Challenges Faced by the Grade VI Students during the Implementation of the New Curriculum Framework: A Case Study on Khulna University School

Arafath Bin Sohel [a++] and Kalyani Bain [a#*]

[a] Education Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna-9208, Bangladesh.

Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study has attempted to explore the challenges encountered by the grade VI students during the implementation of the New Curriculum Framework-2021. This competency-based new curriculum which emphasizes on innovative pedagogical approaches has been in implementation for grade VI and VII throughout Bangladesh since January 2023. A case study on Khulna University School has been carried out to conduct this study. The research questions of this study focus on the challenges relevant to teaching-learning and assessment and how those are affecting students' learning. To answer the questions classroom observations and semi-structured interviews of the students as well as the teachers were done. Then obtained data were analyzed by using thematic

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[++] *Student;*
[#] *Assistant Professor;*
Corresponding author: Email: bainkoli22 @gmail.com;

analysis technique from which major themes emerged. This Study finds that the students are facing a number of challenges including difficulties in understanding instruction and assessment criteria, lack of active participation, insufficient class duration and physical facility, irregular feedback etc. This study also finds that both the students and teachers have claimed that as they were not adequately prepared for a full scale implementation, the mentioned challenges are hampering learning by creating learning gaps and widening parental concerns along with financial issues. The findings have implications for the government, policymakers, curriculum developers, school authority, teachers and other stakeholders so that they can minimize the challenges that the students are facing. This study recommends that bottom-up approach, adequate preparatory time, effective curriculum dissemination, teacher training programs, improved learning environment are required for successful implementation of the new curriculum.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of curriculum has been in existence since 1800s [1]. Yasar and Aslan [2] have described curriculum as the constitution of education which guides an education system. Curriculum is actually an interrelated set of plans and experiences that a student undertakes under the guidance of the school [3] and it provides a structured learning experience that helps individuals to learn [4]. Curriculum has three main forms, tiers, or levels – intended, implemented, and attained [5,6,7]. Implemented curriculum is the form that has been put into practice in an educational setting [8]. Curriculum implementation refers to classroom activities i.e. the actual teaching-learning activities taking place in schools through interaction between the learners and the teachers as well as among the learners [9]. According to Sharon [10], implemented curriculum is crucial as it bridges between the intended curriculum (what should be taught) and the attained curriculum (what students actually learn).

The current education system of Bangladesh is divided into three education subsystems-General Education, Madrasah Education and Vocational Education. Among those General Education is the main subsystem since the majority of the student study in it. Traditionally there are three main levels of general education – Primary (up to grade V), Secondary (grade VI to XII) and Tertiary. The National Education Policy-2010 which is the first complete education policy of Bangladesh was introduced in 2010. Then National Curriculum was developed which has been in implementation since 2012. As curriculum development is a continuous process several research and technical exercises were conducted between 2017 and 2019 to analyze the current situation and assess the learners' needs based on which the government of Bangladesh has developed a New Curriculum Framework-2021 [11]. Bangladesh t has adopted this competency-based education system for addressing the country's growing demand and reducing unemployment problem [12]. A competency based curriculum focuses on critical thinking, problem-solving and creativity [13]. The new curriculum framework was implemented in Bangladesh in 2023, initially only for grades VI and VII. This competency-based new curriculum has emphasized on innovative teaching-learning such as experiential learning, learner centered practices etc. as well as on formative assessment marking significant steps for preparing students for the future. According to Ahmed [14] the New Curriculum Framework in Bangladesh is a commendable initiative that aims to transform the education system and prepare students for the challenges of the future while Hossain [15] is hopeful that it will make the learners well-prepared for the 21st century. By 2027, the new curriculum will be fully adopted at both Primary and Secondary level. Some of the other key features of the curriculum are learning through practical activities, learning by doing, no streaming at Secondary level, problem-based learning, inclusive education, integrating technology with education, emphasis on co-curricular activities, etc. By following government directives, Khulna University School has been implementing the new curriculum for grade VI and VII from January 2023.

According to NCTB [11] the new curriculum has been developed with an expectation of making the classroom activities more joyful and student-centric. But the experience of the authors of this paper is not the same. Since both of them are from Khulna University and the school studied in this research is located at the university campus, they noticed that students seemed to be

struggling after the implementation of the new curriculum. Besides, different aspects of implementing the new curriculum were very frequent in print, electronic and online media since the beginning of the implementation. All of these factors made the investigators inquisitive about this case and motivated to carry out this case study.

Purpose and Research questions: The purpose of the study was to explore the challenges faced by the grade VI students of Khulna University School during the implementation of the new curriculum framework. This research aimed to identify and explore the various obstacles, hindrances, and difficulties faced by the students while navigating through the new curriculum framework of Bangladesh.

There were three research questions of this qualitative study as following:

1) What challenges are the students facing when participating in teaching-learning experiences?
2) What challenges are the students facing when participating in the assessment procedure?
3) How these challenges are affecting the students' overall academic experience?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Approach

A case study within a qualitative framework has been conducted for this Qualitative study. All the research questions of this study are of exploratory nature. These questions deal with the challenges faced by the students during the implementation of the new curriculum framework which is the central phenomenon of this study. To explore this central phenomenon qualitative research is needed as Creswell [16] asserted that the intent of qualitative research is to understand and explore a central Phenomenon. Yin [17] stated that a case study allows empirical inquiry that investigates a compulsory phenomenon in-depth and within its real-world context.

2.2 Source of Data and Sampling Technique

This exploratory study has explored the challenges faced by the grade VI students during the implementation of the New Curriculum Framework. A curriculum has many stakeholders among them teachers and learners are the most significant [18]. As stakeholders, the teachers and the learners are directly involved in the implementation of the New Curriculum Framework. Since this study has explored the challenges faced by the students in the implementation phase, the source of data for this study has been the students as well as the teachers from grade VI of Khulna University School. There are 45 students in grade VI of Khulna University School and 10 teachers teach them. Among them 15 students and 5 teachers were selected as the source of data by using convenience sampling. According to Johnson and Christensen [19], researchers employ convenience sampling when they include people in the sample who are available, willing to volunteer for the research study, or who can be readily recruited. To thoroughly study the central phenomenon of this study, these requirements were needed. Therefore, convenience sampling was used.

2.3 Collection and Analysis of Data

Classroom observation and interview of the students and teachers were used as the instruments for collecting data. Open observations of the classroom sessions of grade VI were done at first and then semi-structured interviews with the students and the teachers were conducted separately by using interview guide.

Creswell [16] stated that observation provides an opportunity to record information as it occurs in a setting and to study what actually happens. When conducting this observation, the investigators were clear about the purpose of the observation i.e. how the students are receiving the classroom instruction, doing their classwork and understanding the assessment criteria or not. But they were not confined to these aspects only; rather they were open about getting any data from the observations. Total ten full-length classroom sessions (two sessions with each participant teachers) were observed for getting comprehensive view of the phenomenon. According to Bell and Waters [20], interview can explore responses as well as elicit motives and emotions, and it might reveal information that might not be reveled through a written response. This study utilized a semi-structured interview method, as Magnusson and Marecek [21] stated that semi-structured interview allows the participants to describe their experiences as well

as offer their reflections and opinions. After the observation of the classroom sessions, interviews with the student participants were done first. After that, for the sake of the triangulation of the gathered data and for getting a more comprehensive view, interviews with the teachers were conducted. Two different interview guides (one for the students and one for the teachers) were used to guide the authors through the semi-structured interview process. The interview guide often serves as a tool that helps the interviewer to ensure that they cover the important topics and acquire information with necessary details that is important and relevant for the research [21].

For the analysis of the collected qualitative data, thematic analysis was used. According to Braun and Clarke [22], thematic analysis involves analyzing and interpreting meaningful patterns (or "themes") within qualitative data. In this study, qualitative data obtained from the observations and interviews were processed by assigning codes, developing several minor themes and finally merging minor themes into 11 major themes which provide answer to the research questions.

3. RESULTS

Description of the case: Khulna University School is an educational establishment located at the campus of Khulna University, Khulna-9208, Bangladesh and was established in 2005. The school is under the Jessore Education Board and its educational institute identification number is 136990. From the starting days, the school has been a co-educational institution. Currently the school is serving both Primary and Secondary education (from grade I to grade X). There is a school managing committee consisting of seven members. The total number of teachers is 16 including the head teacher out of which 6 are female and 10 are male. The number of non-teaching staff is 4. As of November 2023, the total number of students is 317 out of which 163 are in the secondary level while 154 are at the primary level. The school has a one storied tin-shed building. The rooms are well ventilated but lack in other aspects as there are shortage of enough space, sitting arrangement and other physical facilities. There are 8 classrooms, one store room, one teachers' room and one head-teacher's room and a playground in the school compound. The school also has a small library and a laboratory. The New Curriculum Framework (2021) has been in implementation, initially only for grades VI and VII, from January 2023. This competency-based new curriculum has focused on experiential learning, formative assessment, inclusive education, integrating technology with education, co-curricular activities, etc. By following govt. directives, Khulna University School has been implementing the new curriculum for grade VI from January 2023 and in this academic year 45 students are in grade VI.

Analysis of the data obtained from the observations and interviews has identified the following findings reflecting the challenges faced by the grade VI Students of the school during the implementation of the New Curriculum Framework:

3.1 Challenges in Teaching-Learning experience

3.1.1 Difficulties in understanding teaching-learning instruction

This study has found that during the implantation of the new curriculum, a large number of students encounter difficulties in understanding the instructions while few students can pick those. Classroom instruction is crucial in teaching-learning methods, and in the new curriculum teachers are transforming into facilitators, guiding students with necessary instructions required for effective teaching and learning. However, a large number of students do not understand the instructions in and outside the classroom. From the observation and the interviews it has been found that as many students fail to follow instructions from the teachers, some of them simply don't participate while few of them try to participate by copying their peers or on their own.

One student participant has revealed, "Everyone does not understand the teachers' instruction in or outside the classroom. Sometimes it creates a problem because we don`t know what exactly we had to do." Later the participant added that the in the old system the blackboard was used extensively, allowing for proper understanding of the instructions, but now teachers are reducing their use of the blackboard. He thinks that if the teachers write the instruction on the board, it could have been easier for all of them. Meanwhile a few students have different experience as they don't find any difficulties in understanding the classroom instruction.

This study also reports that teachers also admit that students are struggling a bit with the changes brought by the new curriculum as it is quite contrasting with the traditional teaching methods; but they believe that students will adjust within a year or two.

3.1.2 Lack of active participation and difficulties while preparing themselves for learning

All of the participant students have acknowledged that they are not engaging themselves actively enough in the classwork. The new curriculum framework has brought some new innovations and changes in teaching-learning activities such as group-work, pair-work, presentation etc. From the classroom observations of grade six of the Khulna University School it has been found that every student was not actively participating in the group work while some of them were creating chaos instead of working. During the interview all the participants including both the teachers and the students have admitted that students do not generally participate actively in the group work. One student expressed his feeling by saying:

> I liked the new curriculum very much but I surely don't like the group work because everyone is not actively participating. I don't like this approach of them. I believe if all the participants had contributed equally our assigned works would be better and we could have got more marks. I think they are not participating by thinking that they would get good marks by the help of their peers.

Participant teachers added that though they are trying some innovative techniques like inviting all the participants to present their work to ensure participation of all the learners, they are failing to do so. One participant teacher reveals that he considers this issue as a challenge as all the students are not taking this new technique of teaching-learning positively.

This study also finds that majority of the students encounter challenges in preparing themselves for their studies while others navigate their process without any difficulty. Since the new curriculum has come out of rote learning and heading toward creative teaching-learning, students have to prepare them quite differently than before. One of the students said, "When I do my homework and assignments at home, I faced difficulties. I think, it is happening because the curriculum is new and it will take time for all of us to adjust". On the other hand, some students are quite good in adapting this new curriculum. One student said, "There is not much difficulty for me, first I try to understand on my own and if needed, I get my home tutor's help".

3.1.3 Insufficient class duration

All the students collectively acknowledge that class duration is not enough. The new curriculum emphasizes on prior knowledge exploration, connecting with prior experience, experiential learning, motivation, feedback etc. which are challenging the teachers to implement all these in the existing class duration which is 40 minutes. As a result, students are experiencing persistent issues and advocating for increased class duration. It has been found by the observation that most of the teachers couldn't finish their assigned work on time while some are facing difficulties to deliver the concept in such a short time that indicates the class duration is not enough. Teachers are struggling to manage time and complete their lessons effectively, affecting both students and teachers.

One of the participant students reveals that their class duration is not enough and it should be increased as many students are unable to understand the topics. He added that if the time duration was longer, they could have understood better. When asked about this issue one participant teacher replied that the new curriculum requires exploring prior knowledge, motivating, and engaging the learners in discussion. Despite having several training teachers are struggling to implement all these in the school's 40-minutes class time.

3.1.4 Concern about classroom learning environment

The majority of the students recognized the changes in the classroom environment though a minority of them believed it remains the same. The new curriculum of Bangladesh requires an effective classroom environment that facilitates learners to effectively gather classroom experiences. During the observations it has been found that the classroom environment has gone through a slight change from the traditional setting. While the teachers are taking the changes very positively and saying that in the new environment students are learning effectively with joy. Some of the participant students are concern about these changes and

express their concern that these changes make their classroom messy and chaotic. It has been also found that plenty of noise of the construction work around the Khulna University School was affecting the learning environment. Student participants address it as an issue and claim that it hampers their focus and causes headache.

3.2 Challenges in Assessment

3.2.1 Doubts in understanding the assessment criteria

The majority of the students claim about doubting understanding the assessment criteria while few students have no problem. The previous curriculum emphasized more on summative assessment for evaluating students' academic performance, while the new curriculum has brought changes in the assessment criteria. The new curriculum focuses more on formative assessment as the primary method to assess students' learning. Many students are confused about the current scoring scheme and struggling to understand the exact number of marks they are receiving, hence reminiscing the old assessment system. A student respondent shared his feelings by saying that, "I had better performance in the previous assessment system. Now I am getting less marks than before because I don`t know on what basis the assessment is being done. I am not sure about my success in this changed method". On the other hand, few students find the new assessment system easy and enjoy the fun activities. One participant expresses satisfaction as currently his marks are not being reported to home.

Participant teachers added that the new assessment method has sparked competition among the students. Teachers added that sometimes students are showing inconsistency in performance as they are struggling to comprehend the new methods and parents also need to be aware of how this curriculum works.

3.2.2 Gaps in getting assessment instruction

This study has found that during the implementation of the new curriculum, a large number of students encounter difficulties in understanding the assessment instructions while a very few of them are able to comprehend. It has been found from the multiple classroom observations and interviews that majority of the students struggled in understanding the

assessment instruction that indicates lack of clarity and transparency in delivering and getting the instruction. Student participants have admitted that many of them are facing this challenge and claimed that teachers are not giving enough focus to resolve this issue.

Teacher participants have also admitted this issues and one of them has shared his view by saying that it is a matter of huge concern for all of them that the new curriculum depends a lot on student`s activity but students are failing to pick the assessment instructions which will probably hamper the effectiveness of the assessment procedure. Teachers also claimed that the terms and language used in the assessment procedure is new and a bit difficult for them to understand, hence more training can resolve this issue.

3.2.3 Irregular feedback and motivation

The majority of the students claim that they receive feedback and motivation from teachers occasionally. The new curriculum has an emphasis on feedback and motivation as constructive feedback and motivation enhance learners' knowledge and thus contribute in effective and successful teaching-learning. It has been revealed from classroom observation that students barely receive feedback and motivation in the classroom.

During the interviews majority of the students said that they don't receive feedback and motivation too often but when they receive it, it feels good and it helps them to find their strengths and weaknesses. On the other hand, very few students claim that sometimes they have received feedback. One of the teacher participants shared his view by saying:

> We tried our best to provide motivation and feedback in the classroom. I know it helps the students in a positive way. But we had only 30-40 minutes to finish our classes which is very few to finish their daily activity. The curriculum offers numerous benefits in a classroom setting, but implementation can be challenging, limiting the ability to provide motivation and feedback in every class.

From the classroom observation and the statement of the students as well as the teachers, it is visible that students are not getting feedback and motivation in every classes which the new curriculum requires.

3.3 How Challenges are Affecting Academic Experiences

3.3.1 Lack of readiness

After the introduction of the new curriculum in 2023, some of the students find the new curriculum well and exciting while most of the students find it challenging and expressed their preferences for the previous one. All the student participants of this study believe that they were inadequately prepared as the introduction of the curriculum happened in a rush. Students looked uncomfortable, clueless and not convinced enough in the classroom which indicates unpreparedness. Multiple classroom observations reveal that many students struggle with understanding classroom instruction, assessment criteria, innovative strategies like group work, self-assessment etc. due to the sudden introduction of the curriculum.

According to one student participant, "the curriculum was introduced all of a sudden and we were not ready to face it. We could have prepared well if it took some more time before implementing."

Teachers have also acknowledged the lack of readiness and they have admitted that it includes not only the students but them too. All the teacher participants of this study have admitted that most of the teachers are not well prepared for the new curriculum as the current training session is insufficient. They also emphasized that any curriculum innovation should be introduced from the primary section to ensure students' understanding and currently many students are struggling to adjust due to their long experience with the traditional teaching-learning practices. Most of the teachers believe that it would take some time to adapt and adjust and the students will be ready within a year or two.

3.3.2 Learning gap

All the students have admitted that they are struggling to learn due to the challenges and issues brought by the implementation of the new curriculum. Students are facing numerous challenges e.g. difficulties in understanding instruction and assessment criteria, lack of active participation, insufficient class duration and classroom facilities, irregular feedback and motivation etc. It has been found by multiple observations that most of the students are not participating actively in regular classroom activities and assessment activities, rather they look confused and lost. All these are hampering the effectiveness of the teaching-learning and thus creating learning gaps.

During the interviews all of the student as well as the teacher participants have admitted that a huge learning gap is a reality now as they are struggling a lot in ensuring effective teaching-learning. One of the student participants revealed, "Yes, all these issues affect my learning. These issues may look simple but they create a big negative impact when I try to focus in class and even in my house." Another student participant shared her feeling by saying, "We lose our motivation quite often when we see these challenging factors in our classroom. Sometimes I can't even understand the classroom instruction, for that reason I struggle with my homework."

This study has got similar finding regarding the learning gaps from the teacher participants too. They have admitted the issues and have raised their concerns as these are directly affecting learning. During the interviews they also revealed that students are facing challenges both inside and outside the classroom and it creates doubt in their mind to focus on their study. According to one teacher participant, "Yes, undoubtedly there are some learning gaps. We are trying to resolve these issues as much as possible and in some years the students will adjust to it hopefully."

3.3.3 Financial issues creating hindrance

The new national curriculum framework has brought a change in the scenario of education in Bangladesh. The new curriculum incorporates innovative teaching-learning practices such as group work, pair work, projects, and assignments, fostering creativity and joy in students' learning. To participate in these activities students need colorful paper, pencils, pens, glue, `boards, digital devices like smart phone or personal computer, internet connection etc. which are usually quite expensive. This study has found that for financial constraints many students of grade VI in Khulna University School are facing difficulties in collecting and accessing these resources which are required for participating in instructional as well as assessment activities.

Teachers also admitted that they are aware of the situation that families with poor economic background are struggling to collect these

materials. This study has also found that to minimize this issue the school provides funds to the struggling families, but that is insufficient to address the current challenges. One participant teacher added, "We try to ensure that the cost of the required materials is affordable for all the students while providing instructions to them." From the interview of the students and the teachers, it is clear that this issue results in a major learning gap in a student's life.

3.3.4 Parental concerns

This study has found that a large number of the student's parents are concerned about this new curriculum. Curriculum implementation requires a collective effort from all the stakeholders including parents. While observing the classroom sessions, it has been found that parents are complaining to the teachers. During the interviews participant teachers and students of this study have also revealed that parents are concerned about the new curriculum as the changes brought by it are quite unknown to them, hence they are anxious about their children's future.

One of the student participants shared his feelings by saying, "Currently I am not getting any exact score (in assessment) rather I am getting shapes. My parents are concerned due to my inability to share my score with them upon my return to home."

However, according to the teachers, parents need to be aware of the situation and should have more knowledge about the new curriculum so that they can be able to understand what is happening and they can stay connected. Most of the teachers are hopeful that after some years everything will be under control.

4. DISCUSSION

This qualitative study has found that after the implementation of the new curriculum, a large number of students are encountering difficulties in understanding the instructions in the classroom while a few are able to pick those. Literatures show that this phenomenon is quite common when a new curriculum is implemented. According to Collins [23] implementing a new curriculum can lead to difficulty in understanding the instruction. This study also found that students are not engaging themselves actively in the classwork. Active participation is important for several reasons since it enhances conceptual

understanding and trans-active communication, and it improves the quality of teaching-learning [24]. Casanova [25] added that active participation is essential in order to learn effectively in groups. Besides, the majority of the participant students have reported about encountering challenges in preparing themselves for their studies while others navigate this in a better way. Geng [26] stated that the introduction of a new curriculum may bring several difficulties for the students including lack of adequate preparation which would affect the quality of learning. So students' difficulties in understanding the instructions and preparing themselves as well as the lack of active participation from their end would eventually hamper the effectiveness of teaching-learning.

This study reports that the students as well as the teachers are facing challenges with the time duration of the class. Literatures also acknowledge the importance of time factor in educational setting. According to Jones [27] class duration is one of the crucial components of teaching-learning. Proper and adequate time helps students to enjoy learning activities and complete tasks on time [28]. According to Johanna [29], student learning has been found to be significantly impacted by time management. This study has also found that the majority of the students can recognize the change in the classroom environment while others don't get it. According to Monteiro et al. [30] usually students are able to identify if changes in the classroom environment occur. On the other hand, Khan and Unruh [31] stated that it can be difficult for students to notice and respond to changes in the classroom setting. It is also found that the existing facilities of the classrooms along with the overall environment around are not good enough for ensuring effective teaching-learning. But Dhani et al. [32] stated that due to limited facilities, students face challenges which create massive impacts on their learning while Barton et al. [33] emphasized on proper learning environment for quality education and argued that along with other factors, a new curriculum usually requires adjustments to classroom setting.

This study has revealed that the majority of the students are struggling to get the assessment related instructions and especially they are in doubt about the assessment criteria of the new curriculum. According to Collins [23], after the implementation of a new curriculum students generally face difficulties in understanding the

new set of instructions. Matshedisho [34] added that when implementation gets started, understanding the assessment criteria is a common challenge for the students. He also added that students find it difficult to understand as they lack in having explicit knowledge about the criteria. If there is lack of transparency in the assessment procedures, students also face challenges [35]. This case study also revealed that students of Khulna University School don't get regular feedback and motivation from the teachers. Chacko [36] reported similar finding by stating that motivation and feedback are often overlooked. But Asnawi and Wariyati [37] argued that motivation and feedback have a significant impact on learning. Students' motivation to learn is increased when they receive positive feedback while demotivation can result from receiving negative or no feedback [38]. So irregular feedback along with lack of motivation is likely to create hindrances in the way of ensuring effective teaching-learning in this school.

This case study has found that most of the students find the new curriculum well and exciting while some of the students find it challenging. Literatures show that students may experience difficulties to adjust after the implementation of a new curriculum [39]. This study has also revealed that students as well as the teachers are not ready for the new curriculum. Education experts find it disappointing if there is lack of readiness for the new curriculum's implementation [40]. Purba [41] added that fast-paced curriculum development may result in lower academic achievement since the students face difficulties in adjusting to the new educational framework.

In this qualitative study, students as well as the teachers have claimed that students are having learning gaps due to all the challenges they are facing in the classroom after the implementation of the new curriculum. Prendergast et al. [42] reported similar finding by stating that the introduction of new curricula in various educational settings has led to learning gaps among students. They referred to 'Project Maths' in Ireland where the transition from a second-level curriculum to higher education resulted in creating learning gaps. Besides, Andrietti and Su [43] added that changes of curriculum have major effect on students learning and usually less-prepared students suffer more. According to Geng [26] the introduction of a new curriculum may bring several difficulties for the students which would hamper effective learning. When

students face various issues in the classroom, it impacts negatively on their learning [44].

This study also reveals that the students are having financial issues which cause hindrance in their learning. Hasan [45] reported similar finding and argued that since study materials needed for assignments and academic activities are not included in textbooks and must be found through independent study with digital devices, extracurricular books or other sources, the new system has raised the cost of education. According to Hardini and Widayati [46] students' academic outcomes may suffer if they have financial difficulties. It has also been found in this study that a large number of the student's parents are concerned about the new curriculum as they are not well informed about it and hence not convinced with the changes brought by it. This uncertainty stems from the boarder policy environment, the overall educational context, and concern for the possible effects of the changes [47]. According to Dini [48] parental concern plays significant role in student's learning as researches indicate that parental involvement in children's education can encourage students to be motivated and to learn better. So it can be said that financial issues and mentioned parental concerns are likely to hamper effective and successful learning of the students.

5. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that after the implementation of the new curriculum, the students of grade VI in Khulna University School are facing a number of challenges in teaching- learning as well as in assessment activities and these challenges are affecting their learning. There are learning gaps as they are struggling in getting instructions related to the new framework of learning and assessment, participating in classroom activities, preparing themselves for the study, understanding assessment criteria, getting regular feedback and motivation, having enough time and environmental factors required for effective learning. The students as well as the teachers and parents are not fully ready for the new curriculum yet and there are financial issues and parental concerns as well. These findings have implications for the government, policymakers, curriculum developers, school authority, teachers, and other stakeholders so that they can take informed decisions from their respective ends for minimizing the challenges that the students are facing. This study recommends that before introducing a new

curriculum, the government and policymakers should allocate adequate preparatory time to prepare the overall context and ensure effective curriculum dissemination to all the stakeholders specially the parents. Adequate measures should be taken to make the teachers, the students, the parents and other stakeholders well oriented with any curricular changes. Besides, Curriculum developers may conduct situation analyses from the root level. Moreover, conscious effort should be made to make the curriculum and textbooks simple and self-explanatory as much as possible. It will help the teachers as well as the learners to comprehend the curriculum better which will result in ensuring effective learning. Adequate time required for effective teaching-learning should also be allocated. As the new curriculum is struggling to ensure effective learning in spite of incorporating contemporary approaches, necessary measures may also be taken to improve the quality of teaching-learning by arranging capacity building programs for the teachers and by improving the overall learning environment. Effective pre-service as well as in-service teacher training programs and regular monitoring would be possible solutions in this regard. All the necessary resources including physical facilities, instructional materials, teaching aids should be easily available for all. Adequate budget allocation from the government along with the efforts from the end of the school authority and teachers are required in this regard.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This qualitative study mainly focused on exploring the challenges faced by the grade VI students during the implementation of the new curriculum framework. Future researches can be conducted focusing on the challenges faced by the students of other grades as well as by other stakeholders like teachers or parents. Besides, as this study is a case study on the Khulna University School, similar study can be conducted on a larger scale in the future.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

Confidentiality and informed consent were maintained while conducting the study. This study obtained permission from school authorities, informed participants, and ensured voluntary participation without forcing them, ensuring the study did not disrupt school and teaching activities. The participants were provided a formal consent letter, ensuring participant anonymity and stating that participation is voluntary, allowing them to opt out at any time. According to Creswell [16], researchers need to protect the anonymity of the participants in the process of analyzing and reporting data. This research has also consciously protected the anonymity of the participant students and teachers, ensuring their names were not disclosed in the research.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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