IMPLEMENTATION OF SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION IN PUNJAB: WRITTEN AND ENACTED CURRICULUM PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

The current study was framed to determine the gaps between written and enacted curriculum implementation determinants; teaching methods, instructional materials, assessment, and professional development of the single national curriculum early childhood care and education. The study was quantitative and based on survey research design. The study sample consisted of 300 male and female teachers selected through a simple random sampling technique. A self-constructed Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire for Teachers (ECCECIQT) was used to collect data from public primary school ECCE teachers in the district of Hafizabad. The content validated of ECCECIQT was ensured by experts and reliability was calculated employing Cronbach's Alpha score .936. The collected data were analyzed by applying mean, standard deviation, frequency, and t-test to determine the difference between teachers' genders. The study results showed that 64.18% of teaching methods were in use and 35.99% of the gap existed, however, 45.56% of instructional material was in use and, 45.44% of the gap existed. The results showed that 70.69% of assessment techniques were being implemented and 29.31% of the gap existed. Similarly, 66.46% of teachers were professionally trained and 33.54% of teachers were still not provided with training. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between males and females in the implementation of SNC ECCE but the mean scores of females were more than the mean scores of male teachers. Based on the results, it was recommended that the government provide funds for ECCE instructional materials by the curriculum. The education department and head teachers ensured the implementation of curriculum-based teaching methods. Teachers' training institutions provide curriculum-based teachers' training for effective curriculum implementation. Head teachers bound teachers to implement the ECCE curriculum according to its true spirit.

Keywords: *Single national curriculum, early childhood care and education, written and enacted Curriculum*

INTRODUCTION

A curriculum is a written document of an interrelated set of experiences for attaining desired educational outcomes. The curriculum is a disciplinary matrix that provides learners access to knowledge (Lee & Chue, 2013; Young, 2014). Various types of curriculum like written curriculum and enacted curriculum are reported in literature. Written Curriculum (WC) is a document provided by the state for educational activities. It is based on objectives, content, teaching methods learning experiences, and assessment for educational activities. It represents the educational goals and learning outcomes that Witten achieved by teachers and students. The written curriculum is a document provided by the state for educational activities. The Enacted Curriculum (EC) is the actual teaching and learning experiences that take place in the classroom. It reflects the dynamic relationship between teachers, students, and the learning environment,

showcasing the real-time implementation of the written curriculum (Cal &Thompson 2014; Rogoff, 2003). Revision of curriculum is an essential part of educational improvement. SNC was developed to foster social cohesion and national unity while providing all students affordable and equitable educational environment. A single national curriculum of early childhood care and education was revised like other subject curricula to enrich content, medium of instruction, and assessment for public, private, and Deni madras with the same content, teaching methods, and assessment based on a vision for universal and quality education.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is an important cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and language developmental stage for young children ranging from birth to age eight. The cognitive domain focuses on memory, and physically promoting motor skills, social-emotional focus on fostering building relationships, self-identity, emotional regulation, and language exposure to communication skills. This program emphasizes the development of first skills in literacy, numeracy, and critical thinking through a blend of play-based exploration, teacher-guided activities, and exposure to diverse learning materials for promoting social-emotional well-being, and fostering a lifelong love of learning (Government of Pakistan, 2020). When SNC ECCE was developed, the stage of its implementation started. Curriculum implementation is the process of putting theory into practice.

Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework is the foundation for the understanding of the research topic by drawing on established knowledge. The theoretical framework helps to define the scope of research and ensures addressing a specific gap in knowledge. It informs the methods chosen to analyze data and helps make sense of findings (Varpio et al., 2020). The current used Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theoretical framework with three primary constructs: implementation profile, innovation capacity, and external influences. The implementation profile contains classroom interaction, practical work, and assessment. The capacity to innovate is related to teacher and learner characteristics, physical resources, and school ecology and management. The external influences include professional development, learner support, change forces, monitoring, and physical resources. The researchers developed a conceptual framework based on Rogan and Grayson's (2003) theoretical framework. The current study's conceptual framework included teaching methods, instructional materials, assessment, and professional development. The study aimed to identify the gap between the written and enacted curriculum during SNC ECCE implementation at the primary level in Punjab. The results supported probing the enactment of teaching methods, instructional material, assessment, and professional development. The study results were helpful for administration, assessment institutions, teachers' training organizations, head teachers, and teachers in arranging teaching-leaning resources, teachers' training, and formative assessment practice. Despite extensive studies on curriculum implementation components, exploring the existing SNC ECCE implementation level is needed.

Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the gap between Witten and the enacted curriculum about teaching methods.
2. Find out the gap regarding instructional material between written and enacted curricula.
3. Find out the gap between written and enacted curricula about assessment techniques.
4. Find out the gap between written and enacted curricula about teacher professional development.

5. Find out the gap between written and enacted curricula regarding gender

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review of the current study consisted of a single national curriculum early childhood care and education curriculum, written curriculum, enacted curriculum, and SNC ECCE implementation. *A curriculum* is a structured plan of learning experiences designed to achieve specific educational objectives. The primary components of the curriculum were objectives, content, teaching methods, instructional materials, assessment, and professional development (Chue & Lee, 2013; Ediger & Rao, 2006; Wiles, 2008). Literature reported written curriculum and enacted curriculum as primary types of curriculum. The *written curriculum* refers to the official documents of what is intended to be taught in an educational program. It includes standards, objectives, content, teaching methods, instructional materials, syllabi, and guidelines prepared by education authorities (Porter & Smithson, 2009; Schmidt & McKnight, 2012). *Enacted curriculum* refers to the curriculum that is implemented and taught by teachers in the classroom. It represents the actual translation of standards, objectives, and plans for teaching and learning experiences. The enacted curriculum includes the content delivered, teaching methods used, and the learning activities facilitated by teachers' student needs, and available resources. The enacted curriculum is dynamic and influenced by teachers', contextual challenges, and interactions with students (Porter & Smithson, 2001; Remillard, 2005). The enacted curriculum recognizes that learning is a collaborative and evolving process shown by the dynamic interplay of teachers and students within the classroom environment (Cal & Thompson, 2014; Heimer & Winokur, 2015).

The concept of a Single National curriculum (SNC) was realized with the objective of "one nation, one curriculum". The SNC focuses on developing competencies in students that are needed to survive according to the demands of society national curriculum provides opportunities for active participation to implement learned knowledge, skills, and values in community affairs (Gibson & Brooks, 2012; Young, 2014). The enacted curriculum of ECCE includes pedagogy, learning environment, and interactions between teachers and children. ECCE refers to the program for children learning between births to eight years. ECCE is a comprehensive approach to nurturing children's cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, and language growth and development. The SNC ECCE provides guidelines for designing educational activities for tender age. This curriculum aims to foster children's holistic development in a conducive, child-friendly, and inclusive environment focused on the inclusion of values education, and 21st-century skills (Government of Pakistan, 2020). Early childhood is a pivotal period in a child's life, characterized by development in all domains. Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) plays a central role in children's growth and learning daily. Cognitive development includes mental thinking and problem-solving skills development. Cognitive development helps to understand the working of memory and attention span (Burger, 2010; Friendly & Prentice, 2016; Sommer et al., 2013). Socio-emotional development includes sharing, cooperation, and empathy during the early years. Positive social interactions and emotional support from caregivers are energetic for healthy social and emotional development. Language development is fast during this period, allowing them to communicate their thoughts and ideas well. They learn new words, improve their grammar, and activate to use language to

expert their emotions and needs. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills develop and engage learners to support their language development (Ashdown et al., 2012; Wohlwend, 2015).

Physical development includes motor skills. Motor skills are key developmental areas and are divided into fine motor skills and gross motor skills (Carson et al., 2016). Fine motor skills involve the coordination of small muscles, especially in the hands and fingers, to perform precise movements. These skills are critical for tasks that require attention to detail. Common examples include drawing and coloring, cutting with scissors, writing, and tracing, threading and lacing, and buttoning and zipping at the ECCE level. Gross motor skills involve the use of body movements, balance, and coordination. Common examples include running and jumping, climbing, throwing and catching, balancing, dancing or rhythmic movements, and riding tricycles or scooters. Fine and gross motor skills are important for writing, eating, and physical fitness, confidence, and participation in group activities. A balanced ECCE curriculum emphasizes activities that promote both types of motor skills to support holistic development in young children (Berk, 2013; Pica, 2011). SNC ECCE is the process of putting theory into practice. It involves articulating clear learning objectives, selecting content, teaching methods, and assessment and learning resources, to foster implementation (Zhang & Hu, 2010). To effectively implement the enacted curriculum, teachers must possess a deep understanding of child development, pedagogical theories, and the specific needs and interests of their students. They must create an inclusive and supportive learning environment that fosters children's curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills (File et al., 2012).

Single National Curriculum Early Childhood Care and Education Implementation Determinants

Researchers used teaching methods, assessment, instructional material, and professional development SNC ECCE determinants for curriculum implementation.

Teaching Methods

Any teaching way that promotes children's learning and satisfaction is referred to as a teaching method (Shah et al., 2022). Teaching methods at the ECCE level refer to strategies and techniques used by teachers to support the learning of young children that focus on holistic growth, including physical, cognitive, emotional, social, and language development. Key teaching methods used in SNC ECCE discussion, are storytelling, role play, and activity-based learning (Conde-Velez et al., 2024; Montessori, 2013). *The discussion* method at the ECCE level refers to an interactive and participatory approach where teachers and children engage in dialogs to explore ideas, share perspectives, and encourage critical thinking. Key features of discussion include participation, collaboration, curiosity, socialization, and scaffolding in young learners (Burger, 2010). *Storytelling* teaching methods at the ECCE level involve using stories to enhance children's learning and development. It is an interactive and engaging method that stimulates children's imagination, curiosity, and understanding of the world. Key features of storytelling include engagement, language, socio-emotional development, creativity, and cultural awareness. Storytelling offers a talented path for teachers to create an impactful and attractive learning situation (Isbell et al., 2004). *Role-playing* offers vital skills like ethics, morals, and empathy, and promotes a deeper understanding of difficult subject matter (Rogers & Evans, 2007; Suryani et al., 2020; Veraksa et al., 2022). *Activity-based teaching learning* emphasizes hands-on learning experiences to engage young children in the learning process. These methods recognize

that children learn best through play, exploration, and interaction with their environment and peers (Walker & Bass, 2015).

Instructional Materials

Instructional materials are the equipment used in school to facilitate the teaching-learning process. These materials take various forms textbooks, multimedia presentations, charts, diagrams, models, flashcards, worksheets, puzzle games, digital content, etc. The function serves to convey information, presenting content in a structured and accessible manner. Instructional materials cater to diverse learning styles visuals, auditory, and kinesthetic to engage individual student's learning needs. Moreover, they aid in promoting engagement, capturing students' interests, and fostering a more interactive learning environment. Another crucial role is their function in reinforcing key concepts and facilitating review, enabling students to review their understandings. Scholars like Skinner, Burner, and Gagne emphasize their significance in shaping behavior, fostering active learning, and providing instructional cues (Oppong, 2021; Tandika, 2022). Instructional materials are provided in the school for better learning. Teachers utilize materials to enhance attention in learning and promote effective participation in class activities to make learning easy, enjoyable, practical, and meaningful to the learners. Textbooks and resource materials are fundamental tools for effective teaching and learning. The absence of these materials results in a dry and uninspiring learning experience. Proper planning for instructional materials is essential for designing educational activities. A scarcity of textbooks, libraries, and facilities may constrain learning. To enhance the quality, efficiency, and productivity of learning, there is a need for better teaching learning materials, improved facilities, and human resources (Tandika, 2022; Waigera et al., 2020).

Assessment Techniques

Assessment at the ECCE level refers to the systematic process of observing, documenting, and evaluating the developmental progress, skills, and learning experiences of certain attributes of learning of young children. Assessment strategies are ways used by teachers to collect information about the teaching-learning process (Dixson & Worrel, 2016; Weeden et al., 2002). The best assessment provides information about motor skills, linguistic, cognitive, and socio-emotional development in the teaching-learning process (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007; Gullo, 2005). A checklist, portfolio, and Progress Report assessment techniques are reported in the ECCE curriculum document. A *checklist* is a tool used to track and evaluate the development, behavior, skills, and learning outcomes of children. It consists of a series of specific criteria, behaviors, or milestones that teachers can observe and check off as the child demonstrates them. This form of assessment is simple, systematic, and allows for ongoing observation in natural settings, and is widely used at the ECCE level. Developmental checklists, curriculum-based checklists, and behavioral checklists are commonly used checklists at the ECCE level. The checklist is used to chart, and monitor children's performance within an educational context (Bhargava & Kirova, 2002; Mok & Lam, 2011). *Portfolio* assessment involves collecting and analyzing information on children's progress, and growth over time in various domains. A key feature of portfolio assessment involves detailed developmental records of children (Helm et al., 2007; Wortham & Hardin, 2015). Teachers reported challenges in the portfolio reporting process. Portfolio strategic prompts enhance learning and students move toward metacognitive (Alacam & Olgan, 2016; Fernsten & Fernsten, 2005). A *Progress Report* is an essential assessment tool to provide a structured way to document a child's developmental

milestones, learning progress, and overall well-being. It serves as a communication tool between teachers and parents, ensuring a holistic understanding of a child's growth. It focuses on continuous observation and documentation of holistic learning progress (Meisels & Atkins-Burnett, 2004).

Professional Development

Professional development refers to the continuous process of acquiring and improving knowledge, skills, and competencies essential for teachers working with young children. Professional development improves classroom interactions and instructional practices, enhances teachers' ability to understand child holistic development, and strengthens the overall quality of ECCE educational services (Ackerman, 2004; Crawford & Hickmann, 2010). Professional development fosters a collaborative culture among teachers, encouraging the sharing of best practices and creating a supportive learning community (Baker, 2018; Helterbran & Fennimore, 2004).

Various studies were structured regarding SNC ECCE implementation, some of them are reported below. Khan and Abbas (2023) planned a study in Karachi, Pakistan to analyze a single national curriculum at primary and private schools. The study was based on a quantitative method. The data was collected through online Google Forms and questionnaires. A sample of 60 participants was collected through a simple random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using the chi-square technique. The findings of the study reported that ninety-seven percent of primary private schools in Karachi did not use the Single National Curriculum (Khan & Abbas, 2023). Mubasher et al., (2020) structured a study to analyze the implementation of the curriculum of ECCE in public schools of district, Lahore. The data was collected through a questionnaire. 278 teachers were selected as samples through a stratified random sampling technique. The results showed that there was a significant difference regarding the implementation of ECCE. Amin et al., (2023) framed a study in Sialkot, Pakistan to examine teachers' perceptions of (SNC) implementation. The study was descriptive and based on a quantitative research design. A sample of 389 teachers was collected through a simple random sampling technique. The result revealed that Gender-based differences were not significant, but teachers' qualifications had a notable impact. Iqbal and Tatlah (2022) design a study in Lahore, Pakistan to explore the perceptions of teachers about SNC and how teachers perceive their role in the development of the curriculum. The study was based on a qualitative research design and phenomenological approach. The data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews. A sample of 15 participants was selected from 4 schools in Lahore. The results of the study revealed a change in the medium of instruction is the major milestone in the process of implementation. Nawaz and Akbar (2022) structured a study in Punjab, Pakistan to find out the gaps between the Intended and Enacted Formative Assessment Technique: National Curriculum 2006 Perspective. This study was descriptive and based on a quantitative research design. A Sample of 361 teachers was collected through proportionate sampling techniques. The data were collected through a self-Administered questionnaire. The results showed that 59% of formative assessment techniques were used. And 40% gaps existed between written and enacted formative assessment techniques of the national curriculum, 2006.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

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The current study was descriptive based on quantitative method and survey design to determine the gaps between written and enacted SNC ECCE determinants: teaching methods, instructional material, assessment, and professional development. The researchers selected a sample of 300 public sector primary school teachers through a simple random sampling technique from district Hafizabad, Punjab-Pakistan. Self-constructed ECCECIQT was used to collect the data from teachers through the Google Form link and personally visited the selected school teachers. The content validated of ECCECIQT was ensured by experts and reliability was calculated employing Cronbach's Alpha score.936. Ethical considerations were endorsed to collect the data from respondents. The researchers guided the teachers in providing accurate data. The researcher shared the purpose and context of the study and briefed them before starting to fill in the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The collected data was analyzed using percentage, frequency, means, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test to find out the significant difference between teachers' genders.

Objective 1

Identify the gap between Witten and the enacted curriculum about teaching methods.

Table 1. *Teaching methods*

Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Gap	M	SD
Discussion	17.2	12	29.6	37.92	4.86	35.92	3.21	1.22
Story telling	16.54	0.34	16.04	43.94	14.2	43.86	3.34	1.14
Role play	22.32	0	10.6	66.76	0.34	36.1	3.22	1.23
Activity learning	18.7	7.42	10.1	58.18	3.48	28.1	3.31	1.19
Overall	**18.69**	**4.94**	**16.58**	**51.7**	**5.72**	**35.99**	**3.27**	**1.19**

Table 1 revealed that the mean was between 3.21 and 3.34, and SD was between 1.14 and 1.23. Overall M. and SD. were (3.27; 1.19). There existed a 35.92% gap for discussion, 43.86% for storytelling, 36.1 for role play, and 28.1% for activity-based teaching-learning methods. An overall gap existed in 35.99% of teaching methods.

Objective 2

Find out the gap regarding instructional material between written and enacted curricula.

Table 2. *Instructional materials*

Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Gap	M	SD
I was provided an ECCE teacher's guide.	22.3	3.7	28	42.3	3.7	54	3.01	1.22
ECCE teaching-learning resources were timely provided to the children.	18.7	3.7	31.7	42.3	3.7	54	3.08	1.16
I use interactive instructional materials in ECCE class.	3	19	.3	27.3	53.3	19.4	3.15	1.13

Learning corner materials (language, library, art, math, science, home) were available in the ECCE classroom.	19	0	27.3	53.3	.3	46.4	3.16	1.13
I use electronic gadgets/tablets during teaching	22.3	3.7	28	42.3	3.7	54	3.01	1.22
Overall	**17.06**	**6.02**	**23.06**	**41.5**	**12.94**	**45.56**	**3.08**	**1.17**

Table 2 shows that the mean of the statements was between 3.01 to 3.16 and overall M = 3.10, SD = 1.17. The overall mean values declared that respondents agreed with all the statements regarding instructional material. The overall gap existed in 45.56% of instructional material.

Objective 3
Find out the gap between written and enacted curricula about assessment techniques.

Table 3. *Analysis of assessment techniques*

Statements	*SDA*	*DA*	*N*	*A*	*SA*	*Gap*	*M*	*SD*
checklist	15.92	0.3	9.22	66.15	8.42	25.42	3.38	1.17
Portfolio	16	0	15.07	48.67	20.25	31.07	3.36	1.12
Progress report	20.2	0	11.23	68.43	0.1	31.46	3.26	1.18
Overall	**17.37**	**0.1**	**11.84**	**61.08**	**9.59**	**29.31**	**3.33**	**1.15**

Table 3 demonstrated that the mean of assessment techniques was between 3.26 to 3.38 and overall M = 3.33, SD = 1.15. Overall mean values declared that respondents agreed with all assessment techniques. The overall gap existed in 25.42% of the checklist, 31.07% of the portfolio, and 31.46% of the progress report during curriculum implementation. An overall gap existed in 29.31% of assessment techniques.

Objective 4
Find out the gap between written and enacted curricula about teacher professional

Table 4. *Professional development*

Statements	SDA	DA	N	A	SA	Gap	M	SD
I was provided with training on the SNC ECCE curriculum.	22.3	0	11.3	66.3	0	33.7	3.21	1.23
I got training in the effective use of curriculum materials like tablets.	16	.7	17.3	64.3	1.7	34	3.35	1.11
I got training on the ECCE lesson planning.	15.7	1	17.3	64.3	1.7	34	3.35	1.10

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I received training in developing ECCE instruction resources.	11.7	4.3	17	61.7	5.3	33	3.34	1.18
I received training for the effective use of ECCE instruction resources.	11.7	4.3	17	67.7	5.3	33	3.44	1.06
Overall	**15.48**	**2.06**	**15.98**	**62.86**	**2.8**	**33.54**	**3.33**	**1.13**

Table 4 shows that the mean of the statements for professional development was between 3.21 to 3.44 and overall M = 3.33, SD = 1.13. The overall gap existed at 33.54% of the professional development of teachers.

Objective 5
Find out the gap between written and enacted curricula regarding gender

Table 5. *Independent sample t-test on dimensions of* single national curriculum early childhood care and education implementation

Statement	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig
Teaching methods	Female	150	3.24	1.23	1.86	298	.13
	Male	150	3.16	1.16			
Instructional materials	Female	150	3.19	1.24	1.21	298	0.08
	Male	150	3.16	1.09			
Assessment techniques	Female	150	3.30	1.18	1.09	298	.21
	Male	150	3.20	1.11			
Professional development	Female	150	3.46	1.18	1.40	298	0.02*
	Male	150	3.28	1.10			
Overall	Female	150	**3.29**	**1.20**	**1.39**	**298**	**.11**
	Male	150	**3.20**	**1.11**			

Table 5 revealed an independent sample t-test on dimensions of curriculum implementation determinants, teaching methods, teaching methods, instructional materials, assessment techniques, and professional development. The overall mean showed female and male teachers (3.29; 3.20), and SD (1.20; 1.11) respectively. There was no significance between males and females (($t = 1.39$, $df = 298$) primary school teachers in the implementation of SNC ECCE, but the mean scores of females (M = 3.29) were more than the mean scores of male (M = 3.20) teachers.

Conclusion
The current study was framed to determine the gap between curriculum implementation determinants: teaching methods, instructional materials, assessment, and professional development of SNCECCE. The study results showed that 64.18% of teaching methods were in use and 35.99% of the gap existed, however, 45.56% of instructional material was in use and,

45.44% of the gap existed. The results showed that 70.69% of assessment techniques were being implemented and 29.31% of the gap existed. Similarly, 66.46% of teachers were professionally trained and 33.54% of teachers were still not provided with training. Furthermore, there was no significant difference between males and females in the implementation of SNC ECCE but the mean scores of females were more than the mean scores of male teachers.

Discussion

The current research was regarding the implementation of a Single National Curriculum Early Childhood Care and Education Grade Pre 1 2020 in Punjab: Written and Enacted Curriculum Perspective. The research revealed there was a gap regarding the implementation single national curriculum grade pre-1 2020. The present study revealed that teaching methods were 35.99%. Another research was conducted by Fazil et al., (2021) in Punjab, Pakistan. The finding of the study reveals that 77. 8% of participants extremely agreed regarding the improvement of teaching and learning abilities through a single national curriculum. The present study revealed that instructional materials were 45.56%. This gap is consistent with Malik and Asghar (2021) executed in Punjab, Pakistan. The finding of this study revealed that on average the separate allocated ECCE room, trained ECCE teachers, caregiver, ECCE kits, learning corners, teacher-made toys, portfolios, and furnished playgrounds. The present study revealed that the assessment was 29.31% this gap is consistent with Hussain and Maqbool (2024) executed in Rahimyar Khan Punjab. The finding of this study revealed that 81.9% of teachers agree that, with the help of ongoing assessment all students get an equal chance to improve their learning abilities. The present study revealed that professional development was 33.54%. This gap is consistent with Rafiq et al., (2023) around 40% of teachers in Punjab lack professional development. This shortage of qualified teachers is particularly significant in early childhood education, where teachers require specialized training to understand the unique needs and developmental stages of young children.

Recommendations

The study concludes that teaching methods, instruction materials, assessment, and professional development are primary elements of SNC ECCE implementation. Based on the results of the study, it was recommended that the government provide funds for ECCE instructional materials by the curriculum. The education department and head teachers ensured the implementation of curriculum-based teaching methods. Teachers' training institutions provide curriculum-based teachers' training for effective curriculum implementation. Head teachers bound teachers to implement the ECCE curriculum according to its true spirit.

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