



BRINGING INTERSECTIONALITY INTO

Comprehensive Sexuality
Education (CSE)

AN ADVOCACY BRIEF ON CSE IN NEPAL



**RIGHT HERE
RIGHT NOW**

Right Here Right Now is a five-year programme and global strategic partnership that is active in ten countries and the Caribbean sub region. In Nepal, it is a consortium of 15 like-minded organizations working and advocating towards sexual and reproductive health and rights of young people; focused on three thematic areas: legalization of marriage equality, access to a stigma free and youth friendly safe abortion services and inclusion of all components of comprehensive sexuality education in national curriculum and drafting of a curriculum for out of school children.

YUWA is one of the platform organizations of RHRN Nepal and also serves as the host organization for the RHRN Secretariat for Nepal. Established in 2009, YUWA is a registered not for profit, purely youth-led and youth-run organization working to promote youth participation through empowerment and advocacy. Since its formal establishment, YUWA has concentrated upon holistic youth issues and is especially working on three thematic issues- Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Active Citizenship and Research Development.

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Background: Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) is considered pivotal for overall wellbeing of young people primarily due to its human rights component. It provides space for addressing crucial issues such as adolescent pregnancy which can lead girls to drop out of school, depriving them of their right to education. Effective sex education can help to achieve school's aim of providing accurate and relevant information about the physical and emotional changes that young people and children experience throughout their formative years and into adulthood.

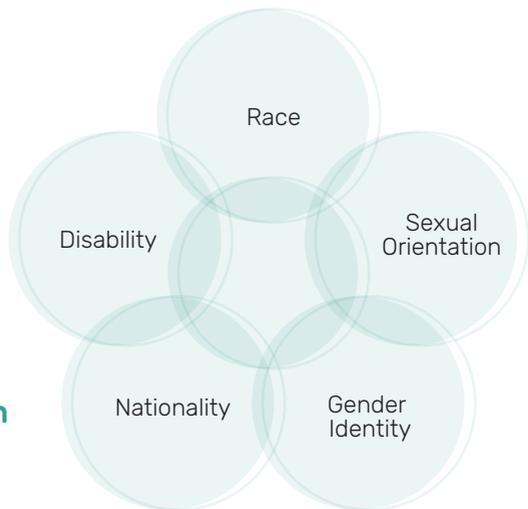
CSE is not a new concept in Nepal. Components of reproductive health have been incorporated in Nepali school curriculum for almost two decades now.

However, the intersectionality in sexuality education, particularly from gender and rights perspective has not been much discussed, let alone studied.



Thus, this study as part of a broader advocacy platform, Right Here Right Now (RHRN) initiative, aims to improve the protection, respect and fulfilment of the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young people.

Intersectionality in Sexuality Education



Study Objectives

The study was carried out with the following objectives in mind:

- Understand and document the history and trend of comprehensive sexuality education discourse in Nepal
- Document the history and trend of incorporation of comprehensive sexuality education into national education curriculum, especially with regards to International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education (ITGSE)
- Discuss with key stakeholders about the current situation, gaps and recommendations for improvement in comprehensive sexuality education

Methods

The following methods were applied for collecting data as part of this study:

- **Evidence Review** of government policies, guidelines and manuals related to sexuality education; grey literature such as available teacher manuals of Curriculum Development Centre (CDC); media coverage, and documentation of event blogs.
- **Key Informant Interviews** with academicians, researchers, SRHR advocates, government education officials.
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** with adolescents of government and private schools studying in Grade 9 and 10

Key Findings

Major findings from the study included:

Out-of-school children, disabled and LGBTI issues not addressed

Currently, CSE is very limited to school children and there are significant number of out-of-school children who require CSE. Likewise, the policies and guidelines are also silent on CSE for disabled and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ)s. These sections of population have been deprived of any orientation or teaching on CSE.

Sub-standard teaching

Overall impression from the evidence reviews and the opinion of stakeholders and students reveal that the teaching is sub-standard. There are issues with the delivery of the content, stapling of the chapters on SRH (trying to avoid teaching those content) which needs to be immediately addressed.

Trainings insufficient to improve teacher's standard

The trainings provided on CSE has helped teachers to some extent but that has not been adequate enough. Some of the trained teachers require refresher trainings and some of the trained teachers have also been transferred elsewhere to other schools or left jobs.

"A male school teacher wasn't able to teach sex and sexuality education to his school students since he was from the same community and some of the students were close to him in relation. This happens in many schools in the communities."

- Academician

CSE as a more health and not gender and human rights perspective

CSE has been so far branded as a SRH issue. However, there are other moral values and human rights perspectives as well when it comes to freedom of choice, rights to knowing and understanding about one's sexuality, which has not been adequately incorporated into the current CSE curriculum.

"Had there been sex and sexuality education taught properly to the school children, there wouldn't be problem of early motherhood. Sex is the driving factor of life so it must be taught in a well and effective way."

- NGO practitioner on CSE

School infrastructure and environment affecting openness of students

This study has revealed that the facilities and overall environment of the school affects the openness of the students in the classroom and with their peers to reveal their queries and anxieties related to SRH matters. Schools with counselor, adolescent friendly corner has helped students to open up and discuss SRH issues.

"It takes time for change as the reforms have been made in a hurry. Many jargons or technical terms have been used which is not easily understood by the teachers who have varying experience and expertise. Thus, bottom up approach and adolescent friendly language is required to make CSE effective."

– Government official

Weak coordination of schools and CSE initiatives with local government

Local governments or Palikas are not aware or have not documented the CSE practices in schools and therefore, there is missing link for other schools where CSE is effectively implemented.

Inclusion of Sexuality Education in Nepali Education Curriculum

Sexuality Education has been a part of the fundamental education curriculum framework of the Ministry of Education.

However, many aspects of the curriculum such as content and delivery needs to be improved. Core curriculum content covering ASRH aspects by grades are as follows:

Grade 1-3	Grade 4-5	Grade 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduction • Personal Hygiene - Identification of external parts of body and their cleanliness (Grade 1), Methods of cleaning external parts of body (Grade 2), Causes of cleaning external parts of body (Grade 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproduction • Personal Hygiene - Cleaning sexual organs (Grade 4) • Cleaning sexual organs and Introduction to menstruation (Grade 5) • Diseases - Cooperative Feeling towards patients (Grade 4), Introduction to HIV/AIDS (Grade 5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Adolescence • Bodily Changes during adolescence • Sexual Education and its importance • Concept of Sexual and Reproductive Health and its importance • Bodily structure of male and female external reproductive organs • Maintaining hygiene of external reproductive organs
Grade 7	Grade 8	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phases of adolescence • Introduction to sexual intercourse • Necessity of sexual and reproductive health education • Wet dreams • How semen is produced and how fertilization takes place • Process of conception • Infections that take place around reproductive organs and, • Process of prevention of such infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities of adolescents in practicing responsible sexual behavior • Safe abortion techniques • Concept and importance of comprehensive sexual education 	
	Grade 9	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adolescence • Sexuality Education • Reproductive Health • Reproductive Rights 	
	Grade 10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexually Transmitted Diseases (AIDS, Syphilis, Gonorrhoea, Chancroid) • Safe Motherhood • Maternal Health Care 	

Gaps and Recommendations:

Grade 1-5	Grade 6, 7 and 8	Grade 9 and 10
<p>Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of the parents feel their children are still too young to see, know about sex organs and the reproductive process <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age specific content should be available in curriculum so that children are aware and prepared before they reach puberty 	<p>Gaps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Though it has been made mandatory course for the students in grades 6 to 8, the content does not cover the whole aspects of SRHR. The contents are driven more in health perspectives integrating with gender and human rights and doesn't always contain information about the availability of services and service sites. • Inclusion of concepts such as 'relationships', 'values, attitudes and skills' and 'culture, society and human rights' is limited. • Menstruation as a topic was taught in grade 7 and Chhaupadi was not included as harmful practice. <p>Recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate intersectionality lens gender and human rights or value based concepts in the curriculum • Include specific societal values and norms surrounding SRH issues as well such as Chhaupadi in the curriculum apart from accustomed content such as menstruation 	<p>Gap:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, the Environment, Health and Population subject from the curriculum of class 9 and 10 has been made optional, which is a huge step backwards. <p>Recommendation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include HPE subject as a compulsory subject in grade 9 and 10 curriculum.

Recommendations

The study came up with the following recommendations from this study:

Targeted and grade-specific programming: Prioritizing the most vulnerable adolescents – the out of school, adolescents with disability and LGBTQ, as well as students in upper primary grades (as in many places many girls do not make the transition to secondary school). Likewise, the content on SRH issues in the HPE curriculum should also be grade specific as the adolescents mature from grade 6 to 10.

Improvements in school facilities and environment

Facilities within the school needs to be improved such as having a separate counselor, adolescent friendly rooms as well as providing confidence among students to open up about their anxieties and queries. Likewise, trainings for the teachers should be a routine capacity building initiative (with periodic assessment of learning abilities), not just one-off activity.

Making CSE comprehensive with gender, human rights and moral values components

Adding gender and rights based perspectives into current curriculum framework so that adolescents aware of their own sexuality and bodily integrity.

Interventions beyond classrooms:

It is widely considered that healthy living should not be limited to the classroom; rather it should be extended beyond it. Schools and authorities should also understand the rights and responsibilities of the parents and young people.

High quality research and evaluation on CSE implementation and their effectiveness

A good quality evaluation research on sexuality education is critical for policy makers and practitioners to understand the needs of sex education and the existing gaps. Such evaluations help schools to identify the need of support by local authority in development and delivery of their policies and findings, and require a realistic amount of time.

Making local governments accountable to document effective CSE practices as lessons learnt for other schools

Local governments need to be made accountable for success or failure of CSE implementation in the schools of their area. This will ensure effective documentation of CSE practices as lessons learnt for other schools and this will also bring about healthy competition among schools.

