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Influence of Globalization on the Social Studies Textbooks at the School Level

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Abstract

This study explores the influences of globalization on secondary social studies textbooks. It uses a qualitative case study method to explore how global topics like multiculturalism, environmental sustainability, and human rights are included in textbooks, teaching materials, and methods. The researchers collected data through interviews with two teachers and by analyzing documents to understand how global ideas are shown in textbooks. The findings indicate that globalization has improved the curriculum by promoting global citizenship and increasing awareness of different cultures. However, there are challenges, such as the risk of losing local culture and content. Balancing global themes with local contexts is essential to help students understand their diverse environment. The study also examines key topics in textbooks, showing how Social Studies help students understand social issues and build national identity. It emphasizes the importance of active participation in communities and how modern teaching methods can make Social Studies more engaging. Lastly, the research highlights how globalization encourages students to think critically about global challenges and their local effects.

Keywords: Globalization, Curriculum, Pedagogy, Textbooks and Social Studies

Introduction

In today's world, everyone knows about globalization. It is a global process involving exchanging goods, information, and people across countries. We can observe various aspects of globalization (Wagner, 2011). It is a complex debate accompanied by in-depth income discussions with an appreciation of technological advances and connected through global multilateral relations (Huggett, 2000). Globalization is regarded as the most significant change happening in societies throughout the globe (Baylis, 2020). Globalization makes it easier for goods, services, and information to move across borders, bringing the world closer together and impacting almost everything we do daily (Aggarwal, 2021). Globalization connects societies globally, meaning events in one location can influence people everywhere. It enhances economic interdependence through trade, technology sharing, and cultural exchange, impacting various sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

The main parts of globalization are the flow of money and trade, the sharing of knowledge and education, and the free movement of people across borders (Ahmad et al., 2022). The development has significantly impacted various aspects of human life, particularly education. It has positive and negative effects, with the positive side providing opportunities for developing countries to enhance citizens' skills and raise educational standards (Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021). Some people are worried that globalization might create a universal Westernized society. While globalization has been around for a long time, it became widely recognized in academia during the 1990s (Lechner & Boli, 2020). With this fast pace of global transformation today, it is very uncertain whether educational institutions have shifted their goals to prepare students to be competent citizens in this age of globalization (Dishon & Gilead, 2021). Education systems worldwide are now more focused on supporting human rights, gender equality, and equal opportunities for everyone. This change is largely thanks to globalization (Torres & Tarozzi, 2020). The goal of school education is to create citizens who are knowledgeable, skilled, responsible, helpful, respectful, ethical, positive,

patriotic, and caring. They should also believe in democracy, human rights, and diversity and be able to think critically (John, 2020). Globalization and education are closely linked. Education plays a vital role in shaping society and helping individuals understand the world around them. As countries and cultures become more interconnected through globalization, education also evolves to reflect these changes.

Globalization is leading to a greater focus on internationalizing school curricula while fostering new research and teaching partnerships between institutions worldwide (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Globalization is reshaping business competition, leading to a scenario where local communities may gain significant importance. These communities encourage organizations to develop and share the skills necessary to thrive in a knowledge-based global economy (Alazmi, 2022). The National Education Commission of 1955 recommended establishing 'Social Study' as a distinct subject. As a result, social studies were introduced at the primary level in 1960, and a compulsory course was created at the secondary level (Neupane, 2024). The Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC) report, which laid the foundation for Nepal's first national education system, has been significantly influenced by globalization (Ra & Joshi, 2020). The CDC published the secondary-level curriculum in 2014 and revised specific objectives and curriculum details for all compulsory subjects. Social Studies is one of the compulsory subjects (Pokhrel et al., 2023). The CDC has published the secondary level (Grade 11 and 12) curriculum, and social studies is also one of the compulsory subjects. The content includes international relations among the nations, sustainable development, current affairs, social responsibility, values and norms, and historical events such as the world war, constitution, and its history, which are some examples of social studies content at the secondary level (Grade 9-12).

Social studies encompasses various academic disciplines, including history, geography, civics, political science, and economics. In recent decades, social studies teachers have adjusted their approaches in response to evolving political, social, and economic landscapes (Shah, 2021).

Social studies is essential to help children understand the world, where they can contribute to the public interest to promote equality and democracy (Reimers, 2020). The primary aim of social studies is to enable young minds to develop the ability to make informed and rational decisions in the interest of the people as citizens of the world's culturally diverse, democratic society (Levy et al., 2023). Social Studies is a subject that combines different fields like history, geography, and economics to help students understand society better. It teaches skills that help people interact effectively in their communities (Seely, 2022). Social Studies provides students with essential knowledge of politics, law, citizenship, and ethics, fostering civic responsibility. Subjects like Economics, Political Science, and History help shape students into informed, responsible citizens who contribute positively to society (Shah & Brett, 2021). Studying Social Science helps students learn important information, skills, and attitudes so they can become active and responsible members of society. It teaches them how to think about and solve problems in their communities and the world using books, technology, and other local resources.

Globalization significantly impacts Nepal's Social Studies curriculum by shaping objectives, content, and teaching methods. The curriculum now promotes both national identity and global citizenship, preparing students for a globally interconnected society. Key themes include international cooperation, cultural understanding, global issues, and technology. While this approach broadens perspectives, it also poses challenges to preserving local culture and identity. This study aims to assess globalization's influence on educational materials, examining both the positive and negative implications and educators' views on balancing local heritage with global knowledge integration.

Although many studies have explored globalization's general effects on education, few specifically examine its influence on Nepali social studies textbooks at the secondary level. Limited research has addressed how globalization impacts curriculum, pedagogy, and learning outcomes in school-level social studies. Most available resources focus on the broader effects of globalization on higher education in Nepal, leaving gaps in understanding its role in everyday classroom teaching

and learning. Furthermore, in textbooks, studies on teachers' and students' views about including global themes, such as diversity, human rights, environmental issues, and global citizenship, are scarce. This study aims to address these gaps by exploring globalization's impact on curriculum, teaching methods, and learning outcomes in social studies education.

Objective

To explore the influences of globalization on secondary-level social studies textbooks.

Methodology

The most suitable approach for this study is a qualitative case study, as it enables an in-depth exploration of the complexities surrounding the impact of globalization on Social Studies textbooks. This qualitative case study utilizes document analysis and interviews to collect data. A document analysis consists of systematic steps intended to review or evaluate printed and electronic documents (Sudarmi et al., 2021). The study used both primary and secondary data. Social studies textbooks from secondary levels, published by the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) in Nepal, were collected for data gathering. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two secondary-level social studies teachers from different schools to gain insights into their perceptions of globalization's influence on social studies education. These interviews allowed the teachers to share their experiences, thoughts, and perspectives on teaching social studies. The researcher asked open-ended questions, which encouraged the teachers to express their views in detail, providing a richer understanding of their experiences in the classroom. This approach helped capture various opinions and experiences, making the findings more comprehensive and insightful.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data analysis examines how globalization has influenced social studies subjects at the school level. This study investigates whether globalization affects the subject matter and content through document analysis. Additionally, teachers' opinions were gathered through semi-structured interviews to understand the teaching methods used in social studies.

Primary Focus of Secondary Level Social Studies Textbooks

The previous social studies curriculum was structured around a single-discipline approach, where history and geography textbooks were combined into one. However, the current social studies textbooks aim to integrate information from various learning domains. In other words, the existing social studies textbooks can be considered as detailed designs that follow an interdisciplinary approach, both in design and practice. In this study, a researcher interviewed teachers to understand their perspectives on the primary focus of social studies textbooks for secondary students. Through these interviews, the researcher aimed to explore the teachers' opinions on the content, themes, and goals emphasized in these textbooks.

The participant, Hari (pseudonym), believes the textbook is well-aligned to foster civic responsibility among students. He appreciates the focus on local governance and community participation but suggests more practical engagement in the community for students. He pointed out, *"I am the teacher of a rural area, and there are limited resources available for teaching Social Studies, making it difficult to fully achieve the curriculum's objectives."* Another participant, Sita (pseudonym), highlighted how important it is for students to learn about different cultures in Nepal through their textbooks. She feels that when children understand the variety of cultures in their country, it helps build unity and peace among people. She said, *"Cultural education in textbooks is vital as it educates children about diverse traditions and practices, fostering respect and appreciation among students. This understanding promotes national unity and social harmony, emphasizing that, despite differences, we are all part of one nation."*

Overall, participants strongly believe that social studies textbooks can help create a more harmonious society where everyone feels valued and connected. The secondary-level Social Studies textbooks emphasize a practical education that encourages students to solve problems using critical thinking and self-reflection. It covers complex social topics, such as caste, untouchability, conservatism, and democratic values, as well as national pride and social responsibilities. The

textbook expects students to understand abstract ideas like human rights, child rights, and social rules and aims to foster a sense of civic duty. Students are also introduced to Nepal's geography, neighboring countries, and the significance of local leaders. This approach seeks to develop cooperative behavior, civic sense, and active engagement in the community and nation.

Additionally, the textbooks expect students to grasp abstract concepts, such as drawing inspiration from local community leaders and famous national figures, being aware of human and child rights, obeying social codes and rules, understanding the geographical features of Nepal, and giving a brief introduction to neighboring countries. The Social Studies curriculum has been developed and included in the school syllabus to meet these goals. It aims to teach children how to live cooperatively within their families, neighborhoods, society, and community. The curriculum also focuses on developing civic sense and democratic behavior, helping children understand their duties and responsibilities to become ideal family, society, and nation members.

Significance of Social Studies in Fostering Social Awareness and National Identity

Social Studies is a broad subject that helps us understand human society and the relationships between people. It covers several key areas: History teaches us about past events, societies, and civilizations to help us understand their impact on the present. Geography looks at Earth's landscapes and environments and how humans interact with them. Political Science focuses on government systems, political behavior, and how policies are made. Economics explores how goods and services are produced, consumed, and distributed, along with different economic theories. Sociology studies social behavior, institutions, and how societies are structured. Anthropology investigates human cultures, societies, and their biological aspects throughout history. Civics examines the rights and responsibilities of citizens and how governments function. Psychology explores human behavior and mental processes, focusing on how people think, feel, and interact with others.

When discussing the function of social studies, interviewees frequently stress how important the topic is for promoting social consciousness and a feeling of national identity. According to

Participant Hari (pseudonym), *“Social Studies is crucial in Nepalese; it provides students with a comprehensive understanding of our country’s diverse cultures, traditions, and history. It helps them recognize the importance of unity in diversity and fosters a sense of national identity.”* Participant Sita (pseudonym) stated, *“Social Studies plays a pivotal role in raising social awareness among students. It helps them understand social norms, values, and challenges prevalent in our society.”* Both participants stated that most learning activities in Social Studies are centered on textbooks, which guide the experiences of students and teachers.

Nepal’s secondary-level Social Studies curriculum aims to develop socially aware citizens with a strong sense of national identity. Guided by the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2019, it emphasizes understanding Nepal’s cultural heritage, geography, and history to foster national pride. Textbooks introduce key social themes, such as diversity, social justice, and democratic values, encouraging students to engage thoughtfully with social issues and develop empathy for various communities. The curriculum incorporates experiential learning, including field visits and projects, to strengthen connections with the community and culture. However, challenges such as limited resources in rural schools and a lack of focus on modern issues like globalization affect its impact. Continuous updates to the curriculum are needed to maintain its relevance and inclusivity.

Social studies encourage the comparative study of human behavior, culture, and other aspects of human creativity in national and international contexts (NEC, 1992). To be a good member of society, the children must also be familiar with social problems (Shah et al., 2020). The aim of a school social studies curriculum is to recognize and help address social problems, understand human rights and children’s rights, know our responsibilities, and practice following social rules in everyday life (Morrow et al., 2023). The main goal of Social Studies is to help young people make smart choices that benefit everyone as citizens in a diverse and democratic society. Through this subject, students develop an understanding of their environment, contributing to national well-

being and global unity. Social Studies encourages respect for diverse cultures, values, and social norms, fostering social responsibility, discipline, and empathy.

In Nepal, Social Studies is crucial in school education, as it teaches about human rights, including child and female rights, and draws lessons from historical figures to inspire students. The curriculum covers a range of topics such as family, community, civic values, history, and economics, helping students understand societal structures, challenges, and the evolution of civilizations. This strong foundation gives students the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to actively participate in society and understand their role in it.

Social Studies as a Tool for Developing Active Citizenship

Social Studies helps develop important thinking skills, like understanding, applying knowledge, analyzing information, evaluating ideas, combining different concepts, and being creative. It covers various topics such as natural resources, political beliefs, social changes, and global organizations. This variety allows students to gather information, make observations, and connect ideas, enhancing their understanding of social impacts on daily life. For instance, when examining poverty, students use historical, economic, and political insights to explore issues like discrimination and resource allocation. They analyze and evaluate these connections to understand how poverty affects specific groups. Encouraged to apply this knowledge creatively, students might develop solutions, propose policies, or present ideas through debates, essays, or projects, fostering deeper engagement and practical application of social studies concepts.

Participants commonly view the subject as a vital tool for developing active citizenship, with the primary objectives including fostering civic knowledge, democratic values, and skills for community engagement. Participant Hari (pseudonym) explained, “*Social Studies helps students to understand their country’s history, geography, culture, and political system. Students learn about the diverse cultural heritage of Nepal through this subject, which fosters a sense of national pride and unity.*” Participant Sita (pseudonym) stated, “*Social Studies helps*

students shape their identities and understand their roles in society. Students build a sense of belonging and deepen their cultural awareness by learning about their own and others' cultures. “ Both participants think that social studies helps students see the good and bad sides of living in a world with different cultures and beliefs. This understanding teaches them why democracy, rights, and freedoms are important. To live together peacefully, everyone needs to respect, trust, and find a balance among society's different opinions, values, attitudes, lifestyles, cultures, and beliefs.

Social studies teaches students about the many religions, cultures, castes, nationalities, and ethnic groups in Nepal, as outlined in the National Curriculum Framework. This helps them understand the diversity in their society. Secondary-level textbooks encourage students to explore different values, languages, festivals, foods, clothing, and family structures, fostering respect and tolerance for people from various backgrounds. The curriculum highlights how these groups depend on each other, showing that collaboration and understanding are key to social harmony and national unity, which are vital for a cohesive society. By recognizing and valuing differences, students can help create a more inclusive and peaceful environment. Social studies textbooks cover topics suitable for different age groups, such as Nepal's festivals, types of families, clothing, food, community, socio-religious reforms, and challenges to the caste system. These topics allow students to learn about human behavior, values, and the relationships among different people. They also learn about religions and cultures beyond their own, as well as societal norms and the roles of various governing bodies, broadening their perspective on society and the human condition.

Social Studies are those whose subject matter relates directly to the organization and development of human society and man as a member of social groups (U. S. Bureau of Education, 1916). Social studies combine ideas from social sciences and humanities to help people learn how to solve problems and make decisions about important social issues. This helps develop the skills needed to be a good citizen (Lassoued et al., 2020). Social studies help children become active

members of our society. It teaches them to communicate well, think critically, and conduct research. Through this subject, students learn to connect their knowledge with their community, country, and the world (Pant et al., 2023). The goals of social studies involve enabling students to acquire skills, knowledge, and values essential for understanding the world in which they live, engage in active democratic citizenship, and contribute to the development of society (Manitoba Educators, 2005 as cited by Poudel, 2017). Social Studies is about understanding people and how they live together. It looks at their behaviors, growth, relationships, and the resources they use, like families, schools, workplaces, governments, courts, and clubs. All these parts of life are connected and depend on each other. No matter what career someone chooses, like being a doctor, engineer, artist, or teacher, they must interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds. Adapting to different situations and following social rules are important for living peacefully and productively in society.

Enhancing Student Engagement through Innovative Teaching Methods

Social Studies is a diverse subject with a wide-ranging curriculum that covers different topics, often unrelated or loosely connected from one chapter to the next. Each topic within Social Studies, whether it be history, geography, economics, or civics, brings unique concepts, contexts, and perspectives. This variation requires a teacher to possess broad and comprehensive knowledge across these areas to ensure effective teaching. To do justice to each concept, a Social Studies teacher should be skilled in conveying factual content and connecting these diverse ideas to help students understand their relevance to society and the world. Such a well-rounded approach enables students to build a cohesive understanding, enhancing their critical thinking and ability to see connections across different domains.

The researcher interviewed a teacher who follows a teacher guide to teach Social Studies. The syllabus requires the use of ICT for certain topics, so they use a smart board in the classroom. Since Social Studies covers a wide range of topics, he relies on more than just textbooks, incorporating internet resources to enrich lessons. Although students are unfamiliar with ICT and

the internet, they are introduced to these tools through the smart board to support their learning. Hari (Pseudonym): *“I connect textbook topics to students’ real-life experiences. For instance, I use discussions to teach social norms and values and role plays to explain complex issues like the dowry system, making the lessons practical and relatable.”*

Participant Sita (Pseudonym): *“I blend lectures, discussions, and group activities, using local case studies to make lessons engaging and relevant. We also organize field trips to historical sites and apply practical methods to teach students about ongoing climate change.”*

These teaching strategies highlight the importance of contextualizing education by linking theoretical content to students’ lived realities. Through discussions, role-plays, and field-based learning, Hari and Sita foster an immersive learning experience that builds students’ understanding and critical thinking skills, ensuring education’s relevance to social and environmental issues.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) promotes experiential learning by linking theory to real-life applications through activities like field trips, project-based learning, and local case studies. Social studies can examine local governance, environmental issues, and cultural history. The NCF also emphasizes developing analytical skills through inquiry-based learning, allowing students to explore relevant social issues such as migration and globalization while fostering discussions that enhance critical thinking and social skills. Integrating digital tools like educational videos and online forums further enriches the curriculum, making it more accessible and engaging. Students can better connect with the material by reflecting on unique social and cultural contexts in teaching. The NCF encourages active, student-centered strategies that prepare learners for informed citizenship and critical thinking.

Social studies include various subjects related to daily life activities, but students do not really seem to be interested in this subject. Students often consider social studies dull and boring (Chiodo & Byford, 2006). Teachers need to link the study material with the student’s personal interest, which increases the student’s interest in the learning process. It uses a variety of teaching

methods that involve students in the learning process (Hoagland, 2000, as cited in Russell III & Waters, 2010). Teachers must use teaching-learning processes and engaging instructional methods, including cooperative learning, role-playing, and technology (Driscoll, 2005). Collaborative education requires students to become active learners and allows them to learn, practice, and live attitudes and behaviors that reflect the goals of social studies education (Stahl, 1994). According to the teacher guide, social studies subjects need to be taught via audio-visual teaching methods, discussions and interactions, project works, and so on (CDC, 2016). The current teaching methods employed in social studies classes are often ineffective in engaging students and fostering their interest in the subject. Many students find the material unappealing and disconnected from their lives, leading to a lack of motivation to learn. To address this issue, educators need to enhance their instructional strategies. By integrating innovative and interactive approaches such as technology, hands-on activities, and real-world applications, teachers can create a more dynamic learning environment that encourages student participation and interest in social studies.

Role of Globalization in Promoting Critical Thinking

Globalization helps people from different countries and cultures share ideas and knowledge at the secondary level. This connection gives us more information and helps us think carefully about what we see and hear around the world. It helps by comparing different opinions and perspectives in daily life, and we can improve our ability to analyze and understand the world around us. The content of secondary-level social studies textbooks focused on those things. When people from different parts of the world exchange knowledge, it encourages us to ask questions, think in new ways, understand different cultures, and help us adopt new and innovative ideas to connect with the world. This helps us look at global problems, like climate change and inequality, from many angles. In schools, learning about these global issues helps students think critically and solve problems more effectively, preparing them to face the challenges of today's world.

The interviewed participants share their insights on how globalization influences the

development of critical thinking skills. They explore various aspects, including the exposure to diverse perspectives, the integration of global issues in education, and the necessity for individuals to engage critically with information from around the world. Through their experiences, they illustrate the importance of critical thinking in navigating the complexities of a globalized society. Participant Hari (pseudonym): *Globalization has significantly influenced Social Studies textbooks, placing a stronger focus on topics such as international organizations and sustainable development. This shift aids students in recognizing their responsibilities as both Nepali citizens and members of the global community.* Participant Sita(pseudonym): *“Incorporating global ideas helps us develop important skills for today’s connected world. Adding local viewpoints also strengthens our national identity. Textbooks do a great job of combining these global and local perspectives, making learning richer and more meaningful.”* In summary, adding global content to Social Studies textbooks has improved education by helping students understand international issues and their place in the world. Participant Hari points out that subjects like international organizations and sustainable development encourage students to feel like global citizens. Participant Sita highlights the need for local perspectives to keep a strong national identity. By combining global and local themes, these textbooks help students deal with the challenges of a connected world while staying connected to their own culture.

There is a need to teach people how to respect cultural differences and work in diverse groups. It is important to shift our thinking from being individual-focused to being more global. With improved access to schools, students are better prepared for international roles. They need to learn how to work well with people from different backgrounds, developing skills like cultural sensitivity and open-mindedness to succeed across cultures. Participating in multicultural environments helps students learn and adapt to new situations, preparing them for challenges they might not face in a more local setting. Understanding how different cultures affect organizations is crucial. Education also promotes teamwork and idea-sharing among students, essential in school

and the workplace. Lessons on various topics, such as society, development, social values, civic awareness, the environment, and international relations, help students grasp the connections between nature and human life and the importance of environmental conservation for future generations.

Globalization, inequality, political corruption, monopolies, technological advances, the collapse of high culture, and the rise of modern existence have become part of the social studies curriculum and classroom education (Ross & Queen, 2010). Globalization specifies the relevant knowledge, skill, and attitude essential to strengthen and enhance the capability of students of any country as a result they can be competitive and responsive to any kind of change to go ahead (MOE, 2007). Globalization education capacity can develop global values such as tolerance and human rights, diversity of cultures, respect for all kinds of diversity and respect for the environment. It develops students' ability to acquire relevant knowledge, skills, abilities, and perspectives (MOE, 2005). Different cultures affect organizations' operations, so explaining this to students is essential. They should also understand how attitudes are formed and how these attitudes affect behavior. Managers working in diverse cultures need to improve their communication and teamwork skills. Students should learn to collaborate effectively with people from various backgrounds. Developing their ability to think from multiple perspectives is essential, which helps them become more culturally aware. Lastly, participants should discuss how globalization influences students' critical thinking skills

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study on globalization's impact on social studies textbooks for secondary students shows how educational materials are changing in our connected world. Social studies education is important for building social awareness and national identity, helping students understand different cultures. The curriculum highlights social studies as essential for encouraging active citizenship and addressing local and global issues. Using effective methods like project-based learning and group activities can make social studies more engaging for students. Globalization encourages

critical thinking, allowing students to analyze various viewpoints, assess information sources, and form informed opinions on worldwide topics. The findings indicate that globalization enriches social studies by expanding perspectives, fostering civic responsibility, and preparing students to engage in a diverse world. Education systems must equip students with the skills and values needed to succeed in a global economy while developing them into responsible citizens.

Globalization leads us to rethink not just the level of education needed but also its core purpose. It has changed how we communicate and learn, reshaping the roles of both teachers and students. Countries with different economic and cultural backgrounds view globalization as a key part of modern life, making terms like globalization and global citizenship common in education. While globalization promotes international perspectives, global citizenship is closely linked to human rights and civic education. These ideas can work with national interests, redefining the nation-state as a supporter of individual rights in a wider global context.

A study on globalization's effect on social studies textbooks shows how global factors shape educational content. Although globalization adds diverse viewpoints and encourages critical thinking about global issues, it also presents challenges that teachers must navigate. The findings highlight the vital role of educators in tailoring materials to meet the needs of diverse students. Therefore, education policymakers should ensure that social studies curricula reflect global trends while being relevant to local contexts, fostering an inclusive and culturally aware educational environment.

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Conflict of Interest

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