



Pedagogical Practices Under State Control: A Study of Basic Education in Nepal During the Panchayat Polity

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Abstract

The Panchayat era in Nepal, emerging after the short-lived multi-party democracy established in 1951, brought a party-less political system that significantly influenced the nation's educational, social, and economic aspects. Although the 1956 Nepal National Education Planning Commission proposed a developmental roadmap for education, it remained unimplemented. With the establishment of the Panchayat polity in 1960, the All-Round National Education Committee was formed to reassess the education system, leading to the 1971 National Education System Plan based on a comprehensive review of educational reports from 1951 to 1971. This Plan underwent both mid- and long-term evaluations, ultimately paving the way for the 1981 Curriculum Implementation Project. These reforms marked a systematic effort to restructure and institutionalize education in line with the Panchayat regime's political ideology. This study critically examines primary education during the Panchayat era, focusing on curriculum, educational objectives, pedagogical and assessment practices, textbooks, teaching-learning materials, physical infrastructure, and the financial system. Employing a qualitative methodology, it integrates an inductive-deductive iterative approach to thematic content analysis. Panchayat-era policy documents and educational literature form the theoretical foundation, with insights derived through both exploration and reasoning. Findings are systematically organized into critically analyzed themes and sub-themes to ensure analytical depth. The findings of this study reveal that notable efforts were undertaken to reform the education sector during the Panchayat era under monarchical rule. An education commission was established, and notably, Nepal's only fully implemented national education plan to date was executed during this period. The school curriculum was developed alongside the formulation of national, level-specific, and subject-specific educational objectives. Furthermore, ambitious initiatives were introduced to institutionalize scientific teaching-learning practices and modernize student assessment systems. Provisions were also made for determining the salaries and allowances of schoolteachers. However, despite these reform initiatives, the anticipated educational transformation was not realized. The prevailing education

system, which prioritized the glorification of the monarchy, the cultivation of loyalty to the king, and the promotion of the belief in the king as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, exhibited significant limitations. As a result, this education system underwent subsequent revisions to address its inherent deficiencies.

Keywords: Pedagogical practices, curriculum, contents, instructional materials, assessments procedures

Introduction

In 1951, His Majesty King Tribhuvan proclaimed the formation of a new democratic government in Nepal. This administration affirmed the essential rights of the populace, grounded in the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity (Chalise, 1968; Shah, 2020). The transition from the autocratic Rana regime to a constitutional monarchy, as enshrined in the Interim Constitution of 1951, represented a pivotal advancement in Nepal's path toward socio-economic development and national prosperity (Aryal, 1977). The constitution explicitly delineated the political, social, and economic rights of the citizenry. Recognizing the adverse impact of Rana rule on the country's socio-political and economic conditions, the newly established government undertook extensive reforms, prioritizing education as a cornerstone of national progress ((Kumar, 1991; Shah, 2020). For the first time, education was formally acknowledged as a fundamental right, prompting the initiation of significant measures to expand, systematize, and reform the educational framework (Gupta, 1964).

The period from 1951 to 1961 in Nepal's educational history is marked by deliberate efforts to establish a nationally coordinated education system (Amatya, 1983). During the preceding Rana era, educational opportunities were scarce and heavily restricted, resulting in the populace accepting whatever limited education was available (Krishnamurti, n. d; Kaushik, 1996). Due to the small number of educated individuals, Nepal did not experience the issue of white-collar unemployment that affected many other Asian countries. Given these conditions, there was little public concern regarding the shortcomings of the prevailing education system (Krishnamurti, 1972). In contrast, India had begun to challenge the "Macaulay System" of education within fifty years of its implementation, whereas it took nearly a century for such criticism to emerge in Nepal (Malhotra, 1966; Shah, 2020).

The Board of Education was established in 1952 but struggled to function effectively due to internal disagreements. In November 1953, it recommended forming a National Commission for Planning Education to develop a comprehensive education plan. Consequently, the Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (NNEPC) was created in February 1956. Prior to this, the 1938 School Code was revised in 1953. After extensive work, the Commission submitted detailed short- and long-term educational plans covering all levels from primary to university. For the first time, educational data were systematically collected, and needs assessments conducted. The Commission's formation marked a decisive step amid prevailing confusion, with the education minister emphasizing the need for a new system aligned with Nepal's traditions and aspirations. The Commission's report, *Education in Nepal*, is regarded as a landmark master plan for the country's educational development. The plan presents a comprehensive framework for overhauling the national education system, proposing a structure consisting of five years of primary schooling, five years of

secondary education, and four to seven years of higher education (MOE, 1961; Chalise, 1968). The commission set ambitious goals, aiming to achieve compulsory universal primary education by 1985. It also recommended establishing one multi-purpose high school in each political district by 1965.

In March 1956, the University Commission was established to address the growing challenges in higher education, as recommended by the Educational Planning Commission. The rapid increase in colleges lacked coordination, and changes at Patan University created difficulties for Nepali students (Rahul, 1996). The establishment of a national university became crucial for national development during Nepal's transition to democracy. After three years, the University Charter was enacted in 1959, granting exclusive authority over higher education institutions (Bhattarai, 1968). While Tribhuvan University filled a vital gap, it faced criticism for administrative inefficiency, lack of student selection, economic barriers for many students, limited focus on technical and professional education, and minimal research facilities.

In 1961, the All-round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1961) was established to evaluate the existing education system and recommend reforms. Following its report, in 1962, King introduced Nepali as the sole medium of instruction in all government-funded schools, excluding regional languages from consideration (Sharma, 1980). The commission advised removing English from primary education, a proposal the government adopted. These reforms aimed to promote national unity and reinforce the dominance of the Hill-based Nepali identity in a diverse, multilingual society (Sharma, 2015; Rahul, 1985). The slogan "*Ek bhasa, Ek besh, Ek desh*" (One Language, One Dress, One Nation) was promoted to foster loyalty to the monarchy and national pride. Consequently, Newari and Hindi news programs were discontinued on Radio Nepal in 1965 (NESP, 1971). Vocational education was launched in 29 high schools in 1970 and became mandatory in all high schools by the following year. Pilot programs for free and compulsory education were initiated in Jhapa, Chitwan, and some town Panchayats, with the government covering 25% of costs (MOE, 1971). However, financial difficulties led to the model's failure (Shah, 2013). During the Panchayat era, the Curriculum, Textbooks and Supervision Development Center (CTSDC), under the Ministry of Education and Culture, was responsible for developing curricula and textbooks for all grade levels (Sharma, 1990; National Education Committee, 1985). A committee selected textbooks, and authors received financial incentives if their work was approved.

The launch of the New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971 marked a significant increase in government investment in education (Sharma, 2012). This initiative brought all community-supported schools under direct government control, with the Department of Education assuming full authority (Sharma, 1990). As a result, teachers were absorbed into the civil service, and community involvement in school management diminished. The government declared the universalization of primary education as a key objective (Shrestha, 1981a). NESP was closely aligned with the principles of the Panchayat System, emphasizing the creation of a skilled labor force to drive national economic progress (Sharma, 1987). While the plan aimed to enhance educational quality and expand vocational training at the school level, its full implementation was hindered by limited financial and material resources (Sharma, 1962).

The NESP, 1971 failed to ensure quality education or improve access for economically disadvantaged families. As a result of its shortcomings, private schooling continued to expand. Although literacy rates showed gradual improvement, the quality of education in government schools remained questionable. Sanskrit retained its role as both a subject and the medium of instruction in traditional Sanskrit Pathshalas. Until 1974, private schools primarily used English as the medium of instruction. However, with the introduction of the NESP, 1971, Nepali was mandated as the compulsory medium of instruction in government primary schools. This change aimed to reduce social tensions between students studying in Nepali and English and to foster national unity. According to Caddell (2007, p. 268), the emphasis on Nepali “distinguished Nepal from India and served as a symbol of internal cohesion.” On February 24, 1975, during his coronation, King Birendra declared primary education free of charge (Shrestha, 1974). Subsequently, textbooks for grades one to three were provided free, and this provision was later extended through grade five with the expansion of primary education (UNESCO, 1984). Although textbook production was nationalized, the rapid expansion of schools without adequate infrastructure or trained teachers resulted in poor learning outcomes, contributing to high dropout rates and educational stagnation.

Methods and Materials

This article is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of educational transformations in Nepal from the political shift of 1951 to 1990. It draws upon detailed reviews of reports produced by various commissions, committees, and advisory councils established during this period. The analysis employed an inductive - deductive iterative approach to thematic content analysis (Creswell, 2015; Glesne, 2011). Panchayat-era policy documents and relevant educational literature served as the theoretical foundation, while insights were generated through both inductive exploration and deductive reasoning (Saldana, 2021). The findings are systematically organized into themes and sub-themes, each of which was critically examined to ensure analytical rigor (Merriam, & Tisdell 2015). Referential adequacy was maintained through continuous engagement with primary documentary sources (Wolfinger, 2002). To ensure the reliability, validity, and internal consistency of the findings, the themes were cross-checked against the original policy texts (Patton, 2015). Where documents were available only in Nepali, the relevant data were translated into English as necessary.

Findings and Discussion

This article draws upon a comprehensive study of the transformations within Nepal's education sector between the political shift of 1951 and 1990. It critically examines the reports and recommendations of various commissions, committees, and advisory councils established during this period. In addition, relevant supporting literature has been consulted to enrich the analysis (MOE, 1961). Thematic and sub-thematic categories were developed through a systematic methodological process. The findings generated through this approach are presented in the following section.

School Curriculum

The systematic institutionalization of the school curriculum in Nepal began with the establishment of the Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (NNEPC) in

1956. Prior to this, curriculum development had lacked structure and coherence. During the nationalization of education from the 1950s through the 1980s, the government initiated significant revisions of the school curriculum (CERID, 1989; Shrestha, 1981b). The NNEPC observed that language instruction occupied a substantial portion - between 40 to 80 percent - of instructional time at the primary level (Bhandari, 2000; Acharya, 1958; Shrestha, 1981c). The Commission proposed a structured five-year primary education program and outlined a comprehensive curriculum framework (DOE, 2003). To enhance the overall effectiveness of primary education, the Commission identified five overarching objectives: eradicating illiteracy; providing a basic foundational education to the majority of children; establishing a base for higher education; fostering the holistic development of children during their formative years to prepare them as capable citizens; and contributing to Nepal's political, economic, and cultural transformation (Bhandari, 2000). The recommended curriculum areas included language, social studies, mathematics, science, crafts, aesthetic arts, and personal development (NNEPC, 1956).

NNEPC, 1956 proposed a comprehensive reform of the national education system (p. 101). Among its key recommendations was the exclusion of English and Hindi from the primary school curriculum. The revised primary curriculum for Grades 1 to 3 emphasized subjects such as the Nepali language, social studies, science, arithmetic, crafts, aesthetic arts, and personal development, with English introduced only as a subject beginning in Grade 4. Additionally, the Commission suggested engaging educated but unemployed youth in translating educational materials from languages such as English, Hindi, Urdu, Sanskrit, and Bengali into Nepali to be used for textbooks and supplementary reading resources (NNEPC, 1956, p. 70).

Over time, the Government of Nepal recognized the need to revise and expand the primary school curriculum. NNEPC 1956 envisioned a structured primary education system based on a graded standard, wherein students would be organized into classes according to their cognitive abilities, social development, and physical maturity (MOE, 1971; Tiwari, 1978; Shukla, 1998). The Commission emphasized the establishment of a unified national education system characterized by a standardized curriculum, centralized examination system, and regulatory oversight. For the primary level, it proposed learning experiences across several key areas: social studies, science, language, arithmetic, crafts, aesthetic arts, and personal development (Acharya, 1957; Shukla, 2000). The Commission also issued cautionary notes regarding the implementation of these reforms. This commission writes:

It should not be assumed that these experiences need to be unrelated or provided as separate "subjects". Indeed, many of them cannot be separated.... The commission believes that primary education should be highly integrated and that insofar as possible the experiences should be organized around broad, central themes or units which may be studied for three to six weeks or longer and which involve as many different types of activities as possible. (NNEPC, 1956, p. 94).

In 1959, the Department of Education undertook a revision of the primary and middle school curricula, integrating key recommendations from NNEPC, 1956. The revised primary curriculum included subjects such as Nepali, Mathematics, English, Art

Education, Health and Physical Science, Vocational Education, and Social Studies (Shah, 2020).

The All-Round National Education Committee (ARNEC, 1961) proposed a five-year structure for primary education, encompassing Grades I through V. ARNEC conceptualized education as a process of behavioral transformation in children, emphasizing the cultivation of positive habits as the core of quality education (MOE, 1997; DOE, 2010). Although the committee did not explicitly formulate general objectives for primary education, it identified the development of essential and constructive habits as its fundamental aim (Acharya, 1958). ARNEC, 1961 recommended age-specific grade placement, suggesting that children begin Grade I at the age of six, Grade II at seven, and so forth. Notably, the committee did not offer an explanation for its departure from the “graded standard” model previously proposed by the NNEPC, 1956. In terms of curriculum, ARNEC, 1961 outlined seven key subjects for the primary level: Language, Social Studies, Science and Health Education, Mathematics, Arts, Self-Reliance Education, and Physical Education.

During the 1960s, the Education Materials Commission undertook a revision of the existing school curriculum, introducing only minor modifications. During this period, Nepal adopted an English education curriculum model similar to that used in India. However, the NESP, 1971 reaffirmed the prioritization of the Nepali language, granting it the most prominent position within the school curriculum (Acharya, 1965). Specifically, Nepali was allocated 300 marks, followed by 200 marks for arithmetic, 100 marks each for social studies, physical education, and hygiene, and 50 marks for handicrafts and drawing.

This policy direction led to the institutional mainstreaming of Nepali as the official language across public institutions (Bista, 1991). It was reinforced through state-controlled media and mandated for use in citizenship applications and official documentation (Acharya Dixit, 1972; Sharma, 1962). However, this strong nationalization of education and the disproportionate emphasis on the Nepali language encountered resistance from two main groups. Firstly, teachers of English began to express concern, particularly as the government aimed to extend Nepali-medium instruction to universities. Malla (1977) noted that 78 percent of students failed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination, with the majority of failures attributed to poor performance in English. (Acharya Dixit, 1972).

In the late 1960s, both education experts and the general public in Nepal recognized the education system’s failure to address the diverse needs of society. Scholars criticized the existing system as dull, uninspiring, and overly ritualistic (Bista, 1994; Chalise, 1968). Widespread dissatisfaction with the prevailing education framework prompted the government to establish the National Education Advisory Council in 1968. This council was tasked with evaluating the education system and formulating a plan aligned with the Partyless Panchayat political structure and the country’s developmental priorities. As a result, NESP, 1971 was introduced as Nepal’s first comprehensive educational policy. The NESP sharply criticized the existing system for being elitist, biased, ambiguous, ineffective, and unsatisfactory. It highlighted that the education system failed to meet the needs, interests, and aspirations of the broader

population (Bhandari, 1968). The plan emphasized the need to unify education into a single, productive system capable of serving the nation's goals and aspirations.

Recognizing the challenges within the education sector, the government established the National Education Advisory Council in 1968 to assess the existing conditions and develop a strategy aligned with the political framework of the Partyless Panchayat system and the country's developmental requirements. This initiative led to the formulation of Nepal's first comprehensive educational policy, NESP, 1971 (Baral, 1977). The plan offered a critical evaluation of the then-current education system, describing it as elitist, biased, vague, ineffective, and unsatisfactory. Summarizing the plan's core critique, NESP (1971) asserts:

The plan is primarily aimed at counteracting the elitist bias of the inherited system of education by linking it more effectively to productive enterprises and egalitarian principles. It, in brief, is committed to tackle irrelevant and disorganized variety of education that still exists in the country. The plan calls for unifying education into one productive system that serves the country's needs and aspirations. (p.1)

NESP, 1971 proposed that the primary level curriculum should focus on developing basic skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic, alongside practical instruction related to everyday life, particularly foundational knowledge of agriculture. For grades I to III, the curriculum included Nepali Language, Arithmetic, Social Studies, Physical Education and Hygiene, Handicrafts, and Drawing (Bhattarai, 1968). For grades IV and V, the subjects comprised Nepali Language, one of the United Nations (UN) languages, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, Pre-vocational Training, and Physical Education and Hygiene. The NESP aimed to design a curriculum that fostered character development, loyalty, and respect for labor, as articulated in the report:

This is the appropriate level for character-building. Classroom teaching will, therefore, lay stress on the lives of national heroes and the contribution of the Royal Family to the development and enhancement of the country. Extra-curricular activities will be designed to foster patriotism, loyalty, sense of discipline, appropriate motivation and right skills.... An attempt should be made at this stage to inculcate love and respect for labour.... This is the right stage to initiate efforts at making education vocation-oriented and socially useful. (NESP, (1971)

NESP, 1971 established a structured educational framework consisting of three levels: primary school covering grades I to III, lower secondary school encompassing grades IV to VII, and secondary school including grades VIII to X. Concurrently, NESP, 1971 developed a unified curriculum applicable to all schools. The primary education curriculum introduced under NESP comprised subjects such as Nepali language, mathematics, social studies, physical education, hygiene, handicrafts, and drawing.

Between 1971 and 1980, the government undertook various initiatives to implement the National Education System Plan as originally envisioned. However, from the outset, many teachers found the restructured curriculum, new lesson plans, and revised evaluation system to be confusing. Mid-term and final evaluations of the plan's implementation revealed a significant disparity between the intended curriculum and what was actually delivered (Bista, 1991; Shah, 2013). Both

assessments highlighted that there were no substantial changes in the curriculum, teaching methodologies, or evaluation practices. The curriculum remained largely theoretical and disconnected from practical realities, teaching lacked interactivity and applicability, and although the frequency of assessments increased, there was no corresponding improvement in testing tools, methods, or the utilization of results (Bista, 1994). The full-term evaluation team thoroughly reviewed the plan and recommended changes to the education structure. Consequently, in 1981, the decade-old system was revised, reintroducing five years of primary education to make schooling more accessible and improve children's literacy retention (Caddell, 2007).

Table 1: Primary education curriculum (CIP-1981)

| S. N. | Subjects | Grade I-III | Grade IV-V | Grade VI-VI |
|-------|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1 | Nepali | 300 | 150 | 120 |
| 2 | Mathematics | 200 | 100 | 100 |
| 3 | Social Studies | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 4 | Physical education, Hygiene, Handicrafts, and Drawing | 50 | - | - |
| 5 | Sanskrit | - | 50 | 30 |
| 6 | English | - | 100 | 100 |
| 7 | Physical Education | - | 50 | 50 |
| 8 | Science and Health Education | | 70+30 (100) | 80+20 (100) |
| 9 | Moral Education | - | 50 | 50 |
| 10 | Pre-vocational Education | - | - | 50 |

Source: Shah, (2013)

Objectives of the Primary Education Curriculum

As both a blueprint for a school's instructional programme and a guide for classroom teaching, the primary education curriculum holds a vital role within a nation's educational framework (MOE, 2009). Fundamentally, it embodies the character, emphasis, and trajectory of the overall educational agenda (MOE, 1999a; Amaty, 2004). Therefore, the curriculum warrants careful and systematic examination over time to reveal the evolving trends, inherent potentials, and future prospects of a robust and responsive education system - one that aligns with the dynamic needs and expectations of a changing society (Cavenagh, 1851).

Until the 1950s - and in many cases even into the 1960s - the concept of curriculum in Nepal was largely underdeveloped and often perceived as an outdated notion within the educational discourse (Dixit, 1964; Reed, & Reed, 1968; Adhikari, 2021). During this period, educational practice primarily involved prescribing subject content to be taught, while other critical components such as skill development, attitude formation, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methods were left entirely to the discretion of individual teachers (MOE, 2000). In essence, curriculum was narrowly equated with the syllabus or list of topics to be covered, with little to no consideration for the holistic development of the child or the evolving needs of society (Adhikari, 1984).

A significant turning point came with the establishment of the Curriculum Development Centre in the early 1970s, marking the initiation of a more systematic approach to the design, development, and implementation of school curricula (Regmi, 1958). This movement gained institutional permanence with the introduction of NESP, 1971, which mandated a standardized national curriculum (Maskey, 1996;

Aryal, 1977). NESP aimed to promote national integration and ensure a consistent quality of education across the country, thereby embedding curriculum planning as an essential and strategic component of Nepal's educational system (Hedrick, & Hedrick, 1972; Regmi, 1958). Promoting literacy has consistently remained a central objective of primary education in Nepal since the inception of modern education. In recent years, however, there has been a growing emphasis on fostering the holistic development of the child (Regmi, 1950). Although not formally recognized as primary schools in the contemporary sense, religious institutions operated by Hindus, Buddhists, and others have traditionally provided instruction in sacred texts for centuries (Aryal, 1970).

The establishment of Durbar High School in 1854 marked a significant milestone, with the primary aim of teaching English to facilitate communication with the British colonial administration in neighboring India (Kumar, 1967). Later, during the late 1940s, basic education schools were introduced in various parts of the country (Jha, 1987). These institutions aimed to equip students with fundamental vocational skills to promote self-employment. However, the initiative was met with limited public support, primarily because graduates of these schools encountered a lack of opportunities for further education, leaving them with few viable paths for academic or professional advancement (Kasaju, & Joshi 1977).

NNEPC, 1956 and ARNEC, 1961 recommended that the primary education system should focus on fostering responsible citizenship, instilling loyalty to the monarchy and the nation, and cultivating proper behavior, including cleanliness, respect for elders, and other moral values. NESP, 1971 incorporated many of the relevant objectives proposed by both NNEPC and ARNEC (Regmi, 1975). Later, in 1981, the goals of primary education were further refined to emphasize children's social and physical development, the formation of good habits and discipline, and the nurturing of character.

A detailed list of the aims of primary education can be found in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Comparison of objectives of primary education (Part-I)

| Pre-1951 period | 1951 -1961 | 1961 -1971 |
|---|---|---|
| Three Types of Schools | • to develop communication skills | • to provide knowledge of science |
| A. <i>Bhasha Pathsala</i> (Language School) | • to instill knowledge about health & hygiene | • to develop economic competency through vocational education |
| • to impart knowledge about alphabet & numerals | • to develop appreciation for fine arts | <i>Recommendations of ARNEC</i> |
| B. <i>Basic Education Schools</i> | <i>Recommendations of NNEPC</i> | • to develop such habits as cleanliness & respect to older people |
| • to teach reading, writing & arithmetic | • to eradicate illiteracy | • to develop loyalty to the crown & the country |
| • to integrate education & work | • to provide minimum | • to foster religious tolerance |
| C. <i>English Type Schools</i> | | • to discourage use of |
| • to develop communication skills in English | | |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to teach reading, writing & arithmetic • to provide general knowledge about history & geography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fundamental education • to provide citizenship training • to contribute to nation building | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • drugs, alcohol, etc. • to engage in physical exercise and sport activities |
|--|--|---|

Source: National Education Committee (1985)

Table 3: Comparison of objectives of primary education (Part-II)

| 1971-1981 | 1981-1985 |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to impart literacy • to develop civic knowledge • to promote social & physical development • to develop scientific attitude <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Recommendations of NESP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to teach reading writing & arithmetic • to provide general knowledge on Nepal • to develop loyalty to the King and the country • to provide instruction in an occupation such as agriculture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to impart literacy • to develop a sense of devotion & loyalty to the country, King & God • to inculcate discipline & build character • to create interest in arts & crafts & sports • to maintain physical & mental health |

The curriculum of the primary schools in Nepal varies considerably. The Educational Commission in 1954 classified schools in reference to four major types of curricula found in them: (i) English Schools, (ii) Sanskrit Schools, (iii) Basic Education Schools, (iv) Gompa Schools. But the data available to the writer indicate that one more category, the Vernacular Schools, should be added to the four categories mentioned above.

School Textbooks

Before 1951, nearly all school textbooks and instructional materials used in Nepal were imported from India. The establishment of the Gorkha (Nepali) Bhasa Prakashini Samiti - now a part of Sajha Prakashan - marked a turning point, as it led to the publication of several textbooks in the Nepali language, some of which began to be used in Nepalese schools. Report of NNEPC, 1956 emphasized the need for a structured curriculum. In response, the Department of Education published curricula for primary and lower secondary levels in 1958. This development encouraged private publishers to produce textbooks aligned with the official curriculum.

The government then began selecting and prescribing textbooks for use in schools. In 1961, the Ministry of Education established the Educational Materials Centre - later known as the Janak Education Materials Centre (JEMC) - equipped with trained textbook writers and its own printing facilities. Textbooks authored by these professionals were printed and distributed through the Centre. The Ministry adopted a policy of selecting textbooks through a competitive process and assigning specific textbooks to particular districts or zones. However, as profit was the primary motive for most private publishers, the overall quality of textbooks remained unsatisfactory.

Furthermore, these publishers showed little interest in ensuring the availability of textbooks in remote and mountainous regions, resulting in significant disparities in access to educational materials.

NESP, 1971 introduced several key policies aimed at enhancing the quality and distribution of school textbooks. These policies included: (i) The Janak Education Materials Centre (JEMC) was designated as the central agency responsible for publishing textbooks in core subjects, as well as model textbooks in other disciplines. It was also entrusted with the nationwide distribution of these materials. (ii) Textbooks were to be made available at affordable prices, with provisions for free distribution to economically disadvantaged students and those residing in remote areas. (iii) Research and development initiatives were to be promoted to ensure continuous improvement in the quality of textbooks. (iv) JEMC was to function as an autonomous institution. In accordance with these directives, JEMC assumed full responsibility for the publication and distribution of textbooks across all levels of school education. His Majesty's Government of Nepal initiated the provision of free textbooks for students in grades I to III. Additionally, girl students in 18 designated remote districts received free textbooks up to grade V. To support effective distribution, JEMC established five regional depots, which supply textbooks to local booksellers. Furthermore, distribution responsibilities are shared with Sajha Prakashan, which sells textbooks on a commission basis.

The Curriculum, Textbook and Supervision Development Centre (CTSDC) is entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing the development of school textbooks. It solicits manuscripts from local authors and selects the most suitable ones through a competitive review process. In certain cases, the Centre also commissions established and reputable writers to develop specific textbooks. As part of its ongoing efforts to enhance textbook quality, the CTSDC implements a systematic review process involving subject experts and experienced teachers. Additionally, the Centre has adopted a policy of piloting newly developed textbooks for a trial period of one year prior to their large-scale production and distribution. For instance, in 1985, the textbook *Mahendra Malla* (focused on language and social studies) was published and circulated for trial use under this new policy.

Instructional Materials

NNEPC, 1956 highlighted a severe lack of instructional materials in schools, noting that essential teaching aids for subjects such as nature study, science, fine arts, music, geography, and history were virtually absent. There was also a critical shortage of textbooks written in the Nepali language, and even the most basic audio-visual aids were unavailable. Illustrating the poor state of educational infrastructure, the report observed, "frequently there is no chalkboard; the teacher and children write in the dust of the floor" (NNEPC, 1956). Recognizing the gravity of the situation, the NNEPC dedicated nearly an entire chapter of its 20-chapter report to this issue. It identified the physical and material environment of learning as one of the three essential components influencing children's educational experiences - the other two being the learner and the teacher. The Commission provided a detailed account of the types of instructional materials necessary for effective classroom teaching and offered guidelines on their appropriate use. In contrast, ARNEC, 1961 focused primarily on textbooks, with limited reference to broader instructional materials.

NESP emphasized the provision of a range of educational materials alongside textbooks to support effective teaching and learning. Established in 1958 as the Educational Materials Organization, the institution was renamed Janak Education Materials Centre in 1971. NESP envisioned this Centre as the key agency responsible for the development, printing, and distribution of textbooks, as well as the production and supply of various educational materials and model kits accompanied by instructional guidebooks to schools. Adequate availability of instructional resources, including textbooks and audio-visual aids, is essential for facilitating efficient classroom teaching and learning, and for fostering a conducive academic environment within schools. Without sufficient instructional materials, the intended curriculum risks becoming a theoretical framework rather than a practical reality. This section provides an overview of the major efforts undertaken to produce and distribute textbooks and other instructional resources.

With the rapid expansion of educational institutions and a substantial increase in student enrollment, it is unsurprising that many schools have struggled to keep pace in acquiring adequate physical infrastructure and instructional resources. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize the considerable and organized efforts made to enhance instructional facilities in primary and secondary schools. A notable transition is underway - from the near-total absence of educational materials prior to 1951 to the ongoing, concerted initiatives aimed at equipping schools with essential teaching resources today.

During the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, the significance of incorporating concrete and visual aids in teaching primary grades was widely promoted by Normal Schools, which delivered primary teacher training through mobile teams across various regions of the country. In-service teachers received hands-on training in the creation and effective use of simple instructional materials. This practical training remains a vital component of the teacher education programs conducted by the Institute of Education. Since 1967, science equipment and general instructional materials, including basic hand tools, have been distributed to schools, reaching 67 out of Nepal's 75 districts by 1972. Additionally, in the late 1960s, two experimental initiatives - STEP and PRIME - were introduced. These projects focused on pioneering innovative approaches to short-term teacher training and the development of instructional materials specifically for science and mathematics education.

The adoption of NESP, 1971 provided momentum for defining a standardized list of essential educational materials required for teaching various subjects. Shortly thereafter, the Ministry of Education initiated a program to distribute these materials to primary and secondary schools within the framework of the plan's implementation. Over the past decade, notable efforts have been made to develop relevant science teaching materials utilizing locally available resources. In 1978, the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID) organized science teachers' workshops across four development regions, focusing on the production of low-cost instructional materials. This was followed by a sub-regional workshop in 1979. Additionally, the Science Equipment Centre, established in 1975, has played a pivotal role in developing various prototypes of science teaching aids since its inception.

The importance of developing and distributing appropriate instructional materials is now widely acknowledged. Various organizations committed to enhancing educational quality are actively engaged in innovative efforts related to teaching and learning resources, as well as providing short-term teacher training. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), through its affiliated bodies such as the Curriculum, Textbook and Supervision Development Centre (CTSDC), along with regional and district offices, has been implementing short-term teacher training programs across the country. Since 1983, the Science Education Development Project has been operational, while CERID has been conducting an experimental initiative on Instructional Improvement in Primary Schools since 1982. This project aims to support teachers in designing and developing necessary instructional materials for primary education. These ongoing efforts are expected to progressively enhance the instructional effectiveness of primary and secondary schools.

The challenge of maintaining the standard of primary education is, in part, linked to the availability of sufficient and relevant instructional materials for both teachers and students. These materials encompass: (i) textbooks, (ii) teacher's guides, (iii) curriculum guides, (iv) lesson plans, (v) supplementary reading resources, (vi) blackboards and flannel boards, (vii) maps and charts, and (viii) other teaching aids. Although considerable efforts have been made over the past decade to enhance the provision of instructional materials for educators and learners, the success in fully achieving the desired outcomes remains limited.

Classroom Pedagogy

A critical determinant of educational quality lies in effective classroom pedagogy, which directly influences student learning outcomes and achievement. Enhancing instructional methods and fostering improved student engagement have been central priorities within Nepal's educational policies (Caddell, 2002). NNEPC, 1956 underscored the dual objectives of expanding educational access and elevating the quality of classroom instruction. Since the commission's inception, maintaining educational quality has remained a focal point. The commission's report emphasized the importance of acknowledging individual learner differences and adapting the curriculum thoughtfully to accommodate diverse local contexts and student needs - principles aligned with a learner-centered approach. Upon reviewing existing classroom practices, NNEPC, 1956 observed that the curriculum was overly selective and academically oriented, resulting in many capable students being underserved.

Classroom practices tended to marginalize children who did not possess exceptional photographic memory or extraordinary memorization skills. This reliance on rote learning was particularly pronounced in Sanskrit schools, Pathshalas, and Gompas, where students spent extensive hours memorizing lengthy Sanskrit texts, often drawn from early religious scriptures such as the Kanjyur and Tanjyur. In these settings, children would recite passages in unison while sitting cross-legged on the floor, rhythmically swaying to maintain cadence. The pedagogical recommendations put forth by NNEPC advocated for a shift away from merely covering textbooks toward more effective teaching strategies. These included adopting a thematic approach, balancing instructional and practice time, actively involving students in the learning process, employing activity - or project-based methods, encouraging collaborative

teacher-student planning, utilizing informal and child-centered teaching methods, and addressing the individual needs of each learner (Liechty, 1997).

ARNEC, 1961 acknowledged the inherent physical, mental, and emotional differences among individual learners. Drawing an analogy to medical practice - where a doctor diagnoses a patient based on history and tests before prescribing treatment - ARNEC emphasized that teaching should similarly be informed by an understanding of each student's background, physical condition, emotions, and cognitive development. This underscores the need for a diagnostic and individualized approach to instruction (Shah, 2020). While the NESP did not explicitly address classroom pedagogical methods, it advocated for research aimed at improving subject-specific teaching techniques, emphasizing the application of scientific methods. However, the promising pedagogical intentions outlined in the 1956 and 1961 education commission reports appear not to have been effectively translated into classroom practice (Singh, 2012). According to the National Education Commission (NEC) report of 1992, prevailing instructional methods in primary schools remain largely ineffective, characterized by rote memorization and assessments based primarily on memorization, resulting in a discouraging learning environment.

Medium of Instruction

After nearly a decade of political struggle and tension between the Nepali Congress party and the monarchy over the rightful locus of power in the post-Rana era, the King ultimately dissolved the party system through a royal coup in December 1960, deeming the experiment with multiparty democracy a failure. In its place, the Panchayat system of governance was established, which was promoted as a uniquely Nepali model of government (Singh, 2012). This reorganization of the state, aimed at legitimizing the expanded authority of the monarchy, involved a fundamental redefinition of the relationship between the populace and the governing system.

Despite the nationalistic rhetoric and the vigorous promotion of an official Nepali nationalism, the nation's identity remained deliberately framed in relation to external perceptions. Moreover, with the growing involvement of development agencies and reliance on external funding, the Nepalese state needed to be comprehensible and credible to the international community (Rongong, 1973). To secure this external support, the government was compelled to portray itself as the primary provider of essential services - such as healthcare, water, and education - and to assert a legitimate claim to represent the interests of its citizens. Consequently, embracing globally advocated economic and social reforms became a crucial strategy for the monarchy and the Panchayat system to bolster domestic legitimacy and attract the necessary international financial assistance to sustain their initiatives.

The emphasis on development and 'modernity' reinforced the authority of political elites and their efforts to integrate diverse groups within a unified vision of the nation-state, achieved through the intertwined processes of Nepalisation and modernization. This conceptualization of the Nepali nation-state is encapsulated in the widely promoted slogan, "*ek bhasa, ek bhesh, ek dhesh*" (one language, one dress, one nation). In practice, this approach entailed the assertive promotion of a singular national identity that served to legitimize the political elites' authority both domestically and in the eyes of the international community.

The education sector was viewed as a vital instrument for promoting this national vision and was utilized by the Panchayat regime in two primary ways. First, schools - both as physical institutions and through their curricula - served as vehicles to disseminate a specific portrayal of the Nepali nation, extending from Kathmandu to the most remote regions (Wood, 1958). Textbooks emphasized the 'backwardness' of rural areas and marginalized ethnic, rural, and non-Hindu communities, positioning them as inferior to the lifestyles and customs of the high-caste urban population of Kathmandu. Second, the regime leveraged education to legitimize the dominance of political elites by linking their cultural identity with 'development,' presenting their way of life as a pathway out of underdevelopment. By framing education as a symbol of progress and modernity and prioritizing modern values over traditional ones, the elites positioned themselves as meritorious and 'educated' -thereby justifying their authority in a society where, at least officially, caste and familial privilege were no longer acceptable grounds for maintaining power (Wood, 1958). It pointed out that most schools were devoting an unwarranted amount of time for the teaching of languages (foreign, as well as national and mother tongue) and preparing for final examinations (NNEPC, 1956). Thus, the commission recommended that

The medium of instruction should be the national language in primary, middle and higher educational institution, because any language which cannot be made lingua franca and which does not serve legal proceedings in the court should not find a place. The use of a national language can bring about equality among all classes of people, can be an anchor-sheet for Nepalese nationality and can be the main instrument for promoting literature. (p. 56)

The reports of the NNEPC, ARNEC, and NESP commissions from 1956 to 1980 consistently emphasized the use of Nepali as the medium of instruction at the primary education level. The NNEPC (1954) explicitly stated that Nepali should be the medium of instruction exclusively from the third grade onward and, as far as possible, even in the first two grades, with the rationale being the promotion of national unity and strength (Wood, 1965). ARNEC reaffirmed the use of Nepali as the medium of instruction across all grades in both primary and secondary education. Similarly, the NESP endorsed Nepali as the instructional language, further recommending the incorporation of vocabulary and expressions from various regional languages into Nepali to enrich and enhance its effectiveness as a teaching medium. A study by Webster (1994), which assessed Nepali proficiency in rural areas through the Nepali Sentence Repetition Test, concluded that uneducated and illiterate individuals demonstrated significantly lower proficiency in Nepali compared to their educated and literate counterparts. Following constitutional reforms in 1990, languages spoken as mother tongues within Nepal were recognized as "national languages" (Rastriya Bhasa), while Nepali, written in the Devanagari script, retained its status as the "language of the nation" (Rastra Bhasa) and the official language of government.

The Constitution also guaranteed the right to establish and operate schools offering primary education in students' mother tongues. While earlier there had been strong opposition to the inclusion of diverse languages in the public domain, this resistance has since diminished, though not completely disappeared. In 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced a three-language policy aimed at eliminating language

barriers in education and addressing the rapid language shift occurring among the younger generations of various ethnic groups. This policy was further reinforced by the School Sector Reform Plan (2009 - 2015), which set a goal for 7,500 schools to provide instruction in mother tongues for grades 1 through 3. Additionally, the Reform Plan emphasized the development of new policies or the revision of existing ones to promote inclusion of ethnic minorities, Dalits, and females, focusing on the development and use of local languages and ensuring cultural adaptability within the education system.

Assessment Procedures

Established in 1934, the SLC Examination Board significantly shaped assessment practices throughout Nepal's school system. Until 1971, the prevailing evaluation model was characterized by a combination of mid-year and annual examinations conducted across all grade levels (Shrestha, 1973). Student promotion or retention was determined exclusively by their performance in the final examination administered at the conclusion of each academic year (Shah, 2020; Singh, 2012).

NNEPC, 1956 highlighted the negative backwash effect of examinations on classroom teaching practices. It observed that most primary and middle schools devoted the final two to three months of the academic year primarily to preparing students for the year-end examinations. These final assessments were the sole basis for determining student progress. The Commission advocated for an evaluation system aligned with the broader educational objectives, emphasizing the importance of holistic development rather than focusing solely on academic or cognitively measurable outcomes (Shrestha, 1973). It recommended that student assessment encompass physical, social, and all facets of mental growth. The evaluation process, according to the Commission, should prioritize attributes such as critical thinking, curiosity, initiative, responsibility, interpretation of visual data (e.g., charts, graphs, maps), honesty, physical well-being, sociability, and cooperation - considered more meaningful indicators of educational achievement than mere rote memorization (Singh, 2012).

NNEPC 1956, further emphasized that assessing the diverse goals of education would require more comprehensive methods than traditional written examinations. It recommended the use of alternative assessment tools such as observation, self-assessment, performance tasks, and similar approaches. These tools should be employed regularly to support students' ongoing development. Assessment was to be continuous, with detailed records maintained for each student to monitor their progress over time. In this context, the conventional final examination held limited significance, as teachers would already have a clear understanding of a student's development relative to their peers. For certification at the end of primary education, the Commission proposed issuing a certificate to each student that would confirm completion, provide a general overview of the work accomplished, and offer guidance on future educational pathways based on the learner's individual strengths and weaknesses (Shrestha, 1987).

ARNEC, 1961 also recommended the practice of automatic promotion based on continuous and comprehensive assessment. It proposed that evaluations at the primary level should be primarily oral and activity-based. Students were to be

assessed monthly on various aspects, including sports, character development, and subject knowledge. Similarly, NESP, 1971-76 introduced a more formalized examination framework. It called for the implementation of internal assessments, quarterly exams, detailed progress records, improved question design and marking schemes, standardized testing, and terminal examinations. The terminal examination at the end of primary education was to be administered by a team of district-level school inspectors, with promotion decisions based on students' performance in these evaluations (Singh, 2012).

In the 1974 publication *On Education in Nepal* by the Office of the National Education Committee, Shrestha noted that transitional examinations at the end of each grade, along with terminal examinations such as the SLC, continued to serve as the primary mechanisms for assessing student achievement. These examinations, typically lasting two to three hours, were designed to assess students' mastery of subject content through approximately 10 to 15 essay-type questions. Although two to three years had passed since the introduction of NESP, the implementation of its proposed assessment reforms appeared minimal (Sharma, 1980). Shrestha (1974) conveyed a tone of cautious optimism rather than reporting concrete progress. He indicated that teachers were beginning to receive orientation in the use of evaluation tools for continuous and comprehensive assessment and expressed hope that the introduction of a student progress record system would have a meaningful impact. Likewise, the recommendation to initiate the development of standardized tests was presented more as an aspirational objective than a realized achievement.

Several recommendations for enhancing student evaluation practices were made by two national-level education commissions. Nevertheless, in practice, the evaluation process remained largely unchanged, with a disproportionate focus on the final annual examination. It was only with the implementation of the NESP in 1971 that a more comprehensive and systematic approach to student assessment was introduced. This revised evaluation framework under NESP included key components such as: (i) internal assessment provisions; (ii) maintenance of individual student progress records; (iii) improvements in question design and scoring methods; and (iv) the development of standardized testing instruments. The application of this enhanced evaluation scheme contributed to a noticeable shift in both teachers' attitudes and practices, encouraging the use of diverse assessment tools for ongoing evaluation of student learning. Concurrently, efforts were made to reform the SLC examination by ensuring broader representation of curriculum content in test items and by refining the scoring process through the use of standardized marking criteria shared with examiners. In various districts, clusters of selected schools began adopting a cooperative examination system to further strengthen assessment practices.

During this period, the Ministry of Education and Culture, under the institutional development and management support component of the Primary Education Project, intends to implement focused measures to enhance the administrative efficiency and overall quality of the examination system, with particular emphasis on the SLC examination. Recently, there has been a growing emphasis on a comprehensive evaluation of the education system, examining both its internal functioning and the extent to which it meets its intended objectives (Shrestha, 1987). To facilitate this, a

systemic evaluation framework has been adopted, incorporating periodic reviews of progress across various sectors of the education system.

Physical Infrastructure

Community involvement in the development of school infrastructure has long been a tradition in Nepal. Approximately ninety-nine percent of school buildings, particularly primary schools, have been constructed by local communities without government funding. However, an assessment of these facilities reveals that over ninety percent are unsuitable for effective teaching and learning (Singh, 2012). Typically, these buildings are constructed using local building techniques, resulting in features such as small doors and windows, poorly constructed walls, and poorly lit, cramped classrooms. Many classrooms are dark, small, and prone to leaking during the rainy season. Well-constructed primary school buildings remain a rarity, with some structures being in worse condition than conducting classes outdoors under a tree. This unfortunate situation largely stems from the government's excessive dependence on community efforts for physical infrastructure development (Shah, 2020). While local communities contribute enthusiastically, with cooperative spirit and labor, they often lack the technical expertise required for proper school construction and the financial resources to procure non-local building materials.

Report of the NNEPC, 1956 highlighted that many schools at the time operated as single-room facilities staffed by one or two teachers, with some classes even held outdoors under trees or simple thatched shelters. These schools generally lacked adequate infrastructure and educational resources necessary for quality instruction. The commission recommended that primary schools should be established on a minimum of three acres of land, accommodating up to five classrooms. It emphasized the importance of sufficient play areas, proper drainage systems, and an aesthetically pleasing environment. Class sizes were advised to be limited to 30 students, with at least nine square feet of space allocated per pupil (Singh, 2012). Essential facilities outlined for schools included a library, laboratory, craft workshop, community room, administrative office, and a teachers' common room. In classrooms, basic furnishings such as floor mats and individual writing boards were considered the minimum standard, though individual desks were preferred. Additional recommended equipment comprised chalkboards, bulletin boards, teacher's desk and chair, storage units, sand tables, and materials to support project-based learning. The commission also stressed the need for adequate play materials, gardens, and agricultural spaces within school grounds (Shah, 2020).

Report of the ARNEC, 1961 did not provide an assessment of the prevailing conditions of schools, nor did it review the recommendations or implementation status of previous education commissions. The report acknowledged the continued existence of "one-room schools" as a temporary necessity until a separate school and teacher could be provided for each grade level; however, it did not specify a timeline or strategy for achieving this objective. The report advocated for co-educational settings, recommending a student-teacher ratio of 25 to 40. Emphasis was placed on the establishment of boarding schools as a means to ensure the provision of quality education (Shrestha, 1981c).

A decade after the ARNEC report, another significant policy document, *The National Education System Plan (1971-76)*, was introduced. This plan recommended maintaining a student - teacher ratio of 1:30 at the primary level. It also emphasized the necessity of adequate school infrastructure, including appropriate buildings, furniture, playgrounds, and other physical facilities, as essential components of quality education (Wood, & Knall, 1962). The NESP echoed the earlier recommendation made by NNEPC to establish standards for school buildings and their sites, urging the formulation and enforcement of regulations outlining the required physical facilities for various locations and educational purposes. However, these repeated recommendations suggest that over the 15-year period, little tangible progress had been made in improving school infrastructure, with much of the planning remaining unimplemented beyond policy documentation.

Financing of Primary Education

Various school financing schemes were introduced to address the increasing demand for educational institutions. In some cases, the government covered the salaries of headmasters in certain public schools. Additionally, a significant number of public schools received modest annual Grants-in-Aid from the government, and a number of primary and secondary schools were directly operated by the government (Shrestha, 1981a). Notably, the financing policy was never explicitly defined in the Education Code, resulting in the absence of clear criteria for providing financial assistance to schools. Apart from the regular Grants-in-Aid, the Ministry of Education also allocated funds to support the development of physical infrastructure, such as land acquisition, construction, furniture, equipment, and instructional materials (Shrestha, 1981c). These grants aimed to support community-driven development initiatives. However, there was no established framework governing the allocation of such one-time development grants to schools.

NNEPC conducted a comprehensive analysis of the state of education financing in Nepal. The commission was notably impressed by the diversity of funding sources available for education. It highlighted the predominantly elitist nature of education at the time. With the surge in demand for education following 1951 and the developmental needs of an educated citizenry, the commission anticipated a significant expansion of the education sector, which would necessitate substantial financial resources. Consequently, they recommended the establishment of a systematic approach to funding education in the country. The commission proposed several key measures (NNEPC, 1956): (i) Education is an inalienable right for all, and its support is a collective responsibility; (ii) Financing education should be viewed as an integral part of funding all governmental institutions and functions; (iii) Exploration of new revenue sources is essential; (iv) All land, except that owned by government agencies, should be subject to taxation; and (v) Income exceeding a comfortable subsistence level should be taxed. The commission's report was formulated during a period when Nepal's economy lacked a formal tax system aside from land revenue and customs duties (Shrestha, 1981b). While emphasizing resource mobilization for education at both central and local levels, the commission did not provide specific details regarding the education financing policy (Shrestha, 1981c).

NESP, 1971 advocated for the continuation of the existing Grant-in-Aid financing policy for schools, subject to certain modifications. To promote public involvement in school management, the government committed to providing financial support through regularized aid at the district level (Sharma, 1987). The District Education Committee was entrusted with administering an education fund derived from multiple sources (Shrestha, 1981b), including: (i) Grants-in-Aid, (ii) education tax, (iii) fees, (iv) donations, (v) income from permanent assets, and (vi) other miscellaneous receipts. School inspectors were charged with recommending grant amounts for individual schools, with allocations determined by criteria such as student enrollment, teacher staffing, curriculum, extracurricular programs, and examination results (Shah, 2020). Funding allocations would be adjusted upward or downward in accordance with each school's performance (Shrestha, 1981a). Additionally, the plan stipulated that schools were responsible for covering non-recurring expenses, while the government would provide financial grants designated specifically for teacher salary payments at fixed rates.

Conclusion

The political transformation of 1951 marked a significant turning point in Nepal's educational landscape. In the early years of the multiparty era, the *Nepal National Education Planning Commission of 1956* was established to devise comprehensive reforms in the education system spanning from the school to the university level. The commission offered critical recommendations regarding curriculum design, pedagogical approaches, instructional resources, assessment methods, and the financial framework of school education. Its report is widely recognized as a foundational milestone in the evolution of Nepal's education sector. Following this, the *All-round National Education Committee, 1961* also proposed a reform plan to the government, aiming to enhance the school education system. However, this initiative largely built upon the framework established by the 1956 Commission.

Subsequently, in 1971, drawing on the insights of earlier commissions, advisory bodies, and committees, the government introduced and implemented the *New Education System Plan, 1961*. This plan institutionalized a school curriculum grounded in contemporary curriculum development principles and placed strong emphasis on educational objectives, teaching methodologies, instructional materials, and evaluation practices. The National Education System Plan, 1971 emphasized the importance of teaching methodologies; however, the report lacks explicit models or detailed specifications regarding the types of instructional approaches to be adopted. The plan was notably influenced by the American education system. Despite this, it exerted a profound and lasting impact on Nepal's educational structure. Under this plan, the Curriculum Development Centre was established, and a comprehensive framework comprising national educational goals, level-specific objectives, and precise learning outcomes was formulated. Furthermore, it introduced a structured process for the development and production of textbooks. The plan also played a pivotal role in standardizing teacher remuneration by determining level-based salaries and allowances. Due to some shortcomings identified in this plan through its mid-term and final evaluations, improvements and revisions were made around 1981, including at the school-level curriculum, and a curriculum implementation plan was enforced.

Overall, it can be said that efforts were made to improve the education sector during the Panchayat regime. However, since this period was marked by monarchical rule, the focus was not on developing a scientific education system, but rather on promoting loyalty to the king and glorifying his image. This led to the development of a mindset dependent on others, rather than fostering independent learning. An education system capable of developing the country's natural resources, improving the system of governance, enhancing the economic condition, and leading the nation towards progress could not be established. Nonetheless, the education commissions and reform efforts during the Panchayat era hold significant importance in Nepal's history, and their long-term impact will continue to influence the country's education system.

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