



SWOT ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK 2021 AND ITS TEXTBOOKS FROM GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

The education system of any country shapes its society by socializing youth with skills, values, and attitudes. Bangladesh declared its National Curriculum Framework 2021, which replaced the National Curriculum 2012 nine years ago, so the New Curriculum Framework is the first country's curriculum framework of the 21st century, which is known for competency-based education. The New Curriculum Framework mainly focuses on competency, which is interdisciplinary and skill-based education. Components of competency-based education are knowledge, skill, values, and attitudes, which provide interdisciplinary, comprehensive and flexible knowledge as the demand of the 21st century. This curriculum framework states how the learning experience will change — learners will be instructed in the classroom with real-life experience and content, and they will examine societal norms and values and be active in bringing about positive changes in society by eliminating all forms of discrimination. Therefore, a gender transformative approach has been adopted in this curriculum, through which every learner seeks to analyze gender roles by transforming unequal gender norms, roles, and relations to gender equality while working towards redistributing the economy and services in society to be more equal. Thus, in this study, we have covered the SWOT Analysis of the New National Curriculum Framework 2021 and the analysis of textbook content. Thus, this study reveals the implementation of NCF - 2021 by analyzing Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat.

Keywords: NCF-2021, gender, transformative, SWOT, learning competency, learning content, learning experience

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1. Introduction

The National Curriculum Framework-2021 was released on October 21, 2021, by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh. According to NCF-2021, *"In order to ensure that the knowledge and understanding of the definitions, features, mechanisms, and importance of competency-based education are reflected in curriculum design and implementation, competency-based education has been conceptualized based on the global definition and the national context"*. The spirit of all historical movements of Bangladesh is the background from which the concept of competency was inspired in this curriculum and established close interrelationships among the four elements: knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) was implemented in various educational systems around the world (Timothy & Hollan, 2024), including Bangladesh, with the aim of improving the quality of education and preparing students for the demands of the 21st century. In Bangladesh, the introduction of CBC in the education system has undergone timely decisions since the old curriculum is flawed in the limitations of the instructional design and evaluation system. In this competency-based curriculum, pupils experience their learning with a new instructional design; therefore, the gender discussion in this curriculum prefers a fresh look at the prevalent gender approach.

According to NCF-2021, *"a gender transformative approach has been adopted in this curriculum, through which every learner, irrespective of gender, will not only be able to grow equally but also learn to question the existing power structure and take steps to find and eliminate discriminatory elements from their family and environment."* As this curriculum focuses on experiential learning rather than traditional rote memorization, students will get out of the classroom environment and get hands-on experience with the people of the society through the learning process of group work, project works, problem-solving, identifying social problems, and trying to solve them. On the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Bangladesh secured the 59th position globally with a score of 72.2%, an improvement from the 71st position from the 2022 iteration of the same report. The most significant increase in gender parity was in education, achieving a score of 93.6%. While the gender equality rate in terms of women's empowerment in politics ranks seventh in the world with a score of 55.2%, the rate of women's participation in the economy ranks much lower, with a score of 43.8%, ranked 139 globally (WEF, 2023). In this regard, a competency-based curriculum will play a timely role in achieving full gender awareness at all levels by making pupils responsible citizens, as through this education, a student gets an opportunity to identify and solve gender-based problems through an experiential learning process. To make the student a sophisticated analyst and neutral observer of social problems and to know and analyze those problems, the new curriculum's textbooks have changed the areas of learning competency, learning content, and learning experience. Therefore, we conducted the study to analyze the concepts of gender in the new curriculum textbooks from class six to class eight of 2024, where we

analyzed the gender concepts in the learning areas of History and Social Science, Wellbeing, Art and Culture, Life and Livelihood through the SWOT model.

2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- 1) explore various aspects from the gender perspective of NCF-2021 and its salient features.
- 2) demonstrate how the learning of area-wise competencies and the subject-wise competencies are dedicated to gender education.

3. Review of the Relevant Literature

3.1. Competency-based Curriculum (CBC)

Carrying a variety of meanings and implications of the words like competence and competency, the meaning of CBC could vary from context to context. As early as the 16th century, the terms "competence" and "competency" were used in Western Europe (Mulder, 2007). Selznick created the idea of competence as early as 1957 (Alainati, AlShawi, & Al-Karaghoul, 2010). It was first applied to characterize the behaviors of students and teachers in the realm of education (Hoffmann, 1999) (Barman & Konwar, 2011). By highlighting Bangladesh's National Curriculum Framework 2021 (National Curriculum Framework, 2021), we demonstrated the fluidity of the definition of "competency" as it is applied in research throughout the globe. Various notions of competency have been applied in professional, training, and educational contexts (Kennedy, Hyland, & Ryan, 2009). A limited definition of competency has been used in certain instances where skills and competency are practically interchangeable (Adam, 2002) (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). Competency is defined by the National Curriculum Framework 2021 as knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes. Learners attain competence when they use information and skills in a variety of contexts, both within and outside of the classroom, in a confident, effective, and adaptable manner (National Curriculum Framework, 2021)

The process of developing a curriculum often starts with determining the needs of the target audience through scenario analysis. The philosophy, psychology, and sociology of the relevant parties are then taken into consideration while deciding on the national and state educational objectives (Molla, 2014). As explained in UNESCO's In Progress Reflection No.11 on Current and Critical Issues in Curriculum, Learning & Assessment, a nation's curriculum serves as the means by which it equips its people with the information, abilities, attitudes, and values essential for both individual and societal growth. Thus, curricula ought to address the demands of both the country and each individual citizen (Kabita & Ji, 2017). A curriculum that emphasizes certain abilities or skills that students must acquire to thrive in the real world is known as a competency-based curriculum (Roy, 2023). Although there are many ways to define competency, a

general idea has gradually come to be understood as follows: a learner is deemed competent in a given context if they are able to function there with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, morality, and other characteristics (Kennedy, Hyland, & Ryan, 2009).

It can be very difficult to build any competencies unless learners are related to their own settings; hence, taking into account one's own context is the most crucial notion when creating a competency-based curriculum (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). When Kenya began implementing competency-based curricula, the majority of Kenyans believed that a competency-based approach (CBA) was necessary to encourage application rather than just information accumulation (Kabita & Ji, 2017). Based on the results of a needs assessment study conducted in 2016, international best practices in education systems and curriculum reforms, and a desire to give learning greater purpose, the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) decided to approach curriculum reforms using a competency-based approach (CBA) (Kabita & Ji, 2017). In the case of Bangladesh, the curricular framework's concepts have all been thought to be heavily influenced by the spirit of Bangladesh's Liberation War (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). For the meaning of "competency," NCF 2021 explained it as motivated by the spirit of the Liberation War: the capacity to adjust to changing settings based on a mix of knowledge, skills, beliefs, and attitudes (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). As stated by the National

Curriculum Framework (2021) states, *"in the context of Bangladesh, competency has been defined as a combination of four elements. These are: values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge."*

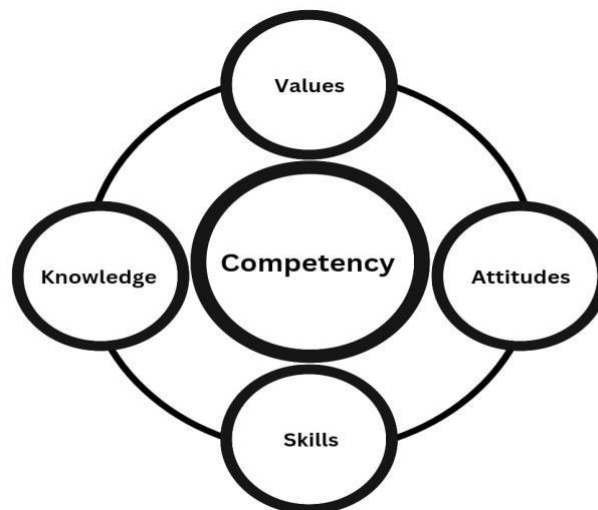


Figure 1: Four elements of competency adopted from National Curriculum Framework 2021, P.19

3.2. Gender Transformative Approach

The phrase "gender transformative" is attributed to Gita Rao Gupta (2000), who first described a range of distinct kinds of methods for addressing gender, sexuality, and HIV in a speech in 2000 (Casey, Carlson, Bulls, & Yager, 2016). In education, it is about providing children, adolescents, and young people in all of their variety with inclusive,

equitable, high-quality education and cultivating a gender-just environment (UNESCO, 2021). By eradicating disparities, gender-transformative education totally changes educational institutions. Gender Transformative Education challenges power structures, rethink gender norms and binary thinking and raises critical awareness about the underlying causes of inequality and oppressive systems. It does this by utilizing every aspect of an educational system, from policies to pedagogies to community engagement. The goal is to transform stereotypes, attitudes, norms, and practices (UNESCO, 2021).

Given the gravity of the current state of affairs, Bangladesh is eager to change society and adopt a more gender-friendly mindset. Hence, the National Curriculum Framework 2021 intends to make generations of pupils who *“will question rather than merely follow the prevailing norms and values of society and be active in bringing about positive change in society by eliminating all forms of discrimination”* (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). Using this technique will primarily help individuals of all genders (male, female, third gender, and so on) to engage in learning activities without facing prejudice, develop skills according to their capacities, and become capable of making their own decisions (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). Because of the curriculum's emphasis on experiential learning, students are no longer limited to the classroom; instead, they may learn from relevant and real-world experiences in their own families and communities. As a result, these learning opportunities will be planned so that students may confront the gender inequality that permeates society and engage in interaction with many stakeholders within their fields through a variety of activities.

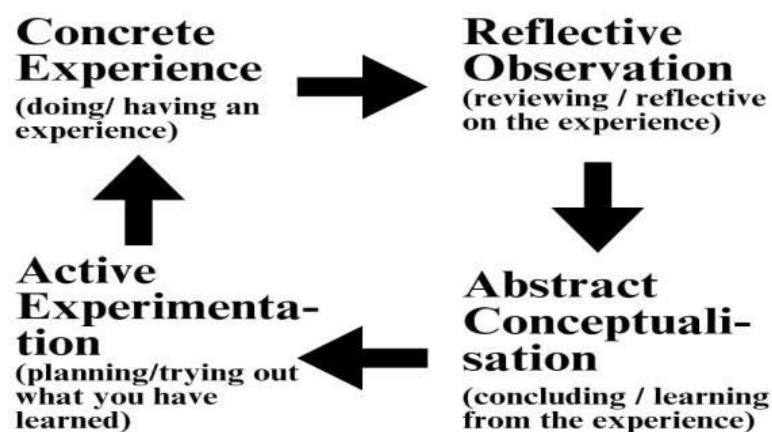


Figure 2: Experiential Learning Cycle adopted from Class Six Teachers' Guide, P. 11

3.3. SWOT Analysis

Swot analysis is a method used to assess an object's advantages, disadvantages, opportunities, and threats in order to build initiatives, curriculum, etc. It is a technique for methodically organizing and assessing any project, individual, sector, or company

based on these four criteria. It includes the thorough examination of both the internal and external components of the business or process in order to determine its viability and success (C.R & K.B, 2023). Although it is disputed because Mr. Albert Humphery never claimed to be the creator, it is thought by a number of writers that he invented SWOT analysis in 1960. Its four letters stand for "strength," "weakness," "opportunity," and "threat," with "strength" and "weakness" standing for internal elements and "opportunity" standing for external ones. It has previously been utilized to analyze the initiatives of different corporate organizations, assisting them in making wise decisions. Of course, there have been various methods to strategy formulation since then that need alternative ways of thinking—chief among them being Porter's work 6, 7. Nonetheless, the practice of analyzing internal and external assessments using a SWOT method and looking for a match between the two viewpoints is still widely used. Despite their doubts about its use, modern strategy textbooks nonetheless feel compelled to incorporate SWOT analysis (Hill & Westbrook, 1997). However, the education sector now also uses it. It works well to close knowledge gaps between teachers' pedagogical expertise and the practical applications of critical thinking in the classroom (AlMarwani, 2020).

Henry Mintzberg established the "Design School Model," whose primary tool is SWOT analysis. According to (C.R & K.B, 2023). Mintzberg divided strategic management into two schools of thought: prescriptive schools, which included design, planning, and positioning schools, and descriptive schools, which included entrepreneurial, cognitive, learning, political, cultural, and environmental schools. Using the SWOT paradigm, NAEM successfully performed research on ICT in ELT at the primary level (Ashrafuzzaman, Babu, & Begum, 2010). Textbooks continue to be a popular teaching tool and are used as an implement of the curriculum. The ESP textbook underwent a SWOT analysis (Wisniewska, 2011). Even though SWOT analysis isn't used much in textbook analysis just now, it's becoming a powerful tool for making wise choices and strategies.

4. Study Method

The research is based on deep analysis of the textbooks. In particular, 12 books have been selected and analyzed using the stratified selection principle. Stratification was made based on the three components:

- a) learning competency;
- b) learning content; and
- c) learning experience, where we analyze the content from a gender transformative approach.

The qualitative method was used for analysis of the illustrations, texts, and tasks. Several types of indicators have been elaborated for qualitative analysis:

- a) characters and characteristics of men and women;
- b) biographies of men and women;
- c) roles (social, political, cultural, etc.);

- d) functions; (by qualitative patterns and positioning of the heroes in story making);
- e) gender sensitiveness in learning content;
- f) inclusiveness;
- g) student task; analyzes their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Also, using secondary data, this study analyzes gender-responsive teacher tasks, teaching methods, teaching materials, school environment, peer relations, and social institutions to see how they could participate to ensure experiential learning.

5. Findings

5.1. History and Social Science

A. Class Six

Learning Competency

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing one's identity in geographical and diverse contexts and acting responsibly (Textbook, p. 2,3). • Realize personal identity (Textbook, p. 9) - and social identity (Textbook, p. 10-15). • Finding one's position and responsibility in society (Textbook, p. 3-6). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no specific chapter that is dedicated to child and woman violence and its law (Textbook). |

Learning Contents

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|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biography of Begum Rokeya (Textbook, p. 7). • Individual development (Textbook, p. 129). • Precaution about social bullying (Textbook, p. 166). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A biography of a 21st century icon could be added (Textbook). • Illustrate mainstream ethnic group man and woman representation, as this book is accessible for all (Textbook, p. 14). • The story of Dharmogola is a complex stimulus for figuring out the social structure, a story of child marriage and dropout of schoolchildren. In this scenario, the role of society could be added (Textbook, p. 125). • The role of young boys and girls during the independent war and the torture against children and women by Pakistan are absent (Textbook, chapter 8). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no specific content towards the third gender (Textbook). |

Learning Experience

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|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active experimentation on personal identity card making (Textbook, p. 9). Abstract conceptualization of social behavior (Textbook, p. 25). The rules to follow in the classroom and school premises (Textbook, p. 28). Concrete experience gender-sensitive ground rules for team formation are instructed (Textbook, p. 86). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of reflective observation on social identity card (Textbook, p. 10). Absence of project-based learning experience as a social identity (Textbook, p. 13). Evaluate the pros and cons of social structure from the students' perspective (Textbook, p. 133). Lack of abstract conceptualization on identifying the major problems (Textbook). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a part of social duty, finding out whether there has been any incident of child marriage in the newspaper or locality in the last five days could be added (Textbook). WED approach could be added to the natural conservation chapter (Textbook, p. 74). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experiential gender biasedness regarding teaching history (Textbook). Learning experience about which examines the real-life scenario of social problems that relate to children and gender violence is absent (Textbook). |

B. Class Seven

Learning Competency

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|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive in nature and acceptance and understanding gender diversity (Textbook). Women's role with the change of the social and political changes was highlighted (Textbook). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no chapter on oppression against children and women (Textbook). |

Learning Content

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding genders, inclusivity is on the focal point (Textbook, p. 1, 8, 32, 41). Unbiased position on gender roles was adopted in order to implement the transformative pedagogical approach by including gender roles knowledge, flexibility, and depictions from different cultures (Textbook, p. 11, 32, 35, 94, 128, 130). Content quality is comprehensive and conceptual (Textbook). Ensured inclusion of women's contribution in the fight for freedom against British Colonial rule (Textbook, p. 71). Challenged social stereotypes on gender issues (Textbook, p. 128, 130). The participation of women in directing government was included (Textbook, p. 130). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of gender roles and society's perceptions of them are inadequate (Textbook). There is no content on the contribution of women in the independence war against Pakistan, like Taramon Bibi and Sitara Begum (Textbook, p. 71). There is no learning content about the contribution of women in the present economic development of Bangladesh (Textbook, p. 64). |
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| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenged social stereotypes on gender issues (Textbook, p. 128, 130). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no knowledge on women’s contribution in economic history (Textbook, p. 23-31). Gender biasedness regarding teaching history and towards women was noticed (Textbook). |

Learning Experience

| |
|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive in nature and concrete experiences are cooperative and collaborative (Textbook). Active participation of all genders was enforced (Textbook). Abstract conceptualization activities to gather knowledge on gender roles from different communities were included (Textbook, p. 38). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no learning experience regarding the third gender with a real-life scenario (Textbook, p. 41). There is no learning experience regarding the differences between sex and gender (Textbook, p. 42). There is no learning experience on preventing underage marriage, which should have been there to understand questioning the social structure (Textbook, p. 94). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge on gender roles from more communities could be added (Textbook). |

B. Class Eight

Learning Competency

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoted freedom of expressing gender identity and promoted acceptance of gender diversity (Textbook). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no discussion on third gender identity (Textbook, Socialization chapter). There has been no specific discussion about social stereotypes and gender roles (Textbook, Socialization chapter). |

Learning Content

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given an example of “satidah protha” to prevent violence against women (Textbook, p. 60). Showing respect for the woman rights movement (Textbook, p. 19) and making effort to socialize pupils from a biased free environment (Textbook, p. 93). Acknowledged women’s contribution in the evolution of civilization (Textbook, p. 66, 67). Presenting women’s rights and honor in human civilization from the history of world civilization (Textbook, p. 110, 114). Presenting the development history of woman empowerment, especially in world civilization, significantly (Textbook, p. 97-104). Described gender discrimination in workplaces and its impact on sustainable development (Textbook, p. 176). Gives importance to women’s role in national development (Textbook, p. 104) and illustrate the famous Mina cartoon stand against the dowry system (textbook, p. 98). |
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| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of contribution of women in education where political contribution was significantly showed (Textbook, p. 105). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribution of women in social reformation (Textbook, p. 99) and success stories of women empowerment and its importance could be added (Textbook, p. 104). |
| |

Learning Experience

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By searching for self-identities collectively, it created respect for different genders (Textbook). Group works created respect for the opposite gender (Textbook) and by questioning traditional social norms and ideals, as these create discrimination or not (Textbook). Discussion about gender discrimination and gender equity at the workplace (Textbook, p. 176). Abstract conceptualization about women changing phases of political and social arenas (Textbook, p. 106). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More women could be added instead of five men in the individual success story (Textbook, p. 21). Abstract conceptualization about economic discrimination against women could be added (Textbook, p. 177). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflective observation about the success story of women's empowerment and its importance (Textbook, p. 104). Abstract conceptualization about different types of discrimination (Textbook, p. 179). Reflective observation about one's identity (Textbook, p. 14), active experimentation about societal norms (Textbook, p. 101). |

5.2. Life and Livelihood

A. Class Six

Learning Competency

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in occupations of men and women in view of the industrial revolution and development of technology in local, national, and international conditions were shown (Textbook, p. 34). Enables one to determine one's own goals and objectives in life by considering one's own preferences and abilities and to implement them. (Textbook, p. 38-40). Given multiple ways to identify school or social/local problems as an inclusive team (Textbook, p. 99). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to share responsibilities and attempt solutions could be focused (Textbook, p. 98). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no competency on the change of occupational status of the third gender population (Textbook). |

Learning Content

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal representation of boys and girls in family activities were demonstrated (Textbook, p. 3). • The illustration on changes in occupation follows a gender balanced approach (Textbook, p. 34). • Story making (Textbook, p. 80-83), and group wise communication were included (Textbook, p. 102). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The struggle of women workers during COVID-19 could be added (Textbook). And real-life story of women absents (Textbook, p. 89-90). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story about the occupation of indigenous women is absent (Textbook). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning content about the negative impact of gender violence as well as responsibility could be added (Textbook). |

Learning Experience

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete experience about work and responsibilities in school (Textbook, p. 19). • Concrete experience of working together and becoming responsible with each other (Textbook, p. 6, 97-98, 107). • Concrete experience about how to protect bullying and dropout issues (Textbook, p. 100). • Active experimentation of commutation skills (Textbook, p. 106). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks abstract conceptualization about the struggle of men and women due to changing occupation (Textbook, p. 34-37). • There are no activities of reflective observation of what types of obstacles pupils faced in order to accomplish their dreams (Textbook, p. 91). |

B. Class Seven

Learning Competency

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative and inclusive. Teacher's Guide, p. 6). • There is no imposition to specific gender to accept specific role and occupation. (Teacher's Guide, p. 7). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contribution of different genders in agriculture, industry, and service sectors could be added (Textbook). |

Learning Content

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|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the case of women's employment, it made an effort to break gender stereotypes (Textbook, p. 16). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular gender roles are often neglected (Textbook). • There is lack of information on genders contributing in several economic sectors. (Textbook, p. 39-56). |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no depiction of the employment rate of genders in various economic sectors (Textbook, p. 30). • There is no case study of women’s success in several occupations (Textbook, p. 35). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about the contributions of men and women in economic sectors could be elaborated (Textbook). |

Learning Experience

| |
|--|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete activities didn’t impose any gender roles (Textbook). • Activities regarding the ways of adaptability with the changes in sectors taking genders into account were included (Textbook, p. 34). • Reflective presentation included knowledge of technology regardless of gender (Textbook, p. 53-55). • No indication of imposition of follies regarding financial exchanges toward any specific gender (Textbook). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities regarding the achievement of knowledge of proportions of men and women in different sectors could be added (Textbook). • There are activities and suggestions on panel discussion with male and female occupants (Textbook, p. 33). • There could be indication of preventing underage marriage (Textbook, p. 109). |

C. Class Eight

Learning Objectives

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures gender equality by implementing experiential learning (Textbook, p. 6). • Encouraging women to choose careers in the STEM sector (Textbook). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The life and livelihood of third-gender people and their struggle are absent (Textbook). • Drawing real examples of women’s participation in various working sectors could be elaborated. (Textbook). |

Learning Contents

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represented women as entrepreneurs (Textbook, p. 22). • Promoted women’s taking higher education (Textbook, p. 26-28). • Participation of women in using technology was present (Textbook, p. 43). • Stories were added that represent women in the technological sector (Textbook, p. 114). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not make an effort to break gender stereotypes in the case of money management (Textbook, p. 8). • Did not make an effort to break social misconceptions about pursuing occupations like doctors and engineers (Textbook, p. 21). • Showed biasedness towards women in the garment sector (Textbook, p. 28). |

Learning Experience

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were group works, collaborative activities, and abstract conceptualization about the presentation of business ideas with added group tasks (Textbook, p. 75). • A group task is asked to discuss what needs to be planned to fulfill the dream (Textbook, p. 74). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no activities promoting pursuing various careers of indigenous women (Textbook). |

5.3. Wellbeing

A. Class Six

Learning Competency

| |
|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring active participation in identifying and addressing health risks and manifest concepts about during adolescence time (Textbook). • Strong experience in developing a positive attitude by understanding and caring about one's own and others' feelings was present (Textbook, p. 89). • Enables to accept or discard others' opinions and expresses them by rationally analyzing one's abilities and possibilities (Textbook, p. 72-88). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The students will know about health protection as well as facing challenges (Textbook, p. 47-50). • Providing knowledge that makes students aware of adolescence (Textbook, p. 47-50). |

Learning Content

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|--|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margin with appropriate age group and health care during adolescence and personal health and hygiene (Textbook, p. 9, 10). • Enables family members to express one's feelings, needs, opinions, and knowledge considering others' thoughts, feelings and behaviors in different contexts and social contexts (Textbook, p. 89-122). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no instruction on how to create a gender-friendly environment in the case of outdoor games (Textbook, p. 9, 10). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining enough knowledge to evaluate themselves and real-life problem-based solutions (Textbook, p. 52). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of adolescence risks awareness and knowledge of the demerits of child labor during adolescence (Textbook). • There is no clear discussion about social and physical issues girls face during puberty (Textbook, p. 49). |

Learning Experience

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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active experimentation on Self-awareness as well as being careful about peer groups were present (Textbook, p. 56-71). Organizing health fairs and identifying health problems through teamwork (Textbook, p. 30). Creating pupils respect value and expressing feelings and emotions through role-playing (Textbook, p. 115). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Absence of decision-making skills (Textbook, chapter, p. 41-52) Mental illness management. (Textbook, p. 9). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being capable of recognizing problems and seeking solutions and could include active experience in taking steps to protect self-respect (Textbook). Gaining experience in the practice of compassion (Textbook, p. 70). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The obstacles of indigenous people during puberty should be added (Textbook, p. 41-55). |

B. Class Seven

Learning Competency

| |
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| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of all genders were ensured and challenged societal gender norms (Textbook). Protection and inclusion of all genders and use of sound pedagogical approaches were ensured (Textbook). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of gender-wise nutrition needs was not added (Textbook). |

Learning Contents

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|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Depictions of social pressure on the gender aspects were shown (Textbook, p. 53). Cooperative interactions were promoted (Textbook). Knowledge of laws and required steps to prevent underage marriage were included (Textbook, p. 65). Knowledge of changing during the puberty period was on point (Textbook). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of changing during the puberty period could be more elaborated with basic scientific explanations (Textbook, p. 55-58). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-wise nutrition needs were not discussed, and lacks proper theoretical knowledge before going to the practical implications (Textbook). Knowledge of mental and physical changes during the puberty period was very short, and the steps required of girls' sanitation were inadequate (Textbook). |

Learning Experience

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|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative and cooperative interactional activities were included, and inclusive and responsive activities and challenges faced by the adolescents were included (Textbook, p. 54). • Finding and solving adolescence problems and changes in an inclusive way (Textbook, p. 65). |

B. Class Eight

Learning Competency

| |
|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoted gender inclusion (Textbook, p. 9-10). Created a sense of respect for any gender (Textbook, p. 9-10). • Gave effort to break gender stereotypes (Textbook, p. 9-10) and maintained gender sensitivity (Textbook, p. 9-10). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presented gender diversity as a power and beauty (Textbook, p. 9-10) • Gave effort to break misconceptions about gender and inclusion (Textbook, p. 9-10). |

Learning Content

| |
|--|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggested to consult with knowledgeable person on contexts regardless of gender (Textbook, p. 2). • Gave effort to break traditional gender stereotypes (Textbook, p. 88). • Gave effort to breaking gender stereotypes about work (Textbook, p. 17). • Inclusion of the opinion of all genders was ensured (Textbook, p. 121). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of depictions of women on the leadership of a family (Textbook, p. 10). • There is no content about the transition to adolescent period of third-gender people (Textbook). |

Learning Experience

| |
|--|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were group activities that promoted assertive communication (Textbook, p. 103). • Active experiment on solving the problems related to adolescence was added (Textbook, p. 81). • Concrete experiment about conflict management was present (Textbook, p. 115). • Mental stress management techniques were included (Textbook). |
| Weakness |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of manifest experience about gender-related conflict management (Textbook, p. 113-119). • Lack of reflective observation about malnutrition (Textbook, p. 87-94). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group activities about first aid treatment (textbook, p. 48) could be included forming an inclusive wellbeing club (Textbook, p. 49). |

5.4. Art and Culture

A. Class Six

Learning Experience

| |
|--|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concrete experience about inclusive group tasks on arts and crafts were added (Textbook, p. 56). The role of women in traditional festivals is illustrated (Textbook, p. 73), The role of indigenous women in Jhum cultivation is illustrated (Textbook, p. 75). |
| Opportunity |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The experience is organized around national days, which are International Mother Language Day, Independence Day, Borsha Boron. But there could be illustrations on other days like Children's Day, Women's Day, and May Day (Textbook). |

B. Class Seven

Learning Experience

| |
|---|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive in nature, and illustrations of genders in art forms and works were befitting (Textbook). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Famous women artists biographies were not included (Textbook). |

C. Class Eight

Learning Experience

| |
|--|
| Strength |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included the depiction of all genders in arts and crafts (Textbook). Inclusive group work activities and illustration of indigenous women's culture (Textbook, p. 24-25). |
| Threat |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no biographies about famous women artists of Bangladesh (Textbook). |

6. Discussion

Competency-based curriculum learning is accomplished through the organization of concrete experiences that fulfill the experiential learning cycle that is discussed in the textbooks, and through these learning outcomes, the student's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are enriched throughout the content. However, with the lack of teacher training, lack of proper classroom management, lack of learning environment, lack of learning materials, cultural factors, aversion to change, and lack of participation of the student's family and society in the learning process, there is a possibility that the providing of the student experience is hindered to some extent. So, to complete the learning process, some things should be looked at. The significant aspects are:

Firstly, it is important to give importance to teacher refresher training. Teachers need training on gender transformative pedagogies, enabling them to challenge rigid gender norms and make learning environments inclusive and free from stereotypes (UNESCO, 2023).

Secondly, the need for a gender-sensitive school environment ensuring a bias-free environment that is supportive of students' learning needs and where students can express their creative thinking is imperative. In particular, such studies highlighted the challenges facing girls with managing menstruation in schools with poor sanitation facilities and the potential risks of dropping out in such environments (Sommer, 2010); (McMahon, *et al.*, 2011); (Jewitt & Ryley, 2014).

Thirdly, family members should provide information through active participation in project-based activities that will help students gain concrete learning experiences.

Fourthly, the participation of all members of society will play an important role in this educational process as the students gain their experience through project work. So, if everyone in society gives a cooperative attitude, their learning process will be much easier, and the active presence of social and cultural institutions will play a role in dynamizing the learning experience, like the class six textbooks show the presence of active citizen clubs through which awareness activities are promoted. Students' involvement in activities gave them an opportunity to be involved and demonstrate their commitment to social change (RopersHuilman, Carwile, & Barnett, 2005). A Grounded Theory on Student Development by Bernardo stresses that although development is primarily a personal responsibility, it is concomitantly a responsibility of social agents. These are schools, government, civil society, the church, businesses, and other organizations that provide a better learning environment for the young.

Fifthly, one of the weaknesses of the History & Social Science textbooks we studied in the new curriculum is that they did not address any specific unit-wise learning experience on children's and women's rights, whereas the previous curriculum had a single learning content on it. For example, the Bangladesh and Global Studies textbook in 6th grade had "Rights of Children in Bangladesh," "Children's Growing up and its Obstacles in Bangladesh," and the textbook in 7th grade had "Rights of Senior Citizens and women in Bangladesh," "Social problems in Bangladesh".

Sixthly, teaching materials and teachers need to avoid using text and visual representations in the learning materials that reinforce gender-biased roles. They need to be aware that in presenting any learning materials, both genders should be given equal emphasis to avoid stereotyping. As a result, using gender-sensitive learning materials will lead to a good rapport between the teacher and the learners. On the other hand, many cases of our learning resources, particularly the instructional materials, do not equally consider what roles of both genders must be relegated (Kurki, 2015). For example: the depiction of men in leadership and story-making.

Seventhly, when teaching methods to integrate and treat both male and female learners equally in-class activities, mathematics, and science, teachers should know how to plan for both boys and females by creating a class environment with instructional methods and materials that support equal learning (Lee, 2021). These skills require teachers to be knowledgeable of gender-responsive pedagogy and be skilled in its application in the teaching process (DeJaeghere & Wiger, 2013) (Mhewa, Bhalalusesa, & Kafanabo, 2020).

Eighthly, in the case of peer groups (Martin, *et al.*, 2013), “*children reinforced each other to exhibit similar levels of engagement in gender-typed activities, thereby amplifying children’s tendencies to segregate by sex*” (p. 932). In this way, children themselves become primary agents in promoting gender-typical play and behavior. To some extent, while conducting the learning experience, the teacher should monitor the group work of the students so that the peers do not face gender-biased behavior from each other.

7. Study Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This study considered only four subjects for gender analysis; a better scenario could be seen if more subjects were considered and compared. We recommend considering textbooks of different subjects in future studies to understand if there were any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in this regard. We also did not discuss the quantitative aspects of gender education. Future studies could fill this gap. We considered only the analysis of gender education from a pedagogical perspective in formal education, not in formal and non-formal education, which limited the scope of understanding the whole scenario of gender education. Since non-formal education is conducted for dropouts, deprived of educational opportunities, and adults in Bangladesh, future studies can be done on how to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged women through competency-based education.

8. Conclusion

The National Curriculum Framework 2021 is a comprehensive and extensive policy document that intends to make responsible citizens of a person with the intention to uphold the spirit of the Liberation War and cherishes the practiced values that were set to be exercised by the pupils (National Curriculum Framework, 2021). By moving from traditional rote learning to experiential learning, students will be able to identify and solve their own problems. NCF 2021 emphasizes holistic development and equity in education to promote an accessible and equitable education system to all strata of society. Ultimately, positive outcomes are possible through proper implementation of the National Curriculum Framework that will help Bangladesh meet the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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