



Social Studies Teachers' Attitude towards the Implementation of New Curriculum at Grade 11 and 12

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Article history

Received Date: 01/01/2026

Revised Date: 02/02/2026

Accepted Date: 09/02/2026

Published Date: 16/02/2026

Abstract

This study analysed the attitudes of Social Studies teachers towards the implementation of the new curriculum in grade 11 and 12. For this study, he developed a survey questionnaire as a research tool. Similarly, he selected 15 Social Studies teachers from 10 secondary schools in the Darchula district. The findings of the study were interpreted under four themes like Social Studies teachers' attitudes towards school administration, teacher training, technology for obtaining curriculum information and the contents in the new curriculum. The study revealed that the teachers were found not so positive towards the school administration and concerned bodies because of their unsupportiveness and unmanaged workloads. Furthermore, it's found that the inadequate internet access and lack of technical knowledge and skills in teacher became challenging in the implementation of the curriculum. Similarly, it further showed the importance of teacher training for implementing the new curriculum in a proper way. It was also revealed in the study that the relevance of contents, distribution of weightage of the working hour for those contents and incorporation of recent trends and approaches in teaching and learning were taken positively by teachers.

Keywords

- Teachers' attitudes
- Curriculum
- Implementation
- interdisciplinary subject

INTRODUCTION

Social study is important and useful for understanding the development and progress of human beings and other aspects of human life. It mainly studies about human beings and their relations with others in the social contexts. Moreover, it primarily concerns with people's activities, social trends and values, religious and cultural functions, economic functions, different natural resources, and national and international affairs (Yadav, 2024). Thus, it is a multidisciplinary subject (Yadav, 2024) having subject matters from different areas of study such as sociology, history, international relations, geography, Information and Communication Technology, etc. It deals with the study of the relationship of human beings with other things such as society, environment, development and invention. In this regard, Jerolemick (1971) presents that the study of humans and their relations with other humans and environment is dealt in social studies. Talking about the emergence of social studies as a humanistic subject, some studies mention that the social unrest situations in the history of human civilization made human beings realize the necessity of the subject to be introduced in the school curriculum to make people aware of human beings, their relations and consequences of their activities. Dhakal (2021) mentions that the necessity of social studies was realized after the Second World War in the USA and was also introduced in the school curriculum. Thereafter, the teaching of social studies as a valued subject has been in practice in different countries considering its importance and necessity for human beings. Regarding the history of social studies in Nepal, Pandey (1993, as cited in Ghimire, 2013) states:

Social study as a distinct subject from the science syllabus as mentioned in the report of Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (1956). Furthermore, the report recommended that the teaching of social studies at primary level from the year 1960 AD and at secondary level from the years 2000 AD, being a separate and compulsory subject including the contents from different social sciences weighting 100 full marks.

Moreover, social education was incorporated in the curriculum of Collage of Education in 2011 B.S; although it was implemented in primary level education in 2017 BS (Yadav, 2023). The social studies curriculum had included subjects like geography and history in S.L.C in the year 1990 BS (Kaiyum, 2068).

So, the teaching of social studies started in the mid-20th century in Nepal. Thereafter, it has been taught as one of the compulsory subjects in the Nepali education system. Recently, National Curriculum Framework (NCF) has introduced social studies and life-skill education in the secondary curriculum, especially for grade XI and XII as a compulsory subject. The curriculum for the newly introduced subjects is designed as per the curriculum structure prescribed by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2019. It is designed to develop the social and life skills of the students to make them able to handle their life-related activities. It covers diverse contents from different social sciences to modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and also intends to involve students in different activities through demonstration, presentation, discussion, group work, and practical and project work in real-world contexts. A total time frame of 40 working hours is allocated for the project/practical works and 120 working hours is allocated for theory in the different content areas of grade 11 and 12 (CDC, 2020).

The term curriculum has been derived from the Latin term 'currere' which means 'to run' or 'run way'. Crow and Crow mention that curriculum covers all the experiences of learners that they get inside and outside of school. To develop them emotionally, socially, spiritually and morally, such experiences are included in a programme (as quoted by Bhetuwal, 2022). Likewise, the term curriculum is also defined in Oxford Dictionary of Education as a content/course of a programme or the content and specifications of a study course/ programme; in a wider sense, the totality of the prescribed learning opportunities available in one educational institution and in its widest sense, the learning programme being applicable to all students in the nation (Jack & Hersh, 2008). So, curriculum is a very fundamental for education or teaching-learning process. It directs the teachers and learners to achieve the determined objectives by bringing the required changed in the behaviours of students. It guides those who are involved in the educative process making them determined. Schooling or educative process becomes unmanaged and unstructured in the absence of curriculum. So, it is considered to be a guide in the schooling process.

Only the formulation of ideal curriculum cannot bring desired change; therefore, it needs to be implemented accurately making each and every aspect well functioning. The way of applying the developed curriculum is termed as curriculum implementation. In this regards, Marques and Xavier (2020) state that curriculum implementation denotes how teachers practice it, how they teach and evaluate students. It is taken as an important and very difficult and inevitable phase (Karakus, 2021). So, curriculum implementation is a mandatory phase in the sense that without implementing the curriculum, its strengths, weaknesses and insufficient parts cannot be identified (Dzimiri & Marimo, 2015). Thus, to evaluate the

effectiveness of curriculum, the curriculum has to be implemented. Moreover, the implementation of new curriculum is influenced by various factors including teachers' perceptions and attitudes. Teachers are the actual agents to implement the prescribed curriculum in the classroom. So, the teachers are expected to implement the curriculum accordingly to transform the curriculum into classroom teaching-learning activities (Marques & Xavier, 2020). So, any newly developed curriculum needs to be examined with respective teachers for making it more contextual. In this regard, Karakas (2021) states that the curriculum needs to provide flexibility and some freedom to the teachers. A prepared curriculum needs to be examined in detail to explore whether a teacher can apply the curriculum in the classroom or not before the implementation of the new curriculum. To illustrate teachers as human beings, bring their experience into the classroom context, so their attitudes and beliefs regarding curriculum and its application affect the quality of the new one. So, the present study was designed to analyse attitudes of Social studies teachers towards the implementation of the new curriculum in grade 11 and 12.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The study is based on a quantitative survey which mainly focuses on collecting social studies teachers' opinions from ten schools in the Darchula district. From the selected schools, he selected 15 social studies teachers of secondary level with a random sampling procedure. He developed a survey questionnaire as a research tool. Then, he piloted the test in one of the secondary schools in Darchula. After piloting the tool, he revised the items considering the lessons learnt from administering the tool. Then, he finalized and printed the items in the required numbers. After that, he requested the concerned schools and teachers for their consent by explaining the purpose of the study and procedures. After getting the consent, he administered the survey to individual teachers to collect the data from them. After collecting the survey questionnaires, he analyzed and interpreted the data under four themes.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from the social studies teachers are analyzed and interpreted by putting them into the following themes:

Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards School Administration

School administration needs to be accountable for the activities of the school. It has a significant role in managing school activities because it plays role in mobilizing teachers, conducting academic activities in the school, and managing human resources and teaching materials. When school administration remains passive, the teachers face many problems in the educative process. In this regard, table 1 presents the teachers' attitudes towards school administration in the phase of new curriculum implementation.

Table 1. Responses of teachers regarding school administration

S.N.	Statement	A	N	D
1.	My school administration does not manage the necessary teaching materials	10 67%	3 20%	2 13%
2.	My school administration has assigned extra periods as mandatory because of insufficient social studies teachers	11 73%	1 7%	3 20%
3.	No economic support for participating students in different social works and activities based on the curricular content	10 67%	2 13%	3 20%
4.	No sufficient leisure time of school is given for planning lessons and designing materials	3 20%	1 7%	11 73%
5.	Poor provisions for incentives and facilities for worthy performance	12 80%	1 7%	2 13%

In table 1, the first statement reveals that a total of 67% of teachers responded that their school administration did not manage and construct teaching materials, while 20% of teachers remained neutral. In the same issue, 13% of teachers disagreed with the statement. In the second statement, a total of 73% of teachers responded that they had to take extra classes due to the shortage of social studies teachers, while 20% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 7% of teachers remained neutral. Similarly, in the third statement, a total of 67% of teachers responded that their school administration did not provide economic support to participate students in different social works and activities, whereas 20% of teachers were not agreed with the statement and 13% of teachers did not respond either. Likewise, in the fourth statement, a total of 73% of teachers disagreed with the statement that their school provided sufficient time to plan and design materials for their teaching, while 20% of teachers agreed that their school provided sufficient time for planning and constructing materials. In the fifth statement, a total of 80% of teachers responded that there were poor provisions for incentives and facilities for worthy performance, while 13% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 7% of teachers remained neutral.

Thus, the data mentioned above shows that teachers did not have positive attitudes towards the school administration which is not a good sign for implementing the new curriculum effectively.

Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teacher Training

Teacher training is essential when the new curriculum gets introduced. The training provides teachers with information and skills on the new contents that are included in the curriculum. It not only helps make classroom teaching purposeful but also makes the whole educative process effective. Moreover, it also makes the educative process transformative and innovative in terms of planning, delivery and assessment. Table 2 presents the teachers' attitudes towards teacher training for implementing the new curriculum.

Table 2. Teachers' responses regarding teacher training

S.N.	Statement	A	N	D
1.	No robust training for the application of new curriculum in the classroom	13 87%	0	2 13%
2.	School organizes training plans for teachers to refine educative activities	2 13%	3 20%	10 67%
3.	Refresher training is organized frequently for teachers.	0	3 20%	12 80%
4.	No participation in any seminar organized for social studies teachers	12 80%	1 7%	2 13%
5.	No need and demand oriented training; only conducted for formality	12 80%	2 13%	1 7%
6.	Application of new instructional techniques and invention become difficult without training	10 67%	2 13%	3 20%

In table 2, the first statement shows that a total of 87% of teachers responded that they did not receive any sort of training regarding the implementation of new curriculum, while 13% of teachers disagreed with the statement. In the second statement, a total of 67% of teachers did not agree in the statement that school organized trainings for refining educative activities, while 13% of teachers agreed with the statement that their schools had organized training for improving teaching and learning practices and 20% teachers remained neutral. Likewise, in the third statement, a total of 80% of teachers responded that the refresher training was not organized frequently, whereas 20% of teachers did not respond either. Similarly, in the fourth statement, a total of 80% of teachers agreed that they did not participate in any social studies-related seminars, while teachers' disagreement rate was 13% with the statement and 7% of teachers remained neutral. In the fifth statement, a total of 80% of teachers responded that the training was just for formality and up-grading without considering needs and demands, while 7% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 13% of teachers remained neutral. In the sixth statement, a total of 67% of teachers responded that training could help them in the application of new techniques in their teaching, while 20% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 13% of teachers did not respond either.

Thus, the above data shows that teacher training in the opinions of teachers was essential for implementing the new curriculum effectively.

Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards Technology For Obtaining Curriculum Information

Being live in the age of science and technology; teachers need to incorporate modern technologies in teaching and learning. Modern technologies facilitate them in various aspects of their profession including the search for curriculum and reference materials. But some teachers remain behind in the application of technology for their professional purposes. Table 3 presents the teachers' attitudes towards technology for obtaining curriculum-related information.

Table 3. Teachers' responses towards the technology for obtaining curriculum-related information

S.N.	Statement	A	N	D
1.	Inadequate internet access for accessing updated curricular information	11 73%	1 7%	3 20%
2.	Difficulty in employing technology for accessing content based information and using them having no training	12 80%	0	3 20%
3.	Lack of technical knowledge and skills in social studies teachers	11 73%	3 20%	1 7%
4.	No familiarity with the application of technology for accessing refined curricular knowledge and contents	9 60%	3 20%	3 20%

In table 3, the first statement shows that a total of 73% of teachers responded that they could not search the curricular information because of inadequate access to the internet, while 20% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 7% of teachers did not respond either. In the second statement, a total of 80% of teachers agreed with the statement that they needed to have training on technologies for making the most of them, while 20% of teachers disagreed with the statement. Likewise, in the third statement, a total of 73% of teachers responded that they lacked the technical knowledge and skills for operating them, whereas 20% of teachers remained neutral and only 7% of teachers were not agreed with the statement. In the fourth statement, a total of 60% of teachers agreed that they were not familiar with the application of technology for accessing curricular knowledge and contents, while 20% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 20% of teachers remained neutral.

Thus, the data given above shows those teachers were found untrained in the application of technologies.

Social Studies Teachers' Attitudes Towards The Contents In The New Curriculum

The new curricula of grades XI and XII include contents from different social sciences along with ICT which most of the teachers have considered overloaded. Teaching this subject requires skilled and competent teachers because of its

multidisciplinary nature. This course is newly introduced in grade XI and XII in the educational history of Nepal. Table 4 shows the teachers' attitudes towards the contents of new curriculum.

Table 4. Responses of teachers towards the contents of the new curriculum

S.N.	Statement	A	N	D
1.	The contents of the new social studies curriculum are contextual and relevant with the current needs of learners	11 73%	3 20%	1 7%
2.	The distribution of weightage of the working hour in the Social studies curriculum is appropriate	8 53%	1 7%	6 40%
3.	The contents of the new Social studies curriculum are helpful for students in their future	12 80%	2 13%	1 7%
4.	The new curriculum has incorporated recent trends in teaching and learning	13 87%	2 13%	0

In table 4, the first statement shows that a total of 73% of teachers responded that the contents included in the new curriculum were contextual and relevant with the current needs of learners, while teachers' disagreement with the statement was 7%. In the same statement, 20% of teachers remained neutral. In the second statement, a total of 53% of teachers agreed with the statement that the distribution of weightage of the working hour in the social studies curriculum was appropriate, while 40% of teachers disagreed with the statement and 7% of teachers did not respond either. Similarly, in the third statement, a total of 80% of teachers responded that the contents included in the curriculum were helpful for students in their future, whereas 7% of teachers were not agreed with the statement and 13% of teachers remained neutral. Likewise, in the fourth statement, a total of 87% of teachers found agreed with the statement that the new curriculum had incorporated recent trends in teaching and learning, while 13% of teachers remained neutral on this statement.

Thus, the aforementioned data shows that the teachers were found positive regarding contents, weightage of the working hour and relevancy of curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Though, this is a small-scale study so it could not be generalized for the overall scale. The study shows the social studies teacher' attitudes towards the implementation of the curriculum which has recently been implemented in grades XI and XII. The study reveals that school administrations do not support teachers in managing and constructing teaching materials, conducting social works and activities as mentioned in the curriculum, not managing the workloads of the teachers, providing time for planning and constructing classroom materials and providing facilities and rewards on their better performance because of these reasons teachers do not have positive attitudes towards school administration. Similarly, it shows the importance of teacher training for implementing the new curriculum stating that without training the implementation of the curriculum becomes more difficult because they do not have proper knowledge of how to implement the curriculum. It also points out that neither the schools nor the concerned bodies conduct refresher training for them. Moreover, it is also highlighted that inadequate access to the internet and lack of technical knowledge and skills in the application of technologies become more challenging for them. It is also revealed in the study that the relevancy of contents, distribution of weightage of the working hour for those contents and incorporation of recent trends and approaches in teaching and learning are taken positively by teachers.

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