
UNIT 9 SCHOOL: THE SITE OF CURRICULUM ENGAGEMENT

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9.1 INTRODUCTION

Being a teacher, you would agree that school is the actual site for implementation of any curriculum. From the previous blocks of this course, you might have understood the theoretical meanings of curriculum, its designs, role of national and state bodies in the framing the curriculum and the need and vision for curriculum assessment and evaluation. In this we will discuss about how curriculum gets implemented in schools.

The ideology and philosophy of a school helps in contextualising learning and translating the goals set at the national level. The culture of a school, its infrastructure, climate and teachers helps in reshaping and the curriculum to make it contextualising the curriculum as per the needs of their learners. In this unit, you will understand the role of school's philosophy in linking the goals of a curriculum with the context of their learners. It will also help you to think of the ways in which your school culture, climate and environment gave meaning to the curricular objectives, making them specific to the needs and socio-cultural milieu of your learners. Schools and its philosophy play a significant role in shaping the knowledge of a child. The goals set by curriculum documents get contextualised within school systems.

Since, you deal with learners every day, it is obvious that you as teacher, would understand their contexts and learning needs much better than the curriculum

and policy makers. From your experience of working with learners, you would have, by now, collected many instances of their learning difficulties, conceptions and misconceptions. Teachers can participate in the development of curriculum by sharing their experiences of transacting and researching the curriculum. These inputs are crucial for the revision and development of any curriculum. We can say that teachers are agencies through which a curriculum is implemented, developed and researched. In this unit, you will come across the relationship between teaching and decision-making regarding curriculum and the role of a teacher as a curriculum implementer, developer and critical thinker.

9.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the role of school as a site for curriculum engagement;
- illustrate the role of school context in providing meaning to a curriculum;
- describe the contribution of school resources (such as its library, laboratories, neighbourhood etc.) in curriculum engagement;
- explain the relationship between the teacher as an implementer and as decision-maker in the process of curriculum engagement;

9.3 MEANING OF CURRICULUM ENGAGEMENT

Curriculum, as we have understood till now is usually a prescribed course of a study that schools are expected to follow. It covers the content that is to be covered in course of study. A curriculum also recommends teaching methods that help to achieve the set objectives. Thus, you can say that curricula, to some extent, defines and directs what should be taught in schools, how should it be taught, and what to expect from the learners. On the other hand, you would agree even though curriculum makers may set their objectives through curricular documents, it is the school which is the actual site of any curriculum implementation and engagement.

Curriculum Engagement occurs when the learning process helps in realizing the goals of a prescribed curriculum. Engagement is not just the involvement of the sole individual in learning; rather, learning is the vehicle for the individual's engagement with a community and with society at large. Schools must provide opportunity to their learners to engage meaningfully in learning. In order to be engaged learners, they must see the value of learning, they must see their own potential as learners, and they must have access to resources for learning.

Thus, Schools play crucial role in curricular engagement. Many educationalists and reformers therefore believe that the context of school defines and shapes the real meaning of the curriculum. In this section, we will see the role of school and schooling in curriculum engagement.

9.3.1 Role of School Philosophy

Through the earlier units of this block, we have understood that the premise of any curricular document is centred on what knowledge is worth teaching to the learners. The fundamental concern of any curriculum is to give a framework of what should be taught and what is worthwhile to learn. As a result one can say that curriculum attempt to provide an understanding of the nature of education.

However, if you try analyse the functioning of any school with an analytically, you would realise that there exist multiple layers of understandings related to learner's expectations. Suppose, if you ask your learners about why they come to school and what would they like to learn? You would realise that different learners hold different expectations. Some aspire to get well educated, for some education is synonymous to taking informed decisions while some would associate it with empowerment. These predominant thoughts with which learners come to school set their expectations. On a finer analysis of learners expectations, you would also realise that they assign roles to each component of schooling. A classroom is typically considered as a site for serious work while a playground may be seen as a site of enjoyment. However, on the other hand, a child wishing to pursue career in sports would ascribe to a playground as a site of learning and growing. These multiple expectations forms dispositions related to the role of school in the life of learners.

The scope and nature of curriculum gets articulated through the practices and ideologies of the site of its implementation, which is the school. School differ from each other in terms of their needs of their learners, the available resources community in which it is located, school environment, management committees of the school and the competence of the teachers. The social and cultural aspects of schools set boundaries and definitions of a curriculum. Each school redefines the implementation of the curriculum through its actual practices. For instance, by studying the timetable of a school you will be able to understand the ideology of the school related to scholastics and non-scholastic areas. The school which places subjects like Mathematics, languages, sciences at the first half of the day strongly believes in the old school of building mental faculties through study of disciplines. Another school whose timetable is based on thematic work visualises a blended mode of curriculum, amalgamating the scholastic with the so-called non-scholastic areas. One can, thus, say that school becomes a mirror that reflects the vision and mission of the curriculum. The actions of a school point out the decisions that the school has taken related to its curriculum. It would hence, not be incorrect to say that each school defines and develops its own curricula to a certain level. Let us consider an example here.

A school called Techie Kids located at the centre of a metropolitan city is equipped with advanced technological devices and the teachers are expected to use these devices in their classrooms. The school adopted project-research pedagogy wherein the learners are expected to search online resources while doing their assignments. On the other hand, another school, The My Learning School located in the same area, with similar student strength believes in the philosophy of learning-by-doing. This school also adopts projectwork as a strategy of learning but encourages students to experience things on their own, through their own senses and draw their learning through their observations.

As you can compare, both the schools, though follow the same aim, have adopted different strategies for learning. Though both the schools come under the ambit of the same standard National Curriculum, their ideologies differentiate their strategies of following the curriculum. The first school relies on technology as a medium for learning whereas the latter school follows an experiential methodology.

Check Your Progress

- Notes :** a) Write your answers in the space given below.
b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the unit.

1) How do you think the ideology of a school effect the implementation of curriculum in a school?

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9.4 SCHOOLS AS CURRICULAR SITES

Curricular sites of a school comprises of both physical and psychological spaces that are other made available in the school or a school creates. The physical sites are expressed in terms of the infrastructure of the school its building, the layout of the school premises and resources that are available. At the psychological level, the curricular sites can be looked at the teacher-student relations, students-student relationship, teacher-administrator relationship, teacher-teacher relationships. In the implementation of a curriculum, both physical as well as psychological sites play a significant role.

The influence of a curriculum gets reflected from the curricular sites through which it is implemented. The curricular sites develop students’ knowledge and skills as well as cultivate values and attitudes to enable them to acquire broad and balanced learning experiences. Well planned and proper utilization of curricular sites benefit the learners in achieving the goals set in the curriculum document. The school as site of curriculum engagement sends a feedback on the effectiveness of the curriculum, which in turn, helps in the development of future goals. Each school is unique in itself. Each school has its own history of experiences of teaching, learning, students’ characteristics, teachers’ dynamics leadership styles, community engagement, school culture and context. A school makes changes according to its own needs, resources and pace. With reference to its curricular sites, a school takes decisions on its learning goals. In implementing and developing a curriculum, a school should flexibly utilize its psychological and physical spaces to achieve a homogeneous amalgamation of resources. Through strategic planning a school can devise is school-based curriculum in which every member participates in achieving the targets.

Teachers and learners have to adjust to the infrastructure available to them in the school. The building of the school, its architecture, school playground, resources such as library and laboratories, neighborhood of the school are important components in this process. The availability, access and condition of

these curricular sites have important consequences on the learning and achievement of the students. These sites determine the attitude, behavior and values of the learners.

In this section we will try to see how the infrastructure of the school, its resources, culture and ideology frame influence curriculum engagement within the school. There is also a **hidden curriculum**, which is often not evident explicitly but gets reflected through the unspoken, non-specific acts that happen inside the school is referred to as hidden curriculum. It gets communicated implicitly through the physical, social and cultural sites of the school.

9.4.1 Available Infrastructure

The infrastructure of the school, its design, its layout, building, size of classrooms, seating arrangements, class size are some of the crucial determinants in ensuring good quality education in any school. You would agree that learners perform better in conducive and healthy environments.

Many research studies have established a positive relationship between learners's learning and the infrastructure of the school. They assert that a stimulating and comfortable learning environment enhances the concentration of learners. Appropriate design and facilities support the learning processes and proper space for independent as well as group work promotes motivation to work. A productive and supportive learning environment enhances the zeal to know. Spacious classrooms with proper ventilation and seating arrangements encourages learners to come to school.

You might have read about the reports about schools in India which were found lacking of proper infrastructure as one of the major reasons of dropout of learners, especially girls from the schools. They found lack of proper toilet facilities and the distance of the school from the homes contributing to less attendance of girls to the schools.

The infrastructure of the school should be sensitive to the needs of all learners coming to school. Physically differently abled students sometimes find hard to cope with school systems due to harsh environments of the schools. Learners who cannot reach to all parts of a school building due to their physical confinements will not be able to participate in school activities. Learners who have difficulties with their limbs need proper ramps to access all parts of the schools. Failure to provide infrastructural support to access to the school building and classrooms leads to dropout of many learners who are already at the thresholds of availing education.

9.4.2 Resources (Library, Laboratory, School Playground Etc.)

The physical resources present in the school, support the implementation of the planned curriculum. Though one may not see a direct relation between curriculum and the physical conditions of the school, but these influence in the fulfillment or non-fulfillment of the perceived goals. There are evidences that support the role of various factors such as library, laboratories, playground and the school's neighbourhood in students' achievement. Based on your experience do you also feel that absence or presence of these facilities effect in the learning of learners? Have you ever realized how these facilities contribute in a learners school life? The condition of science laboratories, classroom furniture, playground, library have direct relation with students' achievement.

(i) Classrooms

You would agree that inadequate and unhygienic classroom conditions would discourage anyone to enter the classrooms. As teachers you would also like to take classes in good comfortable environments. Learners have to spend many hours in a classroom, therefore it is important for the school that their classrooms are cleaned every day and there is proper ventilation in the classrooms. A space for each child to sit comfortably and work must be ensured. You would have noticed that overcrowded classrooms, especially in early grades is a major source of poor achievement. You can even display learners's work on the walls to make them feel attached to the classroom.

(ii) Playground

Besides the classrooms, learners also need space to enjoy, to experiment and to learn on their own. They need a good playground where they can play and enjoy the school premises. Playgrounds are places where learners get the freedom to enjoy, vent out their energies and to be with their friends. It is important that learners feel attached to the natural surroundings and use them as part of their learning. The teachers can use the playgrounds for playing games, teaching through games and also for learning science. For example, in the recent drive by Delhi Government to teach learners about plants, they have asked each school to write the biological nomenclature of every tree present in the playgrounds. Learners, unknowingly, have started to recognise the names and benefits of trees in their lives.

(iii) Laboratories

Learners are inquisitive by nature and want to learn everything by experimentation and experience. Laboratories are places where learners learn to experiment and do things on their own. Nowadays, educationalists have started to promote learning by doing and experimentation as a pedagogy for almost every subject. They urge schools to establish laboratories for science, language and mathematics. A well-equipped laboratory where instruments are easily made available to the learners invites them to learn on their own. If you want your learners to excel and to understand a concept better, allow them free access to laboratories and make sure that the required material is also available to them.

(iv) Library

Along with equipment to experiment, learners also need books and other reference material to learn. Learners use libraries for seeking life-long opportunities and to enhance their learning gaps. It is through school libraries that learners get opportunities to access information and develop their competencies. Libraries, thus play a crucial role in encouraging to learners developing as responsible citizens. Learners need place to study on their own, to read more and to self-learn. Libraries that provide access to good books, magazines and journals enhance learners's learning. Now- a- days a lot of material is available online too. Learners need guidance to skim through these to identify and locate good meaningful material. The librarian and teacher should be able to help learners browse through the internet and make judgement on the quality of the content. Librarians can make lists of good websites and display it in the library. Besides books, libraries can also have digital material such as educational CDs and videos. These audio-visual aids definitely help in learning.

9.4.3 School Culture and Climate

The importance of school culture and its climate have a direct link with the performance of learners. Learners are quite poised and would want their schools to have conducive and safe learning environment. School that maintain an ordered, disciplined atmosphere without being rigid and oppressive leave a positive mark on the learners's learning.

Besides providing good infrastructural facilities, a school has to also ensure a psychologically conducive environment that would let learners participate without fear. It is the ethical responsibility of every school to provide learners with safe surroundings that motivates them to come to school. This is promoted by establishing a healthy relationship between students-teacher, teacher-administrators and teacher-parents. School should ensure that their learners have a freedom to express their feelings with their teachers, teachers should be aware of abilities and difficulties of each child and provide feedback on their behaviour. In other words, we can say that the teacher, the learner and the parents should work as collectively for healthy development of learner.

Discussions on school climate often begins and end with learners's safety and classroom participation. A truly positive environment is not characterized by ensuring physical safety and comfortableness of the child. It should rather be determined by the values that are present in the school. The vision, values, beliefs and assumptions of a school are what define its climate and environment. A strong and positive culture serves several functions such as fostering the efforts and productiveness of each child's inner resources, valuing each child's potential and in maintaining collegial relationships among all.

Schools send their vision of organizational culture through their enactments. They send signals of their organizational culture through the roles and responsibilities that they define for their students and teachers. For example, schools that regard athletic success to be paramount would send signals of promoting sportsmanship, valuing the importance of games, structuring their teaching around sports and pushing learners towards physical fitness. Their organizational culture will reflect their bend towards sports. On the other hand, schools that are centered on academic excellence will revere academic competitions and intellectual efforts.

The culture of a school - positive or negative - in an offshoot of its vision, values and beliefs. The actions, rituals, ceremonies and gatherings of a school are closely aligned to its beliefs and values. To illustrate, a school that values the work done by learners would hold exhibitions to showcase their students' projects. On the other hand, there are schools, where administrators would talk of positive values and beliefs but fail to follow them in their actions. For instance, school want its teachers to be resourceful and up-to-date with their content and pedagogic knowledge but would not hesitate to send their teachers for any professional development workshops.

Schools which practice what they believe in make sure that their ideology gets reflected in their working too. In one of the schools, the principal and the teachers addressed their students in a strange manner. They identified their students as "Class of 2020"- the year in which the batch will pass out from the school. Whenever a visitor asked the students about their class, the students would, invariably, tell them about year in which they would enter the college. The students were also confident of the courses that they would like to pursue in their college.

While talking with the Principal it was found that school values its alma mater most and they were very proud of their students and their achievements. They even displayed the names and degrees of all the students who had passed out from the school. They believed in preparing their learners for future and this ideology was obvious from all the actions of the school.

Similarly, in a government school of Chattisgarh, the teachers taking extra effort while giving feedback on their learners’s work. Each class was found with its walls full of learners’s worksheets. Beneath each learner’s work, suggestions given by teachers as well as learners were written. The display was open for all and every learner was encouraged to give suggestions to their friends. The teachers told us that in their school assessment was not a hidden task. All learners participated in this process. The display of students’ work and the idea of evaluating and feedback was a symbolic way of representing trust within teachers and students.

Check Your Progress

2) List of the infrastructural facilities that you think make any school conducive for learning.

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3) Which aspects of school culture and climate influence the execution of curriculum goals?

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9.5 ROLE OF TEACHERS IN CURRICULUM ENGAGEMENT

Teachers are one of the crucial elements in the implementation of any curriculum. They are also central to any improvement and revision processes of a curriculum. Their knowledge, experience and understanding that they gain by working with learners helps curriculum and policy makers to know the ground realities of the school system. Teachers’ feedback and suggestions are essential for any curriculum formation and revision. They act as facilitator in the making of a curriculum.

In the following sections, we will look at the role of a teacher in the curriculum engagement. Teachers can participate by sharing their experiences of transacting

the curriculum and by sharing their analysis that they have gained by being active researchers in the classrooms.

9.5.1 Role of Teacher in Transacting Curriculum

As discussed earlier, teachers form a crucial link between the aims envisioned in education policies and their actual implementation in schools. Teachers are the active participants who create classroom realities in the light of their own beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and experiences. Their perceptions decide the actual implementation of a curriculum. Policy makers cannot assume the realities of transaction of a curriculum. This decision now lies with the teachers who ultimately shape the realities of an educational enterprise. It is therefore important to acknowledge teacher's attitude, perceptions and experiences while thinking of any curriculum revision or teaching innovation.

While framing curriculum, we should identify and listen to the suggestions that teachers have towards curriculum implementation and its further improvement, as they have a direct experience of working with the learners. Having spent many hours in understanding their developmental processes, intellectual needs, cultural and social contexts a teacher understands better what would work and what will not be feasible for her learners. Teachers understand their students' abilities and levels of engagements. Their opinions about implementation of any programme must be respected and analysed before taking any decision.

Teachers teaching in multiple grades can collaborate and suggest materials that would be most suitable for teaching a specific content. By collaborative thoughts they can suggest ways in which concepts need to be sequenced across grades to ensure smooth transition between the grades. They may also participate in suggesting what should be expected from learners of a particular grade and how to prepare them for subsequent levels. Since a teacher can gauge whether a certain activity is suitable for a particular grade, she can provide meaningful inputs during the creation of the curriculum. When teachers participate in the process of creation of curriculum they perceive themselves as part of the process. They feel attached and confident as the curriculum is prepared by consulting them, considering their concerns and needs. They feel themselves as agents of change.

9.5.2 Teachers as Researchers in the Development of Curriculum

Often we perceive teaching and research as separate activities. Research is considered to be done in universities whereas teaching is related to the level of schooling only. This dichotomy of roles in education has created gaps when it comes to knowing the ground realities of a school system. Since researchers are far away from actual school situations they are not able to speak for actualities of a schooling system. You would agree that researchers can never equate with the true and long experiences of teachers. Since teachers are with learners for the longest time they understand their learners much better.

Just as researchers do not see themselves as part of schools, teachers too shy away from their role of researchers. Often teachers take their roles of teaching as their only work and seldom think of themselves as researchers in the classrooms. You may be aware of several reasons behind such a view. Firstly, teacher training courses do not train teachers for being researchers. As part of their education process, teachers are never made to think like researchers.

They are made well conversant with their content and pedagogic practices but are seldom taught the traits of being a researcher. Secondly, teachers do not indulge themselves in reflecting and researching about their practices. They take their job of teaching too seriously but forget to reflect on the practices related to learning, teaching and curriculum implementation.

Teachers who involve themselves as researchers in the classrooms can identify gaps and can suggest alternative strategies. This is possible only when teachers act as reflective practitioners.

A reflecting teacher is able to find any weaknesses in the curriculum and attempts to make it better. Teachers can reflect on curriculum in multiple ways. One of the ways to do is by keeping a journal while implementing the curriculum. This journal is used to keep record of students' responses, their learnings and the progress made by them. This daily journal serves as a diary to take notes of any incidence that happens in the classroom. Teacher should keep evidences of learners's work, their learnings and their difficulties. The journal is also used to note any anecdotes about learners's reaction to a certain content, what difficulties did they face while learning a content, what alternatives strategies did the teacher adopt while transacting the content, what was learners's reaction to it and so on. These anecdotes helps while taking decisions related content revision. The teacher who is also a researcher should time to time survey students' achievements by reviewing and analysing the assessment records. Such ongoing reflections serve, not only to improve a specific curriculum but to also guide the creation of new curriculum. Such researches that are done by teachers, which are specific in nature, targeted at a theme are called action researches. Thus, the core idea is of promoting teachers role as **action researchers**.

Action research is a systematic inquiry done by a teacher to reflect on her own practices in order to enhance her teaching. Doing action researches not only help the teachers in their professional growth but also add an element of motivation. When a teacher starts to reflect on her own practices and on her place of work, she begins to take a more professional role. She starts forming wise decisions, that are grounded in actual realities and which benefit the school in particular. By exchanging their findings with their colleagues, teachers get varied multiple perspectives which help in making informed decisions.

You may adopt the following steps for conducting an action research:

- i) **Select a Problem:** This is the most crucial stage. It is a moment of reflection and identifying an aspect that is worth worrying about. One needs to be focused and determined to conduct a research in the area.
- ii) **Clarifying Theories:** No work is done in isolation. Read some theories that will help ground your work. The review of work done earlier gives directions for the current work.
- iii) **Collecting Data:** to accomplish the goals select suitable data that is also representative. As an action researcher a teacher needs to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. The data should be collected through multiple modes to drawing true and detailed analysis.
- iv) **Analysing Data:** Draw out the findings by triangulating the data collected through various sources. Analysis should be specific, targeted to answer the research questions.

- v) **Reporting Results for Taking Informed Action:** share your findings with your colleagues, with the administrator and with higher authorities. A good action research may provide meaningful insights for future decisions related to curriculum and others.

Let us take an example where a teacher's notes helped in the reconsidering the mathematical content of elementary grades. Akram, a mathematics teacher of class V was in a habit of taking notes of his learners's work in his daily journal. Through years of experience he concluded that learners of class V have difficulties in recognizing right angled triangles when their orientation is changed. He had been making a note of this observation and could generalise based on his observations of every year. He had also kept a record of the incorrect responses that learners give when shown an inverted right-angled triangle. Akram shared these anecdotes in one of the textbook writing meetings organised by his state's SCERT. The insights were well received and this initiated many debates and deliberations regarding learners's learning. The mathematics textbook of that state now represents all triangles in varied orientations to avoid fixation. This small effort of Akram of being a researcher in the classroom provided many meaningful insights related to learners's learning, difficulties and content representation.

The basic question that one can ask here is how researches done by teachers can help in development of schools? To answer this concern is not easy yet is imperative, considering the how researches done by teachers have proved to be helpful in curriculum development and feedback. When teachers themselves make commitments of doing meaningful action researches in their school systems, they embark on the processes that ensures continuous growth, development, feedback and thus reflection. It's a cyclic process. A teacher who on receiving the curriculum, implements it as a researcher, keeps a note of the successes and drawbacks. Since she delves in on-site anecdotes, she has proofs substantiating her claims. These mini researches, being done at the ground level, give first-hand authentic feedback.

9.5.3 Teacher as a Critical Pedagogue

Over these recent years we are seeing a radical shift in the way curriculum is perceived. Critical theorists are challenging the traditional ideologies that make the school system. The British school of thought regarded schools as centers for social control. Critical theorists challenge all such rigid colonial thoughts of imparting education. They question the ways in which schools mirror the already existing social discriminations of the society. In some sense, we may say that schools are like miniature society and they practice what already exists in the society. Critical pedagogues contest that schools should not be sites of replication of social and cultural discriminations of the society. Schools should rather be sites where such social issues are debated and challenged. Critical pedagogy as a concept has arisen from the thought and actions to challenge the dominant and oppressive ideologies that were constructed historically. The proponent of critical pedagogy challenge all forms of alienation, oppression and subordination that comes as a result of social structures. They believe that schools should challenge the oppressive ideologies and they see teachers as potential actors in this process of social justice. Teachers should situate themselves in challenging the oppressive pedagogies and thus take critical positions.

Before we try to understand the role of a teacher as a critical pedagogue, we need to understand how schools, in general, are spaces of social distinctions and how these spaces can be made spaces for encouraging critical thinking and dialogue.

Critical theorists condemn the traditional ideologies within which education is rooted. They believe that every child has a right to education as per her needs and pace. The existing structure of schooling is dominated by idea of management and control. Rigid structure and standardised curriculum puts every child under the same ambit of learning. Schools rely on the logic of preparing learners for the market economy and this thinking is exacerbated in every component of education – from curriculum to parents' expectations. Schools prepare learners for differentiated social class divisions through excessive competitions and differentiated teaching practices. It is no secret that learners from affluent schools, who have access to multiple resources are made to prepare for high level testing situations as compared to those who struggle in managing even the basic resources such as textbooks for studying. Higher education comes easily for resourceful people whereas many to struggle to get it.

Education, to some extent, presupposes intrinsic motivation on the level of learners. We believe that all learners are always motivated to learn and that the same curriculum will excite every child equally. The education system tests all learners on an equal scale. Those who have been trained in this system excel while many who cannot cope with it fail. In such normative situations, teachers become agencies for critical thought and change. A critical teacher is one who draws her lessons from the social context of her learners. Even though there is one curricula and syllabus, a critical teacher would make efforts to frame her pedagogy around the cultural resources of her learners. This means that she would draw examples from the daily life experiences of her learners and make connection with the lived histories. The language that learners are most comfortable with would be used for transacting the curriculum and the voices of the students will be respected. Instead of following the set examples from the textbooks, a critical teacher should have the skills to mould the text according to the social and cultural milieu of the child. The subject to be taught should be integrated with the dynamics of everyday life.

Teachers' actions in the classroom reflect their thoughts and ideologies. Their actions speak of their notions related to school, their colleagues, of society, of learners and their expectations regarding learning and achievement. Teachers should critically analyse their own ideologies, values, notions and actions. If a teacher herself holds bias against any religious group or any particular ethnic sect, her actions will reflect her biasness. It is therefore important the teacher holds a neutral opinion and is sensitive to backgrounds of her learners.

Being aware and to be a critical thinker would mean to critically question the existing ideologies that discriminate people and to question the cultural politics. A critical teacher will engage her students in discourses related to identity, values and existence of communities, their people and their values, thus making her students aware and more responsible towards the others emotions and rights.

A critical teacher will engage her students in talks related to social justice and oppression of people around them. She allows her students to critically reflect on the reasons of inequality that exists in the society and if education has any

role in it. She allows them to think about bringing justice through education. The learners must be able to see their relationships with the larger society and to be able to understand how power distinguishes between people.

Engaging teachers to think critically is also not an easy job. Such awareness must be instilled from the teacher education courses themselves. For this we need a new vision to education. An education that educates teachers to think critically, to question, to be empathetic towards the needs of others, to challenge the existence of power and how it controls others, to locate oneself in others histories and to exercise moral and public responsibility of being critical agents who have power to change things intellectually.

School can also be sites for promoting critical thinking. Schools should be visualised as a image of the society. To bring about critical awareness, schools should work in collaboration with the community. The teachers and members of the community should collaborate as co-workers to collectively determine the aims of education, what should be taught, how should schools organise the teaching-learning processes and how can the neighbourhood contribute in successful achievement of the set targets. Schools should be cultivated as sites for addressing social responsibilities. Build environments wherein learners get opportunities to understand their rights, duties and responsibilities. Schools should instil social awareness and public values. Along with building core academic values, the schools should also foster ethos of responsibilities and sensibilities. The aim should be bring our learners who are responsible citizens rather than exercising feeling of competence. The schools must empower their teachers to take decisions regarding their pedagogies. Give them spaces to take informed decisions regarding their students' educational welfare. A move towards building democratic spaces must be initiated wherein students are equal participants with their teachers.

Check Your Progress

4) What is the role of a teacher in implementing the curriculum?

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5) What do you mean by teacher as a critical pedagogue?

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9.6 LET US SUM UP

The philosophy and ideology of a school play a significant role in defining the vision of a curriculum for a child. The actions, rituals, ceremonies and gatherings of a school reflect its beliefs and values. The goals set by curriculum documents get contextualised within school systems. The context of school defines and shapes the real meaning of the curriculum. Learning environments of school which include its physical infrastructure like library and laboratories, neighbourhood of the school are important components in the process of curriculum engagement. Availability of resources, their condition and their access to learners and teachers have important consequences on learning and achievement. A school has to also ensure that it provides a psychologically conducive environment to their learners to flourish. Teachers can participate in curriculum development by sharing their experiences of transacting the curriculum. Teachers should act like researchers in the classroom to note learners's learnings and their difficulties. These ground realities give inputs for curriculum formation and revision. A critical teacher is one who engages her students in talks related to social justice and oppression of people around them. She allows her students to critically reflect on the reasons of inequality that exists in the society and if education has any role in it.

9.7 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. In a school a curriculum gets manifested through its infrastructure, resources and human elements. Elaborate this statement and provide examples in support.
2. Recall your childhood experiences of schooling. Does the ideology of your childhood differ from the ideology of the school in which you are teaching now? Do you see differences in their curricular engagements?
3. A critical teacher is aware of the discriminations of a society and does not let her learners get affected. What is the role of a teacher in analyzing a curriculum from a critical perspective?
4. Elaborate on the ideology that promotes 'Teacher as a critical pedagogue'.

9.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- 1) You should be able to comment on:
 - The vision and beliefs of a school and how they reflect in students' learning
 - Day-to-day activities of a school and its relationship between its curricular objectives
 - Experiences that form learners's thinking regarding education
- 2) It includes:
 - School building, its access to all learners
 - Laboratories
 - Library
 - School playground
 - Classroom sizes and seating arrangements

- 3) Vision of school, nature of school culture and values of a school.
- 4) You should be able to list the opportunities that teachers provide to help their students learn better. Talk about the efforts that teachers make while teaching a content and how they A teacher provide help to her learner in the achievementg of curriculum goals. She create linkages between students' experiences, prior learnings and socio-cultural context.
- 5) Go through the section 9.5.3.

9.9 SUGGESTED READINGS

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