

Perceptions on Implementing Single National Curriculum in Pakistan

Abstract

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Objective: *In terms of content, curriculum, and a shared platform of evaluation, all students should have a fair and equitable chance to acquire a high-quality education. A step in the right direction is the creation of a single national curriculum (SNC). The SNC tries to achieve religious neutrality by encouraging interfaith tolerance and responding to the requirements of students of minority religions by teaching them according to their religious views.*

Methodology: *For the context, qualitative analysis was conducted, and the research works that examined cultural characteristics that may impede or facilitate the application of SNC as an instructional technique were reviewed. Medline, ERIC, Web of Science (for Science Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts and Humanities Citation Index), and PsycINFO were the databases employed to conduct literature searches.*

Results: *The gaps in SNC implementation make it a difficult assignment for the government since not all private and public schools in every province will be willing to embrace the SNC, necessitating the*

adoption of a strong monitoring apparatus by the government to ensure implementation. While a unified curriculum is a helpful first step toward uniting the younger generation, it is insufficient as a method for bridging the current inequities in Pakistan's educational system.

Conclusion: *There are numerous other key concerns that the government must deal with and address first since they are critical to SNC's success. To address educational inequality, the government must invest more in education and not rely just on a small number of programs and campaigns.*

Keywords: *Single National Curriculum, Educational Disparities, SNC Implementation, Qualitative Analysis.*

Introduction

Pakistan is a multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic country. In Pakistan, there are many different medium-based schools. Still, English medium-based schools are the most appealing ones for parents to send their students to the education department. As Urdu is the native language of Pakistan, Urdu medium schools are also found (Fareed et al., 2019). It is a multicultural and multilingual

country, so other language schools are also found besides Urdu and English. To teach their children about Islamic studies, Pakistani people have made a different school-type sector known as a madrassah. To eliminate the injustice and insecurities of the Pakistani people, the Government of Pakistan has decided to establish a forum known as the Single National Curriculum (SNC) of Pakistan in different schools. (Jahanzaib et al., 2021)

English is considered the main impact of globalisation in languages because it is linked with all the social, economic, educational, cultural, political, etc., domains with more expansion and connectivity. English is a global, foreign, communication, and continental language as it is spoken and understood by half of the world's regions (Crystal, 1990). English leads to high demand for indigenous languages for better employment opportunities in Pakistan, so it is the main and basic subject in most of Pakistan's educational institutes. The English language is added to the curricula to equip students with better literacy and awareness. Due to a lack of resources, students have not received a proper education. (Irfan, 2021)

When individuals want to pursue their careers and goals in educational settings, it is called a Curriculum, which is considered a general script or pathway to follow their best destination in academic fields. The national curriculum involves national beliefs, ethics, traditions, critics, and even educational goals for a considerable nation (Gul & Khilji, 2021). They also include a national area's past, present, and future. A single curriculum showcases the nation's attitudes, behaviours, and mentality of people residing in that nation. It can also create prejudice, confusion, complexity, and fractions against society. It is not purposively used only for people's behaviour. (Haegele et al., 2014)

Single National Curriculum, also abbreviated as SNC, is now applied by the Government of Pakistan in all the phases of the country, most importantly in the educational sector. It is applied from the primary level to an upper higher level (Irfan, 2020). A curriculum used worldwide for visually impaired people is called ECC (extended core curriculum), followed by most countries. In Pakistan, there is no specific concept of ECC. All the disabilities of visually impaired people in Pakistan create limitations for acquiring

basic needs and support. (Sapp & Hatlen, 2010)

The curriculum is the main ideology of education because there are only guidelines for teachers and students regarding what subject to be taught and how it should be taught. It includes assessments, materials, nodes, and other teaching requirements. The purpose of the curriculum is to independently let students examine their teaching syllabus in the existing order so it would be easier for them to act accordingly (Irfan, 2019).

Pakistan's government is now considering the country's education system by implementing Single National Curriculum (SNC) to align all the educational institutions so there would be no competition with other schools' systems. This would be beneficial for uniting youth as one nation. SNC gives fair and equal opportunity to all students and pupils of educational domains. The main problem in Pakistan is that we have different kinds of curricula available in different parts of the society; that's why it is divided and becomes a failure as one strong nation (Rauf et al., 2022).

In Pakistan, Single National Curriculum (SNC) is frequently implied in all schools and educational sectors. The

Ministry of Federal education formulated it in 2018. It eventually leads to contradictions and controversy as it falls under the election compartments. While the aim of implementing this curriculum is for electoral purposes, it is considered a crucial factor for Pakistan's present, past, and future generations.

In both print and electronic media, some perceptions about Single National Curriculum are being unfolded that blithely ignore the fact of several constitutions of Pakistan. It commends that the federal area or centre does not have the power and authority to impose SNC on any province (Jabeen, 2020). These misperceptions also do not see that all the other four provinces of Pakistan willingly participated in it. Territories and locales hold full optional powers to decipher the execution of the SNC when they, thus, form their particular Schemes of Studies, which take the method involved with carrying out the SNC to the main issue at the hand level.

Before the ongoing SNC, the compulsory reading of the Holy Quran was formulated by the PMLN government in both federal and Provincial provinces. Only one province of Pakistan, Sindh, did not enact the law because it kept the mandatory reading of the Holy Quran from Class 1.

After this, there is another misconception of SNC that randomly uniformise and well-organises the material of education in Pakistan, which stops the diversity and variety of the educational society of Pakistan. There are various obvious nodes of ethics, linguistic, and cultural diversity, which in the document of SNC is considered incorrect and misleading

There is also a third leading profound misconception about SNC, which professes to address the significant, crucial issues besetting Pakistan's schooling. For example, the preparation of educators; seriously deficient actual framework in government schools; accentuation on repetition learning; lack of instructive guides; imperfections in assessment viewpoints. Never in the draft is there an endeavour to either overlook or guarantee the goal of these risky issues because these are past the extent of the SNC (Jamil et al., 2020). The fundamental functional aspects should be tended to independently and desperately by every administration concerned. Further, despite the charges about excessive normalisation, the draft SNC repeatedly focuses on support of basic and imaginative reasoning and offers approaches to substantially survey the effect of schooling through Student

Learning Outcomes and exhaustive assessments of educator execution.

In the draft of SNC, a positive statement is now being affiliated with the sections of English print media that the non-madrassah segments of educational sectors will exchange with the students of madrassah graduates who will conduct teaching of Islam. There may be seen that more students have Islamic teaching than non-madrassah graduates, and there will be more non-religion content in their education methods. (Kalhoro et al., 2020)

One of the main points of Single National curricula, which is not getting its desired attention, is that non-Muslim children are not getting their religion-related subject studies. Non-Muslim educationists formulate this part of the draft. In the old times, non-Muslim students attended to their religion under the studies of the subjects like General knowledge or studies of ethics. That approach was good, rather than now getting them exclusive from their studies concentrated in the draft. (Ahmed, 2020)

A language composed using two different languages, known as "Minglish," is used worldwide. Those who have not taken any educational studies are fluent in this language. They know some words and

phrases and have a conversation also in this hybrid language. Every Pakistani national has a citizenship card known as NIC (National identity card), which also includes details about that particular individual in English and Urdu. Along with identity cards, English is also used in government longings like money, postcards, post stamps, newspapers, magazines, etc. (Muhammad, 2019).

Where worldwide examination lays out that a kid retains best when conferred training in the primary language in the initial not many years in school, there are areas of strength for a mind-boggling interest for the utilisation of English as the favoured medium, if not an assurance for additional advancement in training and work (Leite et al., 2020). With Pakistan being the quickest urbanising country in South Asia, there is presently the peculiarity of 4 or 5 different primary languages spoken by kids in a solitary homeroom in many pieces of Karachi. Maybe the most proper reaction to this issue is to pass on an ultimate conclusion to the Provinces and the Federal Center. There should be something to be thankful for about the draft SNC. In the 21st century, as the force of progress expansions in all circles, we ought to empower the definition

and execution of an SNC that enables the country to defeat notable variations and polarities and confront the obscure future with certainty and union (Gul & Khilji, 2021).

The teaching of moral, social, and widespread qualities in students concerning the multilingual and multicultural arrangement of the country. SNC plans to foster exclusive requirements of education and capability through an all-encompassing way of dealing with English language instruction. English educators need to escalate preparation to have criticality and independence for gaining attitudinal change. SNC tries to utilise general mechanical gadgets to foster ESL students. SNC will likewise assist undergraduates and graduates with creating social and profound ways of behaving (Simmons & MacLean, 2018).

Literature Review

The single national curriculum rose when it was introduced in Pakistan because many educational institutes lacked basic knowledge of academic sectors. So, for this purpose, many research studies have been conducted to emphasise the Single national curriculum (SNC) policy. Irfan (March 2021) believed that if English is used as a

second language (ESL) in many Pakistani schools, it will cause many insightful perspectives on the national curriculum. They worked on the implementation of using English as a teaching subject so that students could understand it more. The term EFL (English as Foreign Language) is not applicable in Pakistan because English is taught as a second language (ESL) to high and preschoolers in Pakistan. It is not taught as a Foreign Language in any educational sector of Pakistan. This curriculum is designed to groom and polish their learners and make them global citizens. It included various designs for developing the learners of ESL so they can write and communicate easily (Irfan, 2021).

Pakistan is considered a multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic country. Different people here can speak mostly more than one language. However, compared to other origins of the world, Pakistani people still lack speaking and having basic conversations in the English language. Rauf (Jan 2022) concentrated on English as a second language using an implementation of a Single national curriculum (SNC) goal so that the communication skills of Pakistani people should improve and make them confident

speakers (Rauf et al., 2022). Awais (Aug 2022) discussed some advantages and disadvantages of a single national curriculum. The major advantage of SNC is that it creates equal and fair opportunities in the educational sectors for the people who want to receive some quality education. This would have a good impact on each other, and social class would disappear. There are always some consequences when generating something good. As SNC offers this main advantage, it also causes some disadvantages: it lacks flexibility. It can be too prescriptive and reduce innovation in educational curriculum fields. (Awais, 2021)

A study was executed by Ansar (Oct 2021) and his companions that a single national curriculum is not only necessary for students studying in any educational institute, but it also focuses on the students who are suffering from any disabilities. They have also worked with students who have some intellectual disabilities. For the research, the public and private sectors were selected, and from there, 90 academic professionals were nominated by random sampling technique. By leading the research, it was found that SNC has caused a vast difference between economic and social groups and is focused on the same

education syllabus for normal students and students with some intellectual disabilities. They concluded in their study that there should not be any competition for better opportunities in the future. Instead, a teacher should help students learn and think creatively (Ansar, 2021).

Jahanzaib (Sept 2021) considered that all educational fields should be equally divided among every child, be it a normal healthy child or children with any intellectual disabilities like visual impairment or any disabled child because education is mandatory for everyone of them. Children with Visual Impairment (CWVI) are somewhat good academically because of their good cognitive skills. With the suitable need for support, they can accomplish many standards, benchmarks, and learning outcomes. With special support and basic adaptation, CWVI can study all the syllabus included in the Single national curriculum like regular students. (Jahanzaib et al., 2021)

The covid-19 outbreak has led to many difficulties all over the world. One of the major problems was that studies were getting affected, and students were getting dragged away from educational things. Rani (March 2021) explained how an outbreak of a deadly virus led to a national

curriculum in the educational sector. They included different institutions' professors and lecturers and the national curriculum framework of Pakistan's content analysis and conducted semi-structured interviews with them. This research found that students and teachers were not satisfied with the curriculum because it did not support learning effectively (Gul & Khilji, 2021).

Methodology

For context, I looked at previous papers that examined cultural characteristics that may impede or facilitate the application of SNC as an instructional technique. For this study, Asia is defined as the geographical region spanning India, Pakistan, and Korea, as well as the countries of Southeast Asia. Native people of these countries who did not live in them throughout the research period detailed in the articles are included in the definition of Asians. Medline, ERIC, Web of Science (for Science Citation Index, Social Sciences Citation Index, and Arts and Humanities Citation Index), and PsycINFO were the databases employed to conduct literature searches. Unifying learning with a single curriculum and Asian or ethnicity were used as search terms. I also looked for

related publications in four journals: Education, Journal of Academics, and Teacher's Education. Despite this issue's importance, there is little published research on the perspective and implementation of a single national curriculum (SNC). As a result, relevant abstracts were used when they were available. This analysis incorporated all relevant papers, including those that detailed challenges.

The government of Pakistan appears to be influenced by counterpart Standards in the United States, specifically within recent years, which in turn contributed to the Standards being aligned with the same knowledge, attribution, and dispositions as in the US. These Standards reflected the highly resourced US system. However, their implementation in Pakistan seems to be problematic owing to financial constraints as well as other logistical limitations. In spite of launching the teaching Standards, the majority of the respondents were unconscious of the procedure the Government had used for developing them. Some understood that committee members comprised both educationists and technocrats, and as several 'foreign models' were consulted, local input was, in turn, diminished.

Significantly, the Ministry of Education formulated the Professional Standards through a highly bureaucratic process in which university teachers (and teacher educators, in particular) were not consulted in any manner, nor did they provide any input in designing the Standards.

Results and Discussion

In Pakistan, a unified national curriculum is being used to achieve equality among all members of society. Its goal is to provide students with an equitable and fair chance to receive the required education. This is the only way to attain the ultimate goal of national cohesiveness and unification. People openly criticising it haven't gone through the outline and structure of different courses that have been analytically planned by taking into account stakeholders involved and panel members from all regional states, public and private sectors, Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEIs), Cantts, and Garrisons, Deeni Madaris (Madrassahs), Cambridge University UK for English, Math's, and Science, LUMS and AKU-IED. People debate when the best moment is to execute this program, but ours was decades ago, or "NOW" is the best time. It's never too late to make a positive change because

transformation in any sector occurs due to varied challenges and criticism. Authorities must spend on professional development and instruments that will provide direction to private schools and educational institutions so that this SNC can be implemented smoothly. Every student and instructor involved in this learning process has to find this procedure simple, straightforward, and accessible.

The three various education systems in which information is distributed in Pakistan: public, private educational systems, and Madrassahs, are the biggest issue we confront. There is a significant content difference between them, which SNC will assist in bridging by establishing equality across the country. The global goal for universal education, learning, and the economy is not driven by a single government's philosophy, as in Pakistan. Global strategists and politicians are eager to collaborate on developing a single framework for unbiased education. The World Economic Forum in Davos 2021 covered education in-depth, emphasising basic skills, numeracy, critical thinking, and occupational skills, as well as digital education for all. Why can't we as a country embrace it and assist our children in becoming accustomed to it and our

Government in effectively implementing it? We are still debating small topics such as the language in which lectures are given and the content of particular lectures. Rather than arguing such topics, the focus of our discussion should be on providing appropriate education through improved technical tools. Apart from the health condition, the COVID-19 epidemic has impacted every element of our life, the most significant of which is education, as schools and colleges have been shuttered. Most governments, particularly developing countries, have realised the need for a worldwide curriculum that aids in the creation of interlinked solutions. In this era of digitisation, it has become necessary for everyone to have improved ICT facilities at their houses to succeed. Globally, all countries are attempting to focus on technology-driven universal educational programs that will address individual issues while promoting the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Suppose Pakistan wishes to succeed and participate in global growth. In that case, it must prioritise SNC, and we, as responsible citizens and a country, must push governments to prioritise SNC, regardless of our political choices.

Challenges in the Implementation of the Single National Curriculum

The government has started to take the initiative of providing a single educational system with the aim of eliminating inequality in this sector in terms of class differences. Implementation of the intended steps necessitates all provincial governments to adopt a sole and common education system with regard to instructional mediums, curriculum, and assessment techniques to ensure that every child gets equal and fair opportunities.

Underneath the motto One Nation, One Curriculum, the administration intends to eliminate the strengthening of class distinctions through universal education (One Nation, One Curriculum). In Pakistani society, a lack of cohesiveness in the educational system has resulted in large learning inequalities, leading to socioeconomic inequality. The educational system in Pakistan is divided into three types: public or government schools, private schools, and madrassas. Significant discrepancies exist between the educational systems imparted in these three systems, resulting in a split in the ideological attitude of pupils taught in these institutions. The Single National Curriculum was established to bridge the gap between the three types of educational systems (Naqvi, 2021).

Despite the SNC's well-considered considerations for developing students as a strong pillar of the nation by making them good and efficient national and global citizens, having appropriate and essential knowledge, values, and skills. However, owing to the preliminary nature of this agenda, the existing Government might come across multiple hurdles and challenges while executing the single national curriculum. The potential factor that may induce obstacles is the implementation of a shared and equally advantageous roadmap in the present diversified educational environment. The Single National Curriculum has several flaws, according to critics. Many people have criticised the system's implementation, stating that it was poorly planned out and executed too rapidly. (Durrani & Dunne, 2010).

The first hurdle for the Government is persuading over 20 million "out-of-school youngsters" to return to schools. The provision of equal opportunities for every student is a hefty and quite challenging task in an environment where everything from textbooks, learning methodologies, available resources, publishing houses, educational criteria, and evaluation procedures, and most notably, the teaching

capacities and capabilities of the teachers are all different across distinct groups and education systems. Besides, the existence of small-level schools, comprising one to two rooms and a few inadequately educated teachers and instructors, is also another hindering aspect as in order to provide favourable and healthy learning environments, the schools must have enough resources and financial stability to offer the required learning medium.

Because after a standard curriculum is established, instructors are also accountable for achieving all of the lofty goals associated with the Single National Curriculum. Unfortunately, there is a scarcity of trained instructors in Pakistan, notably at the elementary and secondary levels. If the instructors fail to fulfil their obligations, all goals and objectives will be unattainable. As a result, skilled and trained instructors are in high demand. To achieve a certain level of consistency across various educational systems, the Government would have to make a significant financial commitment to under-resourced schools. In addition, the Government's spending patterns in education must alter, and education should also be given high priority similar to other aspects.

Conclusion

The administration ought to address structural concerns like teachers' training programs, bringing all "out-of-school" children to school, and so forth for the "Single National Curriculum" to be effective. In this sense, a special emphasis on female education is required. It is necessary to remove the cultural barriers that prohibit girls from acquiring education. Besides, greater funds must be allocated to the educational sector. For SNC to stay afloat, corruption and white-collar crimes must be eradicated. The nation's religious parties and scholars should also come together and mutually reform madrassahs. Establishing the "Single National Curriculum" by the Government is a great step. In a culture like Pakistan, it might be a solution to various issues of poverty. It would be pleasing to see the educational sector receiving the long-lost attention that it deserves from the Government. As a consequence of the reorganised education system, Pakistan will soon begin to make strides toward progress, growth, and advancement.

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