discussed the contribution of independent child care centers to ECD; ii) that researches mainly focused on physical, mental/educational and psychological issues and development but not for what types of development the child care centers contributed; iii) that they discussed only clinical types of research but not the socio-cultural perspectives iv) and that researchers tried to develop theory out of only empirical findings. In this sense, almost all of the researchers have not used judgment perspectives to determine the contribution of ECD on childhood

development. However, it gave me i) insights on child development, its process, and caring responses to them ii) it also helped to develop the conceptual framework of the entire study.

Therefore, It was tried to i) determine the contribution of independent child care centers of Kathmandu Valley area and new directions through this study; ii) focus not only on the physical, mental and psychological development trends analysis theoretically but also have tried to assess the particular contribution of the child care centers to the children and clear the ways forward for further improvement; iii) initiate the discourse of ECD linking with the socio-cultural standpoints; iv) make efforts to move to inductive approach; and v) arrange the discourse on service, its delivery and impact.

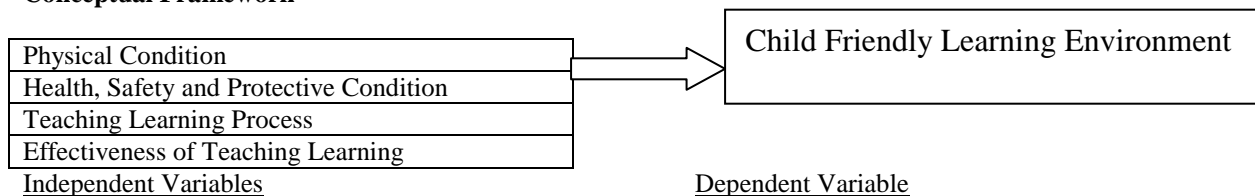
IV. Theoretical Discussions

Theories, literature, field data and personal experiences	Reflections
System theory	Invest input then, process and get the output -Act & regulation Provision of physical condition, health, safety, and protective conditions and teaching-learning process for quality student learning.
Empowerment theory	Established mechanism and strengthen -Establishment for child-friendly school using parents, teachers and students.
Learning and Motivation theory	Use the Montessori approach, scaffolding and Zone proximal Development theory and motivation approach for the teaching-learning process.
HRD theory	Mobilized head-teacher and teachers with proper planning & training-Provision for child friendly school.
Intent theory	Planned intend in to action -for uniformity and recommendation of importance index to support SMC. PTA for quality education to school
Literature of child friendly school	Practice is based on preparation to child friendly learning environment-General provision is made as system.
Field experience	It makes quality education, competent education and avoids inadequate mechanism, no teacher's plan for physical condition, health and learning, confusion in learning perception, the system is established.
Personal experience	Provisions are made but not adequate, competent and less seriousness in implementation.

The Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of this study is as given below.

Conceptual Framework



Analytical Matrix

Theory	By Whom	What Theme
System Theory	biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy-1940's	The transdisciplinary study of the abstract organization of phenomena, independent of their substance, type, or spatial or temporal scale of existence. It investigates both the principles common to all complex entities, and the (usually mathematical) models which can be used to describe them.
Intent Theory	Russell F. Pannier	The theory of original intent is based upon the assumption that judicial discretion in the interpretation of laws subverts the democratic process. Originalists seek to guarantee completely determinate legal rules by eliminating the possibility of adjudicative discretion. In contexts in which the application of a legal rule is uncertain, the originalists recommend that judges apply the rule in accordance with the specific intentions of the rule makers.
Learning and Motivation Theory	Vigotsky	Scaffolding Support and Zone of Proximal Development

V. Methodology

Research Method-Study Objectives Matrix

Objectives	Nature and sources of data	Research Method	Techniques
1. To find out the existing situation of a child-friendly learning environment at school.	Primary Data	Questionnaire Schedule	Interview & FGD
2. To assess the CFS initiative implementation status in terms of physical condition, teaching-learning processes, health, safety & protection.	Primary data	Questionnaire Schedule and Observation / Check list	Interview & FGD

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3. To implement best practices and lessons learned from the CFS implementation and make recommendations to concerned authority with regards to the National framework of the CFS for its step-up, extension and long-term possibility.	<i>Primary Data</i>	<i>Questionnaire Schedule</i>	<i>Interview</i>
4. To find out the problems that obstruct in creating a child-friendly environment at school.	<i>Primary Data</i>	<i>Questionnaire Schedule</i>	<i>Interview & Discussion</i>

Particulars	Description																					
Research Design	Descriptive based on qualitative and explanatory approach.																					
Sources of Data	Primary & Secondary																					
Population of Study	Principal, Teacher, Student, Parents & focus Group																					
Sample	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Particulars</th> <th>No.</th> <th>Method</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>School</td> <td>Five</td> <td>purposive sampling procedure according to non-probability sampling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Principal</td> <td>Five</td> <td>purposive sampling</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Teachers</td> <td>Ten</td> <td>addressing the gender and qualification perspective of one female teacher and one male teachers</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Students</td> <td>Fifteen</td> <td>taking 5 students from each school</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parents</td> <td>Fifteen</td> <td>convenience sampling method</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FGD</td> <td>Ten</td> <td>RP/SI, Chairmen of RC, Head teacher-5, Teachers-3 purposive (non probability) sampling</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Particulars	No.	Method	School	Five	purposive sampling procedure according to non-probability sampling	Principal	Five	purposive sampling	Teachers	Ten	addressing the gender and qualification perspective of one female teacher and one male teachers	Students	Fifteen	taking 5 students from each school	Parents	Fifteen	convenience sampling method	FGD	Ten	RP/SI, Chairmen of RC, Head teacher-5, Teachers-3 purposive (non probability) sampling
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Analytical Tools	Analysis of collected data, percentage, tables and charts. Grounded theories also used as a subsidiary tool in order to interpret the data from different perspectives.																					

It was refined and analyzed the data and information from different theoretical lenses. The main data analysis techniques applied were descriptive and analytical. Furthermore, It was also used the grounded theories as a subsidiary tool to interpret the data from different perspectives.

VI. Result

A. Results from Field Survey

Table no 1:

CFS Components	Not used	Satisfactory	Good	Perfect	Total
Physical Condition	12.15	38.72	20.41	28.72	100
Teaching And Learning Process at School	1.25	40.00	43.75	15.00	100
Health, Safety& protection	1.18	25.88	47.06	25.88	100

Source: Field Survey, 2019

B. Results from Interview Report

Table no 2:

CFS Components	Physical Condition of School		Teaching Learning Process		Health, Safety& protection	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Head Teacher' Interview	63.6	36.4	80.0	20.0	100.0	-
Class/Focal Teachers Interview	71.7	28.3	62.5	37.5	92.5	7.5
Parents Interview	100.0	-	55.0	45.0	40.0	60.0
Students Interview	72.0	28.0	87.0	17.0	73.3	26.7

Source: Field Survey, 2019

C. Results from FGD

- When Children completely forget their parents when they are in school, furthermore, the teacher should be behaved as child in the time of teaching them, children should be learnt from their friends and they should be freed from fear to ask, talk with others is called Child-Friendly school

- We can say there is no sufficient reference and teaching material in the school. Theoretical knowledge of the school's educational development and educational programs are forwarded according to the annual action calendar. During the discussion period, teachers did not use additional teaching materials except chalk, duster and textbook.
- Teaching is related to learning by children; without learning teaching is incomplete. Until the teachers are made professionally competent, teaching and learning can't be effective.

Constraints:

Teacher's Behavior:

Most of the teachers have not got training about child-friendly behavior. Those teachers, who are said to be trained, are also partially trained. No any child-friendly behavior is shown towards the students by the teachers. The teachers are not fully responsible for creating the child-friendly environment in classroom and school.

Who is responsible for providing this? This is the genuine question and problem that is obstructing creating child-friendly learning environment at the school.

Parent's Awareness:

Parents said during the interview, "We know nothing about the child-friendly environment. We are poor and illiterate. We have to work most of the time to earn our livelihood. We don't know anything about the school. Our children go to school only in their leisure time. They just go and come. Teachers have not said anything about our children. "According to the above-mentioned information, there is poor awareness of the parents, which is also an obstacle to creating the child-friendly learning environment at the school.

Participation of the Stakeholders in School Activities:

There was no active participation of all the school stakeholders to create the school's child-friendly learning environment. Who is responsible for taking the initiative of this problem? The researcher has found this as a problem in creating the child-friendly environment in this school.

Poor Financial Status :

It is clear that the government is holding only the minimum operational costs. There is not any investment to create a child-friendly environment at the school. The genuine question is that who is responsible for the investment to develop a child-friendly environment at the school? Government? Community? NGO/INGO? or Donor Agencies? Who is responsible? If they all are responsible, how much portion do they carry? It's the main problem to create a child-friendly environment in the school.

Monitoring, Supervision and Evaluation :

It is seen that supervision, monitoring and evaluation are not given any priority by the government. The researcher could not see any supervisory activities in his research period. The education law and act have assigned the role of school supervision to the principal, resource person, school supervisor, village education committee, community, parent-teacher association and school management committee. But who is mainly responsible and accountable? That is also another obstacle or problem in creating child-friendly environment at the school.

VII. Conclusion

In this study, the researcher has finally concluded that the school does not have a fully child-friendly environment, it's only partially child friendly. The school is running in traditional ways in the aspect of teaching-learning activities. The school is focusing on rote learning even in the Post-modern period. The school follows the curriculum and materials provided by the central government and concerned authorities. Even such materials are not available on time. Teaching strategies and materials, which could be available easily at the local level, are neglected and are not used properly. Thus, the students' learning ability, learning pace, and experience are not addressed properly.

The upgrading level and access of the students to school is satisfactory, but the rates of student achievement are very low. Especially, the permanent teachers, who have a good relationship with a local politician, have not contributed their school time in teaching activities for progressive development. The regular evaluation has not been conducted in the school practically.

The school supervisor and resource person are only prone and loyal to administrative work rather than educational supervision. The researcher found theoretical and inclusive knowledge in teaching-learning but the school I have not found making efforts to create inclusive teaching, identify the social, economic, lingual, cultural, physical, and psychological background and situation of the students.

The school buildings are not made protective of the earthquake. Students and teachers are not following any sorts of measures to get self- protection. The adjustable rooms as the change of seasons, fully pure drinking water, child-friendly toilets with enough water supply and nutritious Tiffin are not available.

There are multilingual group students but no any mother tongues related teaching materials and reference books are used in the school. Even the teachers, who can teach in different mother tongues, are not enough and even the teachers are not trained to multilingual teaching and are uninterested to get required trainings.

The principal does not accept own accountability and responsibility for modern organizational management, student's developmental stages and psychologically skillful teaching expertise. Full potentialities of all the teachers have not been used because there is discrimination on salary and services based on permanent, temporary, and contract teachers appointed even if they have equal educational status.

Members of the SMC and the PTA are busy to conceal the weaknesses of staff and teachers. Their endeavors seem to appoint their close persons in vacant posts. They take the school as a forum for political interest rather than using infrastructure, financial, human, and social resources in improving the quality of education. They are not found to have started a rewarding system to the honest teachers and staff who are devoted, accountable and responsible to their duty.

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