

Original Article

A Study to Analyse Teachers' Views on Curriculum Load At Primary Schools

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Abstract

The curriculum is a fundamental component of primary education, shaping the knowledge and skills students acquire during their formative years. This study investigates teachers' perspectives on curriculum load at the primary school level, aiming to identify challenges and propose reforms for a balanced and effective educational framework. A descriptive research design was adopted, with a purposive sample of 110 primary school teachers from both urban and rural settings. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistical methods. Findings reveal that most teachers perceive the curriculum as overly extensive, often misaligned with students' developmental needs. Key challenges include limited time for individualized instruction, balancing curricular and extracurricular activities, and insufficient teacher training. Suggestions for improvement emphasize reducing curriculum content, incorporating activity-based learning, and providing flexible teaching schedules. This research underscores the importance of addressing curriculum overload to enhance teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, offering actionable insights for policymakers and curriculum developers striving for a more child-centric educational approach.

Keywords: Curriculum Load, Primary Education, Teacher Perceptions, Activity-Based Learning, Educational Policy.

Introduction

In recent decades, educational reforms worldwide have increasingly focused on improving curriculum design, delivery, and outcomes, particularly at the foundational level of schooling. Primary education, the first formal stage of learning, plays a critical role in shaping a child's intellectual, emotional, and social development. Within this context, the concept of curriculum load—referring to the breadth, depth, and volume of content that students are expected to learn—has come under growing scrutiny. A recurring concern among educators, policymakers, and parents is whether the curriculum imposed on primary school students is excessively demanding, not only for learners but also for teachers who are tasked with implementing it. Teachers' perspectives offer valuable insights into the practicality, feasibility, and effectiveness of the prescribed curriculum. As frontline implementers, teachers interact directly with students, engage with instructional materials, manage classroom dynamics, and assess learner outcomes. They possess first-hand experiences of how curriculum content translates into actual classroom practice. Hence, their views are instrumental in identifying the areas of curriculum overload, pedagogical mismatch, and misalignment between policy and practice. This study seeks to investigate and analyze primary school teachers' views on curriculum load, exploring how the structure and volume of curriculum content affect teaching effectiveness, learner engagement, and academic performance. The increasing complexity of modern curricula has raised critical questions regarding the developmental appropriateness of the learning objectives and expectations set for young learners. Curriculum designers often aim to make students competitive in a globalized knowledge economy by embedding a wide range of subjects, interdisciplinary themes, and competency-based goals. While such ambitions are

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laudable, they can inadvertently lead to an overcrowded curriculum, in which too many topics are introduced without sufficient time or support for mastery. In primary schools, where children acquire basic cognitive, linguistic, and motor skills, excessive curriculum demands can result in cognitive overload, anxiety, and lack of conceptual understanding. Furthermore, primary school teachers frequently report being under pressure to "cover the syllabus," leaving limited scope for creativity, critical thinking, or remedial teaching. In environments where standardized testing plays a dominant role in educational evaluation, this pressure is further intensified. Teachers may resort to surface-level teaching, focused on rote memorization rather than deep learning, to meet curriculum expectations and assessment deadlines. Discrepancies between what is mandated by educational authorities and what is realistically achievable in the classroom can lead to professional dissatisfaction, burnout, and reduced instructional quality. Hence, understanding teachers' views on curriculum load is not only an academic inquiry, but also a policy imperative.

In many developing and developed nations, curriculum reform is driven by political, economic, and technological considerations. As a result, curriculum frameworks are frequently revised to include emerging themes, such as digital literacy, environmental sustainability, global citizenship, and 21st-century skills. Although these inclusions are vital, they add layers of complexity to an already dense curriculum. Teachers are often expected to adapt to these changes with limited training, resources, or support. This poses a unique challenge in the primary education sector, because teachers must simultaneously function as content experts, classroom managers, counselors, and caretakers. The pressure to address diverse learner needs, manage mixed-ability classrooms, and meet curriculum targets places an enormous burden on learners. The question then arises: How do primary school teachers perceive and respond to the curriculum load? Are they able to balance prescribed content with the actual learning needs of their students? What coping strategies do they employ to manage the curriculum pressure? Do they feel that the current curriculum aligns with the children's developmental readiness? This study aims to answer these questions by gathering qualitative and quantitative data on teachers' perspectives, experiences, and suggestions regarding curriculum load.

Additionally, the study explores how various factors, such as school infrastructure, class size, teacher training, administrative support, and socio-economic contexts, influence teachers'

perceptions of curriculum load. For instance, teachers in rural or under-resourced schools may find the curriculum particularly burdensome because of limited teaching aids, insufficient classroom space, or lack of professional development opportunities. Conversely, teachers in well-resourced urban schools may struggle with time constraints, behavioral challenges, or parental expectations. Gender, teaching experience, and subject specialization may also shape how teachers experience curriculum demands. Therefore, this study adopts a multidimensional approach to understand how different teacher demographics interpret and manage curriculum overload. By identifying the key stressors and coping mechanisms associated with curriculum load, this study seeks to contribute to the discourse on curriculum planning and teacher-support systems. Moreover, it aimed to bridge the gap between policy formulation and classroom implementation by offering evidence-based recommendations for curriculum streamlining and teacher empowerment.

Another significant reason for undertaking this study is the growing body of research linking curriculum design to student well-being and teacher morale. Overburdened curricula can reduce opportunities for holistic education by sidelining the arts, physical education, play, and socio-emotional learning. Teachers, in turn, may feel restricted by the rigid curricular structures that limit their professional autonomy and creativity. Studies have shown that when teachers are involved in curriculum development and provided with adequate flexibility, they are more likely to adopt innovative and learner-centered teaching practices. Therefore, this research also advocates the inclusion of teacher voices in curriculum decision-making processes. Teachers' insights can inform curriculum review committees, educational boards, and policy advisors of the practical challenges encountered in real classrooms. By analyzing the nuanced views of teachers across different regions and school types, this study aimed to highlight systemic gaps and propose actionable interventions.

This study on teachers' views of curriculum load in primary schools is both timely and essential. This research will delve into the lived realities of primary educators as they navigate a complex educational landscape marked by evolving curricula, diverse learner profiles, and escalating accountability pressures. By focusing on the subjective experiences and professional judgments of teachers, this study hopes to shed light on whether the current curriculum promotes meaningful learning or merely adds to the instructional burden. In doing so, it contributes to a

broader understanding of how education systems can better align curriculum expectations with classroom reality. Ultimately, this research aims to serve as a catalyst for more balanced, inclusive, and context-sensitive curriculum policies that respect the voices of those at the heart of educational transformation—teachers.

Review Of Literature

Chand, Satish. (2024). Quality education encompasses a wide range of aspects that go beyond merely achieving academic success. It involves the development of people in a holistic manner, including the cultivation of critical thinking, creativity, social skills, and readiness for difficulties in a world that is constantly evolving. Although great progress has been made in certain areas of educational research, there are still important gaps that prevent the construction of comprehensive and inclusive educational systems. The purpose of this study was to examine several dimensions of excellent education by considering a variety of views, approaches, and outcomes from many different places throughout the world. Ten main obstacles preventing people from gaining access to decent education were identified and discussed. A few examples are equal access, excellent teachers, relevant curriculum, infrastructure and resources, parental and community involvement, inclusive education, the development of life skills, constant evaluation and feedback, flexibility and adaptability, investment, and provision of policy support. The conclusion of the study suggests that it is necessary to comprehensively address these complicated challenges to develop educational systems that are capable of empowering students on a global scale, as well as those that are inclusive, responsive, and quality-focused. Excellent education, equal access, excellent teachers, relevant curriculum, infrastructure and resources, parental and community involvement, inclusive education, life skill development, continuous evaluation and feedback, flexibility and adaptability, investment, and policy support are some of the keywords associated with this topic.

Rijal, Syamsu. (2023). This study aims to improve learning performance and faculty development through professional learning community participation by utilizing a research lesson framework, which is a Japanese method for professional development. This was done in response to the demands of the changing educational system in the Philippines. The goal was to determine the extent to which beneficial research lessons and community engagement can contribute to an improvement in the overall quality of the

performance of both teachers and students. The findings of the study revealed that a rich interchange of ideas, engaged student and teacher performance, and deconstruction of the privacy of lesson planning were achieved through the utilization of a narrative inquiry technique within a research lesson framework with four classes of Social Dimensions of Education and pre-service teachers.

Naqvi, Dr. (2023). According to the findings of this study, engagement in civic activities has a beneficial impact unpiloted academic achievement and contributes to the achievement of optimal outcomes for students, parents, and teachers. Alterations are brought about in terms of learning behaviour, ethnicity, and acts of society. These criteria have begun to incorporate the concepts of parental and civic engagement in a variety of ways, including the incorporation of certain aspects of school governance. The objective of this study was to provide a comprehensive picture of the role that parents and other members of the community play in educational improvement initiatives and to characterize the function and influence of the community on these programs. In the context of education, the culture of the school as a whole is connected to community engagement. An educational activity that helps children enhance their learning skills is one in which parents play a supportive role and contribute to their learning process. There is a discussion regarding recommendations for additional study in the areas of community-school ties, training and parent-teacher associations, preparation for teachers, and the supply of additional national and local funds to maintain educational improvement efforts.

Ahmad, Iqbal. (2013). Collaborative work is an essential part of education. The aims of education cannot be accomplished without the participation of the community, and without education, society cannot consider the possibility of growth. There is a wealth of research on the topic of community involvement in education and the results of such involvement. However, only a few studies have investigated the connection between community involvement and quality of education. even though two or three indicators are not sufficient to judge the quality of education. Many indicators of educational quality have been identified through research. On the other hand, this study focused exclusively on investigating three crucial indicators that are contextually relevant to developing countries. Access, retention, and attendance were the three primary factors evaluated in relation to community participation. The primary objective of this study was to determine whether the involvement of the

community in educational activities has a positive impact on the problems of access, retention, and attendance at the secondary school level. For the purpose of data collection, the study questioned a total of N=500 government secondary school teachers in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in Pakistan. The survey included 200 female and 300 male teachers. Data were gathered, compiled, and statistically computed using Pearson Correlation and ANOVA to determine whether there was a correlation between the independent variable (community participation in education) and the three indicators of the quality of education, which were referred to as the dependent variables. These indicators include access, retention, and attendance. The findings suggest that there is a substantial positive link between participation in the community and all three indices of quality of education. According to the findings of this study, community involvement in educational activities is a highly positive predictor of access to education, retention, and attendance.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

Results And Discussion

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	40	36.4%
	Female	70	63.6%
Location	Urban	55	50%
	Rural	55	50%
Teaching Experience	2-5 years	30	27.3%
	6-10 years	50	45.5%
	Above 10 years	30	27.3%

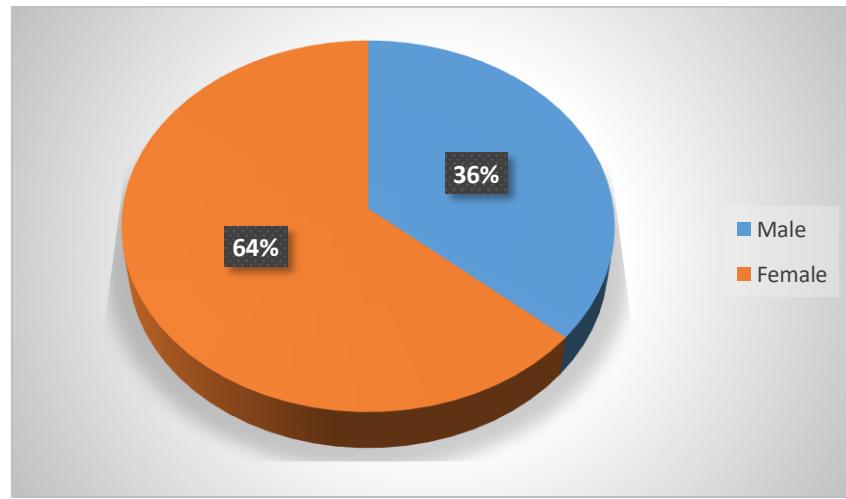


Figure 1: Gender of the respondents

This study employed a descriptive research design to analyze teachers' views on the curriculum load at the primary school level. Descriptive research is appropriate for capturing detailed insights into teachers' perceptions, challenges, and experiences regarding curriculum implementation. This study focuses on collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to identify patterns, trends, and themes.

2. Sample Size and Sampling Method

This study used a sample size of 110 primary school teachers from a mix of urban and rural schools to ensure diverse perspectives. A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants, targeting teachers with at least two years of teaching experience at the primary level. This ensured that participants had sufficient exposure to the curriculum and its implementation.

3. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods (e.g., frequencies, percentages, and mean scores).

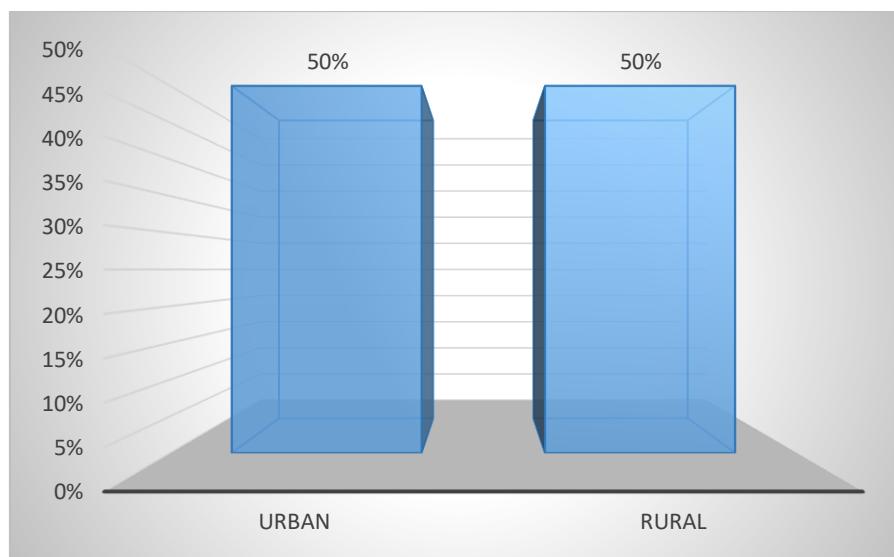


Figure 2: Location of the respondents

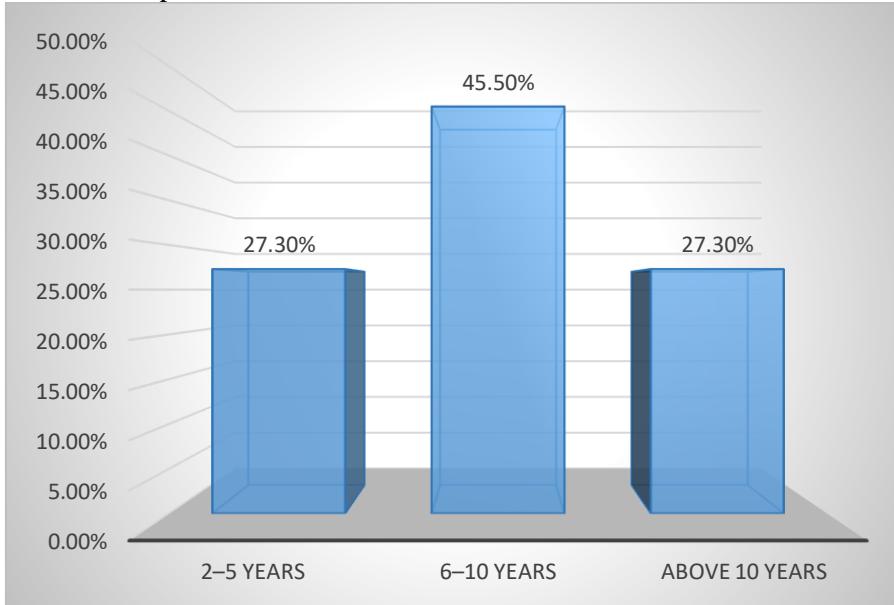


Figure 3: Teaching Experience of the respondents

The sample had a higher proportion of female teachers (63.6%). The distribution between the urban and rural participants was equal, ensuring diverse perspectives. Most respondents had 6–10 years of teaching experience, representing experienced educators with insight into curriculum challenges.

Table 2: Teachers' Perception of Curriculum Load

Statement	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
The curriculum is too extensive for students.	65%	20%	15%
The curriculum aligns with students' developmental needs.	40%	30%	30%
The curriculum allows sufficient time for extracurricular activities.	35%	25%	40%
Teachers face challenges in completing the curriculum within the academic year.	70%	15%	15%

A significant majority (65%) believed that the curriculum was too extensive for students, while only 40% felt it aligned with developmental needs.

Most teachers (70%) reported difficulties completing the curriculum within the academic year, suggesting the need for curriculum review and pacing adjustments.

Table 3: Challenges Faced by Teachers

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Lack of time for individual attention to students	75	68.2%
Difficulty in balancing curricular and extracurricular activities	60	54.5%
Insufficient teacher training on curriculum delivery	50	45.5%
Overloaded content requiring extensive preparation time	80	72.7%

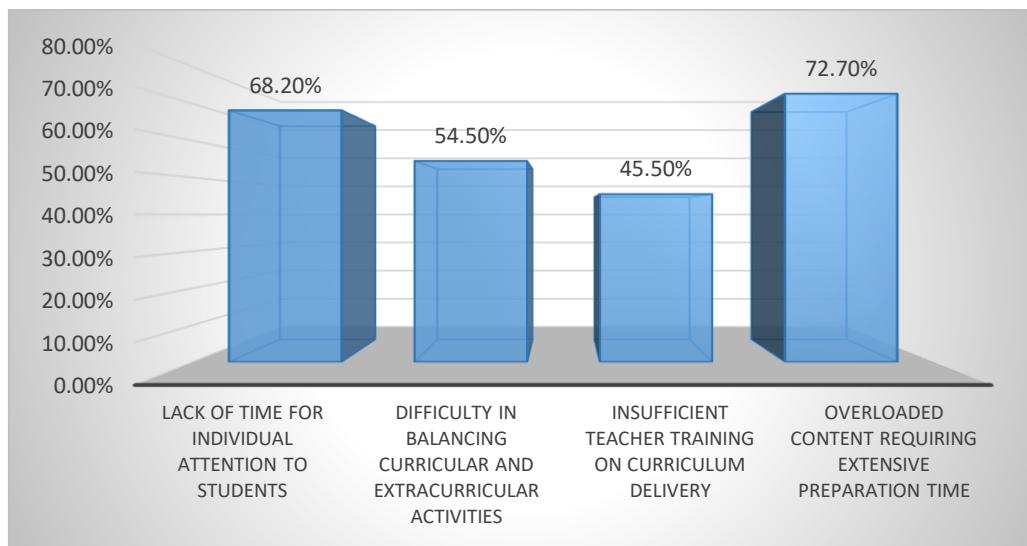


Figure 4: Challenges Faced by Teachers

The most frequently reported challenges included overloaded content (72.7%) and lack of time for individualized instruction (68.2%). These challenges highlight the need for structural and content-level curriculum reform.

Table 4: Suggestions for Curriculum Improvement

Suggestion	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Reduce the curriculum content	85	77.3%
Provide flexible teaching schedules	65	59.1%
Increase training programs for teachers	60	54.5%
Emphasize activity-based learning	75	68.2%

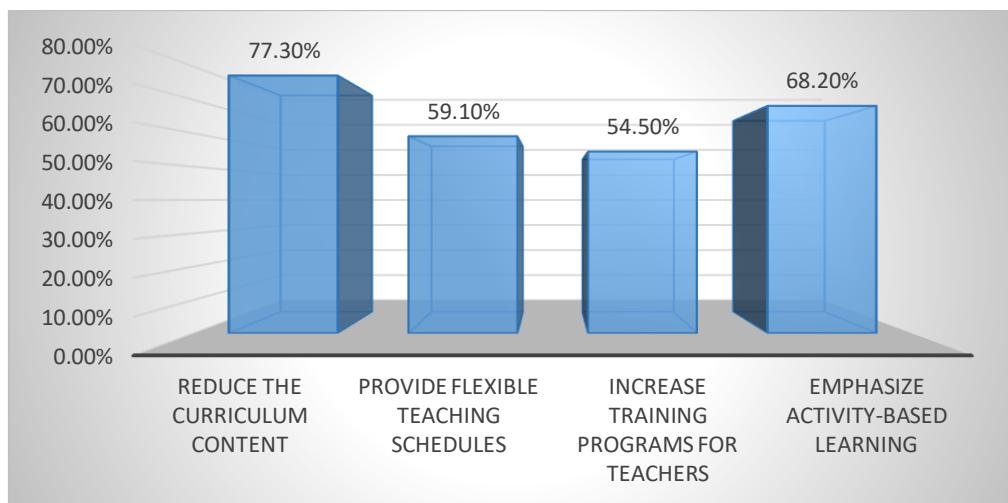


Figure 5: Suggestions for Curriculum Improvement

Most teachers (77.3%) suggested reducing curriculum content to address overload. Emphasizing activity-based learning (68.2%) and flexible schedules (59.1%) is also highly recommended to enhance teaching efficiency and student engagement.

Table 5: Teachers' Overall Satisfaction with the Curriculum

Satisfaction Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Highly Satisfied	20	18.2%
Satisfied	50	45.5%
Neutral	25	22.7%
Dissatisfied	10	9.1%
Highly Dissatisfied	5	4.5%

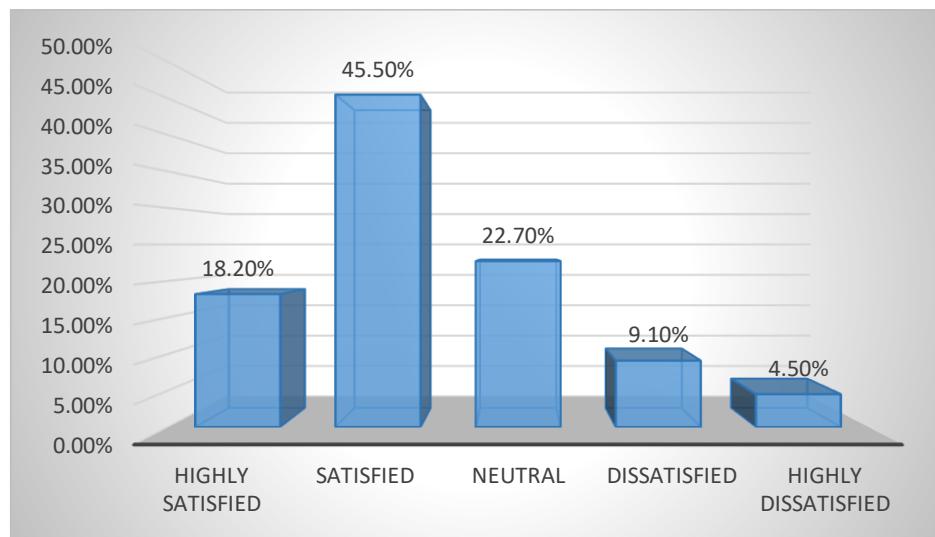


Figure 6: Teachers' Overall Satisfaction with the Curriculum

Nearly half of the teachers (45.5%) were satisfied with the current curriculum, but only 18.2% were highly satisfied with it. A notable portion (13.6%) was dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied, underscoring the need for curriculum enhancement.

Conclusion

This study highlights the pressing concerns teachers face regarding curriculum load at the primary school level. Teachers play a crucial role in delivering and adapting the curriculum to meet students' developmental needs, and their perspectives provide valuable insights into the practical challenges of implementing the curriculum. The findings revealed that the current curriculum often overwhelms both teachers and students, with excessive content leaving little room for creative teaching methodologies, individualized attention, or extracurricular activities. A significant portion of teachers emphasized the need for a more balanced curriculum that aligns better with students' developmental capacities and supports holistic learning. Overloaded content, insufficient teacher training, and lack of time for interactive and personalized teaching have emerged as key challenges. Teachers have suggested reducing curriculum content, promoting activity-based learning, and introducing flexible teaching schedules as practical solutions. These findings underscore the need for curriculum reform that prioritizes quality over quantity to foster an

educational environment in which both teachers and students can thrive. Policymakers and curriculum developers must collaboratively create a child-centric educational framework that balances academic rigor with developmental appropriateness. Such reforms will enhance teaching effectiveness, improve student engagement, and ensure the long-term success of the primary education system.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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