

Implementation of Place Based Education in Lower Primary English Class in Southern Part of Trashing Dzongkhag, Bhutan

ABSTRACT

This research explored how Place-Based Education (PBE) is implemented in teaching English in lower primary class. It also explored on the challenges and opportunities the PBE offers as a teaching-learning approach. It is the qualitative study with an exploratory case study design grounded on the social constructivist worldview. Purposive sampling was used and collected data from twenty-two participants; five face-to-face interviews with teachers and four focus group discussions (FGD) with class II and III students, the data was also collected from one principal and analysed using thematic approach. Moreover, literature shows that PBE principles were used in several fields of education for different purposes. Further, research suggests that principles of PBE can help students to engage in a meaningful learning experience using local community resources and boost students' communication skills. In addition, the findings revealed that English teachers of lower primary classes implemented few principles of PBE such as learner-centered, inquiry-based, and community as classroom. On the other hand, teachers do not used local to global, design thinking and interdisciplinary approach due to time constraint and lack of experiences. Thus, the teachers do not fully utilize the local and community resources due to lack of competencies of teachers in terms of knowledge and skills to implement PBE approaches. On this basis, it is recommended that teachers be provided with a monthly refresher course on PBE principles to integrate into teaching English. In addition, administrator, parents and teacher colleagues render full support to implement PBE teaching. Therefore, future research is needed to ascertain how the principles of PBE are effective in helping learners improve academic achievement.

Keywords: *Community as classroom, Learner-centered, Lower Primary, Place-Based Education, Principles, Training.*

1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, statements of the problem, aim and objectives, main research question and sub-questions, and the significance of the study. Finally, it presents the outline structure of the dissertation.

The Royal Education Council [REC] has significantly changed the curriculum and teaching procedures. The curriculum was revised to encourage students to participate actively in their learning by converting learned concepts into practical abilities through real-life experiences and concepts [1](Wangchuk, 2021). Another major reform was an infusion of Environmental Studies [EVS] into English and Dzongkha subjects. To teach and learn EVS, Place-Based Education [PBE] is an appropriate teaching pedagogy of the current era, which is geared toward student-centered learning (REC, 2017). Moreover, PBE teaches through nature integrates the student into his or her environment. It boosts students' cognitive capacities, effectiveness, and social learning while also motivating and changing teachers' attitudes more than standard teaching approaches (Knapp 2005). In addition, Pasiechnyk (2018) states that PBE is a learning approach that combines the varied history, environment, culture, and economy of a location and is based on what is available in the locality.

Therefore, it was first introduced in Bhutan in 2008, in partnership with Teton Science Schools [TSS], Northwest Wyoming, USA, and implemented in 2019 across schools in the country (REC, 2018). Thus, PBE is known to teachers who teach the lower grades. Further, Griffin (2019) stated that the establishment of the model place-based is led by the President, Her Majesty the Queen Mother, Ashi Tshering Pem Wangchuck, who has a strong vision for excellent education, leadership, and the ability to address the problems and concerns of Bhutanese youths, communities and country. The Queen Mother's belief inspired the collaboration with [TSS] and the Youth Development Fund [YDF] and the establishment of the model place-based village school in Talhogang, Punakha (REC, 2018).

PBE is an educational philosophy that emphasizes the importance of connecting students with their local, cultural and natural environment to create meaningful learning experiences for students (REC, 2017) and promote effective conceptual learning. In addition, Wangchuk (2021) emphasized that students explore their surroundings which would help them to develop their skills involving hands alongside their head and heart (3Hs) which is the sole purpose of PBE. Therefore, PB learning is suitable in Bhutanese school settings where there are rich resources available in the natural environment to help explore meaningful learning without paying for the resources. Moreover, REC (2018) supports those teachers in Bhutan who are often stationed in remote locations with limited resources, and PBE courses have helped learn how to make use of the available resources.

Therefore, REC (2017) found the relevancy and importance of PBE and provided teachers and managers with the training and workshops to implement it in the schools. Hence, the study aims to find out how PBE is implemented in one of the central schools focusing on lower primary English classes in Southern Trashigang dzongkhag.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Our education system revolves around teacher-centered learning in the classrooms. It hardly provides any opportunities for learners to experience the real world of learning beyond the classroom. Therefore, learners lack experiential learning, which is crucial in the changing world. The 21st -century education is about giving learners the skills they require to succeed in this world and motivating them to boost their confidence to apply those skills. His Majesty the King, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk in his Royal Address during the 113th National Day celebration in Punakha shared the concern on the need for change and reformation in education, "We must revisit our curriculum, pedagogy, learning process, and assessments to either transform or rewrite them in view of the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century." Teachers shoulder a greater responsibility to plan whereas students should focus in learning to achieve the desired growth and development, thereby realizing the national visions. Teachers must guide learners to gain meaningful values, and acquire relevant skills and desirable conduct. It was highlighted that with the changing time, our practices of a teacher must change. In this view, PBE helps realizing student's learning is relevant and engaging actively. It provides freedom for students to voice and choice in determining what, how, when and where they learn (Sobel, 2006). Moreover, PBE is one of the effective methods to teach English using real objects available in and around the place to impart the concept REC (2018) and further teachers should embrace PBE because it represents a considerable shift from the traditional lecture-based

model to student-centered approach in which teacher acts as a facilitator. Therefore, the teachers are instructed to incorporate PBE in the lessons irrespective of the grades as it helps to boost the wholesome development of a child and academic score. It was evident from the study by Polk et. al. (2016) that PBE increased workplace skills such as leadership, persistence, taking responsibility, teamwork, time management, encouraging people, and coping with unanticipated problems, improved academic results, and improved performance in subject areas. In addition, Hall (2015) stated that the technique of using the local community and environment act as a beginning point to teach language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other areas across the curriculum. Despite these benefits, the teachers in the field scarcely incorporate PBE in teaching-learning process. It is evident from the researcher's experience that teachers in the field rarely practice PBE explicitly. Similarly, some teachers in Southern schools of Trashigang shared that it is a time-consuming pedagogy which impedes the completion of the prescribed syllabus. Owing to a great benefit of PBE teaching pedagogy, REC conducted National Based Inservice Programs [NBIPS] and School Based Inservice Programs [SBIP] for the teachers since its implementation in 2019 (REC, 2019). Yet, it is observed that the incorporation of PBE principles is rare in the school. Moreover, English teachers do not apply PBE pedagogy as it is believed that PBE is suitable solely to teach Science and Social Study. This effect is evident in Smith, (2016) statement that most of the students failed to connect the local knowledge with the real world. Moreover, researcher has passion to study the new pedagogy in teaching and investigate how it works in the Bhutanese classrooms. Further, the researcher's curiosity to conduct the study was inspired when the module 'Communicative Grammar's' tutor used PBE principle to teach the Grammar. Therefore, this study intends to study the concept, implementation of PBE, its opportunities, and challenges of PBE in teaching English in lower primary classroom.

1.2 Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the implementation of place-based education principles in lower primary English classroom.

More specifically, this study aimed to achieve the following specific objectives:

- Explore the impact of PBE's professional development on the teachers' ability to implement PBE approach in teaching.
- Investigate administrative support for implementing new pedagogy in the classroom.
- Study the impact of implementing PBE to teach English in lower primary school in Southern part of Trashigang Dzongkhag,
- The study will opine that PBE can also be used to teach English in lower primary class.

1.3 Research questions

Place-Based Education is the recent initiative implemented in Bhutan and there is no research done based on teaching English and English teachers believed that PBE is suitable to teach other subjects. Considering the need to address this information gap, the current study aimed to investigate the implementation of PBE principles in the lower primary English class. Therefore, the central question in this paper asks:

How is principle of Place-Based Education (PBE) implemented in lower primary English class?

More specifically, this study aimed to answer the following sub questions:

1. How do teachers and students understand PBE pedagogy in the classroom?
2. How is PBE's principles implemented in teaching English in lower primary classroom?
3. What are the opportunities of implementing PBE in lower primary class?
4. What are the challenges of using the PBE to teach English in lower primary class?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition

Place-based education [PBE] is a pedagogy that caters to the teaching-learning process. Similarly, it connects learning and communities with the primary goals of increasing student engagement, boosting academic outcomes, impacting communities, and promoting understanding of the world

around them (REC, 2019). Further, PBE is a study concept that focuses on the opportunity to learn from the local community and environment, with a concentration on hands-on experience (Sobel, 2004) and the technique of using the local community and environment as a foundation in learning and teaching concepts in all disciplines is known as place-based education. In addition, Smith (2016) defines PBE as a fully immersive learning environment that immerses students in local heritage, cultures, surroundings, resources, and relationships as a springboard for studying language arts and other topics across the curriculum. Similarly, Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) stated that PBE is the method of using the local community and further, Eijck (2010) mentioned that PBE is an educational curriculum consisting of teaching-learning activities that respected the student's place.

Though there are numerous definitions of PBE pedagogy where students should be encouraged to engage society and those around them in meaningful ways. Further, Education Professional Development Centre (2019) defines PBE as an approach that connects learning and communities to increase student engagement, academic outcomes and community impact. It emphasised on "hands-on, real-world learning experiences" that gives students opportunities to connect to the culture, ecology, and economy of the local places. In addition, PBE is defined as an immersive learning experience that place students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum.

2.2 Teachers' Understanding of place-based Education in English classroom

Educators in the schools believed that PBE is applicable to teach Geography, Science, Social Study, and Environmental science. However, Lundahl (2011) stated that Environmental education is not solely the responsibility of science teachers; it is everyone's responsibility, and it is naturally fit for an English classroom. Further, literature from a specific location and writing other literary activities that help students relate to environment are all part of place-based language arts (Lundahl, 2011). Similarly, encouraging students to relate to location was to make it personal through metaphor by integrating inner and outward landscapes. Further, PBE is suitable for language teaching irrespective of the subjects and some remedy programs were introduced to nurture the educators. Further, REC (2019) states that hands-on lessons experiences motivated the teachers with an understanding of how to apply the theory of PBE. Thus, participants experienced and understood how the practice of PBE enriches the existing Bhutanese curriculum.

According to TSS (2014, Jan.19) "During an English lesson, focus is on completing and using a semantic web on a local tree, such as white Champa, to write paragraphs and poems." In addition, REC (2021, p.95) stated that "PBE is used as an approach to teach language in various contexts. The activities could be designed to involve learners in interviewing local people, visiting places in the locality, designing solutions to problems, and using local goods." It is recommended that wherever possible, the teachers need to contextualise lesson to the needs of the locality and teaching-learning becomes more meaningful and relevant. Therefore, PBE teaching pedagogy is given due importance in the field of teaching English irrespective of other subjects.

2.3 Opportunities for Implementing Place-based Education to Teach English

The most important things that helped people learn English were activity-based learning and hands-on lessons. Students get better at observing, making assumptions, listening, speaking, reading, and writing by doing the investigation process. Similarly, Smith (2002) noted that the PBE technique bridges the gap between students' real-life experiences and the knowledge received in school. Attending lessons in the PBE classroom developed a stronger sense of community (Smith, 2002; & Sobel, 2004). Further, Jennings, et al. (2005) stated that PBE instils social duties a sense of community, respect, and academic competence. PBE focuses on a key asset that is shared as a common concept: citizenship, or students' meaningful participation in society, and its current repercussions. On the other hand, preparing students for "some future purpose," is more important to give tools that can help to solve problems in the present (Smith & Sobel, 2010). Similarly, Witt, Peterson, and Trombulak, (2016) stated that learners' feelings of community have aided in cooperating with the outside world and connecting to the natural environment.

PBE teaching has numerous opportunities for teaching lessons or projects by simply stepping outside of the classroom and keeping an eye open for ideas. In the same way, PBE allows the children to explore new places. Further, PBE connects the theories with real-life experiences. Similarly, Smith

(2002) stated that the PBE approach pushed to develop social responsibility, where PBE focuses on learning through social interactions. Therefore, PBE implants social responsibilities, a sense appreciation for the community, and academic ability (Jennings et al., 2005). In addition, Cook and Verbeten (2009) found that socially, children are expanding friendships and explore new things with new friends. Similarly, Marckini-Polk et al. (2016) mentioned that PBE consists of active, participatory, and inclusive learning methods that encourage students to go beyond “surface” learning. In the same vein, Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) stated that the level of students’ participation was significantly higher than in a typical classroom environment. Further, it is supported by Jaramillo and Malagon (2019) who states that PBE is the basis for teaching English to children from a rural school and the environment as it enables the beginning of teaching concepts related to language arts, the writing of short poems, and other subjects from the curriculum. Therefore, Griffin (2019) in Madam Kinley Pem’s lesson observed that a place-based ABC book was created that highlighted various local objects and experiences for each of the letters of the English alphabet.

Thus, PBE teaching has numerous advantages. Students are allowed to explore new places, develop a sense of belonging and have hands-on experiences, focusing on conceptual learning through inquiry and interacting with friends.

Place-Based Education has several advantages in the teaching and learning process. According to Smith (2002), the PBE approach connects what students have learned in school with what was learned in real life. Similarly, students learn better from their friends through inquiry and discussion. Moreover, Cook and Verbeten (2009) support that socially, children are forming new friendships and want to learn from new friends. In addition, Azano (2011) mentioned that by boosting curricular relevance for rural pupils, place-based pedagogy addresses the issues faced by rural schools. Further, the teachers also commented on the benefits of having a supportive, collaborative learning group while developing a new curriculum (Kelley & Williams, 2013). Furthermore, Marckini-Polk et al. (2016) mentioned that PBE consists of active, participatory, and inclusive learning methods that encouraged students to go beyond “surface” learning and promote action-taking in the community. Moreover, Carpenter and Dickinson (2017) stated that place-based education offers students and teachers unlimited paths to personalisation, tools for students to experience actions, and a sense of pride in the community’s sustainability.

Recent evidence suggests that Kinley Pem’s class was observed and found each letter of the English alphabet, a place-based ABC book was made that highlighted distinct local artefacts and experiences (Griffin, 2019) and added that in a country like Bhutan, PBE is very relevant both from a geographical point of view and from the philosophy of Gross National Happiness [GNH]. GNH has four main pillars, which are supported by the principles of the PBE. It beautifully embeds all the pillars into the principles. Further, the place-based teaching would definitely help GNH values move forward in the future. Everything that PBE demands relates to the teaching of values, the concepts of locality, property, and care for the environment and knowledge of oneself. All of these are important for Bhutanese education.

Place Based Education [PBE] is a pedagogical philosophy based on the concept that education should prepare students to contribute to the cultural and ecological integrity of the environments. Similarly, PBE is a learning based on what is local, such as a place’s distinctive history, environment, culture, economy, literature, and art (TSS, 2014). Thus, the community and the local environment are the main sources of learning. Likewise, “The community provides context for learning; student work focuses on community needs and interests; and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning” (Smith & Sobel, 2010, p. 23). Therefore, PBE has numerous benefits for the students and teachers in teaching learning process.

PBE approach has three major benefits in teaching according to Education Professional Development Center, REC (2019) stated that firstly, PBE contributes to deeper, richer learning experiences that are highly relevant and engaging. Secondly, students experience higher degrees of agency in PBE environments, boosting their motivation and persistence. Finally, students who experience PBE have a greater appreciation for the places they experience, including their own communities. In the same vein, Amy (2004) found that PBE can benefit learners in several ways by using community partners which provides teachers and students with diverse viewpoints, access to resources, facilities, broader base of skills and knowledge.

PBE engages in learning deeply. Firstly, it builds a strong knowledge base through authentic and relevant learning experiences. Secondly, higher-level learning improves critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Thirdly, it strengthens the socially equitable, environmentally sustainable learning, and connecting to communities. Finally, empowering learning experiences, which demonstrate to students’ ability to be effective agents for change (REC, 2019). Therefore, the quality of students’

learning improves when encountered the ideas, reflect on one's understandings, and test actively in the context of relevant experiences in the community.

2.4 Impact of Place-based Education on Students

Place-based education (PBE) is based on the idea that children should have strong relationships with environments, whether those environments are large wooded areas and schoolyards. If students were given a chance to learn independently, students would gain more confidence in skills. This view is supported by Gur-Zeev (2001) long-term impact of the PBE experience is to upgrade students' knowledge and content outside the classroom. Similarly, Verbeten (2014) place-based education has an impact that extends beyond the lives of students and the ability to strengthen communities in terms of ecology, economy, and social well-being. Further, the students reach out to the community, creating social capital networks that help communities become more sustainable and resilient making meaningful contributions to well-being. In addition, Linnemanstons and Jorden (2017) revealed that the level of students' participation during the PBE lesson was significantly higher than in a typical classroom environment.

Interestingly, Griffin (2019) stated that

Students in Madam Kinley Pem's class participate in an interdisciplinary lesson on English action verbs and traditional skills using a local mill and cooking as the medium of instruction. The class visits the local grain mill that is behind their school, interviewing the caretaker and practicing their communication skills in Dzongkha (the National Language). They inquired about the local process, investigating the traditional process of producing flour. The students then came back to the classroom and make Khabzay, a local snack made from wheat flour. Emphasizing the English action verbs, like cut, stir, braid, they are introduced to new vocabulary while learning to make a traditional snack. What an engaging place-based lesson! (Survey article, 2019).

To conclude, students enjoyed learning through inquiry and understood the concept if given the opportunities to explore and get hands-on experience. Students will be able to develop relationships with communities and make meaningful contributions. Therefore, learners' participation will be higher in a typical classroom environment.

2.5 Impacts of Place-based Education on Teachers

Place-based Education [PBE] also focused to cement the cooperation between school and community; teachers and parents; teachers and students. Likewise, Hall (2015) found that the benefits of PBE for teachers often include increased enthusiasm and engagement in the classroom, more opportunities to explore new topics, and frequent opportunities to use innovative teaching in the classroom. It also enhances engagement and enthusiasm while teaching through PBE.

PBE instills the quality of leadership through investigation, problem-solving and decision-making skills. In the same vein, Sianturi et al. (2018, p. 313) states: "The students and teachers are actively engaged in issues-investigation and problem solving, as a decision-maker, not just a consumer, but a creator." Therefore, the professional development [PD] was given to the principals and teachers of lower secondary and primary schools to implement PBE in schools. This view is supported by Griffin (2019) who writes that the principal of Dechentsemo Central School in Punakha shared the impressions of PBE and experiences at the Principal's Training [PD] through a poem. Likewise, the researcher of this study was motivated attending the communicative grammar lesson while tutor (Ms Wangmo, 2021) used the PBE pedagogy making students to write poems that provoked critical, creative and mindful observations. The researcher realised that PBE could be an enjoyable pedagogy to teach English in the lower classes such as writing poems, prepositions, describing objects around through observation providing conceptual learning experiences.

Ultimately, PBE focuses on interaction with school, community, teachers and students. Likewise, students were engaged actively in problem-solving and professional development [PD] program were given to the principals and teachers. Therefore, PBE is essential in teaching English irrespective of the class levels.

2.6 Principles of Place-based Education

Place Based Education [PBE] approach connects classroom and communities to increase learning engagement, and community impacts. The PBE approach is constructed on six guiding principles which forms the framework of PBE (Cook, 2017) as stated:

2.6.1 Learner-centered

In a learner-centered classroom, learning is personally relevant to students. Learner-centered education, sometimes referred to as student-centered learning, allows students to influence learning through sharing interests and making choices about learning. Students choose what and how to learn, as well as how to assess learning. Students develop and grow at various paces and in different areas with varied experiences and background knowledge. Instruction is differentiated, with learning opportunities developed to meet students' needs. It is a paradigm shift as students' experience in our schools needs to be more about learning and less about teaching (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010). Therefore, students are more actively engaged in learning and recognising strengths and challenges. It also provides meaningful learning when the strength and challenges provide multiple avenues to engage in the learning process and demonstrate one's understanding.

2.6.2 Inquiry-based

Inquiry-based approach allows students to drive the curriculum and learning by investigation. Inquiry-based instruction is a student-centered approach that triggers curiosity. According to Kahn and O'Rourke (2015) stated that teacher sets up tasks and helps the learning process, but it is up to the students' own research, find out what is need to learn, and try to get to the heart learning. The learning is grounded in students' observation, formulating relevant questions, making predictions, and collecting data to understand the world through ecological, social and economic lenses. Data collection is used to refine relevant questions and predictions. Moreover, Mackenzie (2016) states that the benefit of increased student agency in learning, the authentic connections around the world, and the 21st century skills. Inquiry-Based learning have great reasons to explore how inquiry can enhance learning.

2.6.3 Community as classroom

It encourages broadening the idea of the classroom to include three venues for learning: bringing the community into the classroom through guest speakers and content; bringing the students into community on learning journeys; and simply going outside the classroom to learn something that could have done inside. These venues develop strong relationship between students and community. Using community as classroom emphasize real-world learning experiences. Similarly, Sobel (2014) states that emphasizing hands-on learning grounded in community increases academic achievement, develops stronger student commitment to community, and encourages the development of active, contributing citizens.

2.6.4 Field trip learning

Field trips provide some of the most unforgettable moments in a student's life. Not only does this activity break the monotony of classroom lectures, but it also offers students experiences that are not commonly encountered within school grounds. In the same vein, Bouchrika (2021) stated that higher education institutions either reduced enrichment activity over the past decade in favour of conventional schoolwork. Furthermore, the educational value of field trips, detailing the advantages and disadvantages. In reading through it, educators know why field trips are essential, especially given today's access to information and the types of students who benefit the most.

A field trip is a school-sanctioned trip away from the classroom and other traditional study environments to observe, interact with different settings, and do basic research (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). It is a form of learning through experience that lets students try out ideas read about in books and learn new things through interaction. A student survey done in 2009 and 2015 showed that most students strongly agree that field trips have helped learn more (Rahman & Spafford, 2009; Whitesell,

2015). Field trips also do not have to be to factories, museums, or government offices. There are so many choices that every academic subject has more than one place it could go if needed. Further, the study by Whitesell (2015) found that a trip to a different part of the school can be enough if it is interactive and adds to what they are learning. Moreover, a field trip has the potential to go well. However, there is no guarantee that it will (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014). On the other hand, a well-planned trip can help students remember things longer and have more positive attitude toward schoolwork and extracurricular activities. Also, students tend to be even less responsible once they leave the classroom, so teachers must punish bad behaviour cruelly (Kelly, 2019). It helps keep well-behaved in public places, such as in museums, galleries, and laboratories, where misbehaving could cause damage to the building. Health clearances and other necessary paperwork should be taken care of before the trip for added safety. In addition, a field trip can discuss essential parts of the trip and give more information about what the students did. Learners can also use the reference points instead of reading whole chapters to review lessons.

Even though the number of trips is slowly decreasing (Greene et al., 2013), field trips teach more than enough to keep them in school curriculums. Further, the studies and surveys have shown that a well-planned trip can help students learn and grow out of the classroom (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Greene et al., 2013; & Whitesell, 2015). As a way for students to learn by doing, the trips help improve the ability to notice things, become more interested in art and culture, and become more involved in their studies. Also, when students go on trips where immersed in art, history, and community service, learn to care more about people from other parts of society, even from different times. A study has shown that the experience has long-term effects that can be considered “transformative” (Greene et al., 2013) and added field trips could be much better in many ways. However, it is argued that trips cost money, take time away from schoolwork, put too much stress on teachers, and put students in danger (Behrendt & Franklin, 2014; Berer, 2016; & Peetz, 2019;). Nevertheless, there are ways to solve each problem by good planning and coordination. Also, not all trips have to be far, expensive and take time. Places close to school would be enough.

2.7 Impact of the Professional Development Program

Improvements can be made in an education system as to whether national and local changes will occur without investing in educators’ professional development. For the sustainability of PBE in Bhutan, the Professional Development [PD] programs introduced a Training-of-Trainers [ToT] system (REC, 2019). Teachers’ skills were improved with professional development, according to the Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative [EEC] (2010), a second-grade teacher at the Bernice A. Ray School in Hanover, New Hampshire, took part in a year-long professional development program to learn how to implement PBE. Therefore, REC (2019) states that PBE concepts were explored in detail for a five-day program, focusing on how PBE ideas can be taught to other teachers and administrators. Further, Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) found that teachers benefitted from PDs, a sense of fulfillment, and a broader range of teaching methods.

Over the past decade the most research, the University of Maryland Survey Research Center (2000) has emphasised that PD in PBE-related themes and pedagogies are irregular. Further, Garet et al. (2001) suggested that the amount of time spent on PD is closely linked to insignificant teacher improvements. In addition, the effectiveness of PD programs was frequently judged by their effects on the teachers who participated (Meichtry & Smith, 2007). Nevertheless, Guskey and Yoon (2009) suggested that to improve the abilities, workshops, outside experts, time, follow-up, hands-on activities, and content should be provided. On the contrary, Ajayi (2014) argued the need to improve teacher preparation courses for aspiring elementary school teachers to teach English language arts. Likewise, Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) argued that thorough and well-executed PD programs are required to support teachers. Hence, PD helps teachers learn new skills and improve teaching provided enough practice in the focused pedagogies to use in the classroom.

Educators must accept the change, appreciate it, and implement it in teaching. The long-term influence of the place-based learning experience allowed students to expand the knowledge and subject matter outside of the classroom (Gur-Zeev, 2001). Therefore, to ensure that PBE is sustainable in Bhutan, PD programs such as Training of Trainers [ToT], Dzongkhag Based Inservice Program [DBIP], Clustered Based Inservice Program [CBIP], and School-Based Inservice Program [SBIP] were introduced. Further, REC (2019) stated that Teton Science School [TSS] hosted the first workshop, which was attended by a group of teachers from various disciplines. Those participants returned to the workshop as assistant facilitators in subsequent years. This process was repeated to increase the capacity of individuals to become master trainers to implement PBE in teaching

effectively. Therefore, Koinis (2016) argued that Bhutanese teachers need improved professional development opportunities to enhance teaching skills and pedagogies. Finally, PD programs are ineffective, especially in implementing new pedagogies. Thus, well-executed PD programs must upscale the skills to implement principles of PBE in lower primary English classes. Moreover, PD assesses educators to gain the skills and enhance teaching styles by receiving quality and enough drills in the focused pedagogies to implement in the teaching field. However, teachers must accept the changes positively, appreciate, and implement in teaching.

2.8 Challenges of PBE Implementation

Despite its applicability to a wide range of disciplines, there are significant limitations to use PBE in the classroom. First, is the lack of enough training. Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) stated that only about 10% of teachers reported having any training in environmental education before beginning of the careers and even less idea about PBE. PBE is a new concept in our education system and it needs to be drilled in teachers before implementing it to teach English in lower primary classrooms. In addition, teachers from all disciplines are equally unfamiliar with the concept and practice of place-based learning, and often unsupported the efforts to incorporate it into the curricula (Linnemanstons & Jordan, 2017). Therefore, most researchers have focused on confidence in the subject studied and changes in classroom practices (Meichtry & Smith, 2007). Further, one of the challenges expressed by the teachers while trying to implement the ideas of PBE into classrooms was the lack of support from school administrators (REC, 2019). Therefore, measuring student outcomes across a variety of subjects can be difficult since teachers were not supported to implement PBE vigorously in the schools. Likewise, Hall (2015) states that there are many challenges to take students outdoors, such as discipline issues, materials management, time and safety. These factors create a barrier for the teachers to implement PBE.

The limited duration of PD programs is another obstacle for teachers to acquire enough skills. Royal Education Council (2019) stated that for a five-day workshop, PBE concepts were explored in depth, with a focus on how PBE ideas may be taught to other teachers and administrators. The Master Trainers were given the task of returning to their school with a plan to incorporate a PBE professional development program for one to three days, either school-based or cluster-based (where many schools collaborate to host a PD program). Also, the principles of PBE were implemented in primary and lower secondary schools. Moreover, Principals from different Dzongkhags across Bhutan have attended the workshop on PBE. Principals discussed ways to support the teachers in this approach, and management strategies that support a whole-school approach to PBE (REC, 2019). Therefore, support from the immediate manager is also crucial to implementing the new changes in the teaching-learning process. Griffin (2019) supported that

One of the challenges expressed by the teachers while trying to implement the ideas of PBE into their classroom was the lack of support from school administrators. To address this feedback, REC hosted Principals around the country for a 5-day PBE workshop at the beginning of the 2019 academic year. Primary and Secondary Principals from various districts of Bhutan were introduced to the Principles of PBE. They participated in a discussion on how to support their teachers in this approach, identifying management techniques that support a whole school approach to PBE. The same task was then given to the Principals as the Master trainers: take this information back to your school and host a school or cluster-based PD program on implementing PBE in their classrooms and school culture.

So, it proves that the PBE principles were taught to lower primary teachers and secondary school leaders of different parts of Bhutan to implement in the schools. However, schools focused on meeting academic requirements but did not consider the students' cultures. (Smith & Sobel, 2010).

Similarly, teachers also focused more on academic success rather than the cultural identity of students (Stairs & Bernhard, 2002), and pay attention to what the students know (Smith & Sobel, 2010). As Lin's finding (in Lan et al., 2013) argued most teachers were always worried about how bad the students were and do not have the will to improve.

Therefore, it indicates that teachers were not motivated to implement PBE principles in teaching.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study will be guided by John Dewey's social learning theoretical framework. Dewey's influence on Education was evident in the theory about social learning; believed that Education should be reflected in a social context and that students learn best when in natural social settings (Flinders & Thornton, 2013). In addition, mentioned that children's unique learners influenced Education in another way (Williams, 2017). Therefore, in most schools, Education takes place in a classic classroom setting, as Dewey characterised it. Further, it was argued that traditional classroom settings were not developmentally suited for young learners (Dewey, 1938). Although schools, classes, and programs that promote Dewey's views are difficult to find in this testing era, some persist, such as Place-Based Education.

Dewey is said to be a firm believer in people getting together peacefully to solve problems via discussion, debate, and decision-making. Moreover, Dewey's social and educational views about community and problem-solving (Williams, 2017). In addition, John Dewey was a social reformer. Further, Gutek (2014) firmly believed that people are responsible for making the world a better place to live. It was evident from the study by Williams (2017) that many learning theories, such as constructivism, learner-centered theory, and experiential knowledge, are woven around Dewey's beliefs and philosophy about Education.

Dewey described how progressive Education should include socially engaging learning experiences that are developmentally appropriate for young children (Dewey, 1938). Furthermore, Dewey believed that effective teaching was based on social connections and that the school setting should be viewed as a social institution (Flinders & Thornton, 2013). It encourages the students to focus on learner-centered learning. Moreover, Dewey believed schools and classrooms should reflect real-life situations, allowing children to participate in learning activities in various social settings interchangeably and flexibly (Williams, 2017).

Learner-centered educators believe that Dewey's work supports how students learn (Schiro, 2012). Further, Dewey viewed the classroom as a social entity where students might learn and solve problems as a group and children are seen as unique individuals. It was believed that instead of teacher-imposed knowledge and teacher-directed activities, students might work hard to develop their knowledge through personal meaning (Schiro, 2013). In these classrooms, children will be seen learning by doing and solving issues using hands-on methods. When teachers plan lessons, students' interests must be considered and integrated with curricular subjects, focusing on project learning. Therefore, the educational experience comprises not just academic growth but also intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual growth of the whole child (Schiro, 2013). So, Dewey's ideas and work in the field of Education have had a significant impact on the educational system. Place-Based Education shows that Dewey's ideas and work in the field of Education still affect classrooms in the 21st century.

Place-based Education [PBE] focuses on the opportunity of learning based on place. The idea was conceived by the education philosopher John Dewey (Thomsen, 2016) and Dewey (1938) stated that socially engaged learning experiences appropriate for young learners should be incorporated due to dissatisfaction with traditional and progressive Education. Therefore, PBE learning and teaching can place the students in local heritage, culture, ecology, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences as a foundation for studying language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects. It emphasizes hands-on experiences and real-world learning, which ultimately increases students' academic achievement, helps them develop stronger ties to their community, and enhances their appreciation for the natural world.

Place-based Education [PBE] is grounded in the notion that we must first use the resources, issues, and values of the local communities in our classrooms. The local community should be used as a basis for context for learning at all levels. Furthermore, community-based learning, service-learning, sustainable Education, and project-based learning are all used interchangeably with place-based Education (Powers, 2004). Therefore, John Dewey liked project-based learning, constructivism, and building communities in the classroom.

The ideologies of John Dewey are present in place-based Education. According to Graham (2007), place-based Education draws on the progressive idea that Education should be multi-disciplinary and authentic learning activities should extend beyond the school's walls. One of the goals of place-based Education is to have students effectively build relationships with each other, and it was evident from John Dewey's social learning theory. Dewey was a proponent of making learning experiences centered around student interests and developing socially responsible citizens; these real-world, meaningful connections in PBE contribute to creating educational experiences that result in socially responsible citizens.

4. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The researchers have employed case study as it was the most appropriate design to adopt an interpretive position in this research and the nature of the research question. According to Yin (2009) case studies are inquiry designs used in a range of domains, including evaluation, in which the researcher conducts an in-depth analysis of a case, typically a program, event, or activity. Researchers acquire extensive data utilizing a variety of data collection procedures over a set period of time, and cases were bound by time and activity. The researcher had used case study as a strategy of inquiry in this study to explore a phenomenon that will be within the context using a variety of data sources. It ensures that the researcher was able to investigate not only via one lens but a variety of lenses, allowing for the discovery and understanding of numerous sides. Therefore, this design had provided a systematic way to gather data, analysed information, and published the results, making understanding of a particular problem or situation in abundance (Yin, 2003). In addition, the technique is typically employed when a comprehensive, in-depth examination is necessary, as it has the ability to capture the nuances of a real-world issue (Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the researchers adopted exploratory case study design for this research study.

3.2 Participants

The study had used non-probability purposive sampling. It was a technique used by qualitative researchers to find individuals who can provide in-depth information on the phenomena research (Creswell, 2007). It provides an opportunity for researchers to select participants who can share in-depth information and experiences.

Therefore, collected the data from one of the lower primary schools under Trashigang Dzongkhag. The researcher has chosen this school because PBE was introduced in the teaching and learning process in 2019. It was more convenient to obtain detailed information on PBE implementation in lower primary classes. The population sampling was chosen all the English teachers of the selected school teaching lower primary classes. Further, the researcher has chosen eight capable students from class III and nine from class II, four male and four female from each class. The researcher has used focus group interviews with students and semi-structured interviews with four teachers and a principal. In the selection of the semi-structured participants, utmost care was taken to include proportionate numbers regarding their age, gender, qualification, and professional experience.

The qualitative data, the focus group discussion with students of classes II & III [FGD], and one-on-one interview with English teachers of PP to III and a principal were used for this study. According to Denscombe (2017), a focus group consists of a small group of people, usually between six and nine members, whom the researcher brings together to explore attitudes and understandings, feelings, and ideas about a topic. A FGD interview provides a setting for the relatively homogeneous group to reflect on the questions the interviewer asks. Therefore, seventeen students were selected using a purposive sampling strategy for the FGD. FGD-A, B, and C have four members, and FGD-D has five.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The qualitative data in this study employs four tools to generate data: focus-group interviews (With students), One-on-one interviews (with English Teachers and principal), lesson observation, and documents analysis.

3.3.1 One-on-one interview with teachers

Semi-structured interviews consist of several key questions that helped define the areas to be explored and allow the interviewer or interviewee to diverge from pursuing responses in more detail. The flexibility of this approach allows for the discovery of critical information from participants

(Creswell, 2018). Therefore, the researcher has adopted a semi-structured interviews with four English teachers and a principal.

The interview is a one-on-one dialogue between a researcher and a participant in which information is transferred to the interview (Creswell, 2012). Thus, researchers do not have to strictly follow a formalised list of guiding questions. Further, researchers can ask additional questions or omit some guiding questions in the interviewing process (Creswell, 2012). A semi-structured interview was deemed appropriate for this study as it enabled researchers to get in-depth information about the participants' attitudes towards teaching English and implementing PBE principles in lower primary classes. Moreover, one-on-one interview enables the researcher's flexibility to respond immediately to issues raised by participants, asked probing questions and allows participants to discuss issues. The researchers have framed a set of **ten semi-structured interview questions** for the teachers and principals to get clear ideas and in-depth information on the intended study.

3.3.2. Focus group discussion

Four FGDs were conducted with classes II and III students to validate the findings and reliability of collecting qualitative data on implementing PBE principles in learning English. It is a technique where researchers assemble a group of participants to discuss a topic, aiming to draw responses from the participants' personal experiences, beliefs, and attitudes through an interaction (Morgan, 1996). Moreover, Dilshad and Latif (2010) mentioned that a focus group discussion provides a more natural environment than an individual interview because participants were influenced by others just as they were in real life. The purpose of the discussion was to gather points on students' understanding of the use of PBE by their English teacher in teaching. Further, **seven items for FGD which** provides opportunities for students to share their collective views and helped to explore different views on a single issue. According to Mishra (2016) the focus group discussion is an excellent way to gather people from similar backgrounds and experiences to discuss a specific topic.

3.3.3. Lesson observation

Lesson planning is what a teacher does every day to ensure that lesson goes well, and lesson observation is a common method that has become increasingly important in measuring and improving professional practice in schools. In addition, Angrosino (2007) recommended, observation is a critical tool for collecting data in qualitative research. In addition, it is the act of carrying a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with a note-taking instrument, and recording it for analysis purposes. Similarly, Creswell (2009) stated that qualitative observations are those in which the researcher takes field notes on the behaviour and activities of individuals at the research site. Furthermore, Creswell and Creswell (2018) observation as a complete participant, participant as an observer, and complete observer are not appropriate since they will detach, distract, and rule out the researcher because he or she will not be seen or noticed by the person being studied. Thus, this study followed the 'observer as a participant' observation as it suits this study because the researcher could watch and take field notes from a distance.

3.3.4. Document analysis

Document analysis is a qualitative data-gathering method in which researchers analyse documents to give voice and meaning to a subject under investigation (Bowen, 2009). Likewise, Creswell (2014) argues that private documents account for an individual's experiences and beliefs. Moreover, Bowen (2009) believed that real benefit of document analysis was a quick and easy technique to obtain information because documents are manageable and practical. Further added that the researchers can read and reread it as many times as they want. Therefore, the researchers have observed the documents, such as PD documents of CBIP and SBIP records, school time table, and REC's subject wise period and time allocation document to get in-depth information about the study.

3.4 Data Analysis

It is a qualitative data analysis. Inductive qualitative data analysis is the best way to look at this data type (Creswell, 2018). Therefore, inductive qualitative was employed in the data analysis.

The researcher read the access data stored in the device, transcribed it, and often located it using the inductive qualitative data analysis technique. Further, Butna (2015) stated that inductive analysis is one form of qualitative data analysis. Therefore, colour coding was used for different responses but using the same colour for similar responses. Thus, the thematic analysis method was applied to analyse the data. Furthermore, thematic analysis is a method of analysing inductive qualitative data. It is usually applied to texts, such as interview transcriptions. The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes like topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly (Claufield, 2019).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Information

The study collected case study and qualitative data from twenty-two participants. From one of the Lower Primary Schools of southern Trashigang Dzongkhag. In the case study, one female, three male English teachers, and one principal were selected as face-to-face interview participants. The study had students participating from classes II and III. Seventeen students were categorized into four focus groups consisting of four members (2 male and two female). However, FGD-D has three males and two females, as one male student was curious to participate in the interview.

Furthermore, the qualification and teaching experiences of the participants were considered to be important in the use of PBE in teaching. The face-to-face interview participants were from B.Ed, PgDE/PgCE, and MA/M.Ed.

4.2 Understanding of the Concepts of Place-based Education

There are two sub themes identified to determine teachers' and students' understanding the concept of PBE. They are:

4.2.1 Learning as a place

A common understanding and similarities emerged in defining the concept of place-based education [PBE]. For instance, PBE is understood as an "Experiential learning and hands-on practice" (Tr-A) and "makes language learning engaging, exciting, and meaningful based on place." (Tr-C). It also allows teachers and students to engage in the local community in learning (FGD-A, FGD-B, FGD-C, FGD-D). Furthermore, a majority of the participants defined it as a teaching strategy based on the principles such as the community as the classroom, field trip learning, student-centered learning, and inquiry-based learning, which helps to foster creativity, high-order thinking, and knowledge building (Tr-A, Tr-B, Tr-D). Furthermore, all the participants have learned PBE from professional development [PD] programs.

A similar definition documented in the cluster-based in-service program [CBIP] and school-based in-service program [SBIP] states, it is an approach that connects to community learning, increasing students' engagement, and community impacts (2019 & 2022). Furthermore, place-based education [PBE] also emphasizes learning through involvement in service projects for the nearby school. It immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities, and experiences, using these as a foundation for studying language arts and other subjects across the curriculum (SBIP, 2022). Learning experiences are tailored to the local audience grounded in and support the development of a love for one's place (Tr-A, Tr-B, and Tr-C). Similarly, P-I stated that learning could happen anytime, anywhere, in rural villages and schools. In addition, FGD-C and FGD-D noted learning from each other and objects and interacting with the people around places in real. In addition, FGD-A stated, "We prefer to learn outside since we are familiar with the names of animals and other real-world

objects and could see simply pictures on the chalkboard in the classroom.” Likewise, FGD-B and FGD-C believed that learning better by understanding of the concept with PBE.

Moreover, the lesson observation document analysis revealed that few students use the surrounding information to construct sentences. In contrast, it was observed that “After the teacher demonstrated how to build sentences, students must be given a chance to go outdoors for learning practically. Students might have used natural materials to engage in experiential learning and connect to the outside world. However, Tr-B’s lesson observation found that using locations, classroom materials, and experiential learning connects experiences to a real-world learning environment. For example, “we cook food in the kitchen; the National flag is in front of the academic building, and water is inside the bottle.” A short field trip boosted the learning of the students. Interestingly, SBIP (2022) mentioned that,

Place as content-rich. It is where we are from; it is where we are going. It asks for our attention and care. If we pay attention, the place has much to teach us. Sites are content-rich in that students can explore local themes, such as culture, economy, ecology, and governance, which connects student learning to an authentic, place-based experience and sets the stage for deeper student learning. Students can use their knowledge and skills from multiple sources to promote a deeper understanding of the disciplines/subjects, preparing them for real life outside the classroom.

As a result, the findings revealed firm understanding of PBE by participants, which supports learning depending on location. It depends on the prior teaching experiences and exposure to different professional development programs and teachers’ application of PBE pedagogy in teaching English. Since the participants attended professional development programs, PBE was defined accurately. On the other hand, finding also shows that to provide a thorough understanding of the subject, the facilitator must explain PBE precisely while leading SBIP.

4.2.2 Learning as 21st century teaching pedagogy

21st-century learning is the development of skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and digital literacy. To concede that document analysis disclosed the 4 Cs - critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication as components of 21st-century learning abilities that the PBE inspires in students (Tr-C and CBIP, 2019). Further, PBE tailors to the needs of all learning styles. In addition, it is a strategy that engages learners through interaction with their immediate environment, sharing ideas to foster creativity, high-order thinking, and knowledge building (Tr-A, Tr-C, and Tr-D). Moreover, CBIP (2019) documents highlighted, “The aim of infusing EVS is to enrich and contextualize the classes PP- III language curriculum (Dzongkha and English) through Place-Based Education (PBE).” Therefore, it shows that PBE is the strategy that can cater to the demand of 21st-century learners to learn English in lower primary classes.

4.3 Implementation of Place-based Education

Place-Based Education (PBE) is governed by six basic principles. However, majority of the participants predominantly used the following PBE principles in teaching English. Place-Based Education [PBE] is an educational pedagogy used by different English teachers in the school based on their knowledge, competency, and experience gained from PBE training. Moreover, the teachers of lower primary classes implement few principles of PBE pedagogy in teaching English.

Accordingly, the school held cluster-based Inservice program [CBIP] and school -based Inservice program [SBIP] (2019 and 2022) which vividly described the PBE teaching principles to all teacher participants, as shown in **figure 1**. In contrast to other PBE principles, learner-centered, inquiry-based, community as a classroom, and field trip approaches are more commonly implemented to teach English in lower primary classrooms (Tr-A, Tr-B, Tr-C, & Tr-D). Therefore, it is found that most of the teachers implemented a few common principles of PBE in teaching English.



Fig. 1. Six principles of PBE, Teton Science School, CBIP (2019)

4.3.1 Inquiry-based learning

The inquiry-based learning approach is other frequently applied principle of place-based education [PBE], according to the lesson observation findings. It is noticed from all class observation from PP–III, that the teachers implemented inquiry-based learning principle. In addition, the majority of the teachers indicated that students actively participated, mingle with peers and asked questions about the lessons (Tr-A, Tr-C, & Tr-D) which developed language skills and learned to communicate better with the help of inquiry-based Learning.

Most participants shared that inquiry-based learning is mostly used in teaching English owing to the complex level of inquiry process involved (levels of inquiry). The document analysed in the CBIP and SBIP stated:

Inquiry-based Learning is an approach where individuals can learn by investigating scenarios and problems and through contact with people or nature. It is a process of collecting information, clarifying doubts, or confirming data.

The finding shows that teachers were briefed on four levels of inquiry but it was observed that most of the teachers in the field used only the second level of inquiry, *Structured Inquiry* where students investigate and a teacher presents questions through a prescribed procedure. The finding reveals that teachers were unaware of four levels of inquiry and were not fully engrossed and attentive while attending SBIP in school.

4.3.2 Learner-centered approach

It is defined in the CBIP document analysis as a teaching and learning approach where the student's background, interests, needs, and experiences are considered when creating and executing lessons. Similarly, the document analysis of SBIP discussed based on five key principles of learner-centered learning such as "learning is personalized; learning is competency based; learning happens anytime, anywhere; and students take ownership." Additionally, Tr-D believed "The teacher serves as a facilitator to learning, creating opportunities for students." Similarly, it was observed in the CBIP document that a significant shift from traditional model of teaching to student-centered approach. Additionally, the document analysed in the SBIP stats the EPDC's statement:

It's an instructional approach in which students are involved in selecting the contents, activities, materials, and methods of learning. Learner-Centered refers to the teaching and learning process where the learner's background, interests, needs, and experiences are considered during the planning and implementation of lessons.

Nevertheless, the study reveals that only a few teachers in the field sensibly applied this principle to teach English in lower primary classroom. It was evident from the data that only Tr-D used learner-centered approach while teaching English in pre-primary (PP) class in spite of offering PBE's PD program to all English teachers. Therefore, the findings indicated that a very few teachers have adequate knowledge and skills to use Learner-Centered approach to teach English in lower primary classes.

4.3.3 Community as a classroom

Place-based Education [PBE] is grounded in the belief that learners learn best from place and community. According to the lesson observation, a few teachers used the community as a classroom approach among the six PBE principles. A community do not need students to leave the classroom and travel outside, remote community, and other location. This is because the diversity of students' geographical location and cultural heritage, brings the community inside the classroom.

It is observed that most lessons were based on community as classroom teaching. For instance, Tr-A, Tr-B, and Tr-C focused on the community as a classroom, using students themselves as a community. Activities were designed according to the learners' standard, which engaged learners actively. Similarly, Tr-B and Tr-D claimed that it was a way of teaching that combines learning with the community to get students more involved, improve their academic outcomes, and help the community. Furthermore, P-I supports that learning can happen anytime, anywhere; in cities, parks, hometown, field trips, rural villages, and schools. Moreover, the documents analysed of CBIP and SBIP outlined the value of community learning and its methods for lesson designing.

Therefore, the finding affirms that teachers in the field have good knowledge about the community as a classroom to teach English in lower primary classes.

4.3.4 Field-trip learning

The field trip learning offers the most unforgettable experiences a student can have on field excursions. A field trip is a school-approved excursion away from the classroom and other conventional studies in contexts for observation, interaction with diverse locations, conducting primary research, engaging in novel activities that are not typically present in the classroom. A common view amongst interviewees was, field trip breaks up the monotony of classroom lectures and provides students with experiences beyond the typical classroom settings (Tr-B, Tr-C & Tr-D). It is an experiential learning which enables students to apply ideas covered in textbooks and learn new information through engagement and helps students retain their knowledge better.

The most striking result emerged was, as Tr-A said, "I take them around school surroundings and let them name the things and at the same time let them describe those things (Field-trip)," and Tr-B claimed, "So far, I have been using field trip." Therefore, the finding suggests that Tr-B has good knowledge of field trip to teach English lesson. Further, FGD-A states:

Yes, they take outside for field trips when we were in class II and a few times in class three this year. If the teacher teaches all the time in the class, we feel suffocated and hot and unable to learn better. We get fresh air to breathe outside and learn better. We go to the place and can learn better.

Moreover, FGD-B "We like to go for field-trip learning, and it is boring to sit in the same classroom all the time." In addition, FGD-C and FGD-D expressed that the field trip was an enjoyable learning process which involved sharing ideas, moving around, asking questions, learning and understanding better by observing objects with better retention of knowledge. Furthermore, all the FGDs' shared the similar view that nouns, articles, and prepositions were taught outside the classroom while talking about their own experiences through experiential learning.

Further, students' observational skills, inquiry-based learning, interdisciplinary learning, problem-solving, and designing abilities are all improved due to field trip learning. Moreover, it is evident that when Tr-B took the students on a field trip in English lesson, they were very active and excited about going out with their teacher. Tr-B taught prepositions using objects around them. Students participated actively and learned better. On the other hand, teachers are trained on using PBE principles during the PD program in the school. The documents analysis demonstrated detailed procedures of field-trip learning. However, despite the vigorous PD program on PBE, the finding shows that only few teachers implemented the field trip to teach English lesson as shown in **figure 2**.



Fig. 2. Tr-B, Class III, field trip (English lesson, 2022) THSS

It is observed that the leading principles such as “Inquiry-based, community as a classroom, Learner-centered, and Activity-based learning,” were prominently implemented in teaching English lessons in lower primary classes. The finding divulges that teachers and students must be motivated to use the schoolyard, community, public lands, and other unique places as resources, turning school communities into classrooms. It affirms that teachers have to plan well and implement field-trip to understand the basic concept of English better in the lower primary class. Therefore, it is significant that teachers revisit the PBE documents available in the school.

4.4 Opportunities of PBE

This theme explores teachers’ perceptions of the opportunities of using PBE principles in lower primary English classes. Under this theme, three sub-themes emerged based on the semi-structured interview (Teachers, Tr-A-D), focus group discussion (FGD-A-D) with students, lesson observations, and document analysis. The sub-themes were ‘better engagement and meaningful learning outcome,’ ‘enhancement of skills,’ and the ‘impact of professional development’ as follows:

4.4.1 Better engagement and meaningful learning outcome

One of the essential opportunities’ teachers perceived about PBE in teaching English was better learning through engagement, exploration and self-discovery, and ownership of learning. Most of the participants asserted that PBE teaching method keeps students interested and helps to learn better. For instance, Tr-A and Tr-C’s classroom teaching was students’ active engagement in activities a whole period. It was observed that the teacher provides engaging group work to strengthen communication skills and learned English concepts effectively. Similarly, all the students agreed that learning something new every day was exciting and enjoyed the teaching.

Moreover, Tr-C and Tr-D shared that PBE engages learners through involvement with the immediate environment, communication, or sharing of ideas which develops creativity, higher-order thinking, and knowledge building. PBE also makes language learning entertaining, engaging, and relevant. Furthermore, Tr-B said that PBE is very relevant pedagogy to be applied in lower classes to teach English as it engages the students to learn complex concept effectively. Likewise, the analysis of the CBIP documents found language learning practical, enjoyable, participatory, and in line with PBE. In addition, the examination of SBIP documents revealed that PBE encourages individual exploration were students used experiential learning to examine different ideas. Thus, this study demonstrates that teachers engaged students in various learning activities to promote meaningful learning outcomes in English.

Place-based Education [PBE] helps students understand complex concepts in English by giving examples from many disciplines and local areas. For instance, Tr-C stated that communicating or sharing ideas was the way to get students interested in learning actively. It also encourages creativity, and higher-order thinking, and the growth of knowledge. Similarly, Tr-A pointed out that meaningful learning happens in English with the use of PBE in lower primary classes. Additionally, Tr- A states:

A... I feel like PBE provides a rich experience for the learners in the lower primary because, at this age, they enjoy exploring or learning through being in the field themselves and experiencing it.

Further, Tr-D shared that students can achieve profound learning outcomes and better understand of the concept. Similarly, FGD-A (S1) expressed that,

A...to help us learn and remember things better, the English teacher also takes us outdoors under canopies, makes us look around, and then lets us record the names of things and draw pictures in our notebooks which helps us learn and remembered better.

Moreover, in the SBIP documents, it is interestingly closed the session with beautiful remarks as:

Place-based approach aligns well with students' developmental stages. For example, in primary grades, students focus on the local themes, such as home, family, school, and neighbourhood. Once they are in upper-elementary grades, the scope extends to district and region, while also reaching back further in time. Once our students have more developmental capability for abstract thought in middle and secondary school, the curricular scope really widens to encompass a worldwide view. This is where students have more opportunities for service and change-making.

Therefore, the finding reveals that PBE motivates meaningful learning by clearly defining basic English learning in lower primary classes and enhancing memory retention power.

4.4.2 Enhancement of skills

Place-Based Education (PBE) enhances skills and helps students to understand real-life problems to be globally competent as approaches, engages students in having real-life experiences. For example, Tr-C stated "Encourage teachers and students to use the schoolyard, community, public lands, and other unique places as resources, turning communities into classrooms." Further, Tr-D stated that engaging students in inquiry-based and field-trip learning would help the students acquire and develop skills that are important in 21st century learning. The majority of the participants shared that PBE enhanced teamwork, communication, and observational abilities; engaged students in their immediate environment; and shared ideas to encourage originality, higher-order thinking, and knowledge development. Additionally, it encourages using the five senses, such as sight, touch, taste, hearing, and smell, to enhance the observation skills in learning English. Similarly, Tr-A and Tr-B stated that PBE develops critical thinking and improves memory retention. Furthermore, FGD-A states:

The English teacher gave us different activities, such as colouring pictures by taking us outside because we could see different colours outside. We looked out because the teacher sometimes instructed us to sit inside. We had a tough time colouring, so we looked out the window and coloured it well. Sometimes we identify the different seasons by looking outside and learning how the colour changes in each season.

The finding reveals that students enhance their observational skills while learning English. Moreover (FGD-A) S-1, added that,

When learning outside, look at the trees and the shape of the leaves. Sometimes I touch the leaves, and some of them are soft, and some of them are good. Some of them are small and big. Sometimes *I wonder* why some of them are turning orange and yellow. So, I picked it up, observed, and learned better from nature. I do it alone, and I learn best from nature and people.

Further, the most striking result emerged from the observed data was high-achieving students helped the slow learners. It is evident that PBE enhances cooperation, kindness, and collaborative learning in the lower primary classes. Furthermore, using PBE in the classroom helps both teachers and students learn how to conduct basic research while learning English.

According to the document analysis of CBIP and SBIP, teachers in the field were provided enough hands-on practice regarding how to conduct simple research using inquiry, field trips, and community as part of classroom teaching, especially English. Further, the CBIP documents revealed that identifying topics, methods, designs, data collection, data analysis, conclusions, reporting and sharing, and the master artist were practices in teaching English in the lower primary classes. Additionally, the finding affirms that professional development [PD] on design thinking and problem solving was facilitated to improve the ability to design (exercise creativity) and solve problems related to the local and global environments. The study says that PD was executed exactly as it is explained in the SBIP document:

Teachers can implement Design Thinking principle to help students understand how to create innovative solutions to challenging problems. In order to facilitate a scaffolded approach, teachers can consider using this framework of implementation to increase the level of student ability over time appropriately.

The finding explained that teachers were vividly oriented how to implement design thinking principle to teach English in lower primary classes to enhance the skills of designing new ideas and problem-solving skills.

However, building the student's skills in various fields depends on the individual teacher's dedication to teaching. The teachers have been given PD for three days with four sessions a day covering all aspects of PBE. The CBIP and SBIP documents show that detailed information about PD on PBE was documented. Hence, it depends on the honesty and determination of teacher to use PBE principles to teach English after receiving the training.

4.4.3 Professional development on place-based education

Most teacher participants share similar ideas and experiences about learning PBE from professional development programs such as school-based in-service programs [SBIP], cluster-based in-service programs [CBIP], Dzongkhag-based in-service programs [DBIP], and training of trainers [ToT] conducted at various levels (Tr-C, Tr-D, and P-I). However, a few participants who graduated a year ago have had training on PBE from the college and have implemented the PBE pedagogy in teaching English in lower primary classes. In addition, "SBIP on PBE enriches us with new knowledge, helps inculcate the values of PBE in our teaching, and enables us to recall what was already learned" said (Tr-A and Tr-B). The finding shows that all the participants have good ideas about PBE as they have attended workshops. On the other hand, Tr-D revealed, "I learned through the first ever SBIP on PBE this year." It indicates that teachers who have attended DBIP, NBIP, ToT, and CBIP have not given due importance to implementing the PBE in school.

However, Tr-C has clear ideas about PBE and its implementation. He added that "It is because of infusing EVS to enrich and contextualize the classes' PP-III language curriculum (Dzongkha and English) through Place-Based Education (PBE)." Similarly, the CBIP document also states, "Use EVS contents to teach language skills." Moreover, all the FGDs shared a common understanding that they learned best from nature and the people around them. It indicates that students also possessed a good knowledge of PBE.

It was evident that professional development [PD] was conducted, covering all the content of the PBE in two different phases, such as CBIP and SBIP, for three consecutive days. The CBIP and SBIP documents revealed that all the participants were given hands-on practice to familiarize themselves with the principles of PBE to teach English in lower primary classes. Furthermore, participants were briefed on the impacts and opportunities of implementing PBE principles in teaching; different design thinking principles and design process structures; 7E instructional models in lesson planning, providing hands-on experiences; sufficient familiarization activities from the classes PP-III English text; how to go on a field trip, places to visit, and people to contact; detailed steps of field visit research, developing questions, opportunities of PBE principles, and how to plan at the beginning of the academic session, as documented in SBIP,

Team of teachers to come together during the planning for the academic plan in the beginning of the session, map out the lessons/topics with common themes or competencies; select topics, content, standards and skills from across academic disciplines. Link the topics, content and concept with the interdisciplinary core/theme. Look for connections between the content that students are learning and skills that students are expected to master. Set objectives to prioritize what students need to know and be able to do. Further, the essential question directs and drives the search for understanding across all participating subject areas. The question challenges student to solve real-world problem and applies to more than one discipline.

In contrast, most participants suggest that the duration is too short for SBIP, where the facilitator provides the gist of information due to the time constant. Additionally, Tr-C and Tr-D states that it would have been better if there was more time and duration to conduct in-depth understanding and application in the classroom, providing more hands-on practice during CBIP and SBIP. However, P-I stated that SBIP gives teachers more confidence to teach, update their skills and keep knowledge up-to-date, and become more professional. In addition, the CBIP document shows that PD on PBE was conducted over three days, each day with four sessions covering all the required content of PBE to teach English. The documents of CBIP reveal that the content of the PBE were oriented to the participants, such as guiding principles of PBE; opportunities; history of PBE; EVS topics and concepts infused in English; period and time allocation; the definition of PBE; benefits of PBE; Place triangle; and basic research methods for field-trip (lesson planning practice). It affirmed that detailed information input was given and enough hands-on training were offered to individual school teachers.

However, a few topics were missing from SBIP, such as EVS topics and concepts infused into English, period, and time allocation. Moreover, the participants (especially English teachers) of PP-III were familiarized with a few topics from the teachers' guide, which are linked to PBE teaching. The finding reveals that teachers in the field must frequently provide PD programs on PBE to make the participants understand and appreciate PBE as one of the 21st-century teaching pedagogies. It was evident that the PD was not conducted promptly in the school as Tr-C attended the DBIP in January 2019 and P-I attended ToT in December 2019. However, P-I conducted SBIP only in 2022, having attended ToT in 2019. This study reveals that the manager was not serious about implementing PBE in teaching English in the schools despite knowing the opportunities and being instructed to conduct PD for teachers.

4.5 Challenges of Place-based Education

Teachers in the field confronted a few challenges in implementing a place-based education [PBE] approach to teaching English in the lower primary classroom. Certain challenges include:

- Time constraints.
- Administrative issues.
- Lack of parental and teacher-colleague support.

4.5.1 Time constraint

Most participants pointed out that the lack of time to complete the lesson as a significant challenge in implementation of all the PBE principles in lower primary English class. The participants shared that the pedagogy takes a long time and has a lengthy procedure (Tr-A, Tr-B, Tr-C, and Tr-D). The study confirmed that the school management, timetable committee, and teacher professional and support division REC overlooked the revised policy, which was also provided by REC while conducting the Dzongkhag-based In-service program (DBIP) at the beginning of 2019.

According to the CBIP document conducted in March 2019, clear guidelines were shared on EVS topics and concepts to be infused into the English curriculum. However, it was not oriented during SBIP, which indicates that some of the critical information was compromised during SBIP. Similarly, Tr-B stated, "The gist of information is delivered in SBIP, and teachers must explore ourselves." Therefore, according to the document records, it is confirmed that some information was missing in SBIP.

However, the period and time allocation are vividly shared with the participants for planning the academic timetable. The CBIP documents reflected adequate time, allowing enough time for each class. On the other hand, teachers complained of the school not allocating the given time for the practice of PBE. It reveals that Class PP is supposed to be allocated nine periods of 40 minutes but was given only six periods of 40 minutes, which was even less than the previous periods mentioned which was given only four hours for teaching English in a week. Similarly, Class -I was allocated ten periods of 40 minutes a week. The school timetable shows only six periods of 40 minutes. Further, classes II and III were supposed to be allocated 14 periods of 40 minutes each, which equals to 9:20 hours according to the additional period and time. However, the school timetable shows only seven periods of 40 minutes, which is equivalent to 4:7 hrs, shortened by 1:7 hours.

In contrast, the Revised Subject-wise Period and Instructional Time Allocation (REC, 2020) document mentioned that one period from English and Dzongkha was shared to implement ICT in the lower primary classes. It indicates that REC was also unaware of the period allocations for English subjects in lower primary classes.

Therefore, it was evident that teachers in the field were not provided enough time as allocated in, which hinders the implementation of PBE principles in teaching English. It is observed that the time for all the classes were further shortened than the previous period and time. However, it is observed that the school timetable committee had followed the guidelines of REC's time and period allocation (2020).

The findings disclosed that time allocation was a serious problem since the time allocation done by REC while conducting (CBIP & ToT, 2019) is differing to the school timing allocation and REC's time allocation (2020). Having infused the EVS topics into English curriculum, interestingly teachers were given even less time than ever before. Therefore, the concerned authorities must relook at this issue and provide enough time for learning English through place-based education.

4.5.2 Administrative support

The school manager is vital in creating conditions to implement place-based education (PBE) in teaching-learning. The most striking result that emerged was the rigid administrative system for obtaining clearance to take students out in the field was cited by some participants as a significant challenge faced by teachers wishing to implement PBE in teaching. For example, Tr-C expressed, "the concerned subject teachers have to ask for approval from the office." Further, Tr-C affirmed that field-trip learning is where students must take time out of the classroom. Moreover, teachers found it taxing to seek approval from the administration whenever students were brought outside the classroom for learning.

The finding reveals that P-I has conducted SBIP only in 2022, having attended the ToT in 2019. Thus, the finding unveils that the manager was not concerned about implementing PBE teaching in the school despite knowing the opportunities of PBE.

4.5.3 Lack of parental and teacher colleagues' support

Place-Based Education [PBE] also requires additional support from parents and teacher colleagues apart from school administration and students. The participants shared that parental and teacher colleagues' help is needed, especially when students are taken out of the classroom for learning experiences. For instant, Tr-B said:

Yes, yes, sir! Very much sure sir, because not only English, sometimes... we also teach HPE, so we take students outside. We teach them especially like games, some teachers are complaining that you are disturbing the class. So, I have group chat with parents. So, I do click some pictures and sent to them and also informed the parents when I take them for field trip.

Furthermore, most participants shared that the importance of parental and teacher colleagues' support is required in the student's independent learning. According to, Tr-C

Some people directly blame the teachers saying that their children are kept in the hot burning sun without knowing the concepts of the lesson. Further, they say, PBE is useless and I try my best to educate them on the main concepts of PBE and its importance in learning. After that, they could find that PBE is an important tool for learning where both the teacher and students are engaged in learning.

Similarly, Tr-D expressed that parents were not supportive of implementing PBE in teaching. Tr-D said,

People complaining about taking children out of the classroom as they speculate that children are just loitering around without classroom teaching-learning though they are learning through the outside world. Took it positively and explained about the need to take children out of the classroom to learn the lesson by observing the things outside their normal classroom.

Therefore, findings divulged many challenges of implementing PBE in teaching English despite its numerous opportunities, implementing PBE is challenged by various factors in the field. To discover the full potential of PBE and reap its benefits, all the concerned authorities, including parents, teacher colleagues, and school administration, must join together to enhance learning through PBE.

5 DISCUSSIONS

According to the findings, teachers, and learners actively implement PBE in teaching English in lower primary class. However, irrespective of active engagement and practices, the results revealed that the implementation of PBE was not adequately focused on all parts of the PBE principles and other necessary components. Despite offering professional development [PD] programs such as clustered-based Inservice program [CBIP] and school-based Inservice program [SBIP], the discussion focuses on different themes generated during the data analysis.

5.1 The teachers and Students' Understanding of Place-based Education

The current study found that teachers and students considered the local community and place as a primary source of resources to engage the learners and boost learning of English from an early age. This finding further supported by majority of the participants definition "PBE is an experiential learning and hands-on practice learning." (Tr-A, Tr-B & Tr-C) that provides teachers and students with an opportunity to engage in the local community and places in learning. Another important finding was that

Place as content-rich. It is where we are from; it is where we are going. It asks for our attention and care. If we pay attention, the place has much to teach us. Sites are content-rich in that students can explore local themes, such as culture, economy, ecology, and governance, which connects student learning to an authentic, place-based experience and sets the stage for deeper student learning. Students can use their knowledge and skills from multiple sources to promote a deeper understanding of the disciplines/subjects, preparing them for real life outside the classroom (SBIP, 2022).

This finding corroborates the ideas of Dewey's belief that effective teaching was essentially based on social connections and that the school setting should be viewed as a social institution (Flinders & Thornton, 2013). Another finding reveals that PBE principles consider the community as the classroom, learner-centered, and inquiry-based, which foster creativity, high-order thinking, and knowledge building. This finding was in agreement with Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017); REC (2019); Smith and Sobel (2010) and Sobel (2004) where PBE is a study concept that focuses on the opportunity to learn from the local community members as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning with concentration and hands-on experience learning in English ensuring deeper understanding and greater appreciation for the place. Therefore, it fosters active learning to ensure deeper understanding of the concepts of PBE.

The result demonstrated that most participants have sound knowledge of the concept of PBE. The finding shows that PBE is learning from each other, objects and interacting with the people around the place in real. This finding correlates the ideas of Smith (2016), who defined that PBE is a fully immersive learning environment that immerses students in local heritage, cultures, surroundings, resources, and relationships and uses these as a springboard for studying language arts and other topics across the curriculum. The finding further fits into the definition of Eijck (2010) that PBE is an educational curriculum consisting of teaching-learning activities that respect the student's place. Another promising finding was that "PBE is more effective in lower primary classes providing real-world experiences which cater to better understanding the complex concepts" (Tr-B). This analysis was found evident with Education Professional Development Centre (2019); Lundahl (2011) and REC (2021) where PBE is naturally suitable for an English classroom while using things as a basis for studying language arts and other subjects across the curriculum to teach language in a variety of settings. The findings of this study suggest that teachers adapt the lessons to the community's needs and the student's immediate surroundings making teaching and learning more meaningful and valuable.

However, the results of this study indicate that Teachers' used of PBE pedagogy in the classroom differs depending on their prior teaching experience and exposure to different professional development programs. Therefore, PBE was effectively defined by the participants' who have attended professional development programs.

5.2 Implementation of Place-based Education in Teaching

Place-based education [PBE] is guided by six main principles in teaching. However, the most interesting finding shows that English teachers of lower primary classes implemented only few principles of PBE approach in teaching. The finding of the current study revealed that learner-centered, inquiry-based, community as classroom, and field trip approaches were more frequently implemented in teaching English.

Learner-centered approach was astutely used in assigning group activities by the teachers. Learners are assigned tasks which involves brainstorming, exploring, and discussing ideas in groups for the purpose of making presentations in class. The finding reveals that learner-centered classrooms provide opportunities to collaborate and learn under the guidance of their peers and teachers. This finding corroborates the ideas of Hannafin and Hannafin (2010), and Schiro (2012 & 2013), who stated that learner-centered classrooms are where John Dewey's social learning theory and pedagogical principles are put into practice and saw the classrooms as social spaces where students might interact and work together to solve problems. Another important finding was that learner-centered is a paradigm shift as students' school experiences need to be more about learning and less about teaching. This finding agreed with REC (2018) and Williams (2017) findings which showed schools and classrooms should reflect real-life situations, allowing children to participate in learning activities in various social settings interchangeably and flexibly. Further, support the idea of learner-centered, representing a considerable shift from the traditional lecture-based model toward student-centered approaches in which the teacher acts as a facilitator. Further, these findings validate the ideas of Educational Professional Development Centre, EPDC (2019), mentioned that

It's an instructional approach in which students are involved in selecting the contents, activities, materials, and methods of learning. Learner-Centered refers to the teaching and learning process where the learner's background, interests, needs, and experiences are considered during the planning and implementation of lessons.

Inquiry-based is grounded in four different levels of inquiry. In general, inquiry-based learning follows developing relevant questions, adopting the proper procedure and methods, collecting data to confirm the findings and learning the concepts better. Another important finding was that students actively participated, mingled with peers. And sked questions about the lessons which developed language skills and learned to communicate better with the help of inquiry-based principle. These finding aligns with Mackenzie (2016) benefit of increased student agency in learning. The authentic connections with the world around and the 21st-century skills is nurtured by Inquiry-based learning which explores how inquiry can enhance the learning in the classroom. However, this finding shows that most teachers used structured inquiry for group discussions where students are assigned some questions to work on it. It is observed that the investigation tasks assigned to students are fundamental, collect information from textbooks and workbooks and inquire from friends and surroundings.

On the other hand, the observer felt that structured inquiry is quite relevant according to the standard of the class level. The finding aligns with Smith (2002) suggesting PBE bridges the gap between the students' real-life experience and the learned knowledge from the curricula. Therefore, students learn better from friends through inquiry and discussion. Thus, the study corresponds to the theory of inquiry-based learning used by teachers to teach English to lower primary learners. However, even the most basic form of inquiry requires both learners and teachers to develop a procedure to reach conclusions though the results might be already known. It indicates that teachers in the field are not earnestly implementing different levels of inquiry, although they were given PD vividly on how to teach English implementing different levels of inquiry.

The finding reveals that teachers used the community as a classroom approach. However, students are neither taken into the community to learn and explore nor are the community's experts invited into the classroom to share experiences and knowledge. Surprisingly, this finding refutes by Graham (2007); Smith & Sobel (2010); and Sobel (2014) states that the community provides context for learning, student work focuses on community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning beyond the walls of the school. Further, the aforementioned literature supports another significant finding that reveals providing hands-on learning experiences in the community improves communication, speaking, reading, listening and writing skills, developing commitment to the community, and encourages to be an active, contributing citizens.

However, it is observed that community as a classroom can form within the classroom as the learners come from diverse community backgrounds and experts. So, it is not necessary to take the students

out of the classroom or call the experts from the community. It aligns with Power (2014) who mentioned place-based education is grounded in the notion that we must first use the resources, issues, and values of the local communities in our classrooms. The local community should be used as a basis for context for learning at all levels.

Further, the findings divulge that teachers use the school community as an expanded form of the classroom. Learners are taken from the classroom into the school community to learn and explore. However, the local community experts and experiences were hardly used for teaching-learning purposes and experiences. In contrast, Amy, L. P. (2004), and Teton Science Schools (TSS, 2017) asserts that communities should serve as learning ecosystems for schools where local and regional experts, experiences, and places were part of the expanded definition of a classroom. PBE can benefit learners in several ways providing teachers and students with diverse viewpoints, access to resources, facilities, and a broader base of skills and knowledge. The community as classroom learning often took place beyond the four walls of traditional teacher-centered learning, and the local community became the context for many learning experiences. Thus, the use of the community as classroom for learning was evident during the limited classroom observations.

Finding reveals that field trip learning is another strategy liked by most of the students in learning process. A few participants had common understanding that field trip breaks up the monotony of classroom teaching and provides students with experiences outside of the typical classroom setting (Tr-B, Tr-C & Tr-D). It gives an experiential learning which enables students to apply ideas covered in textbooks and learn new information through engagement and helps students retain knowledge better. The current study found that the field trip was an enjoyable learning process sharing ideas, moving around, asking questions, learning and understanding better by observing objects and able to remember well. The finding associate with the excursions which sharpen students' observation and perception skills engaged in sensory-based learning (Nabors et al., 2009; & Rahman & Spafford 2009) and gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Similarly, the finding discloses the enhancement of students' observational skills, inquiry-based learning, interdisciplinary learning, problem-solving, and designing abilities with field trip learning. Contrary to the findings, most of the teachers argued that teachers were not encourage field trips due to time constraint and difficulty in seeking approval from school heads and consent from parents. This finding fits with Bouchriks (2021) and Kelly (2019) that field trip consumes a lot of time and can take a toll on educators, considering that some of them did not receive ample training in planning and conducting trips. Similarly, another finding affirms that Keeping students safe, behaviour, and orderly in public spaces is another major headache for educators (Berer, 2016), especially if the site attracts hordes of visitors. Students can easily get separated from the group, which exposed to danger. Therefore, the finding reveals that only Tr-B used field trip teaching using schoolyards in teaching English lessons in lower primary class.

5.3 Opportunities of Implementing Place-based Education

The most important opportunities teachers perceived about PBE in teaching English were better learning concept of the language through better engagement. The observer noticed exciting group activities and interactive lessons would help learners improve communication skills. Additionally, Tr-C and Tr-D shared that creativity, higher-order thinking, and knowledge building develops as PBE engages learners with immediate environment, communicating and sharing ideas. It also makes language learning entertaining, engaging, and relevant. Further, the most significant finding was that PBE was a relevant approach to be applied in lower classes to teach English engaging the students to learn complex concept effectively. These finding resonates with Education Professional Development Centre (2019) where PBE is an approach that connects learning and communities to increase student engagement, academic outcomes, and community impact. Further, the finding is consistent with Linnemanstons and Jorden (2017), who revealed that students' participation during the PBE lesson was significantly higher than in a typical classroom environment. Another important finding was teachers engaged learners in various learning activities to promote better engagement in learning English.

The finding affirms that PBE provides examples from numerous fields and local areas to help students comprehend complex ideas and concepts in English and further, it gives lower primary students a great learning experience since the students prefer investigation. Therefore, PBE focuses on meaningful learning outcomes providing experiential learning and improving remembering. These findings align with Royal Education Council (REC) (2021, New Norma Curriculum (NNC) p.95) which states

PBE can be used as an approach to teach language in various contexts. The activities could be designed to involve learners in interviewing local people, visiting places in the locality, designing solutions to problems, and using local goods. It is recommended that the teachers contextualize their lesson to the locality's needs and the learners' immediate environment to make the teaching-learning meaningful and relevant.

It makes the learning meaningful by giving a clear concept of the lesson and enhancing memory retention by exploring different sources to improve skills.

The finding implies that PBE promotes making observations utilizing the five senses. It also assists students comprehend real-life issues become globally competent. PBE also has the chance to acquire the skills needed in the world of the twenty-first century. It is because Witt, Peterson, and Trombulak (2016), and Smith and Sobel (2010) also revealed that rather than preparing students for "some future purpose," it is more important to give tools to help solve the problems connecting to the natural environment. Further, it affiliates with Jaramillo & Malagon (2019) that PBE is the basis for teaching English to children from a rural school and the environment as it enables the beginning of teaching concepts related to language arts, writing short poems, and other subjects from the curriculum. Further, PBE implants social responsibilities and a sense of value and appreciation for the community, as well as academic ability exploring new things with new friends, (Jennings et al., 2005 & Verbeten, 2009). Therefore, when the students are connected to communities, it helps to develop the sense of belongingness and respect for the place.

The finding reveals that PBE helps develop critical thinking and improves memory retention. Further, the finding reveals that place-based approach aligns well with students' developmental stages from primary grades, students focus on the local themes, such as home, family, school, and neighbourhood. These findings associate with Gur-Zeev (2001) long-term impact of the PBE experience was to upgrade students' knowledge and content outside the classroom. The most significant finding was that high-achieving students helped the slow learners, which helps to enhance collaboration, kindness, and cooperative learning in the lower primary class. The finding corresponds with Sianturi et al. (2018) who stated that students and teachers actively research issues and solve problems, not just as consumers but also as creators. Therefore, to enhance the student's skills, teachers were offered experiential PD programs to strengthen the skills in different areas, such as design thinking and problem-solving, improving the ability to design and solve problems related to the local and global environments.

The finding unveils that most of the participants learned PBE teaching pedagogy from school-based Inservice programs (SBIP), cluster-based Inservice programs (CBIP), Dzongkhag-based Inservice programs (DBIP), and training of trainers (ToT) at various levels of PD programs. According to Tr-A and Tr-B, "It enriched with new knowledge, assisting in instilling the values of PBE in teaching and recalling what was already learned." The finding aligns with Linnemanstons and Jordan (2017) that teachers benefitted from PDs, a sense of fulfillment, and a broader range of teaching methods. Thus, PD programs are a must for upskilling the skills of teachers.

Further, the PD documents revealed that all the required content of PBE was oriented to the teachers in three consecutive days and provided enough hands-on practice to familiarize themselves with the principles of PBE teaching. The finding is supported by REC (2019) as PBE concepts were explored in detail for a five-day program, with a focus on how PBE ideas can be taught to other teachers and administrators. Additionally, the finding shows that participants were oriented to the planning strategy at the beginning of the academic sessions. For example, the SBIP document mentioned that "a team of teachers to come together during the planning for the academic plan at the beginning of the session, map out the lesson topics with common themes; select topics, content, standards, and skills from across academic disciplines." It helps teachers cover the syllabus on time. In contrast, the finding reveals that duration is too short for SBIP, where the facilitator provides the gist of information due to the time constant. It aligns with the argument for the need to improve teacher preparation courses for aspiring elementary school teachers to teach English language arts. It was further added that improvement in the abilities, workshops, outside experts, time, follow-up, hands-on activities, and content should be provided when it comes to PBE implementation (Ajayi, 2014; & Guskey and Yoon, 2009). Furthermore, the findings reveal that it would have been better if there was more time and duration to conduct in-depth understanding and application in the classroom, providing more hands-on practice during CBIP and SBIP. These findings interconnect with Place-based Education Evaluation Collaborative (2010), a second-grade teacher at the Bernice A. Ray School in Hanover, New Hampshire, who took part in a year-long professional development program to learn how to implement PBE. These findings suggest that, teachers have to be provided with frequent professional development (PD) on how to use PBE to teach English in lower primary class.

The study found that teachers must be given frequent PD programs to enhance the understanding of PBE as one of the 21st-century teaching pedagogy. Similar finding suggest that most teacher participants have learned PBE from PD programs. However, the PD was not conducted promptly in the school because it was evident that P-I attended ToT in December 2019 and conducted SBIP only in 2022 in collaboration with a science teacher who had attended DBIP on PBE. The finding associates with Garet et al. (2001); Hall (2015); Meichtry & Smith, (2007); and University of Maryland Survey Research Center (UMSRC) (2000) stated that the amount of time spent on PD is closely linked to insignificant improvements in teachers; the effectiveness of PD programs was frequently judged by the effects on the teachers who participated PD on PBE-related and pedagogies was irregular. What is surprising is that the manager was not serious about implementing PBE in teaching. It also aligns with Koinis (2016) who wrote that Bhutanese teachers need improved professional development opportunities to enhance teaching skills and pedagogies. Therefore, the finding suggest that teachers must be offered quality PD programs to understand teaching English with PBE pedagogy.

5.4 Challenges of Implementing Place-based Education

The finding divulges that teacher in the field confronted few challenges in implementing place-based education [PBE] approach in the lower primary English classes. The finding of this study shows that lack of time to complete the lesson while implementing PBE was a significant challenge in the field. Similarly, the participants shared that this pedagogy takes a long time and has a lengthy procedure. Therefore, it is found that teachers are not able to manage time while using place-based pedagogy. Further, the instructional hours assigned for learning do not meet the learning materials prescribed for the students. These finding were consistent with Hall (2015) and REC (2019) which found many challenges in taking students outdoors, such as discipline issues, materials management, time and safety. Furthermore, the most interesting finding was that the period and time allocation for teaching English after infusing EVS topics into the English curriculum further shortened the time than the previous time. This finding shows that teachers do not get enough time to implement PBE in teaching and time allocation is a serious issue. The time allocation done by REC while conducting (CBIP & ToT, 2019) contradicts to the school timing allocation and REC's time allocation (2020). Surprisingly, the finding shows that teachers were given even less time than before and reveals that concerned authorities must seriously rethink this issue and provide enough time for teaching English through place-based education. This finding was unexpected and suggest that the school management needs to monitor and support teachers trying to implement PBE pedagogy to teach English in lower primary class.

Another interesting finding was the rigid administrative system for obtaining clearance to take students out in the field was a significant challenge faced by teachers wishing to implement PBE in teaching. It is also studied that PBE approach is where students are required to take time out of the classroom frequently. This study corresponds to the challenges expressed by the teachers who faced lack of support from school administrators despite attended the PD on implementing PBE teaching across the curriculum (Griffin, 2019 & REC, 2019). The study was evident from the findings that P-I conducted PD on PBE in 2022, having attended ToT at the end of 2019. It is studied that school administrator lack integrity in one's duties and responsibilities. Therefore, it affirms with Koinis (2016) who argued that Bhutanese teachers need improved professional development opportunities to enhance teaching skills and pedagogies. Therefore, to get support from parents and teacher colleagues, the school management has to advertise the importance of PBE in teaching English irrespective of the subjects.

Similarly, another unanticipated finding was that teacher colleagues' do not provide support to the teacher trying to teach using PBE pedagogy taking students out of the classroom for learning experiences. It is evident that

Yes, yes, sir! Very much sure sir, because not only English, sometimes... we also teach HPE, so we take students outside. We teach them especially like games, some teachers are complaining that you are disturbing the class. So, I have group chat with parents. So, I do click some pictures and sent to them and also informed the parents when I take them for field trip (Tr-A & Tr-B).

Further, it has been studied that parental and teacher colleagues' support is crucial in the students' independent learning. Therefore, the finding shows that teacher colleagues, parents, and the manager of the school must provide full support when using PBE pedagogy in teaching. The study found that English teaching has limited time, having added the content from EVS curriculum.

6. CONCLUSION

The study presents the implementation of place-based education (PBE) principles in lower primary English classes. The knowledge of PBE is vital in enabling an environment for learning English concept effectively. The study shows that teachers perceived PBE as a fundamental educational approach to engage learners and boost learning English in lower primary classes. The teachers perceived that PBE can infuse strong values such as a “sense of place and attachment to the community” with the place. These values are the foundation for building communication skills effectively. The study revealed that teachers were fully oriented on incorporating principles of PBE in classroom teaching. However, the teacher’s negligence regarding the efficacy of the professional development (PD) program on PBE has deterred them from implementing all the principles effectively in teaching English. Despite attending the PD programs on PBE teaching, the finding revealed that teachers in the field faced challenges such as time constraints, administration, and parental support. These challenges are insignificant considering the ample opportunities PBE could provide to 21st-century learners. Thus, the teachers try hard to implement PBE teaching to achieve what is suitable for the learners. Therefore, teachers used PBE principles such as inquiry-based, learner-centered, community as a classroom, and activity-based in teaching English. The commonly used principles resulted from teachers lacking good knowledge and self-confidence in using other principles such as local to a global context and interdisciplinary approach. Similarly, the design thinking approach was not used owing to the lack of support from administrative, parents, and teacher colleagues. In sum, the teachers used experiences, resources, and opportunities available to make PBE principles effectively implemented in teaching and learning practices despite the infinite challenges.

6.1 Limitation

The sample size for this study was minimal, and the study pertained to only one particular lower primary school. It would have been better if the selected samples were from different schools in the Trashingang district. The researcher has four English teachers, one principal for semi-structured interviews, seventeen students from grades II and III for focus group discussion, lesson observation for each class, and analysed a few documents. By observing more lessons might have offered substantive information on implementing PBE principles effectively in teaching English and could have studied the teachers’ competency.

Similarly, more diverse samples from various sources may provide different results. Therefore, the mixed methods and quantitative approach could provide valuable information because it might involve a large selection of participants from other schools in the district. The mixed methods approach could also offer different avenues for the researchers to explore and collect enriched information for the study.

6.2 Recommendations

The finding of this study strongly recommends a monthly refresher course on incorporating principles of place-based education (PBE) for all the school’s language teachers. The refresher course program would help the teachers acquire current knowledge and skills to implement PBE principles in teaching English. It would also help to understand the idea of PBE, thereby evading misconceptions of PBE approach.

The evidence from the study strongly suggests that principals who have attended the training of trainers [ToT] on PBE conduct enough PD programs scheduling enough days and time to give in-depth understanding with abundant hands-on activities.

Furthermore, the finding strongly recommends that the principal and head of department [HoD] strictly monitor the implementation of principles of PBE teaching in English.

The study also recommends separate training for the school head of departments’ [HoD] on PBE. The training of HoDs’ will ease the work of principles and help teacher colleagues get the necessary support from their HoDs, thereby creating a conducive environment to implement and practice PBE in teaching.

The study also recommends that include the principles of PBE teaching pedagogy in the lesson observation sheet to help effectively monitor and implement PBE judiciously, having attended the PD programs and training.

Further, the study recommends to re-visit the current English curriculum for options to reduce learning activities to cover the syllabus on time. Also, it recommends serious monitoring of the implementation of PBE in the schools of Bhutan, having offered various PD programs.

Moreover, the finding also strongly recommends that teachers refer to the PD documents to holistically implement all aspects of PBE principles.

The significant finding recommends that PBE is suitable for teaching English in lower primary classes provided enough time and support from parents, principals, and teacher colleagues.

Finally, future researchers can research this topic as a rare study conducted in the Bhutanese context mainly uses of PBE principles in teaching English. Further, the future researcher can focus mainly on using PBE principles in teaching English for all grade levels to confirm the benefits and effectiveness of implementing PBE.

Ethical Approval and Consent

Prior to commencing the study, ethical clearance was sought from the ethical College research committee, ministry of education [MoE], Drungkhag deputy chief education officer [DDyCEO], Principal, participants' willingness, and concern letter from students' parents. After the data is analysed, the researcher will destroy all the documents (Soft and hard) after three years of the final submission of the dissertation. Resnick (2015) stated that one should never suggest anyone or have interacted with as a peer reviewer and should make every effort to ensure that no groups are intentionally excluded from the study. Therefore, the researcher ensured that none of the participants' responses were left out of this study.

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