

Reflection of the Key Aspects of Curriculum in the Newly Revised Secondary School Curriculum of English and other Subjects in Bangladesh

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Abstract: Curriculum is an integral part of formal education. A well devised curriculum is an unavoidable necessity to make the learners equipped with the knowledge which they need to cope with the challenges of modern world. Different scholars and specialists viewed curriculum from different perspectives. Some saw curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted, some saw it as a process through which the knowledge is conveyed to the learners and some saw it as all the practical activities which the teachers do to transmit the knowledge. In fact all these are different aspects of curriculum. Whatever be the definition of curriculum, it must have an aim, well arranged content, guideline of dealing with the content so that maximum benefit could be achieved and a good evaluation system to be sure that the curriculum is working well. One of the key aspects of curriculum is that it is modifiable as per the demand of the age. Keeping this aspect in view the government of Bangladesh has recently introduced a new curriculum in the secondary schools of Bangladesh replacing the earlier one. The curriculum experts worked hard to equip it with all important aspects of curriculum, such as it has a definite aim, the contents are well arranged, the system of dealing with the content is also commendable and the evaluation system is also worthwhile. So it can be said that the curriculum is appropriate. This article at first describes some important aspects of curriculum and then focuses on the concern of Bangladesh government with education as well as its development and then deals with government initiatives to change the curriculum of the secondary schools of Bangladesh especially the English curriculum of secondary schools. Finally it explores whether the important aspects of curriculum have been given due importance here or not.

Key Words: Curriculum, process, praxis, sustainable development, netiquette.

I. Introduction:

The word *curriculum* has its origins in the running/chariot tracks of Greece. It was, literally, a course. In Latin, *curriculum* was a racing chariot; *curre* was to run. As early as the seventeenth century, the University of Glasgow referred to its "course" of study as a *curriculum*, and by the nineteenth century European universities routinely referred to their curriculum to describe both the complete course of study (as for a degree in Surgery) and particular courses and their content. (Wikipedia) To define *curriculum* we can say that it is the name of such a preplan that encompasses all the activities in the domain of education. It answers-*who, why, what, by what, where and how*. Therefore a well devised curriculum must clearly show who are the expected beneficiaries of that curriculum, what aims and objectives are to be achieved by studying that curriculum and what are the ways which the teachers should follow in order to achieve the expected goal. We can know more elaborately about *curriculum* from the other well known sources. The definition of *curriculum* offered by John Kerr and taken up by Vic Kelly in his standard work on the subject is worth mentioning here. Kerr defines curriculum as, 'All the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school. (Quoted in Kelly 1983: 10; see also, Kelly 1999). Wikipedia, the largest online encyclopedia says, a curriculum may refer to a defined and prescribed course of studies, which students must fulfill in order to pass a certain level of education. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language defines curriculum in this way: **cur·ric·u·lum** *n. pl.* **cur·ric·u·la** (-lə) or **cur·ric·u·lums**
1. All the courses of study offered by an educational institution. 2. A group of related courses, often in a special field of study. It will be helpful if we distinguish the use of the word 'curriculum' to denote the content of a particular subject or area of study from the use of it to refer to the total program of an educational institution. Many people still equate a curriculum with a syllabus and thus limit their planning to consideration of the content or the body of knowledge they wish to transmit or a list of the subjects to be taught or both. This kind of definition of curriculum is limiting the scope of curriculum and is likely to hamper the planning of curriculum change and development. (Kelly-2009) In fact curriculum differs from syllabus in different ways, such as, curriculum is the blue print of education at a certain level while syllabus is the quantity of content to be taught in

an academic year/term. Curriculum is a long term plan and vision while syllabus is content to be covered in a particular time. Curriculum is macro plan, on the other hand syllabus is a micro plan. Last but not least, curriculum is a whole, but syllabus is a part.

II. Literature Review:

In his study of *curriculum* Smith, M. K. (1996, 2000) found four ways of approaching curriculum:

They are-

1. Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted.
2. Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students –product.
3. Curriculum as process.
4. Curriculum as praxis.

2.1 Curriculum as a body of knowledge to be transmitted: Many people still equate a curriculum with a syllabus. But a syllabus will not generally indicate the relative importance of its topics or the order in which they are to be studied. In some cases as Curzon (1985) points out, those who compile a syllabus tend to follow the traditional textbook approach of an ‘order of contents’, or a pattern prescribed by a ‘logical’ approach to the subject, or, consciously or unconsciously, the shape of a university course in which they may have participated. Thus, an approach to curriculum theory and practice which focuses on syllabus is only really concerned with content. According to this view of curriculum, it is a body of knowledge-content and/or subjects. Education, in this sense, is the process by which these are transmitted or ‘delivered’ to students by the most effective methods that can be devised (Blenkin et al 1992: 23).

2.2 Curriculum as an attempt to achieve certain ends in students: American writer Franklin Bobbitt (1918; 1928) writes in his book *The Curriculum* ‘The central theory [of curriculum] is simple. Human life, however varied, consists in the performance of specific activities. Education that prepares for life is one that prepares definitely and adequately for these specific activities. However numerous and diverse they may be for any social class they can be discovered. This requires only that one goes out into the world of affairs and discovers the particulars of which their affairs consist. These will show the abilities, attitudes, habits, appreciations and forms of knowledge that men need. These will be the objectives of the curriculum. They will be numerous, definite and particularized. The curriculum will then be that series of experiences which children and youth must have by way of obtaining those objectives. (1918: 42)’

In the late 1940s the work of Ralph W. Tyler has made a lasting impression on curriculum theory and practice. He shared Bobbitt’s emphasis on rationality and relative simplicity. It has been suggested (Tyler 1949) that the curriculum has to be seen as consisting of four elements and curriculum planning therefore, as having four dimensions: objectives, content or subject matter, method or procedures and evaluation. In short, the claim is that we must distinguish in our curriculum planning what we are hoping to achieve, the ground we are planning to cover in order to achieve it, the kinds of activities and method that we consider likely to be most effective in helping us towards our goal and the devices we will use to evaluate what we have done. Tyler’s own way of putting this point is to suggest that there are four fundamental questions which must be answered in developing any curriculum and plan of instruction. These he lists as –

1. What educational purpose should the school seek to attain?
2. What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?
3. How can educational experiences be effectively organized?
4. How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Tyler 1949: 1)

This analysis, then, if taken just as it stands, would give us a very simple model for curriculum planning, a linear model which requires us to specify our objectives, to plan the content and the methods which will lead us towards them and finally to endeavor to measure the extent of our success. (Kelly 2009, 20)

The attraction of this way of approaching curriculum theory and practice is that it is systematic and has considerable organizing power. Central to the approach is the formulation of behavioral objectives – providing a clear notion of outcome so that content and method may be organized and the results evaluated. (Smith 1996)

2.3 Curriculum as a process: Another way of looking at curriculum theory and practice is via process. In this sense curriculum is not a physical thing, but rather the interaction of teachers, students and knowledge. In other words, curriculum is what actually happens in the classroom and what people do to prepare and evaluate. This form of words echoes those of Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) who produced one of the best-known explorations of a process model of curriculum theory and practice. He defined curriculum tentatively: ‘A curriculum is an attempt to communicate the essential principles and features of an educational proposal in such a form that it is open to critical scrutiny and capable of effective translation into practice’. He was not saying that curriculum is the process, but rather the means by which the experience of attempting to put an educational proposal into

practice is made available. The reason why he did this is that otherwise there is a danger of widening the meaning of the term so much that it embraces almost everything and hence means very little. For example, in a discussion of the so-called 'youth work curriculum' (Newman & Ingram 1989), the following definition was taken as a starting point: 'those processes which enhance or, if they go wrong, inhibit a person's learning'. This was then developed and a curriculum became: 'an organic process by which learning is offered, accepted and internalized' (Newman & Ingram 1989: 1). The problem with this sort of definition, as Robin Barrow (1984) points out, is that what this does is to widen the meaning of the term to such an extent that it just about becomes interchangeable with 'education' itself. More specifically, if curriculum is process then the word curriculum is redundant because process would do very nicely! The simple equation of curriculum with process is a very slap-happy basis on which to proceed. (Smith 1996)

2.4 Curriculum as praxis: Curriculum as praxis, in many respects, is a development of the process model. The process model does not make explicit statements about the interests it serves. It may, for example, be used in such a way that does not make continual reference to collective human well-being and to the emancipation of the human spirit. The praxis model of curriculum theory and practice brings these to the centre of the process and makes an explicit commitment to emancipation. Thus action is not simply informed, it is also committed. In this approach the curriculum itself develops through the dynamic interaction of action and reflection. 'That is, the curriculum is not simply a set of plans to be implemented, but rather is constituted through an active process in which planning, acting and evaluating are all reciprocally related and integrated into the process' (Grundy 1987: 115). At its centre is *praxis*: informed, committed action. (Smith 1996)

2.5 The main elements of curriculum: If we combine all four aspects of curriculum as stated above we find that the main components of curriculum are as follows.

1. Aims and objectives: It must be specified why the followers of the curriculum should follow it.
2. Contents/subject matter: What activities the learners are to do and what skill, knowledge, values are to be transmitted to them.
3. Methods: What are the strategies which are to be followed in order to transmit the expected knowledge, skill, expertise and values to the learners or participants.
4. Evaluation: How it will be ensured that the learners and participants have obtained the expected knowledge and skill.

III. Curriculum Development Process

While developing new curriculum the following steps have to be followed:

3.1 Analysis of situation:

Some important facts and figures must be established first before developing the curriculum. This is done through baseline surveys/or Needs Assessment. Without a Situational Analysis we can not develop a good and realistic curriculum.

Situational Analysis involves:-Identifying tasks and problems and seeking possible solutions, identifying difficulties and possible areas of resistance, clues to planning for the resources and the organizational changes that will be required.

3.2 Formulating objectives

Curriculum objectives of any program, institution or education system constitute the behaviors which the learners have to show or exhibit if the aim of the course is attained e.g. what skills they should possess, what knowledge and insights they should have, what attitudes and values they should develop. Objectives are derived from analysis of the situation. They have to reflect:-

- The needs of the society
- The needs of the teacher, instructor
- The needs of the learner/ user

3.3 Selection of content

Curriculum content is a body of facts, ideas, concepts and skills that are presented, discussed and involved in the course. The content selected should reflect the pre-determined curriculum objectives and experiences needed by the learner.

While selecting the contents the curriculum designer should give attention that the knowledge to be selected must be of established value to participants and the society they are going to serve after learning and they should meet the needs and interests of the learners. What society has achieved, its institutions, aspirations, traditions, beliefs etc should guide selection of content. This is because some of these will themselves form the

content of courses. Due to the ever changing society, both local and international, it is needed to select from the abundance of generated knowledge and skills. There is need to remain current by replacing content that may be outdated, there is need to ensure quality as well as quantity, i.e., how much to cover on a particular course.

3.4 Evaluation and Assessment: Continuous assessment and final examination: In order to measure the success of curriculum there should be continuous assessment throughout the course as well as final examination at the end of the course.

IV. Education in Bangladesh

We can see the above aspects of curriculum if we evaluate the newly introduced curriculum in the secondary schools of Bangladesh. To make it clearer it is necessary to have an idea about the Bangladesh government's concern with education as well as the system of education followed in Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh recognizes that education is an important prerequisite for ensuring sustainable development. The country's constitution makes it obligatory to provide basic education to citizens and eradicate illiteracy within a given time frame. As a signatory to the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990); World Conference on Children's Rights (New York, 1990); and the EFA Summit Conference of Nine High-Population Countries (New Delhi, 1993) Bangladesh gives top priority to education. The education system and structure of Bangladesh has three major stages-primary, secondary and higher educations. Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7- year one with three sub-stages: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary. Higher education is tertiary education which ranges from 3 to 5 years. The Ministry of Education is the supreme state office for education. The higher secondary schools are known as colleges. There are also Madrasah (religiously inclined) and English medium schools which are enrolled under Madrasah Education Board and Foreign Education Board respectively. Besides this, a Technical Education Board has been established to administer the vocational training schools. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board is the authority to develop, approve and manage the curriculum and text books for primary, junior, secondary and higher secondary level. In 1982, the National Curriculum Development Centre merged with the Textbook Board to form the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). The NCTB currently serves as the national curriculum agency for the country as a whole and has been entrusted with curriculum and instructional materials development activities from pre-primary to pre-university level.

4.1 Secondary Education: The aim and objectives of secondary education are to extend and consolidate primary education; provide students with knowledge of various subjects and develop their potentials and abilities; prepare skilled man power for the country's economic development and enable the students to take an active part in society as good and responsible citizens. The subjects taught at the secondary level include: language, mathematics, science, religion, history, geography, economics, civics, home economics, environment, art and crafts etc.

The secondary curricula and guidelines for preparing textbooks were formulated in 1977. The corresponding textbooks for Grade vi-viii were produced during 1980-82 and those for Grades ix-x in 1983. At the secondary level (Grade ix-x) science education is optional and the general science curriculum is followed. Curriculum specialists, teachers, educators and planners have strongly advocated making both general science and social science required subjects in Grades ix-x. The curricula were reviewed in 1995-96. Secondary education is largely examination-oriented. Job chances depend on educational qualifications, because employers use educational qualifications in the recruitment and selection of personnel. Students and teachers follow strategies of learning and teaching which maximize students' chances of gaining the qualifications which will secure them a job

4.2 An overview of the New Curriculum in Schools of Bangladesh: The government of Bangladesh has implemented a new curriculum for students from class i to ix this year keeping in view the changes in the national and international aspects such as history, geography, social practices, science and technology, education, values, attitudes and beliefs. The curriculum has been changed after about 17 years to keep pace with the modern world and infuse ethical values in students of all education systems. The last curriculum was designed in 1995 and was implemented in 1996. Students from class vi to class x will have to take at least three new subjects-Bangladesh and global studies, job and life-oriented studies, and information and communications technology. Two new subjects *career studies*, and *finance and banking*-will be compulsory for students of class ix and class x. The new curriculum has been developed in keeping with the Education Policy 2010 aimed at building a modern Bangladesh. The government has given much importance to the teaching of ethical values so that students can learn to love the country and respect their elders. Besides 'netiquette, i.e., the etiquette to be followed in using net, has been given due importance keeping in view the idea of digital Bangladesh, which is a

vision of the present government. The changed curriculum will establish a uniform education system for students of class vi to class viii to ensure that Bangla-and English-medium schools and madrasahs have compulsory Bangla, English, mathematics and Bangladesh & Global Studies with the same syllabuses having a total of 650 marks. The new optional subjects include 'Ethnic Minority Languages and Culture' for the students of class vi to class x and 'Population and Development Studies, Human Resource Development, Human Rights and Gender Studies and Tourism and Hospitality' for the students of class xi and class xii. 'Bangladesh and Global Studies' has been made mandatory for all students, replacing 'Social Science' from class vi to class x. 'Ethics' will be included in religious instructions. Class xi and xii students will also have 'Information and Communications Technology' as a subject but there will be no course on 'Bangladesh and Global Studies'. The underlying principles behind the new curriculum are:

- Creating opportunities to develop patriotism on the basis of the Language Movement, Liberation War and of secular values.
- Emphasizing on morality and human values.
- Creating opportunities for inquisitiveness, creativity and innovation.
- Prioritizing scientific mindedness and work culture.
- Acquiring skills to use modern technology.
- Creating scopes for realistic and applied education along with theoretical knowledge
- Enhancing opportunities for life skills.
- Upholding human rights with a view to removing all sorts of discriminations.
- Developing human resources adaptable with globalized world

The special features of new curriculum are:

- Identical and unitary curriculum for schools and madrasahs,
- Inclusion of ICT, career education, Bangladesh and global studies,
- Inclusion of issues like climate change, reproductive health, autism, small ethnic group's culture and language,
- Learning by doing,
- Continuous assessment beside formative assessment,
- Constructive theory of learning.

V. English Curriculum in Secondary School

English occupies an important position in the curriculum of secondary schools. English teachers of the secondary schools are being trained on communicative approach under English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP). The present prescribed book of English language is 'English for Today' which is being taught in classes. The English text books under this title have been compiled by a group of curriculum experts entrusted by NCTB. The books have recently been revised according the guideline of new curriculum. The contents in the texts and the activities under each lesson of class vi to class x have been arranged in such a way that the learners are expected to be skilled users of English language in their higher study as well as in their practical life.

5.1 Aims and Objectives of Secondary School English Curriculum: The common aims and objectives of English curriculum of class 6-10 are firstly developing students' competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills so that they can use English language effectively in real life situation, secondly helping the students acquire appropriate language and communicative competence for the subsequent levels of education, thirdly supporting them to gain accuracy through grammatical knowledge. The English curriculum of class 9-10 aims at developing students' creativity and critical thinking through English language, helping the students become independent learners of English language by using reference skills, helping them use language skills for utilizing information technology and finally making them skilled human resources capable of using English language effectively.

5.2 Contents of the curriculum: The contents of the English curriculum of class 6-8 have been arranged in such a way that by following the curriculum the learners are expected to be able to follow instructions, commands, requests, announcements, use English sounds, stress and intonation appropriately, understand and enjoy stories, poems and other texts, interact through short skills and simple dialogue, conversations and discussions, read aloud texts with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation, understand written instructions and texts through silent reading, use dictionary and understand the table of content of a book, write answers to questions, short compositions (paragraph, essay, letter) and simple CVs and use punctuation marks properly. By completing the English curriculum of class 9-10 the learners are expected to have been able to describe people and places, narrate incidents and events in a logical sequence, ask for and give suggestions/opinions,

exchange personal information, participate in conversations, discussions, and debates, tell stories, surf net, recognize and use English sounds, stress and intonation appropriately while listening and speaking, listen for specific information on radio, television and other announcements, understand and enjoy stories and other texts (descriptive, adaptive and authentic) read and recite poems, describe a process, read and write formal and informal letters, CV, emails, use references and read maps, charts and graphs.

5.3 The Strategies Followed in the English Curriculum to Transmit the Knowledge Aimed at: The English textbooks of class 6-10 contain lots of dialogues, passages, stories and poems. The text books are arranged in units and lesson. Each unit has several lessons. Units of books specify the aims to be achieved by doing the activities under them. Before introducing the dialogues a general idea is provided. For example, the following idea is given in the first lesson of *English for Today*, (EFT) class vi-

'It is natural that when two people meet they would continue their conversation further. They may want to know where the other comes from, or what the other person does and so on. Here are some conversations in such everyday situations'

The text then asks the learners to listen to the conversation and practice it in the class.

'Mamun and his friend Akash have gone to a book fair. A lot of other people have also come. They are all talking, laughing and buying books. Mamun introduces Akash to someone. Because of the noise around, Akash cannot hear his name.

Mamun : Akash, I'd like you to meet-----
Akash : Hello! My name is Akash. I am sorry, I couldn't catch your name.
The stranger : James, James Collins, nice to meet you.
Akash : Nice to meet you, too. Where are you from, James?
James : I'm from England.'

The conversation is followed by questions where students are required to use the language they have seen in creating new dialogues. Such as,

'Imagine that you are at a bus/railway station. A friend introduces you to somebody. You couldn't hear his name properly for the sound around. Now make a conversation among you, your friend and a new person.'

It is notable here that when a model dialogue has been given the students will find it easier to create new dialogue. They will be motivated in this way to practise speaking in the class in front of the teacher.

The first Unit of EFT- class 7 specifies the following learning outcomes-

'After we have studied this unit, we will be able to

- follow instructions, commands, requests, and announcements and act accordingly
- use sounds, stress and intonation
- ask and answer questions'

This Unit contains 7 lessons showing what language to be used in different situations like in the classroom, outside the school, in the house, in the street, at the bookshop, in a restaurant and at the railway station.

Lesson -1 *'In the Class'* is divided into sections A, B & C. Section-A contains a dialogue between the teacher and the students. Section-B contains an instruction like: *'Read the conversation and act it out in pairs. Discuss this question with your partner: 'What does the teacher ask the students to do?'* Section-D asks the following questions:

1. Do you speak English with your teacher? If you do, when and how often?
2. Do you speak English with your friends and classmates? How often?
3. If you speak English outside the class, where do you speak it?
4. Do you watch any English programmes on TV? What programmes do you watch?

Lesson-2 *'Outside School'* also has sections A, B & C. Section-A contains some short conversation showing requests and replies. Section-B contains a gap filling exercise which requires the use of language shown in section-A. Section-C contains the following instruction-

'Make requests, using the prompts.

- 1 You want someone to help you with the washing.
- 2 You want someone to give you change for a one hundred taka note.
- 3 You want someone to wait a minute.
- 4 You want someone to carry your bag.
- 5 You want someone to call you a rickshaw.'

Lesson-3 *'In the House'* has four sections, A, B, C & D. Section-A contains a dialogue showing requests and replies used at home. Section-B asks to act out the dialogue. Section- C Shows a table with two columns, one showing some requests and the other showing some replies. Students are first asked to match the requests with suitable replies and then make another dialogue using the table and act it out. Section -D contains the following instruction-

Suppose your friends/relatives are coming to visit you. Write a dialogue between you and your brother/ sister on making your room. You can use words from the box.

'Take out bring push move hang (some pictures)'

Lesson-4 'In the Street' has sections A, B, C & D. Section-A shows a dialogue related with asking and giving direction. Section-B shows a map and asks the students to work in pairs and practise asking and showing direction of the places shown in the map. Section-C asks the students to ask for and give directions for a place in their upazila, town or city. Section-D asks to listen and practice some new words used in the dialogue.

Lesson-5 has sections A, B & C. Section-A shows a picture of a bookshop and asks the following questions:

1. What is it?

2. Where can you find it?

3. Is there a bookshop near your house or school or in your upazila / town? Tell about it.

4. Can you guess what the people in the picture are talking about?

Section-B is a listening activity where the students are asked to listen to the teacher / CD and answer the following questions. (The listening text has not been provided in the text to ensure that the students will find out the answers only by listening.)

1. What do you mean by 'in stock' and 'out of stock'?

2. Who are talking in this conversation?

3. Where is the conversation taking place?

4. How many books does the student want?

5. What books does he want to buy?

6. How much do the books cost?

Section-C is a role play activity where the students are required to play the role of customer and shopkeeper. To make the activity easier a dialogue has been given with disordered sentences. The students are to rearrange the sentences, prepare the dialogue and act it out.

This is as follows:

'Work in pairs. One of you is a customer and the other is a shop assistant. Make a dialogue saying the following sentences in the right order. Then write the dialogue in your notebook and act it out.'

• Thanks

• Hello. Can I help you?

• Yes. An eraser too.

• Fifteen taka, please.

• Here you are.

• Sure. Anything else?

• Here is the money.

• How much?

• Can I have a pencil?

Lesson-6 'In a restaurant' has sections A, B & C. Section-A has two questions based on personal experience aimed at developing speaking competence. They are-

1. Have you ever eaten in a restaurant?

2. If yes, where, when and who with?

Section-B is a listening activity where the students are required to listen from CD/teacher and answer some questions.

Section-C is both writing and speaking activity where the students are required to work in pair and write a dialogue. It reads as follows

'Work in pairs. Write a dialogue between a waiter and a customer in a restaurant, giving and taking orders for the following food items. When you finish writing, act out the dialogue.'

Rice, fish curry, dal, vegetables, fresh juice and mineral water'

Lesson -7 'At a Railway Station' has sections A & B. Section A is a listening activity where the students are required to listen to the teacher / CD for the announcement at a railway station and answer some questions. Section-B is a writing activity where the students are required to write a similar announcement as they have listened from the teacher for the passengers of a luxury bus at a bus station and give the passengers necessary instructions, including departure and arrival times, place and time for lunch break, etc. in the announcement.

From the analysis of the above unit it has been seen that in one unit all four skills are integrated in such a way that if the teachers can perform the activities in the class the students are most likely to be motivated. Since all the required activities are preceded by models students will find it easier to perform the activities.

It is notable that all other activities of EFT are based on communicative approach which emphasizes on all four skills and where the classes are learner centered and the activities are required to be performed through pair works and group works.

5.4 Evaluation: Evaluation is one of the basic components of curriculum. In a formal education evaluation is done through internal and central examinations. Internal examinations can have continuous assessment as well annual final examinations. There are two central examinations in the secondary stage, namely JSC (Junior School Certificate) and SSC (Secondary School Certificate). In the new curriculum 150 marks are allocated for two papers of English at classes 6, 7, & 8. Paper-1 of classes 6 & 7 consists of listening, speaking, reading and writing and paper -2 consists of grammar and composition. The paper-1 of class 8 consists of reading & writing and paper -2 consists of grammar and composition. 200 marks have been allocated for English of class 9 & 10, where 100 marks are for paper-1 and 100 marks are for paper-2. The marks have been distributed as reading-50 and writing-50 (Paper-1), grammar-60 and composition-40 (paper-2). There are no marks allocated for listening and speaking in those classes where students appear at public examinations (classes 8, 9 & 10). Allocation of marks for listening and speaking has been omitted from those classes for the fear of unethical practice in public examinations.

5.5 Types of questions in the English curriculum: Various types of questions have been proposed to evaluate students learning and thereby to measure the effectiveness of the English curriculum.

5.5.1 Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) : MCQ can be set for testing a number of skills related to reading such as scanning, skimming, reading for gist, inferencing (guessing the meaning from the context) comprehension check etc. In preparing MCQ questions, question setters are required to make sure that learners have to apply certain skills or strategies of reading in order to be able to choose the right options. Depending on the level of the learners, items will be set to test learners' lower order thinking skills (knowing and understanding) as well as higher order and more critical thinking (analyzing, evaluating or producing information).

5.5.2 True/False: True-false questions are typically used to measure the ability to identify whether statements of fact are correct or incorrect, which can only be done if the student comprehends the passage.

5.5.3 Matching: There will be two columns, one containing a part of sentence and the other containing the other part. Students are required to match the part of column –A with the part of column-B. The same text will be used but the sentences will be in different sentence structures.

5.5.4 Gap filling with or without clues: The text in the gap filling activity is separate and complete. The text for this item will have a meaningful context too. The gaps can be used for article, preposition, or any other parts of speech without verb as there is separate test for it.

5.5.5 Cloze test with/without clues: A cloze test is a fill-in-the-blank activity that assesses students' comprehension of vocabulary and reading passages or knowledge of grammatical items. Unlike the gap filling activity that tests a particular grammar item (e.g. preposition, article, pronoun, or verb) it is a test for vocabulary (key words) in general. This is why gap filling activity in the reading section is usually a cloze test. In contrast, gap filling activity is a merely a grammar test item.

5.5.6 Information Transfer: Depending on the level of difficulty and length of the text, information transfer and True/False questions can be set from the same text.

5.5.7 Substitution table: It's a grammar test item. It tests whether students can make grammatically correct sentences following any particular structure/s. It's different from matching item. In matching there might be equal number of texts in each column in a table and students need to make sentences using a text from each column. In designing the test item, the question setter can write the texts in Column A in a way that the sequential arrangement of the text makes a context. In a substitution table, depending on marks, there will be 4 or 5 texts in the left column, 1 or 2 grammar words that shows the form in the middle column, and extensions at the right column.

5.5.8 Gap filling with right forms of verbs: Sentences will be written in context in the question paper. Some verbs could be omitted or given in brackets without any form. If the verbs are totally omitted in the text, a list of verbs will be supplied in a box separately. Students' job will be to use the verb at the gaps in their correct forms according to the context and other grammatical considerations. Alternatively base form of verbs can also be supplied in the body of the text in parenthesis.

5.5.9 Changing sentences: A text will be designed with a certain context. Some of the sentences in the text will have instructions in the parenthesis on how to change them. Depending on the marks in the test item, students will be asked to change 5 or 10 sentences.

5.5.10 Rearranging: 10 detached sentences will be given and students are required to rearrange the sentences chronologically. This tests whether the students are able to understand the relation among sentences. The test objective here is the organization of sentences, not the copying of texts from the question paper.

5.5.11 Writing summary: A text not exceeding 150 to 200 words will be given for classes 6 to 8 and not exceeding 300 words for classes 9-10 in the question paper. Learners will produce a summary using one third words of the given text. For an example, if the original text has 150 words, learners will produce the summary in 50 words. However, 5% plus minus is okay. This answer should be written in random texts not in isolated sentences.

5.5.12 Writing a paragraph answering questions: Learners are required to answer the questions in writing the paragraph. However, if there are 5 questions to answer, it does not mean that students will write only five sentences. They will use sentences as per their discretion but the paragraph as a whole answers the questions. If there are 10 marks for this item, learners should be able to make at least 10 sentences. Teachers should keep an eye on the content rather than the mechanical calculation of sentences and assess the paragraph from different aspects such as grammar, ideas, communication, organization etc.

5.5.13 Completing a story: There will be the beginning of a story in the question paper. Students will continue the story and complete it. The answer will vary here. Completing a story when given at classes 6-8 would be more guided where question setter not only begins a story but also provides with some clues for the extension of ideas. Students will complete the story following the clues. Use of cohesion (inter-connectedness of the sentences) and coherence (transition from one idea to another idea) are important here.

5.5.14 Open-Ended Questions: Open ended or essay format questions are excellent for measuring higher level cognitive learning and overall comprehension of a reading text/passage. They allow the student to select content for their response, to organize their thoughts in a logical manner and to present their ideas on a given subject matter. Overall, these types of test questions allow teachers to test student's broader understanding of a reading item.

5.5.15 Writing letters/emails: Writing letters and e-mail tests students' ability to correspond in English and their writing skill as well. Correctness of language and style of expression is given more importance than the formalities of letter and e-mail writing.

5.5.16 Describing graphs and charts: Describing a graph or chart needs certain language abilities. This type of question will make the students equipped with different styles of writing sentences and play an important role in the development of their writing skill.

VI. Conclusion

The government of Bangladesh gives top priority to education and it is well aware of the need of the society and the qualifications which learners are required to achieve at different stages of their educational life. That's why the government has taken the initiatives to change the curriculum keeping in view the need of the society. In the above discussion of the complete curriculum of the secondary schools of Bangladesh curriculum has been viewed as the name of such a preplan that encompasses all the activities in the domain of education at the secondary level. While preparing the curriculum of secondary schools of Bangladesh the curriculum designers must have kept in mind the theory of Tyler that the curriculum has to be seen as consisting of four elements and four dimensions: objectives, content or subject matter, method or procedures and evaluation. This is why we can see that the newly introduced curriculum clearly has an aim namely making the students skilled human resources capable of coping with all challenges of modern world, harboring the morality and ethical values, keeping in mind patriotism and working with inquisitiveness, creativity, innovation and scientific mindedness. The newly introduced curriculum defines the strategies to be followed and the way to evaluate the skills achieved. Since English will be an unavoidable necessity for adjusting with the modern world it has been given due importance in the curriculum and all the activities are set in such a way that if the activities are done properly students are sure to be capable users of English having sufficient command of all four skills of English language. Identifying tasks and problems and seeking possible solutions, identifying difficulties and possible areas of resistance are some of the key aspects of curriculum. The inclusion of Bangladesh and global studies, job and life-oriented studies, and information and communications technology as well as finance and banking in

the curriculum of secondary school indicates that the curriculum setters gave due importance to these aspects. In fine we can say that the newly introduced curriculum of secondary schools of Bangladesh maintains all important aspects of curriculum and therefore it is well devised and worthwhile.

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