Evaluating the Balance of Primary Education Second cycle Curriculum Material vis-à-vis UNESCO'S Four Pillars of Education with Particular Reference to Addis Ababa City Government

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether or not the Ethiopian primary education second cycle curriculum, with particular reference to Addis Ababa city Government, incorporates the "Four pillars of Education" in a balanced manner. To this end, mixed method research with quantitative content analysis design supported by qualitative interview guide was employed. The contents of a total of seven selected sample text books from grades 5 and 8 were analyzed and officials, professionals and experts from Ministry of Education, Institute for Curriculum Development and Research and Addis Ababa City Government Education Bureau were interviewed in the research. The sample grades (grades 5 and 8) are selected purposefully where as the sample text books are selected using stratified sampling technique. All the data gathered through these data gathering instruments were analyzed thematically and meanings are constructed out of them. Consequently, it was found that in 71.4% of the sample text books the "Four Pillars of Education" are found unbalanced mainly dominated by the pillar 'learning to know'. Findings from the interview also ensured that these "Four Pillars of Education" were not deliberately considered during policy formulation, syllabi development and text book preparation. In the end, it is concluded that the primary education second cycle curriculum of Addis Ababa City Government lack a proper balance in comprising the "Four Pillars of Education" set by UNESCO.

1. The Problem and its Background

Curriculum is a crucial component of any educational process. It can be viewed from different points of view. The value we give for education dictates the meaning of the curriculum or the kind of school system. Basically there are four layers of curriculum, viz. intended curriculum – the written curriculum document; the expressed curriculum – the enacted or manifested curriculum elsewhere; the hidden curriculum – that invisibly taught of the interaction of teachers with the students and students with the students; and the experienced curriculum – the actual experiences in the classroom. The content of what we expect children to learn during their schooling is clearly a crucial element in curriculum planning, whatever view we take of education, curriculum or, indeed, knowledge itself (Kelly, 2004:14).

As stated in the education sector strategy document of Ethiopian government (TGE, 1994b as cited in Akalewold, 2005).

> *The quality and standard of education in a given country is mainly determined by the essence of its curriculum and the process of its implementation. The relevance of any curriculum on the other hand is determined by the extent it meets the educational objectives.*

When we refer the efforts made to achieve goals of primary education in Ethiopia (ESDP, 1996), the emphasis is on the improvement of the level of quality of human and material resources as well as capacity building of teachers. For instance, the goals of the second cycle of primary education are: to provide a grade education that prepares the learners for the next cycle and to prepare citizens who can be trained in basic vocational and technical skills (ICDR, 1994). However, as Wanna (2001) indicated, studies conducted show that especially the second goal has not been addressed well. This means that instructions given at elementary level have not motivated the students as expected to pursue different occupational skills at secondary level. Further study may not be required to recognize that the major factor for the in achievement of the aforementioned goals can be unbalanced and irrelevant curriculum because it is the curriculum, at any level, which guides the instruction.

By the formulation of the new education and training policy in 1994, one of the components of the educational structure is a primary education from grades 1-8 sub divided into two cycles of first or basic (grades 1-4) and second or general (grades 5-8) education (TGE, 1994). Accordingly, profile of students who finished the first eight years of elementary schooling is stated as follows (ICDR, 1994).

- They are ready to carryout simpler tasks that do not require special skills or training
- They will be ready for different kinds of training
- They can become productive workers with the help of directives, continuous training and assistance
- They will actively participate in cultural activities and feel responsible
- With the help of continuing education they can develop their knowledge and skills further

- They have developed good experience of working cooperatively for the common good.

2. Statement of the problem

Primary education being the base of the formal education pyramid has often been viewed as the most crucial educational level in the formal system because any unsolved problems at this level would automatically reflect at the subsequent (secondary and tertiary) educational levels (Yalokwu ,2001).One of the major determinants of quality of education is believed globally to be curriculum soundness in terms of relevance and balance. The new Education and Training Policy (ETP) gives due emphasis for strengthening of the individual's and society's problem solving capacities at all levels. As stated in ETP (1994:7) one of the objectives of education is "to develop the physical and mental potential and problem solving capacity of individual by expanding basic education for all". Moreover, a look at the goal of primary education in Ethiopia which is documented by the Ministry of Education (MoE, 1996) in its Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) reveals that emphasis was placed on the improvement of the level of quantity of human and material resources as well as improvement in the training of teachers. However, not much was stated in terms of the relevant skills and values to be inculcated in the training of primary school students (Yalokwu, 2001).

Quality education is understood in three aspects: input, process and output. Expecting to achieve quality education with out having the major input, balanced curriculum is unthinkable. With respect to Ethiopian primary education, neither the formative evaluations and review of curricular materials conducted as of the implementation of the curriculum reform nor the summative evaluation which took place between May-June 2000 paid significant attention for balance and relevance of the curriculum (Dereje, 2001)

What initiated the idea of conducting a study on this issue is the conditions in which quality of education seems expected with out giving sufficient attention for curriculum balance and relevance. Furthermore, the researcher believed that UNESCO'S "Four Pillars of Education" can be best standards to evaluate curriculum balance. It is also the researcher's personal belief that the curriculum document of primary education second cycle is more of full of cognitive

information and subsequent evaluations, even, overlooked or ignored the issue of balance and relevance of the curriculum.

3. Objectives of the study

General Objective:

- To examine the balance and relevance status of primary education second cycle curriculum Vis-à-vis the "Four Pillars of Education" set by UNESCO in Addis Ababa City Government.

Specific Objectives:

- To evaluate the primary education second cycle text books of Addis Ababa City Government against the set criteria;
- To investigate the problems with respect to balance and relevance of the curriculum;
- To show the impact of unbalanced and irrelevant curriculum on the general aim of education of the country in general and primary education quality in particular.

4. Basic Research Questions

In brief, the study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Is the Addis Ababa City Government primary education second cycle curriculum balanced or not vis-à-vis the "Four Pillars of Education" set by UNESCO?
2. What is the need for considering these "Four Pillars of Education" in curriculum development?
3. What is the contribution of balanced curriculum for quality education?
4. What is the impact of unbalanced curriculum on the country's general aim of education?

5. Significance of the Study

The study is believed to have the following significance:

- It can throw some light for educational policy makers and curriculum developers on the criticality of considering UNESCO's principles, opinions, standards, etc. during construction or development of curriculum;
- It might make the implementers to recognize that due consideration should be given for keeping the balance during instruction;
- Curriculum evaluators and reviewers are also expected to be benefited from the study because it might help them to focus on the balance and relevance of the curriculum at the time of evaluation or revision;
- Researchers might also use the research results as springboard for further investigations on the various aspects of curriculum balance and relevance.

6. Review of Related Literature

The "Four Pillars of Education": A brief overview

UNESCO is working to improve education worldwide through technical advice, standard setting, innovative projects and networking. Accordingly, after the General conference invited the then Director General, Federico Mayor, in November 1991, to convene an international commission to reflect on education and learning for the Twenty first century, the International Commission on Education for the Twenty first century was formally established at the beginning of 1993. After carrying out its work in a very concerned and responsible manner the commission provided a report, '***Learning: The Treasure within'*** and delivered to the Director General on 11 April 1996.

Accordingly, the commission set the "Four Pillars of Education" which it saw as providing a frame work on which education should be based. Thus, the "Four Pillars of Education" are:

a. *Learning to know*:- concerned less with the acquisition of structured knowledge than with the mastery of learning tools. It implies learning how to learn by developing one's concentration, memory skills and ability to think.
    - Improving concentration skills can be aided by different learning opportunities like game, work experience programs, travel, practical science activities, etc.
    - The development of memory skills is an excellent tool for countering the overpowering stream of instant information put out by the media.

- Ability of thinking should encompass both practical problem solving and abstract thought.

b. *Learning to do:* - is the issue of occupational training i.e. equipping the pupils to do the types of work needed in the future. There is a growing trend among employers to evaluate potential employers in terms of their personal competence rather than certified skills which they see as merely demonstrating the ability to perform specific physical tasks. The new forms of personal competence are based on a body of theoretical and practical knowledge combined with personal dynamism and good problem solving , decision making , innovative and team skills.

c. *Learning to be:*- implies learning for life. All people should receive in their child hood and youth an education that equips them to develop their own independent, critical way of thinking and judgment so that they can make up their own minds on the best courses of action in the different circumstances in their lives. To challenge dehumanization of the world, education should enable each person to be able to solve his own problems, make his own decisions and shoulder his own responsibilities.

d. *Learning to live together*:- involves developing an understanding for fellow people, history, traditions and spiritual values whether education is provided by the family, the community or the school, children should be taught to understand other peoples reactions by looking at things from their point of view. Where this spirit of empathy is encouraged in schools, it has a positive effect on young person's social behavior for the rest of their lives.

7. Research Design and Method

Mixed methods research with embedded design is employed. Accordingly, a qualitative data is embedded within a quantitative methodology. Because of its relevance, content analysis design is used to collect the quantitative data, the major data, and interview is used as a qualitative data, the supportive data, gathering instrument. For content analysis, four categories, each with 3 subcategories, are constructed and coding sheet is prepared so that data collection can be made accordingly.

Table 1: Coding sheet Relevance of grade (5or8) - - - (each of the selected eight subjects)

Chapters	Title of chapters	Categories											
		Learning to know			Learning to do			Learning to be			Learning to live together		
		Knowledge	Understanding	Discovery	Occupational training	Technical & vocational training	Interpersonal skills	Value & moral issues	Self confidence	Exemplary practices	Self acknowledgment	Interpersonal understanding	Spirit of empathy & sympathy
Total													
Grand Total	**No**												
	%												

8. Data Analysis and Presentation

On the analysis stage, both quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed independently and mixed at the discussion stage. Following sequential steps the analysis started from the quantitative data gathered by content analysis. Chi-square test is used to measure the level of significance of each subject. Then after, the qualitative findings collected by interview are also analyzed. The brief quantitative data analysis is as follows:

Based on the units counted and categorized of grade 5 Amharic textbook, the percentage of the units which are relevant to the category 'learning to know' is the highest (32.7%) and that of the category 'learning to live together' is the least (17.3%). It is also observed that the difference between the coverage of the categories 'learning to know' (32.7%) and 'learning to be' (28.8%) is not significant. The same is true for the categories 'learning to do' (21.2%) and 'learning to live together' (17.3%). The chi-square test also shows the following:

Table 2: Chi- Square Test for Grade 5 Amharic

Categories	$\mathbf{f_o}$	$\mathbf{f_e}$	$\mathbf{f_o-f_e}$	$\mathbf{(f_o-f_e)^2}$	$\mathbf{(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e}$
Learning to know	17	13	4	16	1.23
Learning to do	11	13	-2	4	0.3
Learning to be	15	13	2	4	0.3
Learning to live together	9	13	-4	16	1.23
Total	52	52	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = 3.06$		

The computed chi-square value shows x^2=3.06 which is less than the critical value (x^2 at df=3, 0.05 levels of significance= 7.815). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is not significant in grade 5 Amharic since the calculated chi-square value is less than the critical chi-square value. This implies that the contents of grade 5

Amharic textbook incorporate the "four pillars of education" almost in a balanced manner.

The data collected from the other sample textbook i.e. grade 5 science, show that the very largest content of the text book (50.9%) is covered with issues relevant to the category 'learning to know'. Relative to the categories 'learning to be' (13.2%) and 'learning to live together' (3.8%) coverage of 'learning to do' (32.1%) is better. The significance test using chi-square also indicated as follows:

Table 3: Chi-square Test for Grade 5 Science

Categories	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e$
Learning to know	27	13.25	13.75	189.15	14.3
Learning to do	17	13.25	3.75	14.1	1.1
Learning to be	7	13.25	-6.25	39.1	2.95
Learning to live together	2	13.25	-11.25	126.6	9.6
Total	53	53	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = 27.95$		

The computed chi-square value shows $x^2=27.95$ which is greater than the critical values (x^2 at df=3, 0.05 level of significance= 7.815). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is significant in grade 5 science since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical chi-square value. This implies that imbalance of the "four pillars of education" in the contents of grade 5 science is very high dominated by the pillar 'learning to know'.

Evaluation of grade 5 Geography textbook shows that over half of the contents of the textbook (56.5%) consists of issues that are under the pillar 'learning to know'. Only 6.1%, which is the least of all, addressed the issues of 'learning to live together'. The finding also shows that the pillar 'learning to be' (26.7%) is better covered than the pillar

'learning to do' which is 10.7%.When the values obtained are also tested by chi-square a significance difference is observed among the pillars.

Table 4: Chi Square Test for Grade 5 Geography

Categories	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e$
Learning to know	74	32.75	41.25	1701.6	52
Learning to do	14	32.75	-18.75	351.6	10.7
Learning to be	35	32.75	2.25	5.1	0.15
Learning to live together	8	32.75	-24.75	612.6	18.7
Total	131	131	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = 81.55$		

The computed chi-square value shows x^2=81.55 which is very much greater than the critical value (x^2 at df =3, 0.05 level of significance= 7.815). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is significant in grade 5 geography since the calculated chi-square value is grater than the critical chi-square value. The implication of this finding shows that the contents of grade 5 Geography textbook are highly dense with cognitive information which is under the pillar 'learning to know'.

The findings from the other sample grade level grade 8 English indicate that the category 'learning to know' has a relative highest coverage, i.e. 31.3%. It is the category 'learning to live together' which has a relative lowest coverage (17.9%). The difference observed between the percentage of 'learning to do' (26.2%) and 'learning to be' (24.2%) is not that much significant. The result obtained from the chi-square test also shows the levels of significance.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test for Grade 8 English

Categories	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e$
Learning to know	42	33.5	8.5	72.25	2.15
Learning to do	35	33.5	1.5	2.25	0.07
Learning to be	33	33.5	-0.5	0.25	0.007
Learning to live together	24	33.5	-9.5	90.25	2.69
Total	134	134	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = 4.92$		

The computed chi-square value shows x^2=4.92 which is less than the critical value (x^2 at df=3, 0.05 level of significance=7.815). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is not significant in grade 8 English since the calculated chi-square value is less than the critical chi-square value. This value implies that the coverage of the "four pillars of education" in the grade 8 English textbook is almost balanced.

Units relevant to the category 'learning to know' scores the highest value (49.4%) in grade 8 Biology textbook. The coverage of the category 'learning to live together', 12.0%, is the least value in this textbook. Even though their coverage is very much less than the highest value, the difference between the coverage of the categories 'learning to do' and 'learning to be' is not that much far. The level of significance tested by chi-square is shown as follows:

Table 6: Chi- square Test for Grade 8 Biology

Categories	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e$
Learning to know	41	20.75	20.25	410.1	19.8
Learning to do	17	20.75	-3.75	14.1	0.68
Learning to be	15	20.75	-5.75	33.1	1.59
Learning to live together	10	20.75	-10.75	115.6	5.57
Total	83	83	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right]$ = 27.64		

The calculated chi-square value shows x^2=27.64 which is greater than the critical value (x^2 at df=3, 0.05 level of significance=7.315). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is significant in grade 8 Biology since the calculated chi-square value is greater than the critical chi-square value. This implies that unbalanced coverage of the "four pillars of education" is observed in grade 8 Biology textbook.

In grade 8 Social studies textbook it is the category 'learning to know' which has the highest coverage (41.4%). It is observed that the textbook has least coverage of the category 'learning to do' (4.3%). The category 'learning to be' which is 34.3% is better covered in the textbook next to the highest, i.e. 'learning to know'. Far from both the highest and least covered categories, the category 'learning to live together' found at the third level covering 20.0% of the textbook. The values are also analyzed by chi-square test as follows:

Table 7: Chi –Square test for Grade 8 Social Studies

Categories	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e$
Learning to know	29	17.5	11.5	132.25	7.56
Learning to do	3	17.5	-14.5	210.25	12.02
Learning to be	24	17.5	6.5	42.25	2.41
Learning to live together	17	17.5	-3.5	12.25	0.7
Total	70	70	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = 22.69$		

The calculated chi-square value shows x^2=22.69 which is greater than the critical value (x^2 at df=3, 0.05 level of significance=7.815). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is significant in grade 8 Social studies since the computed chi-square value is greater than the critical chi-square value. The implication of this value also ensures the unbalanced coverage among the "four pillars of education" in the contents of grade 8 Social studies.

The data collected from the last sample textbook, grade 8 Civics and ethical education show that the coverage of the category 'learning to be (45.0%) is the highest and that of 'learning to do' (8.1%) is the lowest. The category 'learning to know' is placed at the second level covering 28.0% of the text book. Only 18.9% of the textbooks issues are relevant to the category 'learning to live together'. The chi-square below shows the difference among the four categories.

Table 8: Chi-Square Test for Grade 8 Civics and Ethical Education

Categories	f_o	f_e	f_o-f_e	$(f_o-f_e)^2$	$(f_o-f_e)^2/f_e$
Learning to know	31	27.75	3.25	10-56	0.38
Learning to do	9	27.75	-18.75	351.6	12.67
Learning to be	50	27.75	22.25	495.1	17.84
Learning to live together	21	27.75	-6.75	45.6	1.64
Total	111	111	$X^2 \sum \left[\frac{(fo - fe)^2}{fe} \right] = 32.53$		

The computed chi-square value shows x^2=32.53 which is greater than the critical value (x^2 at df=3, 0.05 level of significance= 7.815). Hence, the difference among coverage of the "four pillars" is significant in grade 8 Civics and ethical education since the calculated chi square value is greater than the critical chi-square value. This implies that imbalanced of the "four pillars" is also observed in the contents of grade 8 Civics and Ethical education textbook dominated by the pillar 'learning to be' unlike the other subject textbooks.

9. Summary

The findings of the content analysis made on the sample text books and interview responses show that there is problem of imbalance in the curriculum of the education level under study. As a result the major findings of the study are:

- In the text book contents of five subjects from the seven sample subjects the "four pillars" are incorporated in unbalanced manner.
- The pillar 'learning to know' which is with highest coverage in six of the sample subject text books highly dominates especially grade 5 Science, grade 5 Geography and grade 8 Biology.
- The pillar 'learning to do', very crucial for underdeveloped countries like Ethiopia by enabling the learners to equip with skills that can solve community problems, is only given a better coverage in the contents of grade 5 Science text book.

- “Learning to live together” which is the current major global issue is not addressed well in many of the sample subject text books.
- The responses of the interviewee also show that these “Four pillars of Education” are not given deliberate consideration by the respective people from policy makers to text book writers.

10. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the investigation the following conclusions are drawn:

- The contents of the primary education second cycle program lack a proper balance in comprising the “Four pillars of Education”. Even though the MoE & ICDR assumed that the “ four pillars” are indirectly incorporated in the contents in the form of the three domains of ”Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives” in a balanced manner, the analysis of the sample text books reveals a different fact;
- The ideas or concepts of the “Four Pillars of Education” are observed incorporated at policy level even though not deliberate consideration is given. The general objectives (listed 1 to 5) and specific objectives (listed 1 to 15) in the Education and Training Policy document incorporate the ideas of these “four pillars” (TGE, 1994: 7-11). Hence, the failure of incorporating them in the contents in a balanced manner happened on the level of syllabi development and text book preparation;
- The contents of primary education second cycle curriculum are more of cognitive information as presumed by the investigator. It is known that the investigation is made only by evaluating the content of the text books. But, If the pedagogy had been evaluated, some of the contents that are categorized under the other three pillars (learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together) might have been included in the first pillar (learning to Know);
- The pillar ‘learning to do’ which is crucial to link primary education with occupational needs in the community is not given sufficient coverage in the primary education second cycle curriculum. Especially contents that are relevant to technical and vocational training are insignificant in coverage. This will be also

against the Education and Training Policy of the country, because, if a foundation is not laid at primary school, how possible will be thinking about the effectiveness of TVET program? Further, the issue of TVET is not only the issue of education sector; it also highly affects the overall development policy of the country.

- The contents those are relevant to the pillar 'learning to live together' which help people live together in peace and with respect for the human dignity and well being of others are least incorporated in the primary education second cycle curriculum.
- The imbalance of the "Four pillars of Education" has negatively affected the aim of education of the country in general and quality of primary education in particular. This is because contents that are inclined largely to cognitive information cannot enable to produce an individual who is intellectually, practically & morally fit to the national or global community. It is impossible to talk about the achievement of the aim of education and a better quality of education with poor foundation at primary level.

11. Recommendations

- All responsible bodies (MoE, ICDR, and Regions' Education Bureaus) should deliberately consider the "Four pillars of Education" set by UNESEO and use the ideas and concepts on them as a benchmark during policy formulation, syllabi and text books preparation or revision.

- The Institute for Curriculum Development and Research (ICDR) should establish partnership with International Education Bureau (IBE) so that it can be accessible to the opinions, guiding principles and standards of UNESCO. Since IBE, as a UNESCO institute, focuses on curriculum issues from its development to implementation, partners will benefit from it especially in having quality curriculum that incorporates UNESCO's global ideas including the "Four pillars of Education".

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