

Scope of Global Citizenship Education in the National Curriculum Framework 2021 of Bangladesh: A critical Review

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ABSTRACT

Global Citizenship Education (GCED) has significant role in creating active and responsible citizens with specific knowledge, skills, and values – such as solidarity, tolerance, empathy who can address the challenges of future uncertain world. This study aims to explore the scope of GCED in the new National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2021 of Bangladesh. Qualitative content analysis was used to critically analyze the NCF as a document. The findings show that the NCF has created a great deal of opportunities for infusing GCED in the curriculum mainly in four aspects. First, it has stepped into competency based education which is one of the major preconditions for embedding GCED in the curriculum framework. Second, within the development process, NCF has created the scope of addressing GCED issues and discourses. Third, in conceptualizing different aspects of the curriculum such as, conceptual understanding of the curriculum within a theoretical framework proposed, the understanding of the competency-based curriculum, assessment system, and technical aspects of the education system, GCED concepts were projected heavily. Fourth, learning area wise core competencies and the subject-wise competencies has also clearly reflected the GCED knowledge, skills, and values. However, analysing the NCF from 'soft' and 'critical' GCED perspective, we found that though the NCF has focused both 'soft' (e.g., harmony, tolerance, humanity, empathy, human rights, self-awareness) and 'critical' (e.g., social justice, creative and critical thinking, power and governance, informed and reflective action) GCED perspectives, it is leaned towards the 'soft' GCED aiming to create active citizens who will be able to solve the problems of the world to live a better life, not challenging the existing social and underlying power structure, which is more of a 'critical' GCED perspective. Explicit mention of GCED theories, approaches and tools such as gender transformative approaches, process of involving the disadvantaged groups in the NCF development process would make GCED attributes more visible in the document. This study will help the researchers, policy-makers, and educators to bridge this policy document with detailed curriculum, textbooks, and teacher professional development programs to understand the translation of GCED to create responsible national and global citizens.

Keywords: *Global Citizenship Education (GCED), Curriculum framework, Bangladesh*

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Introduction and Background

Global citizenship Education (GCED) is regarded as critical to student's learning throughout the world as a means of building internationally capable citizens with a variety of attributes (An, 2014; Asia-Pacific Centre of Education for International Understanding [APCEIU], 2021; Howard & Maxwell, 2023; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO,] 2014; 2015; 2016; 2018). Chong (2015) argues that global citizens are created rather than born, and GCED has impact on creating global citizens. When the UN's SDGs focus on promoting global citizenship via education (UN, 2015), supporting GCED has emerged as an emergent education objective. Despite the fact that Global Citizenship (GC) and Global Citizenship Education (GCED) are becoming increasingly popular, no comprehensive theory or consensus has been developed to date. A broad understanding seeks to equip students with the information, skills, attitudes, and values required to thrive in a globalized society, address global concerns, and make the world a better place (Davies, 2006; Oxfam, 2015; Print, 2015; UNESCO, 2013). Since the UN SDGs call for the development of globally competent citizens via education, governments around the world are supporting GCED in a variety of ways based on their national and global circumstances.

The UN entities and various organizations are all playing important roles in promoting GCED, with UNESCO leading from the front. UNESCO (2018), for example, states that “UNESCO is leading global efforts on Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which is at the core of Target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on Education” (p.16). Because globally UNESCO is in charge of GCED implementation, its various publications include a wealth of important information. According to UNESCO (2014; 2016), GCED can be promoted through a specific subject or through a cross-curricular approach. GCED should be reflected in national education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessments, according to UNESCO (2016). Many countries have begun to integrate GCED concepts into their national educational strategies and school curriculum (Wang, 2023). Bangladesh's National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 incorporates numerous GCED concepts and ideals (Islam, 2020a; 2020b). Evidence from the NEP 2010 supports Islam's assertion; for example, some significant characteristics of GCED mentioned in the NEP objectives are sense of justice, human rights, citizen responsibilities, honesty, tolerance, diversity, worldwide fraternity, and global skills.

Taking into account the existing NEP 2010, global dimensions of educational needs (e.g., Fourth Industrial Revolution), global commitments (e.g., UN SDGs), and various government policies (e.g., Bangladesh Perspective Plan 2021-2041 [Vision 2041], the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2021 was developed (NCTB, 2021). Furthermore, based on an assessment of various best practices in education around the world, other elements of education and student learning, such as vision, mission, and core competencies, has been included to the national curriculum framework (NCTB, 2021). However, while GCED has the capacity to produce globally competent people (An, 2014; APCEIU, 2021; Howard & Maxwell, 2023;

UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2014; 2015; 2016; 2018), the research on how Bangladesh's NCF 2021 produces scopes appears to be lacking. Even existing research focus on other aspects as well as dimension of GCED rather than GCED from the perspective of curriculum in Bangladesh context. For examples, Islam (2015) conducted a study on democratic citizenship education in the secondary schools of Bangladesh following the national curriculum 2012. Gambino and Hashim (2016) conducted a study aiming to assess global citizenship in a short-term study-abroad program in Bangladesh. Another recent study, entitled 'Role of Theatre Communication in Global Citizenship: A Case Study on Bangladesh' conducted by Rowf (2021) focuses on theatrical communication for promoting GCED. This research seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating how GCED is included into the national curricular framework 2021 for the purpose of developing globally competent citizens through education.

Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- (i) explore different aspects of global citizenship education incorporated in the process of developing NCF 2021 of Bangladesh and in the salient features of the curriculum.
- (ii) demonstrate how the learning of area-wise core competencies and the subject-wise competencies are dedicated to knowledge, skills, and values of GCED.

Literature Review

This section explains the study's major concepts and demonstrates how they relate to one another with the goal of creating a conceptual framework (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). This review includes both globally recognised policy documents of GCED as well as research publications in this area. Though we reviewed literature related to the ideology of 'soft' versus critical GCED, different philosophical and ideological theories of GCED have not been included in this review due to our limited scope, and having particular focus of this study.

Conceptualization of Global Citizenship and Global Citizenship Education

The idea of global citizenship and GCED is becoming increasingly important in today's complex, uncertain, and fast changing world. Though GC and GCED are gaining traction, no comprehensive theory or agreement has been reached as of yet. The goal of a broad understanding is to provide students the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values they need to handle global issues, prosper in a globalized society, and improve the world (Davies, 2006; Morais & Ogden, 2010; Oxfam, 2015; Print, 2015; UNESCO, 2013). Various academics have examined global citizenship from various angles over the years. For examples, Andreotti (2006) provided the contrast between soft versus critical global citizenship education. In order

to encourage a generation that will have a thorough understanding of global issues and will be more responsible toward ‘saving/educating/civilizing’ the world rather than getting involved in the reconstruction of the colonial era’s power structure, he argued that GCED must examine and unpack the complex web of social, cultural, local, and global contexts. Within this particular form of the global citizenship approach the world system is regarded as flawed, raising questions about the perception of inherent inadequacies and the presence of biased and exploitative structures (Pais & Costa, 2020). Therefore, ‘the principles of social justice, diversity, equality and deliberative democracy’ are emphasized in the discourse of critical approach of GCED (Pais & Costa, 2020, p.05). While critical GCED aims to empower people to critically reflect on the processes and legacies of their cultures and contexts, imagine alternative futures, and accept responsibility for their decisions and actions, soft GCED empowers people to act (or become active citizens) in accordance with what has been defined for them as a good life or ideal world (Andreotti, 2006). Similarly, Andreotti, (2006) argues that while there are possible benefits of soft GCED such as increased awareness of specific issues, support for campaigns, and a feel-good aspect, critical GCED benefits include independent/critical thinking and more informed, responsible, and ethical behaviour.

Nonetheless, the majority of GCED literatures have mentioned that GCED makes a substantial contribution to enabling citizens to live peacefully in a culturally diverse world, despite differences in how global citizenship is perceived from various theoretical viewpoints (OECD, 2018). The basic elements of GCED, as described by Sherman (2019), also include “human interconnectedness, ability to see the world as others see it, respect for cultural diversity, commitment to human rights and social justice, environmental sustainability, and sensitivity” (Sherman, 2019, p. 7). Once more, Kim (2021) discovers that other academics have described GCED as a means of promoting empathy, conduct, and policy that are in line with a global perspective, expressing national interests entwined with global issues. According to APCEIU (2021), GCED is a transformative educational strategy that empowers students to become responsible global citizens who can make a positive impact on a more equitable, peaceful, and sustainable society.

For more than two decades, UNESCO, the most active proponent of GCED in the modern world, has conducted considerable research, literature reviews, conferences, workshops, and international summits on GCED in order to establish a thorough functional definition of GCED. UNESCO (2015) provides a framework of GCED having three conceptual dimensions of students’ learning and development: cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral. The cognitive dimension includes the information and critical thinking abilities required to better grasp the world and its interconnectedness and intricacies. The socio-emotional dimension encompasses the abilities, attitudes, and values that enable learners to collaborate, negotiate, create, and communicate in a diverse and globalized environment, as well as cope with the problems of life and work in the twenty-first century. This dimension also allows for the development of

self-reflection, as well as beliefs, attitudes, and motives that enable learners to live meaningful and productive lives while interacting respectfully and peacefully with others. The behavioral dimension fosters learners' ability to engage compassionately, respectfully, and non-violently while developing constructive connections. It also refers to action competencies, such as constructive participation in community projects that promote sustainable development in their immediate surroundings and beyond. Finally, the behavioral dimension assists learners in applying their learning to local community norms or broader social standards.

Curriculum Framework and different factors related to GCED

A curriculum framework is typically a set of guidelines and an auxiliary structure meant to aid in the planning and creation of new curricula. It consists of interrelated parts like learning domains and basic learning experiences. The curricular framework is one of the most important instruments for ensuring consistency and quality in a curriculum system. A curriculum framework, according to Borkar (2021), is a collection of guidelines, benchmarks, or learning objectives that specify what subjects students should study. International Bureau of Education-United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IBE-UNESCO) (2018) focuses on inclusive and participatory processes for GCED planning through the engagement of national-level curriculum developers/specialists, pedagogical counselors, teachers, educators, and policy-makers, as well as other types of representatives from various social levels (e.g., religious bodies, school principals and headmasters, teacher unions, parent associations, representative from local UNESCO or UN commission) in order to develop curriculum framework from the perspective of GCED. Conducting research and reviewing different existing policies/laws for example, constitution, national education policy, education laws, teacher education, existing curriculum and assessment framework are also recommended.

Using various teaching-learning strategies and resources, evaluation and assessment tools are also necessary for the successful implementation of GCED (IBE-UNESCO, 2018; UNESCO, 2015). In order to successfully implement GCED in schools and ensure students' holistic development, scholars, researchers, and various organizations—including UNESCO itself—mostly emphasize action-oriented, right-based pedagogical practices (An, 2014; Guo, 2014; IBE-UNESCO, 2018; OXFAM, 2015; Rapoport, 2010; UNESCO, 2015). Project-based learning, collaborative work, experiential learning, and service learning are some examples (Guo, 2013; Oxfam, 2015; Trilling & Fadel, 2009; UNESCO, 2015). Similarly given the requirements of GCED for a learning environment that promotes learner engagement and fosters personal development Brigham (2011) proposes transformative learning, experiential learning, reflective practice, and collaborative learning, which have the potential to prioritize the active agency of learners, empowering them to take ownership of their own learning process and establish meaningful connections between their individual perspectives and the learning activities at hand (Brigham, 2011).

Assessment is another important factor for successful implementation of GCED and UNESCO (2015:57) suggests to utilize the potentials of assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning in GCED assessment practices since “there are no globally agreed indicators for monitoring global citizenship education learning outcomes as yet”. However, aligning the learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment techniques (summative and formative) is essential to ensure efficient assessment in global citizenship education. While the specific assessment tools required to evaluate global citizenship education (GCED) may vary depending on the contextual factors, it is essential to employ a comprehensive range of assessment approaches, encompassing assignments, demonstrations, observations, projects, performance tasks, and tests, to effectively assess the learning outcomes within the realm of GCED (Brigham, 2011; UNESCO, 2015). NCF 2021 was created with these issues in mind, as well as other global and national contexts and issues following the procedures of curriculum planning and development (NCTB, 2021) and we conducted this study to critically investigate how Bangladesh’s NCF 2021 incorporates these aspects and follow the procedures in light with GCED.

Study Method

Research Approach

The purpose of this study was to explore the scope of National Curriculum Framework 2021 of Bangladesh in incorporating Global Citizenship Education. We employed Qualitative Content Analysis for analyzing the NCF. Qualitative Content Analysis performs systematic coding and the identification process for the subjective interpretation of text to reveal patterns” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). In qualitative content analysis, the original texts are actually expanded and enlarged, rather than typical data-reductive approach (Schreier, 2014). Through Qualitative Content Analysis; we explored the manifest content and the themes & core ideas of the NCF.

Design

We used the conventional approach of content analysis which is unstructured or inductive as a process (Hickey & Kipping, 1996). In the conventional approach, no existing theory or research is used as a framework to look into the content, but to look directly into the text to discover themes and patterns (Potter & Levine-Donnerstein, 1999). We reviewed and analyzed the NCF to see how different aspects of GCED has been incorporated in the document and in what way the content is making sense for creating global citizens.

The content sampling

The content that we analyzed was the **National Curriculum Framework of Bangladesh** developed in 2021 by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh.

All relevant chapters and sections in the chapters of NCF were analyzed to reveal the themes which project the overall manifesto of GCED in this document.

The process of qualitative data analysis

We followed the eight step process of qualitative content analysis (Datt & Chetty, 2016). We defined document that we will analyze as preparing the data. We chose the curriculum framework as the choice of the content must be aligned with our research question (Patton, 2002). Then we defined our unit of analysis choosing different themes from the curriculum framework, developed categories and coding scheme from the already existing GCED framework, tested our coding scheme on a small part of the document, and as it worked well, we applied in to all texts that we wanted to analyze.

Research Ethics and declaration on subjectivity

Subjectivity is comprised of what an individual feel, his or her opinions and preferences about the world that constitutes his or her identity (Siegesmund, 2008). Subjectivity is inevitable in qualitative research and Peshkin (1988) argues that acknowledging researcher's subjectivity cannot be counted as a weakness, rather it actually contributes to the study in the way he or she conducts the research. Subjectivity statements include acknowledging "personal histories, cultural worldviews, and professional experiences" (Preissle, 2008, p. 845). For our study, we acknowledge that one of our authors was involved in the development process of this NCF document. To minimize any bias that may occur because of this involvement, we used reflexive (Lisi, 2016; Fleming, 2018; Roulston, 2010; & Morin, Olsson, Atikcak, 2021) techniques during the analysis, cross checked each-other's analysis, and finally used peer debriefing with someone outside the study as critical friend (Rossman and Rallis, 2012);

Findings and Discussion: Scope of National Curriculum Framework in Creating National and Global Citizens

While reviewing the different chapters, five themes emerged, each from a cluster of NCF chapters (shown in table-1). In this section we present the themes which explain the role of NCF in transforming the secondary school students into global citizens by infusing GCED knowledge, values and skills in it.

Table-1: Themes and relevant chapters of NCF

Broad theme	Relevant chapters in NCF
Curriculum development process: Was GED a consideration?	Background of curriculum development Curriculum revision and development process
Conceptual underpinnings of curriculum: Aligned with GCED?	Foundations of curriculum development Vision and mission Approach of the curriculum Competency-based education Basic principles Inclusiveness and gender sensitivity in curriculum
GCED in Subject-wise core competencies and teaching-learning	Core competencies Learning areas Learning area-wise competencies Objectives of different stages and levels of education Level-wise selected subjects Subject and subject conceptualization Secondary level (Grade 11– 12) Teaching-learning strategies Teaching-learning materials
Assessment system proposed: Scope of assessing and promoting GCED knowledge, values and skills	Assessment and reporting system
Curriculum Implementation: From GCED Perspective	Curriculum Dissemination and Training Curriculum implementation and monitoring

Curriculum development process: Was GED a consideration?

Revision and development work of the NCF 2021 was started in 2017 and completed in 2021 led by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Bangladesh. The last revision and development of national curriculum in Bangladesh took place in 2012. It is suggested that while developing a curriculum that promotes GCED, both national and global situation should be taken into consideration to better situate the curriculum in a local and global context

through i) extensive review of national and global policies and discourses, ii) conduction of research at national level, and iii) involvement of relevant stakeholders (IBE-UNESCO, 2018).

Review of national and global policy document and discourses:

IBE-UNESCO (2018, P.46) mentioned a list of possible national documents to review which are-“Constitution, National Education Laws and mandates, National Education Policies, National Education Sector Plans or Strategic Plans (e.g. Rights of the Child, etc.), Statements of education principles, Curriculum and Assessment Frameworks (general, as well as subject-specific), Teacher Education/Higher Education Laws, and National Youth Policies”.

Table 1: National and international policies, documents and discourses reviewed for NCF

National and internal policy and other documents reviewed	International or sub regional policy or other documents and discourses reviewed
Constitution, Education policy 2010, Education related rules and laws, Eighth Five-year Plan, Vision 2021, 2041, 2071, and 2100 (Delta plan), National Curriculum 2012 of Bangladesh	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), National curriculum of different countries, Policy documents from UNESCO, Learning Framework 2030 (OECD, 2018), The Brookings Report (2016); Fourth industrial revolution, Pandemics, Massive migration, Global Challenges of 21st century

We see that the table includes all of these documents except teacher education document which was crucial. Regarding the international context, fourth industrial revolution, pandemics, massive migration and other factors of global changes were taken into account.

Conducting national level research:

To comprehend the situation and analysing the needs of the learner & society, various studies were conducted between 2017 and 2019 on the pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels for reviewing the curriculum and to analyze the learners’ needs and challenges (NCTB, 2021). However, the quality, rigor, and objectivity of these research can be further explored.

Involving different relevant stakeholders:

It is suggested that the process of developing a GCED policy needs to be inclusive and transparent by involving all relevant stakeholders so that they understand and own the GCED policy (IBE-UNESCO, p.33). The curriculum framework was developed in a systematic and rigorous process involving different steps. In the process it has consulted with relevant government and non-government organizations such as National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), Teacher professional development institutes of different levels and streams of education. NCTB has also consulted with more than 800 relevant stakeholders (in 13 groups) to review and finalize the draft NCF. They included policy makers; reputed educators; educational entrepreneurs; education specialists; curriculum experts; gender experts; education administrators; teacher trainers from different national institutes; parents, teachers and learners from different level and streams of education; professionals; employers; and members of the University Grants Commission (NCTB, 2021, p.11-12).

It is also recommended that along with other individuals and groups, the minority and vulnerable groups in particular, should be reached and involved in the policy development process in a meaningful way so that it reflects the overall diversity of the country (IBE-UNESCO, p.33). In the NCF, we did not find any specific mention of such underprivileged or silenced group. However, the NCF was publicly shared for getting comments and this certainly promotes inclusivity and participation in decision-making processes of different groups which is also recommended for GCED (IBE-UNESCO, p.33). We think that the document would be more critically inclined to GCED if there was mention of how silenced and marginalized groups were involved in the process. Besides who was included in the process of NCF document, how were they recruited (who were not), who were considered as experts remains unknown in this document.

Vision and mission of the Curriculum and GCED

The vision of the curriculum is to create “Patriotic, productive, adaptive, happy and global citizens inspired by the spirit of the Liberation War” (NCTB, 2021, p.13). The mission is to ensure “sensitive, accountable, integrated, and participatory education system” by employing “responsible, self-motivated, skilled, and professional human resources” (NCTB, 2021, p. 13), which reflects the GCED competencies overall. The mission includes aspects which also promote GCED such as having a flexible and effective curriculum to promote learners’ latent potentials, making educational institutions as social hubs, creating opportunities for multi-dimensional learning outside educational institutions (Brigham (2011). However, we must keep it in mind that keeping GCED concepts in the general statements would not ensure preparing students as global citizens unless these general statements are demystified and translated into specific policies, content and pedagogies.

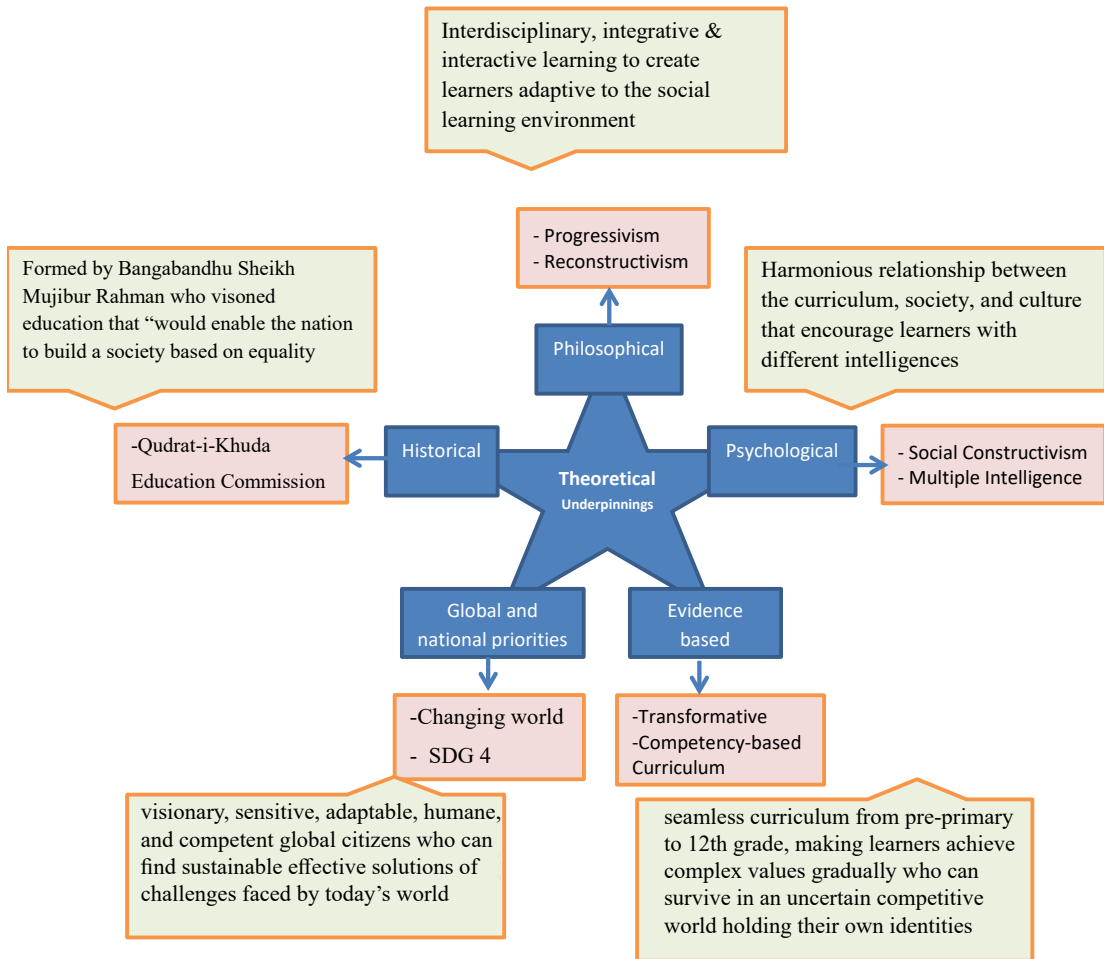
Conceptual underpinnings of curriculum: Aligned with GCED?

Five separate sections (foundations of the curriculum, approach, competency-based education, basic principles, inclusiveness and gender sensitivity) of the NCF 2021 were analyzed here to understand how much the GCED concepts are infused in the holistic philosophical and conceptual aspects envisioned for the education system through the new curriculum.

Theoretical underpinnings

The theories and discourses that built the conceptual underpinnings presented in five different foundations (philosophical, psychological, historic, global and national priorities, and evidence-based) are- progressivism, and reconstructivism; social constructivism theory and Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences theory; Qudrat-i-Khuda Education Commission; Uncertain and changing world, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)-4; and competency-based transformative curriculum. Through these theories and concepts, the NCF envisions a fair and equality-based education system connected with society and culture. For this it proposed a seamless, competency based, transformative, and interdisciplinary curriculum from pre-primary to grade 12 which will create a learning environment that supports learners with different potentials and intelligence who can thrive in an uncertain future world and able to solve the challenges of today's world as global citizen holding their own national and local identities. This final goal is totally aligned with the goal of GCED which is social justice "... for securing a world which is more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable" (UNESCO, 2014:9) through creating citizens who are compatible in both performing in national and global contexts (UNESCO, 2014:25). However, there was no direct mention of any GCED related theoretical aspects or any 'critical' theories that challenges and aims to reconstruct the underlying power structure of the society in the NCF.

Figure 1: Theoretical underpinnings of NCF and the related attributes in future education system and learners



Conceptualization of competency

NCF has conceived the definition of the competency as, "Competency is the ability to adapt to changing contexts based on a combination of **knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes**, and is driven by the spirit of the Liberation War" (NCTB, 2021, p.20). The four components of the competency gave a suitable platform for including GCED aspects as in different literature, GCED has been conceptualized in terms of three similar domains- knowledge and understanding; skills; and values or attitudes or socio-emotional domain. The following tables (Table 3 and 4)

list down the values, qualities, skills and knowledge to be achieved by the learners from this NCF juxtaposing with GCED knowledge, skills and attitudes.

GCED Values and Attitudes in NCF

Table 2: Mapping the NCF listed values and qualities with the values and attitudes for GCED

Values listed in NCF	Values and Attitudes listed for GCED	Qualities to be achieved as listed in NCF
Solidarity	Sense of Identity and self-esteem	-
Patriotism		
Harmony	Commitment to social justice and equity	Humanity
Tolerance	Respect for people and human rights	Non-communalism
Respect	Value Diversity	
Empathy	Commitment to participation and inclusion	Democracy
Integrity		
-	Belief that people can bring about change	Initiative Positivity Enthusiasm
-	Concern to the environment and Commitment to sustainable development.	Responsibility
-	-	Honesty Aesthetics

(NCTB, 2021, p. 21 & 22 and OXFAM, 2015, p.8)

From the table above, we see that certain set of values and attitudes listed for GCED clearly match with similar sets of values and qualities listed in the NCF.

GCED Skills in NCF

Table 3: Mapping the NCF listed skills with skills mentioned for GCED

Skills mentioned in the NCF		Skills mentioned for GCED
Skill category	Associated skills	
Skills for learning to learn	“Critical thinking Creative Thinking Problem solving”	Critical Creative Thinking
Skills for personal empowerment	“Self-management (self-awareness and analysis, emotional intelligence, social intelligence, self-efficacy) Decision making Communication” Life and livelihood Cooperation	Conflict resolution Empathy; Self-awareness and reflection Informed and reflective action Communication Cooperation
Practical and social skills	Global citizenship Literacy and numeracy, change literacy Digital literacy (information, technology, media)	Ability to manage complexity and uncertainty
Foundational skills		

(NCTB, 2021, p.24 and OXFAM, 2015, p.8)

From the table we see a perfect match of skills mentioned in the NCF with that of GCED except some general skills that are mentioned only in the NCF such as literacy and digital literacy.

GCED Knowledge in NCF

Table 4: Mapping the NCF listed Knowledge with GCED knowledge

Listed in NCF		GCED Knowledge and Understanding
Type of knowledge	Description	
Disciplinary knowledge	Disciplinary concepts and content	Social Justice and Equity Identity and Diversity
Interdisciplinary knowledge	Interconnecting the concepts and content of one discipline with that of another	Globalisation and Interdependence Sustainable Development
Epistemic knowledge	Understanding the works and thoughts of discipline-based specialists	Peace and Conflict Human Rights
Procedural knowledge	Knowledge of how to perform a task step by step	Power and Governance

(NCTB, 2021:26 and OXFAM, 2015:8)

Four types of knowledge are described in the NCF for the students to gain. The knowledge and understanding for GCED are comprehensive and general in nature which can be taught as any type of knowledge. For example, social justice can be taught as a separate disciplinary concepts, can be used in different subject as connecting concepts, can be further explored with related discourses by specialists, and/or seen as a procedural knowledge to achieve step by step.

Comparing the characteristics of above mentioned knowledge, skills, value and attitudes of the NCF with that of GCED, we see that it is overwhelmingly synonymous. However, it is difficult to see the connection of these sets of knowledge, skills and attitudes with the ‘soft’ and ‘critical’ GCED perspective (Andreotti, 2006) in a direct manner without observing its translation into implementation.

Gender and inclusion

NCF 2021 has advocated for incorporating teaching-learning strategy, content and assessment strategy in a gender sensitive and equally considerate to race, religion, economic status, geographic location, disability and other relevant factors. This is clearly linked with the manifest of GCED which is social justice and equity. Along with gender sensitive approach, GCED could be encouraged through a gender transformative approaches that gives emphasis on redistributing resources, gender roles, expectations & labour among women, men, and non-binary gender identities. These approaches work on gender based norms, power dynamics, and collective actions (MacArthur, Carrard, Davila, Grant, Megaw, Willetts & Winterford, 2022) as a more critical’ GCED (Andreotti, 2006).

GCED in Subject-wise core competencies and teaching-learning strategies

Embedding GCED: From core competency to Subject-wise competency

NCF has articulated ten Core Competencies to express the intended capabilities that the learners should achieve. Following table portrays an analysis of these core competencies regarding incorporation of the GCED.

Table 5: Incorporation of GCED in the core competencies of the NCF 2021

Core competencies	GCED Knowledge	GCED skills	GCED values
1. “Ability to express one’s views and opinions properly and creatively according to the context, respecting and understanding the opinions and propositions of others” (NCTB, 2021, p. 27).	Expressing and understanding opinions and propositions of others	Effective Communication Creativity	Respecting diversified ideas and perspectives

- | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|
| 2. | “Ability to take logical and the most beneficial decisions for all after considering various aspects of an issue holistically through critical thinking” (NCTB, 2021, p. 27). | Understanding diversity
Understanding different issues and interconnectedness | Critical thinking
analytical thinking | Empathy
humanity |
| 3. | “Ability to achieve the qualities of a global citizen by showing love and loyalty to one’s own country and upholding own traditions, culture, history and heritage while respecting differences and diversity” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28). | Local, national and global system and Culture
history and heritage | Global citizenship
Cooperation
Decision making | Respect for diversity
Solidarity
Responsibility
Empathy |
| 4. | “Ability to take logical and the most beneficial decisions for all and solve problems with the participation of all through problem projection, quick realisation, analysis, synthesis and consideration of future significance” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28). | Knowledge on metacognition | Analytical thinking
Problem Solving
Creative thinking
Cooperation | Responsibility
Empathy |
| 5. | “Ability to adapt to the changing world through peaceful coexistence while maintaining cooperation, respect and harmony and to play a role in creating a safer habitable world for future generations” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28). | Adaptability
Interconnectedness
Sustainable development | Cooperation | Harmony
Peaceful coexistence
respect for diversity |
| 6. | “Ability to artistically present and contribute to national and global welfare by creating new ways, strategies and possibilities adapting new attitudes, ideas, and perspectives”(NCTB, 2021, p. 28). | Aesthetics
Communication
National and global issues
Sustainable development | Adaptability
Creative thinking
Problem solving | Respect for diversity
Responsibility |
| 7. | “Ability to create and maintain risk-free, safe and acceptable personal, familial, social, state and global relationships and communications by knowing one’s own position and role in managing one’s own physical and mental health” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28). | Identity
Social, national and global structures
Physical and mental health
Interconnectedness | Creative thinking
Communication
Citizenship | Empathy
Cooperation
Responsibility
Human rights |

8.	“Ability to deal with disasters by facing risks and opportunities while keeping human dignity intact and preparing oneself for safe and secure life and livelihood in a constantly changing world” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28).	Sustainable development	Adaptability Life skills Transferable skills Livelihood skills	Human rights cooperation Empathy
9.	“Ability to solve everyday problems in a changing world using mathematical, scientific and technological skills” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28).	Issues related to mathematics, science and technology	Critical thinking Analytical thinking Creative thinking Problem solving	
10.	“Ability to engage oneself in the welfare of nature and humanity through religious discipline, honesty and moral virtues and the practice of integrity” (NCTB, 2021, p. 28).	Sustainable development Theology Human rights Nature	Cooperation Collaboration Harmony	Humanity Honesty Integrity Empathy Respect for diversity

We see that the learning areas were not drawn linearly from ten core competencies rather they have been composed in an interconnected way and are explicitly aligned with GCED issues and concepts (IBE-UNESCO, 2018).

In continuation, the NCF has articulated competencies for ten learning areas to comprehend the exact need of competencies for learners. As these learning area-wise competencies are the reflections of core competencies, they also uphold the GCED (IBE-UNESCO, 2018). Following table displays the analysis of both explicit and implicit integration of GCED in the learning area-wise competencies.

Table 6: GCED in learning area-wise competencies

Learning Areas	GCED Knowledge	GCED skills	GCED values
1. Language and communication	Expressing and understanding opinions and propositions of self and others Local and global context	Effective Communication Creativity Aesthetics	Respecting for diversity Tolerance

2.	Mathematics and Reasoning	Mathematics Local and global context Change	Creative thinking Critical thinking analytical thinking Problem solving Decision making Communication	Responsibility humanity Cooperation
3.	Science and Technology,	Local, national and global system life and environment Scientific phenomena and process Disciplinary knowledge Epistemic knowledge Interdisciplinary knowledge	Creative thinking Critical thinking analytical thinking Problem solving Decision making	Respect for diversity Responsibility Empathy
4.	Digital Technology	Sustainable development Disciplinary knowledge Safety Digital literacy	Critical thinking Analytical thinking Problem Solving Creative thinking Decision making Communication	Responsibility Empathy Cooperation Ethics
5.	Environment and Climate	Adaptation Interconnectedness Sustainable development Life and nature Environmental issues Safety	Critical thinking Analytical thinking Problem Solving Decision making	Responsibility respect for diversity Empathy cooperation

6.	Social and Global Citizenship	Identity Aesthetics Local, national and global system and Culture history and heritage Communication National and global system Sustainable development Safety	Adaptability Creative thinking Problem solving Analytical thinking Decision making	Respect for diversity Responsibility Patriotism Empathy Cooperation Collaboration Harmony
7.	Life and Livelihood	Identity Social, national and global context Disciplinary knowledge Safety	Creative thinking Communication Livelihood Adaptability Life skills Transferable skills Livelihood skills	Empathy Cooperation Responsibility Human rights
8.	Religion, Values and Ethics	Sustainable development Religion Human rights Nature	Cooperation Collaboration Harmony	Humanity Honesty Fairness Integrity Empathy Respect for diversity Tolerance
9.	Physical-Mental Health and Well-being	Identity Social, national and global structures Physical and mental health Interconnectedness Safety	Creative thinking Communication Citizenship adaptability	Empathy Cooperation Responsibility Human rights Positive attitude Respect for diversity

10. Arts and Culture	Aesthetics	Adaptability	Respect for diversity
	Disciplinary knowledge	Creative thinking	Responsibility
	Communication	Problem solving	Self-reliant
	National and global issues		
	Sustainable development		
	Culture		

In quest of achieving these ten learning area-wise competencies, NCF has determined subjects for pre-primary to grade ten. For instance, there are ten subjects for grade 6-10, namely; “Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, Social science, Digital technology, Life and livelihood, Art and Culture, Wellbeing and Religion” (NCTB, 2021, p 35). It has adopted thematic and integrated approach to conceptualise the subjects, which is an important aspect of GCED (IBE-UNESCO, 2018).

In order to attain ten core and learning area-wise competencies, the framework has articulated subject-wise competencies for each subject. It has stated that, “The context of the subject has been taken into consideration, and at the same time, the local and global contexts have also been considered. The current context of the curriculum and future expectations in the changing world have been reflected” (NCTB, 2021, p 37). For instance, History and Social Science subject where the GCED concepts has been introduced most, conceived the subject-wise competency statement as follows-

“To be able to play a positive role in transformation by reviewing, from a scientific point of view, one’s own position in the world, history, culture and identity, various elements and structures of natural and social environments, and to be able to play a role as a global citizen to build a developed, safe and sustainable Bangladesh and world by practising resource management” (NCTB, 2021, P. 56).

This competency statement distinctly emphasizes the goal of nurturing an engaged citizen capable of global thinking, local action, and contributing to the establishment of a sustainable world. Upon examination, it becomes evident that this competency statement encompasses all three learning domains as recognized by UNESCO (2015). Other subject has also conceptualized GCED concepts explicitly.

When we analyzed these competencies and learning areas, we found that there were both components of ‘soft’ and ‘critical’ GCED (Andreotti, 2006). However, it mostly focused on solving daily life problems, living a better life, acting as an effective global citizen. It did not explicitly focus on challenging the existing power dominance in the society and on reconstructing or transforming the society.

Embedding GCED in teaching-learning Strategies

The NCF embraces a pedagogical approach rooted in social constructivism and leverages connectivism as the fundamental concept, with a central emphasis on experiential learning. Experiential learning incorporates a range of processes and strategies, such as “joyful learning, hands-on learning that engages all the senses, project-based, problem-based, and challenge-based learning, collaborative learning, inquiry-based learning, a blend of self-directed individual, paired, and group work learning, as well as a focus on process and context over traditional subject-based learning” (NCTB, 2021:76). The teacher’s role is to facilitate effective experiential learning, with a focus on creating a supportive, inclusive, and unified learning environment that motivates learners to take charge of their learning with confidence. The classroom environment is characterized by learner-centered, democratic, and collaborative principles (NCTB, 2021), which are well-aligned with the GCED concepts regarding teaching learning strategies (Guo, 2014; IBE-UNESCO, 2018; OXFAM, 2015; Rapoport, 2010; UNESCO, 2015; Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Brigham, 2011).

Assessment system proposed: Scope of assessing and promoting GCED knowledge, values and skills

It is vital to review the teaching-learning and assessment while examining the scope of GCED in curriculum or education system as both the components has direct and significant impact on student’s learning experience (IBE-UNESCO, 2018). It should be ensured that effective and appropriate diversified assessment strategies aligned with teaching-learning strategies are used to measure and foster the transversal competencies of GCED such as critical thinking, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity (IBE-UNESCO, 2018). In the NCF, we see the exact reflection of the emphasis on this constructive alignment, use of diversified assessment strategies, and assessing the different components of competencies in a comprehensive and integrated way. The NCF included, “Competency-based assessment needs to be ensured through the proper application of various assessment strategies and methods. The assessment strategies need to be set considering the purpose of the assessment while the assessment methods need to be fixed based on what needs to be assessed” (NCTB, 2021, p.84).

The major philosophy of assessment for GCED projected in the UNESCO & APCEU toolkit, and the major principles of the assessment described in the NCF go hand-in-hand. Emphasizing formative assessment over the summative (Muskin, 2017; UNESCO, 2015, in IBE-UNESCO, 2018), using verities of assessment method to assess the GCED competencies (IBE-UNESCO, 2018) are also mentioned in the NCF. The principles of assessment in the curriculum framework also clearly states “Reduction of examination-centric summative assessment” (NCTB, 2021: 81) and also focused on using multidimensional models of assessment. “Instead of relying solely on paper and pencil tests, assessment can involve observation, portfolio, reflective and process-based assessment, continuous assessment, peer assessment, stakeholder assessment,

and technology in assessment (apps)” (NCTB, 2021:84).

Curriculum Implementation: From GCED Perspective

In quest for the successful implementation of the curriculum, this framework has emphasized on appropriate educational institutions, educational management and policies & plans. For educational institutions it has highlighted on competent teachers as driving force for the implementation of the curriculum focusing on continuous professional development of the teachers along with national standard for new teacher recruitment, academic, financial, administrative, social incentives, and accountability for teachers. It also suggested developing educational administration and policies in line with the curriculum need (NCTB, 2021). A number of GCED literature suggested similar implementation strategy. For instance, while describing the implementing strategy for GCED curriculum IBE-UNESCO (2018) expressed that “In the case of a new or revised curriculum, this process ideally includes school development and improvement processes; fostered school leadership and ethos; in-service teacher training and the development of new textbooks, teaching and learning materials and resources, as well as guidelines” (as cited in IBE-UNESCO, 2013:19).

Even though the NCF has elaborately emphasized on the crucial aspects and areas of development for the successful implementation of the curriculum, there are huge challenges regarding teachers’ competencies and education system which eventually may narrow down the scopes for GCED. Following the suggestions from NCF the government has started implementing the curriculum in January, 2023. It is apparent that time for preparing the teachers and the system was very limited. Critical analysis of the situation may reveal some censorious question regarding preparedness for the implementation process. Since the NCF has suggested a huge transformation in the curriculum, many aspects of the curriculum might appear as unknown to the teachers and education system as a whole (NCTB, 2021). Teachers and educational administrators might not have adequate pedagogical, academic and administrative competencies to foster the expected outcomes. Present infrastructure, resource, classroom environment, technology, for example, have huge scope to develop. Classroom size in most of the schools is too big to practice any participatory, inquiry based, problem based learning, which can further make the scope for GCED slim.

Reflections of ‘soft’ versus ‘critical’ GCED in the NCF

According to Pais and Costa (2020), the rhetoric of the critical approach of GCED emphasizes the values of social justice, diversity, equality, and deliberative democracy. According to Andreotti (2006), the soft GCED encourages people to act (or become active citizens) in accordance with what they have defined as a good life or ideal world, while critical GCED primarily aims to empower people to critically reflect on the processes and legacies of their cultures and

contexts, imagine alternative futures, and accept responsibility for their decisions and actions. Furthermore, Andreotti (2006) makes the case that while soft GCED may have advantages like raising awareness of particular topics, supporting campaigns, and having a positive feeling, critical GCED advantages include independent/critical thinking and more responsible, ethical, and informed behavior. Based on the analysis of the features of the NCF, and competencies, findings suggest that both ‘soft’ (for examples, harmony, tolerance, humanity, empathy, human rights, self-awareness) and critical aspect of GCED (for examples, social justice, creative and critical thinking, power and governance, informed and reflective action) have been reflected in the NCF. It indicates that NCF provides scopes for the learners to exercise what are imposed for them as good, as well as scopes for thinking critically to take justice-oriented and informed actions.

However, the overall analysis shows that the features of the NCF, and competencies are more dominated by the ‘soft’ GCED rather than the critical one.

Conclusion

In the light of some important literature related to GCED, the study analyzed the scope of the NCF in incorporating GCED aspects which pave the path of creating global citizens through formal education. We found that NCF has infused GCED aspects both in the process of developing NCF and in important features of the curriculum, such as vision, mission, foundation, and approach, very well creating excellent scope for developing competent national and global citizens in Bangladesh. The learning area wise core competencies and the subject-wise competencies also clearly reflect the GCED knowledge, skills, and values. When we analyzed the document from ‘soft’ and ‘critical’ GCED perspective, we found that though the NCF incorporated both soft and critical aspects of GCED, it is leaned towards ‘soft’ perspective- creating active citizens with knowledge, attitudes and skills to be able to solve the problems of future world. Though it had some aspects of ‘critical’ GCED, it does not explicitly aim to create citizens with knowledge, skills, and attitudes who will be able to challenge the existing power structure, dominance, and discrimination within the society.

We must also be cautious that the existing constrains in our education system, such as teachers’ competence, bureaucratic education system, large class size, dropout rate, and inclusion issues can narrow down this scope created in NCF. Nevertheless, the findings of the study suggest future policy documents to explicitly mention how GCED aspects are critically, purposefully, and carefully infused in the document. Further educational policies and practice can also be compared and mapped juxtaposing with the GCED mapping of our study.

Recommendation for further research

The study reveals that GCED is infused in all the aspects of the NCF 2021 quite well. However

it is important to further investigate how this has been translated to the detailed curriculum, textbooks, and teacher professional development. How teachers are practicing these GCED in real classroom and to what extent the students are inculcating these GCED knowledge, skills, values and attitudes also needs further research attention.

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