

Analysis of Curriculum about Political Literacy as a Dimension of Citizenship Education

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Abstract

Concept of citizenship is a key to comprehend about democracy and its working. The citizenship curriculum is straightforward based upon the social and political debates of the community. Therefore, this research article aims to analyze the political literacy as a dimension of citizenship education in the secondary school curriculum of Pakistan. For this purpose, the researchers identified ten elements of political literacy in the context of citizenship education with the help of literature review. To find the presence of these ten elements of political literacy in curriculum, the researchers selected four sources viz. curriculum documents 2006, education policy 2009, textbooks of four subjects i.e. English, Urdu, Islamiyat, Pakistan Studies and also the views of teachers teaching these subjects through questionnaire. It was concluded from the data that very poor situation exists about the inclusion of political literacy as a dimension of citizenship education in the curriculum of secondary school level.

Keywords: Curriculum, political literacy, citizenship education

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Introduction

Citizenship is a way of behaving, thinking, and learning which supports personal and community development and life-long learning. The Global Gateway focuses on introducing political literacy as an international dimension of citizenship education in the schools' curriculum. Citizenship education caters to the citizenship between the person and the political society, and between the self as well as other people. It must help the general population comprehend their own character and the essence and virtue of society, and how to effectively draw in with the perplexing relationship of rights and obligations that exists between the two (Crick, 2002).

Kennedy (2006), cited by Ross (2012) discussed kinds of active citizenship. The first level is the 'conventional political activity' where each citizen is engaged in voting on a regular basis or in belonging to a particular political party. The second form is of 'participating in social movements'- where the citizens are involved with voluntary activities such as collecting money on their behalf or for charity. Thus, the first and second forms may together be known as 'voting and volunteering' methodology to address the topic of political literacy in the context of citizenship education.

Concept of citizenship is a key to comprehension of what democracy is and how it works. Thus all who are involved in education for democracy need to know what citizenship is, how it is to acquire or loose in various political system, what rights, responsibilities and duties are entailed by it, and how it is connected to the institutions of particular nation-states, especially their own. But students need to move beyond conceptual understanding to learning experience that develops participatory skill and civic disposition for exercising the rights and carrying out the responsibilities and duties of citizen in democracy. There are three types of participatory skills needed for student's growth, (i) interacting (ii) monitoring and (iii) influencing. Interacting pertain to skills of communication and cooperation in political and civic life. Monitoring involves skills needed to track the work of political leaders, and institution of government. And influencing refers to skills used to effect outcomes in political and civic life, such as resolution of public issues (Johansson & Havinden, 2005).

Crick (2007) discussed many elements of citizenship education which are involved and useful in the development of political literacy are as follows:

- learning about social, political and civic institutions, as well as human rights;
- the study of conditions under which people may live harmoniously together, about social issues and ongoing social problems;
- teaching young people about national constitutions so that they are better prepared to exercise their rights and responsibilities;
- promoting recognition of the cultural and historical heritage;
- Promoting recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity of society.

The citizenship curriculum is straight forward, based on the social and political debates of the community. So the conditions and means by which these issues are debated, analyzed, argued and acted upon the students (Ross, 2012).

The curriculum development in the context of citizenship education has fine implications in the sense that no external pressure can force the child to implement the curriculum as such. But it supplements discipline with greater freedom of activity, freedom of expression and development of confidence in the students. It is based on the principles of child activities and needs which arouse the interest and motivation to accomplish a task. Thus, purposeful co-operative learning environment in free and happy atmosphere is useful for citizenship education (Sharma, 2014).

Methodology

The main objective of the research study was to qualitatively analyze the curriculum documents 2006 and textbooks of four subjects that is English, Urdu Islamiyat and Pakistan studies at secondary school level of Pakistan, about the political literacy as a dimension of citizenship education. For more evidence, the education policy 2009 was also be analyzed to find out the relevant material about the citizenship education. The quantitative data was also collected through a questionnaire to analyze the teacher's views about the presence of content about political literacy with respect to citizenship education in the curriculum of the above mentioned four subjects. The research was carried out in four phases.

In the phase one an instrument (no 1), a checklist was developed for the content analysis of curriculum documents 2006 along with their textbooks of four subjects, such as, English, Urdu, Islamiyat and Pakistan studies and education policy 2009. Citizenship education is very broad field and has various dimensions or aspects like political literacy, active participation, critical thinking etc.

However, in this study, the ten elements of political literacy in the context of citizenship education have been identified with the help of literature review (Staeheli, 2008; Tam, 1998 & Wood, 2010) as follows:

- i. Knowledge of human rights;
- ii. Knowledge of national constitution.
- iii. Knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity of the society.
- iv. Participation in the public debate.
- v. Participation in the forum of peaceful protest.
- vi. Participation in interest groups.
- vii. Participation in election/voting.
- viii. Participation in services for community.
- ix. Political efficacy.
- x. Any experience of democracy at school level.

This checklist was validated by the jury of experts (fifteen teachers teaching these four subjects) in the following way:

Sr. No	Item statements	I-CVI	Remarks
i.	Does the curriculum provide knowledge about human rights?	0.80	Appropriate
ii.	Does the curriculum teach about national constitutions?	0.83	Appropriate
iii.	Does this curriculum works for the promotion of recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity of society mentioned?	0.80	Appropriate
iv.	Does this curriculum provide learning about the importance of participation in Public debate?	0.79	Appropriate
v.	Does this curriculum provide knowledge about the importance of participation in forum of peaceful protest?	0.79	Appropriate
vi.	Does this curriculum provide knowledge about the importance of participation in Interest group?	0.80	Appropriate
vii.	Does this curriculum provide knowledge about the importance of participation in election (voting)?	0.93	Appropriate
viii.	Does this curriculum provide knowledge about the importance of participation in Services for community?	0.87	Appropriate
ix.	Does this curriculum provide some knowledge about political efficacy?	0.80	Appropriate
x.	Does this curriculum favor any experience of democracy at school level?	0.80	Appropriate
	S-CVI	0.81	Appropriate

Curriculum documents 2006 and textbooks of the four subjects mentioned above have been selected to analyze the content and relevant material, using relational analysis (a content analysis technique) as a research tool. As with the other content analysis model, relational analysis begins by identifying themes/ elements or issues to explore. However, unlike the majority of other analyses, this approach attempts at identifying and exploring the relationship between themes or issues.

Model of content analysis (Relational analysis)

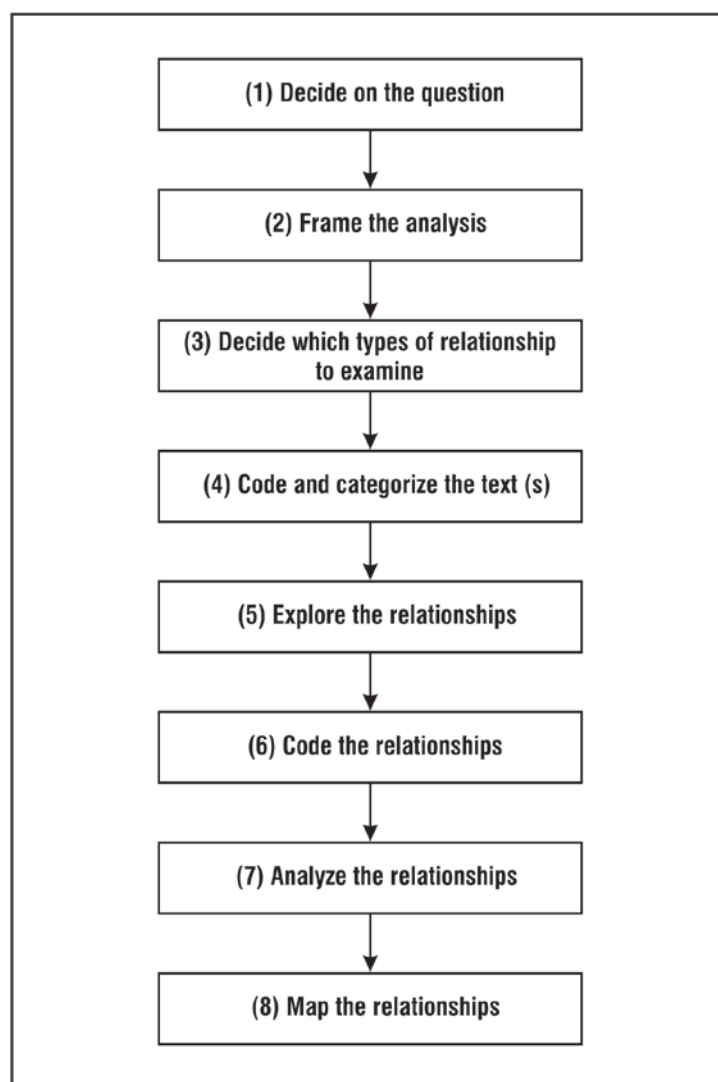


Figure The stages in 'relational analysis' as adopted by Wikinson and Birmingham (2012)

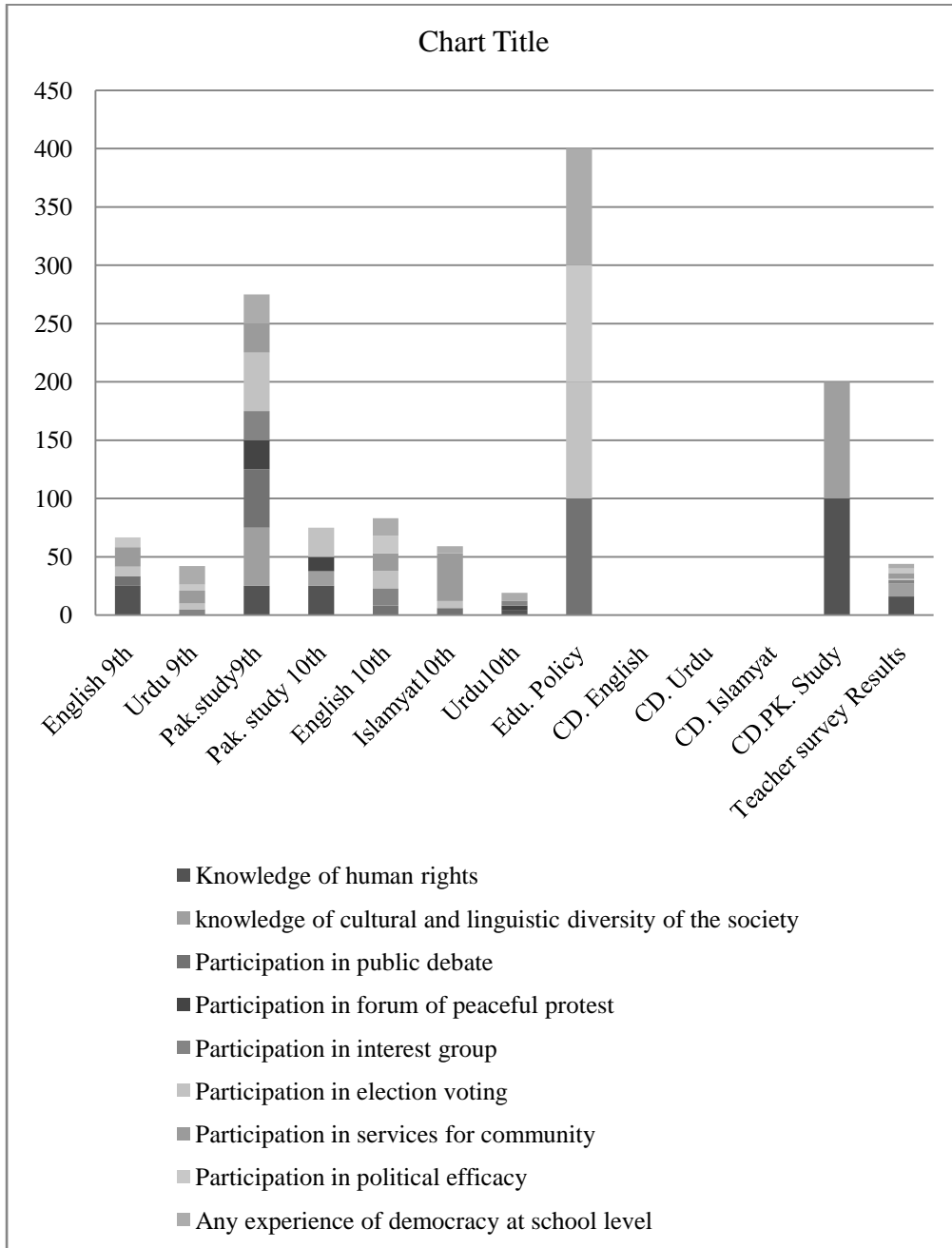


Figure 2 Graphical representation of table 1.1

Interpretation of the data

Column (i) Knowledge of human rights

Citizenship Education increases the support for democratic process. Democracies depend upon citizens who among other things are aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This element has been analyzed as follows:

- **Text books:** English 9th text book contained this component with 25% ratio and English 10th had zero percent content about it. Both the textbooks of Pakistan Studies viz. 9th, 10th had 25% content about this element each. However Islamiyat 10th has zero percent content about the 'knowledge of human rights'.
- **Education policy:** Education policy had zero percent guidance about this component of political literacy.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents of English, Urdu and Islamiyat had zero percent but Pakistan Studies had a 100% ratio for its presence.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' views reflected somewhat significant figure of 16% about the presence of this element.

Thus, it may be concluded that textbooks of English 9th and both of Pakistan studies, have 25% content about this element of 'knowledge of human rights'. The other textbooks, the curriculum documents of English, Urdu and Islamiyat, as well as the education policy contain no content i.e. zero percent, about it. However, the curriculum document of Pakistan studies has fully emphasized upon it with a value of 100%. This has also been revealed by the results of teachers' perception with a value of 16%.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources of this research study were not equally involved in contributing about the 'knowledge of human rights' under the umbrella of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (ii) Knowledge of national constitution

Teaching young people about national constitution is important so that they are better prepared to exercise their rights and responsibilities in the society. This factor about political literacy may be analyzed as follows:

- **Textbooks:** The English 9th textbook had zero percent while English 10th 8% ratio for this element. Similarly Urdu 9th had a zero percent value and Urdu 10th comprised of only 4% about it. Pakistan Studies 9th also had a zero percent ratio but Pakistan studies 10th had 12.5% ratio for it. Islamiyat 10th also had zero percent about the knowledge of national constitution.
- **Education policy:** Education policy had 100% admonition regarding this element.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum Documents of all the four subjects viz. English, Urdu, Pakistan Studies and Islamiyat had completely ignored this important component of political literacy in the context of citizenship education.
- **Teachers' survey:** This element was included by the ratio of 7% in the curriculum in the view of teachers.

Therefore, it may be deduced that only education policy emphasized on this component i.e. 100%, whereas curriculum documents and textbooks have ignored its worth entirely i.e. zero percent. However, textbooks of English 10th and Pakistan studies 10th have a slight mention of relevant content with the ratios of 8% and 12.5% respectively. The teachers' viewpoint looks comparatively prominent about this element, i.e. 7%.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved in contributing about the element of 'knowledge of national constitution' under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (iii) Knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity of the society

There is growing awareness that languages play a vital role in development and ensuring cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity of the society can be presented only through citizenship Education. This fact may be analyzed as follows:

- **Textbooks:** The textbooks of English, Urdu and Islamiyat contained no content about this element i.e. zero percent. However, Pakistan Studies 9th contained 50% and Pakistan Studies 10th had 12.5% about the knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity of the society for promoting political literacy.
- **Education policy:** Education policy had no advice regarding this element, i.e. zero percent.

- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents of English, Urdu, and Islamiyat had zero percent content about it. While the curriculum document of Pakistan studies consisted of 100% mention about it.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' survey identified 11% inclusion of this component in the curriculum.

Therefore, it may be concluded that only the textbook of Pakistan studies with 50% and curriculum document of Pakistan studies with 100% ratio, have mentioned it properly while all other sources included in the study ignored this component. This finding was correctly identified by the teachers' survey as well, i.e. 11%.

χ^2 -test depicted that all these resources were not equally involved in contributing about the element of 'knowledge of cultural and linguistic diversity of the society' under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (IV) Participation in public debate

Participation in public debate is an important component of political literacy. It develops awareness about the rights of public in the society. This may be analyzed as follows:

- **Textbooks:** English 9th has 8.3% ratio while English 10th has 8% ratio for the inclusion of this element. Both Urdu 9th and Urdu 10th textbooks had absolutely no material regarding this element, i.e. zero percent. Pakistan studies 9th had a prominent figure as compared to other text books with a 50% ratio, but Pakistan Studies 10th had a zero percent value. Islamiyat 10th had only 6% content about it.
- **Education policy:** Education policy comprises of complete guidance about this element, i.e. 100%.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents reflect no mention of this element for all the four subjects, i.e. 0%.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' survey result reflected the total absence of this content in the curriculum.

Therefore it may be noticed that textbooks slightly viz. English 9th and 10th, 8% each, and Pakistan studies 9th, 50% and education policy completely i.e. 100% emphasized upon the element of political literacy. Whereas curriculum documents have entirely ignored it i.e. zero percent and teacher survey results reflected this finding too, i.e. zero percent.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources of present research study were not equally involved in contributing about the element of ‘participation in public debate’ under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (v) Participation in forum of peaceful protest

Democracy encourages people to participate in the forum of peaceful protest for their rights. This activity makes people realize not to compromise on their rights. This element may be analyzed as follows:

- **Textbooks:** Both the textbooks of English 9th and 10th had no material regarding this element of political literacy, i.e. zero percent. Urdu 9th had zero percent while Urdu 10th had only 4% content about it. Pakistan studies 9th had 25% and Pakistan studies 10th had 12% ratio for its presence. Islamiyat 10th also had absolutely no relevant content, i.e. zero percent.
- **Education policy:** Education policy had absolutely no admonition for this element, i.e. zero percent.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents of all the four subjects had zero percent emphasis over it.
- **Teacher’s survey:** Teacher’s survey results also reflect the absence of content regarding the element in the curriculum.

Therefore it may be deduced that only textbooks of Pakistan Studies 9th and 10th (25% & 12.5% respectively) and Urdu 10th (4%) mentioned about this element while all other sources did not even mention it i.e. zero percent. This has been correctly identified by the teachers in their survey as well i.e. 0%.

χ^2 -test depicted that all the sources were not equally involved in contributing to the element of ‘participation in forum of peaceful protest’ under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (VI) Participation in the interest group

Participation in the interest group is also a basic element of political literacy which protects the rights of people from illegal action against them. This may be analyzed as follows:

- **Text books:** Text book of English 9th had zero percent while English 10th contained 15% content regarding the element of participation in the interest group. Similarly Urdu 9th had 5% and Urdu 10th had 4% ratio of its presence. Pakistan studies of 9th had a significant figure of 25% for it but Pakistan studies 10th had no such content i.e. zero percent. Islamiyat 10th also had no mention of this element, i.e. zero percent.
- **Education policy:** Education policy comprises of no guidance regarding this component.
- **Curriculum documents:** The curriculum documents of all the subjects viz. English, Urdu, Pakistan studies and Islamiyat has zero percent.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teacher survey result reflected 3% presence of this element in the curriculum.

Therefore it reflects that text books had partially mentioned this element but it has been completely ignored by the other sources of this research study. This finding is assured by the results of the teachers' survey.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved in contributing to the element of 'participation in the interest group under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (vii) Participation in election voting

Participation in election is also a basic responsibility of a citizen in order to elect their own government which can run all the institutions of their country. Therefore casting a vote is very essential for everyone. This element may be analyzed as follows:

- **Textbooks:** Textbook of English 9th had 8.3% while English 10th had a 15% value for the presence of content related to this element. Urdu 9th had 5% while Urdu 10th had no relevant content, i.e. zero percent. Pakistan Studies 9th had a 50% ratio while Pakistan studies 10th had 25% ratio for the presence of content regarding participation in election voting. Islamiyat 10th text book contained 6% material about it.
- **Education policy:** Education policy fully stressed upon this component, i.e. 100%.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents of all the four subjects had absolutely no mention of this element of political literacy i.e. zero percent.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' survey results also reflected a low value of 2% presence of this element in the curriculum.

Therefore it may be concluded that textbooks hold partial content and education policy fully guides the students about its importance but curriculum documents did not show its existence. This is what is reflected by the teachers' survey as well.

χ^2 -test showed that all the sources of this research study were not equally involved in contributing to the element of 'participation in election/voting' under the aspect of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (viii) participation in services for community

Participation in services for community is also an integral part of political literacy. As a matter of fact it is a characteristic of great people who are known for serving their community. This element may be analyzed as follows:

- **Text books:** English textbook 9th had 16.7% ratio whereas English 10th had 15% value for the component of political literacy. Urdu 9th had 11% but Urdu 10th had zero percent for it. Similarly Pakistan Studies 9th had 25% while Pakistan Studies 10th had no content relevant to it i.e. zero percent. However Islamiyat 10th contained a significant figure of 41% value about it.
- **Education policy:** Education policy had no roadmap regarding this element, i.e. zero percent.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents of all the four subjects had no mention of this element at all, i.e. zero percent.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' survey results also reflect a ratio of 5% for this element in the curriculum.

Thus, it may deduce that only textbooks partially revealed the existence of this component while other sources have ignored it. An insight into the view of teachers reflected these findings as well.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved in contributing to the element of 'participation in services for community, under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (ix) Political efficacy

Political efficacy is the citizens' faith and trust in government and their belief that they can understand and influence political affairs. It is one of the basic needs of any community. This may be analyzed as follows:

- **Text books:** English textbook of 9th had 8% while English 10th depicted more stress on this element with the ratio of 15%. Urdu 9th had 5% while Urdu 10th had no emphasis on this element, i.e. zero percent. Similarly Pakistan Studies 9th and 10th both held absolutely no mention of this element, i.e. zero percent. Islamiyat 10th also had no such emphasis, i.e. zero percent.
- **Education policy:** Education policy fully stressed on the importance of this element i.e. 100%.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum document of all the four subjects had no contribution in this regard at all, i.e. zero percent.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' survey result indicated 4% assurance of the teachers about the presence of this element.

Thus, it is concluded that education policy emphasized on this element completely, while textbooks of English and Urdu had partial mention of content about it and rest of the sources ignored its importance. This was correctly identified by the teachers as well.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved in contributing to the element of 'political efficacy, under the aspect of political literacy of citizenship education.

Column (x) Any experience of democracy at school level

Any experience of democracy at school level may be a beautiful memory of any student which is helpful to enable him in future to be a better citizen of the society. This may be analyzed as follows:

- **Text book:** English 9th had zero percent whereas English 10th had 15% content about this component. Urdu 9th had 16% while Urdu 10th had 7% mention about it. Pakistan studies 9th had 25% while Pakistan studies 10th had no such mention, i.e. zero percent. Islamiyat 10th had 6% ratio of this element of political literacy.
- **Education policy:** Education policy had complete guidance about this element, i.e. 100%.
- **Curriculum documents:** Curriculum documents of all the four subjects had absolutely no mention of this content, i.e. zero percent.
- **Teachers' survey:** Teachers' survey result reflected 4% presence of this element.

Thus, it may be deduced that education policy fully supported the importance of this element but text books had a partial contribution in this regard. The curriculum document has totally ignored this component. This is also reflected correctly by the teachers' survey.

χ^2 -test indicated that all the sources were not equally involved in contributing to the element of 'any experience of democracy about this element at school level' under the dimension of political literacy of citizenship education.

Conclusion

It was concluded that all the four sources, i.e. textbooks, curriculum documents, educational policy and teachers' views were not found to be contributing equally to even a single element of political literacy as a dimension of citizenship education. Therefore, the analysis of curriculum at secondary level depicted a very poor situation about the inclusion or perception of citizenship education in the most important four subjects, which were supposed to be important for promoting citizenship education in the young generation.

From the analysis of available data, it was clear that there was a big gap in translating education policy into curriculum documents and textbooks. It was particularly noticed that the Educational policy 2009, contained 100% guidance about most of the elements of the political literacy which were relevant to the dimensions of citizenship education while a very low ratio of those was reflected in the curriculum documents and textbooks.

The quantitative data obtained by teachers through questionnaire, was mostly verifying the qualitative data collected through checklist. Thus the mixed methods (combination of qualitative and quantitative) was useful in getting an insight through analysis of curriculum about political literacy as a dimension of Citizenship Education, but unfortunately, this dimension was not given its appropriate status in the curriculum at secondary level schools.

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