ABSTRACT

The present study is focussed on the evaluation of the compulsory English curriculum for +2 level in Nepal. Introduction of 10+2 system in the kingdom reflects the nation's realisation of the importance of educational development. In its course of restructuring and renovating the educational system with a view to render the curriculum, oriented to produce skilled manpower at different levels and to be compatible with other SAARC countries, especially India, His Majesty's Government (HMG) decided to introduce 10+2+3 system in the country. Accordingly Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) was established in 1989. The curriculum for the same was first designed and implemented in 1993. After 3 years another curriculum was developed and implemented in 1996. These steps are indicative of HMG's endeavour to refine and update its curriculum. It is in this backdrop that the present research gains a direction.

The standards of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Nepal has frequently been questioned by eminent educationists and scholars. After the introduction of National Education System Plan (NESP), in 1971, the ELT situation became all the more
deplorable. The full marks for English at School Leaving Certificate (SLC) was reduced to 100 with only one paper. Before 1971, there used to be two compulsory papers of 100 full marks each totalling to 200. This resulted in less attention and exposure given to teaching of English, thereby causing a general fall in standards of ELT across the country. Davies, A. (1971), Malla, K.P. (1977) Kerr, R. (1994), Sthapit, S (1997), Awasthi, J.R (1995), and many others eminent educationists and scholars expressed their serious concern for this situation.

After the restoration of Parliamentary party system democracy in 1989, a great enthusiasm was witnessed for educational development in the country. Educational reconstruction and restructuring became the prime focus in the early nineties. 10+2 system was introduced, curriculum for the same was framed and implemented in 1993. Later, the HSEB redesigned a uniform curriculum in 1996 and implemented it throughout the country. However, the sincere efforts put in by the HSEB in designing the curricula of 1993-1996 have not received encouraging or rewarding results. The examination results of the various streams (Humanities, Management, Science and Education), at the +2 level in the past have been extremely fluctuating and frustrating. The results have been bewildering
everyone sometimes drastically falling down to 4% on the one hand, and at other times shooting up to 60% on the other. While the poor results have generated serious doubts about the efficiency of the teachers and teacher training programmes, present curriculum and its designers, the seriously fluctuating percentage of the results leads one to doubt the validity and reliability of the examination system itself.

The present research was prompted with a view to appraise and evaluate the curriculum and its various constituents such as objectives of the curriculum, textbook materials, used to achieve these objectives, teachers' efficiency, and teacher training, and the evaluation system of the HSEB. The evaluation work was taken up with a view to discern problems and gaps in the curriculum and provide measures for modifications to ensure its smoother and better functioning. The concept of evaluation as a developmental tool for the betterment of the system has been central to the research undertaken. Long-term planning for improvement of education depends on proper capitalisation of the curriculum research. As the chief purpose of the present research work is developmental in nature, data collection for the same has fulfilled diverse functions (Weir and Roberts 1994).
The present research is based on eclectic approach with a firm belief in the statement that the purpose of the evaluation should override quasi-ideological preferences in favour of principles of utility and relevance (Patton, 1986). This is now a more widespread and far more sensible view, providing preference for a broader and more inclusive approach to evaluation. As such, the methodological aspect for the present research work were chosen according to the information required for different evaluation purposes, as mentioned above and also according to the realities of logistics.

The study aims at making a critical appraisal of the current compulsory English curriculum of +2 level with a view to suggest points of modifications to supplement to it. The study makes an attempt to inquire into four major aspects of the curriculum, as mentioned earlier. The evaluation of a curriculum has to be based on certain theories and principles. Curriculum consists of educational needs of the learners, formulating objectives for them, selection and organisation of contents, selection and organisation of learning experiences and finally evaluating the effectiveness of what has been taught (Taba, H. 1962). Obviously the role of the teacher in the implementation of a curriculum is most crucial. As such the present study is biased to the
perceptions of the practising teachers while evaluating the curriculum.

While setting focus on the present curriculum evaluation, teachers' views were the mainstay of such process. They expressed their views on curriculum and students' needs, curriculum design, instructional processes, materials used for the instruction, student progress to the curriculum, teacher effectiveness, curriculum policy, and outcomes of the instructions. The recommendations of the study are based on the systematic data collection, processing, and interpretation of data received from the teachers for a complete evaluation. There are two main kinds of data based on (1) Objective descriptions of goals, environments, techniques, content, and outcomes, and (2) personal judgement as to the quality and appropriateness of these goals and environment. As such, the researcher had to take up a series of tasks in the forms of field work, tool construction, organising, analysing, and interpreting data for the present study.

The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the curriculum in focus as well as the participants' (teachers and students) attitudes. The present evaluation is focused on formative evaluation practices in an
educational programme. The various dimensions of an evaluation as mentioned by Weir and Roberts (1994) were given due importance in the course of the present study.

As the present study examines the objectives, textbook materials, teacher training and evaluation system of the +2 compulsory English curriculum through practising teachers, a survey method was adopted to collect their opinions. For this purpose a questionnaire consisting of 50 questions was framed. Besides receiving data through the questionnaire, interviews and discussions with teachers, students, curriculum experts, and educational administrators were conducted with a view to supplement the data as well as for triangulation of the same. Before taking up the field work for data collection, the questionnaire was tried out. Suggestions received from the piloting of the questionnaire were incorporated. As for the sampling procedure, a stratified random sampling was made for the selection of schools. A total number of 81 higher secondary schools, representing the 5 development zones of the kingdom were selected for the data collection. The data received from them were qualitatively and quantitatively presented and interpreted as demanded by the nature of the specific questions.
The study has been presented in five chapters. The first chapter seeks to provide ELT situation as it exists in Nepal followed by the introduction of +2 system. In order to see the problem on a wider canvas, the educational struggle in the introduction of +2 system in the SAARC countries has been delineated. This follows the statement of research problem for the present study.

The second chapter is devoted to theoretical underpinnings for the present evaluation study. It mainly deals with meaning and definition of syllabus, dimensions in curriculum development, models of curriculum evaluation and purpose of evaluation.

The third chapter deals with the methodological aspects of the present research. The formation of questionnaire, piloting of the questionnaire, modifications for the refinement of the questionnaire, sampling procedure, sample population, administration of the questionnaire for the main study, informal interviews and discussions with students, teachers, curriculum designers and educational administrators - are all described at length.

The fourth chapter is devoted to data presentation and interpretation. Each objective item of the questionnaire has
been tabulated and presented in percentage form. The open-ended questions have been qualitatively presented and interpreted.

The fifth chapter concludes with research findings and suggestions for the improvement of the present syllabus. The findings of the research reflect teachers' perceptions of the existing curriculum and accordingly ways to improve it have been recommended.

The main findings of the present research concern with the curriculum, examination system, teachers' efficiency, and need for teacher training. It has been observed that the present curriculum lacks in sequencing, coherence and integration. It is found to have too much coverage but too little practice. Most of the subject matter in the textbooks are found to be less relevant to present social needs. The curriculum has several inherent weaknesses with respect to concepts and practices. Teachers being overworked, the real instructional time required to teach the textbooks with excessive materials is found to be inadequate. There is an acute shortage of teacher training, programmes and provisions for the +2 level English teachers. The examination system has suffered from very high backwash effect because of its faulty practice of evaluating the students exclusively through the annual examinations. There is no representation of internal
assessment in the evaluation system. This results in poor interest of the teachers and students for the internal tests (formative evaluation).

Teachers' efficiency has been observed to be low as they lack in the relevant knowledge of theories of language learning and educational psychology. The efficiency of the teacher is also adversely affected by low status of teachers and teaching profession in the society. Teachers are paid low salaries and as such they have to supplement their earnings by working at other institutions or taking up jobs not related to teaching e.g., business, agriculture, etc.

For the improvement of the present curriculum at the +2 level, following recommendations and suggestions have been provided:

1) The HSEB has to provide for teacher development and training reforms.

2) The curriculum has to be brought into proper sequencing to its lower and upper levels.

3) Evaluation system at +2 level needs to be revised as Improvement in the quality of question papers by framing short answer questions preparing, marking schemes, organising spot evaluation and training of papersetters.
(4) A specified curriculum in terms of the communicative skills of LSRW should be designed with an objective of enabling learners to acquire the use of English for day-to-day communications.

(5) It would be more practical to design two separate courses to meet the two divergent aims of HSEB curriculum i.e., 'preparatory' and 'terminal' objectives.

(6) For the components of teacher training programme, the following points are suggested:

As the existing curriculum places emphasis on developing linguistic and communicative skills, as well as knowledge of the structure of English, most of the inservice and pre-service teachers may find them difficult and feel diffident. As such the training components like structures of English language, teaching and testing of the four language skills, literary interpretation and teaching of English literature should form part of the training component. Addition of further topics sought by the teacher-participants will be very useful in this regard.

(7) As for the textbook materials, they should be revised and replaced from time-to-time keeping in view the linguistic competence and literary content suited to the maturity level of the learners. For the time being NCERT textbooks may replace (with some modifications) to suit the Nepalese context.

Finally, it is not the 'ideal' syllabus but a cadre of 'ideal' teachers that contribute to the overall improvement of the programme. Therefore teachers need to be spirited, well-trained and caring for their learners on humanitarian principles.
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS USED IN THE STUDY

ARNEC: All Round National Education Committee
CDC: Curriculum Development Centre
CHSE: Council for Higher Secondary Education
CLT: Communicative Language Teaching
CTSDC: Curriculum, Textbook and Supervision Development Centre
ELT: English Language Teaching
FOE: Faculty of Education
GCE O', 'A': General Certificate of Education
\( \text{Ordinary/Advanced} \)
HMG: His Majesty's Government
HSEB: Higher Secondary Education Board
IOE: Institute of Education
ISCE: Indian School Certificate Examination
JEMC: Janak Education Materials Centre
MOE: Ministry of Education
MOEC: Ministry of Education and Culture
NCERT: National Council of Educational Research and Training
NEC: National Education Committee
NELTA: Nepal English Language Teachers' Association
NEP: New Education System Plan
NIE: National Institute of Education
NNEDC: Nepal National Education Planning Commission
No: Number
op.cit.: In the work already quoted.
PCL: Proficiency Certificate Level (Intermediate Level)
PGDE: Post-Graduate Diploma in Education
PTC: Primary Teaching Certificate
SAARC: South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SLC: School Leaving Certificate
SOS: Structural-Oral-Situational
TU: Tribhuvan University
UCLES: University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate
UGC: University Grants Commission
VSO: Volunteers Service Overseas
\( \text{For example} \)
et al.: and other people
ibid.: in the same book, article
i.e.: that is.