Social Science Teachers' Perceptions of and Practices on Global Citizenship Education: A Case Study of Primary Schools in Bangladesh

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated social science teachers' perceptions of and practices in global citizenship education (GCED) through a case study of two government primary schools in Bangladesh. The study was qualitative to obtain in-depth insight from the participants. The schools and participants were selected purposively. In-depth interviews were conducted with four social science teachers and two head teachers. Two FGDs were conducted with students, and four classrooms were observed. The data were analyzed thematically, and nine themes emerged, such as knowledge of GCED; perceptions of diversity, empathy, and solidarity; GCED in the curriculum; pedagogies for GCED; cocurricular activities; GCED; student voice, engagement, and GCED; practicing GCED in the classroom and school; practicing equality in and out of the classroom; and ensuring critical pedagogy through student voice and engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Global citizenship education (GCED) is becoming increasingly crucial for primary school students to navigate today's rapidly changing world and contribute to creating a more equitable and sustainable society (Tarozzi & Inquaggiato, 2018). The phrase "global citizenship education" has grown in popularity over the last 20 years and attracted the interest of both national and international educational organizations (Pais & Costa, 2017). "Global citizens' are made, not born" (Chong, 2015), which indicates that global citizenship education aims to provide learners with the requisite knowledge, abilities, and principles to effectively navigate and actively participate in an intricate, interconnected global community (UNESCO, 2018). GCED equips individuals with the skills of critical thinking, cultural understanding, and a sense of shared responsibility, enabling them to actively address global challenges (Howard & Maxwell, 2023). It is a way of recognizing and accepting multicultural differences and maintaining social justice, equity, and responsibility through the lens of individuals' moral and ethical imperatives in the global context (Schattle, 2009).

As a result, GCED is an area of priority for the UN and UNESCO. It is guided by the Education 2030 Agenda and Framework for Action. Notably, it addresses SDG 4.7, which states that human rights, sexual equality, peace and pacifism, practical education, sustainable lifestyles, globalization, acceptance of variety, and cultural involvement in sustainable growth are crucial if we are to achieve sustainable development by 2030 (Windrof, 2020). Thus, it is time to integrate and apply GCED in national education policies, curricula, teacher preparation programs, and student assessments on the basis of a framework focused on civil rights and responsibilities, cultural understanding and sustainable development (UNESCO, 2015).

However, GCED has been criticized by some scholars for its trend toward Western imperialism through the legitimization of the GCED concept, modes, and practices of Western countries, which is similar to postcolonial initiatives toward globalization (Munck, 2010). It is also criticized for ignoring socioeconomic and political perspectives along with the decolonial education and critical pedagogical situation of postcolonial countries such as Bangladesh. Despite criticism, GCED has gained significant attention in educational discourse, particularly with UNESCO's framework, owing to its acceptability of democracy, human rights, and global peace and unity. As a result, across the world, nations have included the GCE in their curricula after realizing its importance. For example,

integrating GCE into the national curriculum in the United Kingdom promotes social justice, sustainability, and diversity (Bamber et al., 2018). India has implemented policies incorporating global citizenship education (GCED) at several educational levels, emphasizing the importance of global interdependence and multicultural understanding. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India prioritizes a comprehensive and value-oriented education system encompassing global citizenship, critical thinking, and cultural appreciation (Mochizuki, 2023).

The issues of global citizenship education have been emphasized in the USA and UK to create globally skillful, responsible citizens (Akkari & Radhouane, 2022). Global citizenship education and teacher education have also been emphasized in Ireland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Italy to make responsible global citizens and aware that teachers promote global citizenship education (Tarozzi & Mallon, 2019). In addition, evidence suggests that local governments in China are incorporating GCE-related components into their educational plans. For example, Beijing's orientation strategy as the "Four Centers" of China—political, cultural, international communication, and science and technology innovation centers—is fulfilled through the 13th Five-Year Plan for Education Reform and Development (2016–2020), which directs educational reform (Wang & Print, 2024). Moreover, teachers in Kazakhstan are incorporating GCE into conventional university curricula by reframing the conceptual focus of various globalization and GCE components in their instructional strategies (Abazov, 2021).

Bangladesh's government also included global citizenship ideas, including global fraternity, awareness of human rights, a sense of justice and soft skills for being a global citizen in the 2010 education policy, the 2012 curriculum, and a new curriculum framework (NCTB, 2021, Islam et al., 2024). A literature review revealed that Bangladesh has very little significant body of work on GCED (Ahsan et al., 2023). Furthermore, through extensive research, there is hardly any research on the perceptions and practices of social science teachers regarding GCED in primary schools in Bangladesh. By investigating the perceptions and practices of social science teachers regarding GCED in two government primary schools in Bangladesh, this study seeks to close this research gap. By investigating how teachers comprehend and incorporate GCED ideas into their instruction, this study aims to shed light on the efficacy of current initiatives and pinpoint development opportunities. Therefore, this study was conducted to answer the following questions: How do social science teachers perceive global citizenship education (GCED) at primary schools in Bangladesh? How do social science teachers practice GCED in classrooms and schools? The research findings have significant

implications for stakeholders, educators, and legislators committed to enhancing global citizenship education in Bangladesh and beyond. Bangladesh, as a signatory country, aims to fulfill the SDG 4.7 target, which focuses on promoting global citizenship to create global citizens. This study will provide assistance in achieving this goal. The findings of this study support the development of teacher guides and training modules.

LITERATURE REVIEW

GCED in the lens of different perspectives

Global citizenship education is now highly valued worldwide. The United Nations declared GCED to fulfill SDG 4.7, emphasizing the importance of accepting cultural diversity and global citizenship. As a result, UNESCO has advocated for GCED since 2012. The main objective of GCED is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to advance inclusive, civilized, and sustainable societies (UNESCO, 2015). However, the core components of GCED are the interconnectedness of all people, the ability to see the world from different viewpoints, respect for cultural diversity, the commitment to social justice and human rights, and environmental sustainability (Sherman, 2019). As a result, GCED is essential in today's globalized society because it equips students with the knowledge and skills to address issues such as economic crises, refugee crises, globalization, and climate change. It also fosters appreciation for other cultures and encourages civic engagement and responsibility (Pacho, 2020). However, UNESCO (2015) provided three conceptual dimensions or learning domains for GCED to achieve its goal in educational institutes:

a) Cognitive: To acquire knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking abilities about global, regional, national, and local issues and the interconnectedness and interdependence of numerous communities and countries.

b) Socioemotional: To have a sense of belonging to the human race, to have shared values and responsibilities, to show empathy and support for others, and to value uniqueness and diversity.

c) Behavioral: Encouraging a more peaceful and sustainable world by effectively advocating locally, nationally, and internationally.

Even though UNESCO's GCED framework provides a valuable foundation, a critical examination is needed to fully understand its implications in Bangladesh. Several academics and philosophers have examined global citizenship education from multiple perspectives over time. For example, postcolonial educational theories have criticized global citizenship discourses for often excluding knowledge from indigenous

systems and promoting the continuation of neocolonial power dynamics by focusing exclusively on Westerncentric narratives (Andreotti, 2011). In addition, decolonial education theorists criticized GCED because it focuses only on individual right-centric citizenship, whereas some societies in the Global South focus on the communal form of citizenship. Moreover, while decolonial education prioritizes dismantling the colonial legacy in education, GCED fosters a colonial power structure and upholds Western-centric epistemological hegemony (Waghid & Hungwe, 2023). On the other hand, critical pedagogy approaches are supportive and critical of GCED for different reasons. A critical pedagogy approach (Freire, 1970) posits that education should enable students to interrogate power structures, challenge discrimination and social inequities, and increase intercultural understanding, respect, and critical reflection, which is also emphasized in GCED. However, GCED is criticized for prioritizing global employability skills rather than commitment to social change, such as the marketization of education (McLaren & Bosio, 2022).

In addition, GCED is described from neoliberal, radical, and transformative perspectives. According to the neoliberal perspective, a global citizen is a traveler whose social and economic connections can be freely established across time and space without being encumbered by national boundaries. In addition, an activist who understands the global systems that produce profound global inequities and works to combat inequality is encouraged by a radical approach. On the other hand, according to a transformational approach, globalization has resulted in a complex and dynamic set of international, national, and local relationships that have created new patterns of inclusion and exclusion, which rejects both the radical view of globalization as new mechanisms of imperialism and the neoliberal commitment to a single global market economy. This strategy cultivates a global citizenry committed to peace, environmental conservation, and economic and social justice (Shultz, 2007).

GCED and five big ideas

Teaching GCED in the classroom and educating learners as global citizens do not require expertise in every aspect of global matters; however, teachers need to understand the five big ideas of GCED to implement it (Oxfam, 2015). The five major ideas are mentioned below:

Globalization and interdependence
The growing interdependence of the world through the globalization process significantly impacts all levels of education. GCED is a form of education that aims to create citizens who are both members

of the global community and preserve their sense of national identity (Leek, 2016).

Social justice and equity

Social justice and equity are significant concerns in global citizenship education (Strunk & Locke, 2019). By encouraging students to recognize and confront global injustices and advocate for the rights of oppressed groups worldwide, global citizenship education advances social justice and equity in education (Waghid, 2024).

Identity and diversity

Identity, diversity, and global citizenship education are closely connected. Students' knowledge of diversity, self-esteem, and communication skills are improved through global citizenship education, which promotes respect for identity and diversity (Silva & Lourenço, 2023).

Sustainable development

According to the DSustainable development Goals (SDGs) of 2030, every student must have acquired skills and knowledge about human rights, gender equality, sustainable lifestyles, and development, which can promote nonviolent and peaceful cultures and society through global citizenship education (UN, 2016).

Peace and conflict

GCED is essential for developing attitudes, values, and abilities that support positive peace and conflict resolution. GCED fosters civic involvement, interpersonal respect, and respect for others—all of which are necessary for a peaceful society (Silva & Lourenço, 2023).

However, as major stakeholders, teachers need to understand five major ideas related to global citizenship education. In addition, teachers need a positive perception of GCED and practice it in the classroom. However, Ghosn-Chelala (2020) reported that most teachers support ideas of nationalistic citizenship that contribute to marginalization, whereas very few prioritize GCED concepts. There are different studies on GCED from other countries' perspectives, but substantial research on GCED has not been conducted in Bangladesh (Ahsan et al., 2023). Social science teachers' perceptions and practices in primary schools have not been investigated. Therefore, this study aims to fill this literature gap and explore social science teachers' perceptions and practices in Bangladesh's primary schools.

Conceptual framework

It can be argued, based on a review of the literature, that social science teachers should be knowledgeable about the various facets of global

citizenship education (GCED), focus on the goals of GCED implementation and promotion in schools, and effectively contribute to the implementation of GCED. UNESCO (2015) also offered the following framework of fundamental conceptual elements of GCED, taking into account the contentious notion of GCED. The following framework has been developed:
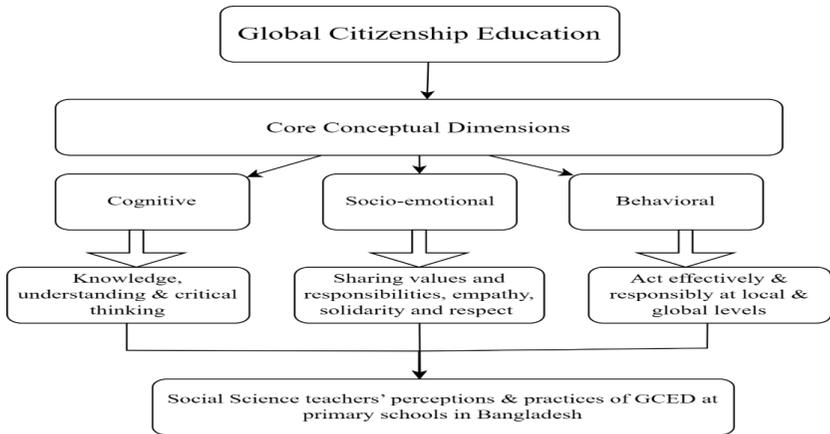

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study, which is based on the UNESCO framework (2015)

RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative study investigated individual experiences and perspectives, yielding a deeper understanding of global citizenship education in primary schools. Two Bangladeshi primary schools, one urban and one rural, were chosen purposefully to investigate in depth how contextual factors influence the perception and implementation of GCED between two schools and obtain comparative insights profoundly. This comparative approach examines structural inequities, including disparities in teacher preparation, resource allocation, and policy implementation. The rural and urban contexts were considered when selecting schools, as structural inequalities exist in both rural and urban primary schools in Bangladesh (Mustary, 2018). This study aimed to explore the contextual realities from the perspective of GCED.

However, this study uses multiple data collection techniques, such as interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations from different respondents, such as head teachers, assistant teachers, and students, to mitigate potential bias. In addition, after tools for collecting data were prepared, they were validated by a language expert and two educationists, and their suggestions were addressed immediately. Through

in-depth interviews, data were collected from four social science teachers (two from each school) and two head teachers (one from each school) from rural and urban areas. Furthermore, data were collected from two focus group discussions with primary school students (one from each school, each consisting of six students) and four classroom observations. Focus group discussions (FGDs) lasted 30--40 minutes, whereas each in-depth interview lasted approximately 40--50 minutes.

Before the data were collected from the participants, the study's aims were clearly stated, and consent forms to participate were collected. Additionally, it was stated that researchers would adhere to all ethical research protocols and maintain the participants' privacy. After obtaining the participants' permission, the researchers recorded the data through an audio tape recorder. After data collection, the qualitative data underwent a thorough analysis stage to extract insightful information from the participants regarding global citizenship education. As Bangla is the mother tongue and accurately portrays the discussion, the recorded interviews and FGD data were initially transcribed verbatim in that language.

After data transcription, purification was performed to find and fix any flaws or inconsistencies. A methodical coding procedure was used. Descriptive codes were assigned to each section of the text, precisely capturing the essence of the material and allowing for methodical classification and retrieval in the analytical process. Recurring themes and patterns emerged during the coding process. Codes were sorted into more extensive thematic groups as the study progressed, allowing for a deeper exploration of the underlying problems and viewpoints. To prioritize important discoveries, unnecessary or redundant data were removed. Several techniques, including debriefing and triangulation, were used to increase the validity and credibility of the analysis.

This investigation adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki. Before participating in the study, each participant provided informed consent, and throughout the entire process, their right to privacy and confidentiality was maintained. Every possible risk to the participants was minimized.

The study participants included six primary school teachers, represented by pseudonyms for ethical considerations. Refat Ara, a female headteacher with 20 years of teaching experience, holds a postgraduate degree. Khadiza Sultana, a female assistant teacher with 15 years of experience, is also a postgraduate. Similarly, Rohima Khamon, a female assistant teacher with 11 years of experience, holds a postgraduate qualification. MD Sofiq Ahmed, a male headteacher with 23 years of teaching experience, has a postgraduate degree. Nitu Rani Majhi, a female

assistant teacher with 7 years of experience, holds a graduate degree, while Sathi Akter, a female assistant teacher with 2.5 years of experience, also possesses a postgraduate qualification. This group reflects a mix of leadership and assistant teaching roles, with substantial professional experience and advanced educational backgrounds.

RESULTS

Nine themes emerged from the data when thematic analysis was applied. These themes are knowledge of GCED; perceptions of diversity, empathy, and solidarity; GCED in the curriculum; pedagogies for GCED; cocurricular activities and GCED; student voice; engagement; and GCED; practicing GCED in the classroom and school; practicing equality in and out of the classroom; and ensuring critical pedagogy through student voice and engagement.

Knowledge of GCED

The findings demonstrated the limited knowledge of global citizenship (GC) and global citizenship education (GCED). Most of the teachers from both urban and rural schools reported that education starts from family and school. Moreover, this process occurs through the acquisition of knowledge from part to the whole. Most of the teachers from both schools noted that they did not know about global citizenship and global citizenship education appropriately. More than half of the teachers from urban schools indicated that acquiring global competency was considered the standard of the GECD, but they could not mention any specific competency. For example, one social science teacher mentioned that

We have heard about global citizenship education, but we were never given proper training on how to integrate it effectively in our lessons. We only know a little about GCED, mostly from textbooks, but we were never trained in how to teach it in practice.

Furthermore, most teachers from both schools mentioned that learning English, the international language, was the best way to learn GCED and be a GC. For example, a social science teacher commented that

If a student does not know English, he/she cannot be a global citizen. If he/she does not know English, he/she will not communicate with the world and cannot even acquire global knowledge.

In addition, as noted by two urban school teachers and one rural teacher, students obtain global citizenship education through appropriate classroom communication and outside-of-class internet use. Two urban school teachers noted growing ethical concerns and social values, socialization, positive thinking, critical thinking, patriotism, and attitudes as essential components of a global citizenship curriculum. One teacher prioritized technology and computers from an urban school. On the other hand, other teachers from urban and rural schools did not mention these competencies.

However, teachers from both urban and rural areas needed more knowledge of GC and GCED. Their level of understanding was much less than needed. Therefore, this study suggested that teachers had a significantly limited understanding of GC and GCED.

Perception of diversity, empathy, and solidarity

The findings revealed that all the teachers admitted that there was a significant correlation between respect for differences and diversity, empathy, solidarity, tolerance and GCED. All the social science teachers who participated in this study remarked that they were also conscious of the students' rights and that they did not discriminate among the students. Moreover, teachers stated that they never distinguished students on the basis of gender, religion, color, diversity, occupation, or financial status. However, exceptionally, a teacher from an urban school contended that

We try to treat every student equally, but those who are academically high achievers are mostly included in every activity. In addition, in our school, we encourage students to respect each other's opinions, but sometimes, they hesitate to engage in discussions about different perspectives."

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that all the social science teachers understood empathy as showing sympathy. For example, they emphasized helping people, showing pity, and not quarreling with others only. The results also revealed that most of the teachers tolerated students' misbehavior because corporal punishment was forbidden. A teacher from a rural school stated that

I do not consider giving punishment badly to keep students on the right track. Because students still cannot distinguish between bad or good. Therefore, there is a need for punishment, sometimes to bring them on the right track. It seems to me to be just qin social and religious aspects.

Hence, the findings demonstrated that the teachers admitted that there was a significant correlation between respect for differences and diversity, empathy, solidarity, tolerance, and GCED. However, they lack sufficient knowledge of these issues. They needed more knowledge about respect for differences and diversity, empathy, solidarity, and tolerance to promote GCED.

GCED into the curriculum

All the instructions needed to practice GCED in the classroom were included in the curriculum. Nearly all of the teachers from both urban and rural schools agreed that the curriculum provided them with guidance, practical teaching and learning strategies, and appropriate GCED guidelines. Although they acknowledged that GCED was vital, nearly all teachers from both schools did not mention the specific activities or know where they are included in the curriculum. For example, one teacher from an urban school mentioned that

I have heard about global citizenship education through training. However, I do not know the exact part of the curriculum where the GCED has been included. Moreover, I do not have any specific training on GCED to practice it in school or the classroom. "

According to almost all teachers from urban and rural schools, history, culture, values, ethics, relationships with neighbors, and positive thinking are essential issues of GCED. According to a teacher, students need to study only the core curriculum. According to one outstanding teacher from an urban school, the primary curriculum is insufficient. Through the GCED curriculum, half of the teachers from urban and rural schools observed nationalism and the struggles of our ancestors.

The new curriculum emphasizes values and ethical issues more than the previous curriculum does, according to a superb teacher from a rural school. An outstanding teacher from an urban school stated that

All the students of our school are six to ten years old, and they are not adequately mature and aged to be global citizens; however, they can obtain a way to be global citizens by realizing BGS books and teacher direction.

Again, one urban school teacher stated that

Students must study BGS subjects properly at school and home to be global citizens. They can obtain ideas about the world by reading BGS books. Additionally, they can learn the process of socialization. This plays a vital role in building a student as a global citizen.

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According to a statement jointly made by a teacher from an urban and a rural school, students can acquire and learn GCED by sharing knowledge and socialization processes.

Pedagogies for GCED

The teaching-learning approach provided a suitable method for achieving GCED. Globalization was deemed crucial by nearly half of the teachers from both urban and rural schools, and the Industrial Revolution (4IR) produced many innovative teaching methods. Almost half of the teachers from urban and rural schools explained that they employed activity-based learning strategies. Teachers from urban schools acknowledged that they taught in the classroom via various techniques, including lectures, demonstrations, observations, and learning-by-doing. Without the lecturer method, nearly all rural schoolteachers did not mention any of these approaches. Furthermore, urban teachers understood activity-based teaching-learning methods to acquire GCED, such as a variety of techniques, including lectures, demonstrations, observations, and learning-by-doing. On the other hand, rural schoolteachers did not mention any of these approaches except the lecture method. One exceptional rural teacher commented that

> *Collaboration and communication between students and teachers can facilitate learning. However, we cannot obtain enough space and environment to collaborate and communicate with students for so-called superstations.*

Nearly half of the teachers from both urban and rural schools diversify their teaching methods to increase students' latent quality. In addition, a teacher from an urban school said

> *Students can learn extracurricular activities such as art, music, and drawing by practicing following teaching-learning methods.*

Two teachers from urban and rural schools stated that motivation and inspiration would help achieve the outcome of teaching-learning methods. The study revealed that nearly every student paid close attention to what their teacher was teaching them through a variety of techniques. The study also revealed that teaching-learning methods were crucial to acquiring GCED.

Cocurricular activities and GCED

The findings indicated that teachers believed that there was a strong correlation between cocurricular activity and the acquisition of GCED. Most social science teachers from both schools believed that students should engage in cocurricular activities to develop teamwork and communication skills. Moreover, teachers from both schools indicated that participating in cultural activities such as debate, art, music, dance, games,

and drawing could help students learn GCED. One social science teacher noted that

> *Cocurricular activities such as arts, music, dance, drawing, sports and debating can enhance and advance the implementation of GCED. When students engage in debate competitions, they learn to appreciate different perspectives, which is an essential part of global citizenship education.*

Furthermore, a different social science teacher contended that cocurricular activities promote students' social rights, sympathy and empathy rights, educational rights, and leadership skills development rights, which are unavoidable in learning GCED. The results again demonstrated that students could acquire knowledge from books and expand it outside the classroom through cocurricular activities, as nearly half of the teachers were from urban and rural schools. Although most of the students prefer book-based learning to cocurricular activities, most of the students always try to avoid the scope of being leaders. For example, one teacher mentioned that

> *We encourage students to take part in leadership activities, but sometimes, only a few students are actively involved. In fact, most of the students do not want to take responsibility because of fear and idiocy.*

Hence, the findings revealed that every social science teacher agreed that there was a strong correlation between cocurricular activity and the acquisition of GCED.

Student voice, engagement, and GCED

The findings demonstrated that most of the social science teachers believed that there was a significant relationship between students' voice, engagement and GCED. In contrast, the two social science teachers presented different thoughts on this matter. They described that those students should be controlled, as they were young and had less decision-making capacity. Moreover, the findings indicated that students' voice and engagement could promote responsibility and leadership skills, as most social science teachers mentioned. However, they did not mention specific methods except for cocurricular activities and the election of student councils.

For example, one teacher commented that

> *We give students opportunities to speak and engage them in many activities. For example, we select class captains, consider their opinions, and elect student council members through elections.*

The findings also revealed that cocurricular activities and the student council were the main agencies that upheld students' voices and engagement and promoted GCED. For example, one teacher commented that

> *Cocurricular activities develop the dormant talent of students. In addition, increasing their logical decision-making ability increases their ability to participate in various activities. On the other hand, the student council develops leadership qualities among the students. Sometimes, the members of a student council share their opinions on different issues, such as tiffin quality, the school environment, and the school library.*

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that students' participation could mitigate discrimination and promote GCED, as social science teachers mentioned. Hence, most social science teachers agreed that a significant relationship existed among students' voices, engagement and GCED.

Practicing GCED in the classroom and school

Teaching pedagogies are essential for implementing global citizenship education (GCED) in educational settings. Nevertheless, a significant deficiency was the insufficient focus on critical pedagogy, which prompted pupils to interrogate global systems and disparities. Integrating more participatory and problem-posing methodologies could augment the transformative capacity of GCED. The research indicated that the majority of social science teachers employed pedagogical techniques such as lectures, discussions, and question-and-answer procedures. For example, one social science teacher mentioned that

> *We try to make lessons engaging, but often, we rely on lectures owing to a lack of resources and training. We involve students in group activities, but managing time for interactive learning is challenging with our current syllabus.*

The findings indicated that the learning-by-doing method was endorsed by an urban social science teacher who received training on the new curriculum framework. Furthermore, the study revealed that the majority of teachers prioritized facilitating student engagement. Nonetheless, several teaching pedagogies, including play-based, experiential, observational, and lecture approaches, have been implemented in urban schools, whereas rural schools predominantly utilize lecture and discussion methods. For example, one rural school teacher mentioned that

In rural schools, we mostly use the lecture method because we lack proper materials for activity-based learning. In addition, we encourage discussions in class, but students hesitate to share their opinions openly.

Furthermore, the study revealed that most social science teachers employed students' engagement strategies in teaching-learning activities. In addition, they employed group work to promote equity, equality and empathy. The study also revealed that teaching pedagogies had an important effect on teaching-learning activities. Hence, instructional methods are crucial for the acquisition and promotion of global citizenship education (GCED) in educational settings.

Practicing equality inside and outside the classroom

Implementing diversity, gender sensitivity, and equality in educational settings demands more than just policy execution; it involves a culture transformation in the perceptions of teachers and students about these matters. The study revealed that although teachers advocated for gender equality, certain implicit prejudices, including the preference for academically high-achieving children, persisted unexamined efficiently through equitable treatment and opportunities for both male and female students in educational environments. The results indicated that the majority of social science teachers provided equal opportunities for answering questions and established mixed-gender groups in the classroom to reduce discrimination. However, discrimination still remains. For example, one social science teacher mentioned that

We try to treat boys and girls equally, but some parents still hold conservative views about mixed-gender activities. Despite ensuring that both boys and girls have the chance to participate in class discussions, some students are still hesitant.

The results also revealed a contrasting situation: only female students conducted weekly classroom cleaning activities in both schools. For example, one head teacher mentioned that

It has always been the norm that girls clean the classroom. That is why we usually do classroom cleaning by girls' students and the rest of the task does the boys.

Furthermore, the study indicated that the urban teacher's opinion was favorable; however, she favored children from affluent families over those from impoverished backgrounds. However, the results demonstrated that the majority of social science teachers amicably supported special needs students.

In addition, the findings indicated that head teachers play a vital role in practicing diversity, gender sensitivity and equality in the

classroom and school. The focus group discussion (FGD) findings also revealed that social scientists actively tried to engage students and promote diversity, gender sensibility and equality in the classroom and school. Hence, this study revealed that most social science teachers consider factors such as diversity, gender sensitivity and equality in promoting global citizenship education.

Ensuring critical pedagogy through student voice and engagement

Practicing students' voices and engagement is crucial for promoting global citizenship education (GCED), which is also connected with critical pedagogy. The findings revealed that social science teachers employed diverse strategies to engage students in classroom and school activities such as group work, student council elections and cocurricular activities. Moreover, the study revealed that students could voice their opinions in the classroom and school environments by asking questions but not in the decision-making process. In addition, a teacher stated that

> *"I tried to ensure students' voice and engagement but could not do so due to the fairness of mocking". Many of my colleagues say I have become more modern. I do these to be famous to the student. Also say that by doing these things, I am taking the students in the worse way. Students will be devoid of social etiquette and manners.*

Furthermore, the focus group discussion revealed that the members of the student council were allowed to share their opinions. In addition, they have a chance to engage all students in diverse activities, such as tree plantation and cocurricular activities. The study's findings also revealed that students spontaneously engaged in classroom and school activities.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Global citizenship education (GCED) is crucial in this globalized era. GCED is a way of increasing empathy for people; respecting others irrespective of culture, religion, gender, and other dimensions; and ensuring human rights worldwide. UNESCO (2015) provides a cognitive dimension that emphasizes teachers' knowledge of global citizenship education to implement GCED successfully. However, the findings of this study demonstrated that teachers in both urban and rural settings lacked sufficient understanding of GCED despite their different socioeconomic and political structures, which aligns with the findings of Lourenço (2021), who emphasized the importance of comprehending teachers' perspectives on global citizenship and global citizenship education (GCED), as these

viewpoints substantially influence curriculum implementation and students' achievements in various educational settings.

Moreover, the findings of the present study indicated that both urban and rural teachers believed in the importance of respect for differences and diversity, empathy, solidarity, and tolerance concerning GCED, but their views were superficial, and they ignored systematic discrimination irrespective of the urban or rural context. This finding is supported by Çolak et al. (2019), who indicated that GCED sometimes ignores the discussion of power, structural inequality and inequity and systematic injustice, which prevails worldwide. This is a limitation of GCED, which is indicated by postcolonial and decolonial education theorists.

The National Curriculum Framework 2021 is a competency-based curriculum (Islam et al., 2025) that has opened chances for Bangladesh to include GCED ideas in many spheres of the curriculum, solve GCED problems in the development process, and apply GCED via competency-based education. The findings revealed that urban teachers have some understanding of the curriculum and GCED, whereas rural teachers lack a deficit in understanding, which indicates that urban teachers have more facilities and opportunities, which is supported by the study of Salahuddin et al. (2013). In addition, this finding contrasts with the findings of Ahsan et al. (2023), who reported that the national curriculum framework 2021 of Bangladesh addressed the issues of GCED.

The Bangladesh primary social science curriculum usually prioritizes global policies to address global challenges (Rahman & Mazid, 2015), which is closely related to GCED but is ignored at the practice level. This study revealed that although few teachers have some basic knowledge about the curriculum framework of the 2021 and GCED terms, most of them could not clarify where and how the curriculum addressed GCED. The findings demonstrated teachers' lack of knowledge about integrating GCED into the curriculum, which aligns with the findings of Al-Husban & Tawalbeh (2022). Integrating GCED into curricula is a challenging endeavor that demands meticulous thought and adjustment. However, it is necessary to integrate GCED into the curriculum and disseminate knowledge to teachers to achieve the goals of GCED.

The study's findings showed that different participatory teaching-learning pedagogies were crucial in implementing GCED, and social science teachers, irrespective of urban and rural context, admitted the importance of using different teaching approaches, such as lectures, demonstrations, observations, and learning-by-doing. Nevertheless, they could hardly use different teaching approaches to increase student engagement. Although Islam et al. (2023) indicated the influence of

leaders' leadership role on the use of different pedagogies in the classroom, the findings of this study indicate that the use of different pedagogies involves resource shortages and time constraints, which is supported by the findings of Islam et al. (2023). In addition, these findings align with Bosio's (2023) results, as he emphasized different pedagogies in practicing GCED. This finding highlights the difference between policy and classroom practices due to resource shortages, which is a significant concern in critical pedagogy and decolonial education.

Moreover, this study indicated that cocurricular activities promote students' social rights, sympathy, empathy rights, educational rights, and leadership skills, developing rights that are unavoidable in the context of learning GCED. Different cocurricular activities are held regularly in urban and rural schools, which is beneficial for primary school students. These findings are supported by the research results of Gyulsina and Ganisher (2023), who argued that cocurricular activities could help students develop vital 21st-century skills and strengthen their feelings of global citizenship. Furthermore, the results of this study indicate that students' voices and engagement are promoted in schools irrespective of their urban and rural context and socioeconomic status. It is supported by critical pedagogy theory, where students' voices and engagement are prioritized to enhance their learning and increase their leadership ability (Bosio, 2023). This approach is supported by the study of Pillay and Karsgaard (2022), who revealed the significance of students' voices and engagement in promoting GCED. They also indicated that promoting student voice and engagement assists in decreasing discrimination and increasing equity in schools and societies.

Moreover, the study indicated that participants believed that practicing diversity, gender sensitivity, and equality in the classroom and schools was crucial in implementing GCED. Compared with those in rural areas, teachers in urban areas practice the issues of GCED, which are connected with diversity, gender sensitivity, and equality. These findings indicate that rural teachers lag in awareness of diversity, gender, and equality due to socioeconomic differences and a lack of training and other professional development facilities. These findings support the results of Dyrness (2023), who emphasized that ensuring diversity and equality in the classroom is essential for implementing GCED. This study indicates that to implement GCED properly, teachers need professional development on GCED and support from school authorities and policy levels to implement GCED in primary schools, irrespective of urban and rural contexts.

Limitations

The researcher purposefully and conveniently chose the study area (location and schools) because of concerns about funding, time, and permission. The researcher chose schools that were willing to provide data and were available. Additionally, only government primary schools in urban and rural areas were included in the study, which limits the study findings due to the lack of variation in the school categories. Finally, owing to the qualitative nature of the study, the generalizability of the findings was limited. Future research can address these issues.

Conclusion

Global citizenship education is essential for promoting empathy, human rights, equity, and global awareness among primary school students. Social science teachers are the major stakeholders in disseminating this education to them. As a result, social science teachers' perceptions and practices of GCED are crucial to explore in the context of Bangladesh. This study indicates that social science teachers, irrespective of urban or rural context, do not have sufficient knowledge about GCED, even if they do not know how GCED is integrated into the curriculum. Owing to a lack of professional development and a supportive environment, they are unaware of GCED implementation; they do not even have opportunities to use different participatory pedagogies in their classes. However, students in these schools can raise their voices and actively participate in cocurricular activities, which is crucial to improving their critical and analytical skills according to critical pedagogy. To successfully implement GCED in primary schools, teachers need more intensive professional development programs with supportive facilities in Bangladesh, which is also applicable to other countries with similar contexts.

The findings of this study could be significant for various stakeholders, including teachers, policymakers, and teacher educators in Bangladesh and other countries with similar contexts. This study offers insightful information that can help direct and influence the creation of new plans and policies for GCED by analyzing research findings that consider postcolonial and decolonial education and critical pedagogical perspectives. The findings can also be used to develop and implement professional development education aimed at improving social science teachers' attitudes and practices in the classroom since they lack an understanding of global citizenship education (GCED). In addition, this research will support the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework 2021 (NCTB, 2021), which has given considerable attention to GCED. Insights from this study may help shape global education policies that support UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7,

which strongly emphasizes education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

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