



RESEARCH PAPER

The Implementation of Single National Curriculum in a non-Secular, Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Cultural Environment in Pakistan.

Daulat Karim Dayaan¹

ABSTRACT

An effective and uniform education system is essential for national unity and development, unless educational activities are not developed in the common interest of the nation, the common interest of the nation will not be achieved, and the essence of education will be implemented on the national level. When we talk about the uniform education system then it is also important the common ethnic, religious, cultural, and language differences should be addressed to strengthen the diversified societies for the common and long-run interests of the nation. In this article single national curriculum and its implementation has been discussed. The issues affirmation of social and cultural differences as well as move towards restreaming are focused. In this article also it has been discussed how commonly faced issues can be resolved with the implementation of a single national curriculum and how can be converted national challenges into national opportunities. In this regard, different educational policies were studied and discussed. Furthermore In the first part of this article shared some facts about Pakistani society's multi-religious sects, multi-ethnic groups, cultural differences, and language differences. The second part briefly discussed the old curriculum and multi-class education system in Pakistan, the three types of education systems have been discussed Cambridge international schools, Urdu medium schools, and Deeni madrassas and their education systems. In the third part, the new single national curriculum and its goals alignment with SDG-4, the trends in international mathematics and science study (TIMSS), usage of ICT, and twenty-first-century skills including analytical, critical, and creative thinking were discussed. In the fourth part challenges and obstacles that will be faced while implementing a single national curriculum were discussed. Then in the last part, some suggestions have been given for the long and gradual build-up toward the implementation of a single national curriculum. And based on this study conclusion has been drawn that whether the single curriculum will be able to eliminate social injustice and disparity in the field of education.

Keywords: New Curriculum, Old Curriculum, multi-cultural, Multi-ethnic, non-secular

1. University of Karachi

Introduction

This research article mused the attention on the new single national curriculum as a selection from multi-cultural and on the social need to know how the socio-ethnic, religious, and cultural differences can be focused and addressed in a single national curriculum, no doubt this is not an easy job, challenges and obstacles will have to face. Developing and launching a new curriculum does not guarantee that challenges and problems will be overcome (Gitlin at all). As in curriculum development challenges and problems are indispensable but meanwhile, we cannot ignore the change in society, the individuals acquire personal meaning and Knowledge from the change they experience, therefore change is a subjective process. (Fullan and Miles 1992).

The purpose is to put shed some light on the curricular reforms which have been developed by the current government for the sake of bringing uniformity in the education system which has always been a major challenge to eliminate the disparity in an education system. Providing equal opportunity across the country is a challenge because, in Pakistan multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and different religious communities are living together, and have different practices and social customs. Despite having cultural and religious differences and beliefs, where different curriculums are experienced, no culture yet observed has been able to eradicate the differences in temperament of the person who composed it (Benedict, 2019) but in society do have some common thoughts and tasks which bounds a society despite the having differences these common thoughts and tasks are like performing common economic tasks, patriotism, performing national events, remembrance of national heroes, celebrating common religious and cultural events and so on, these shared experiences and common activities reduce ethnic and cultural differences so individuals one way or another have behaved similarly. These common events and works make it easy to lead the nation towards the direction based on which common national goals are achieved there for Curriculum should be developed based on common values, which should be acceptable to all racial, ethnic, and religious groups, similarly, people gender sexual preferences and other differences should not elicit discrimination. In this regard society has also a role in the development of an individual's personality like in societal curriculum, about societal curriculum "Carlos Cortes" states "massive ongoing informal curriculum of family, peer groups, neighborhoods, churches, organizations, occupations, mass media, and other social forces that educate all of us throughout our lives", There for society cannot be ignored in the personality development of individuals. Society and the education system both direct impact and change individual personalities, society's norms govern interpersonal relations and produce a model personality (Benedict). The curriculum worker who helps determine education's content, activities, and environment plays a major role in shaping and indirectly socializing students (Allan & Ornstein, 2016 p: 152). curriculum development does not mean to just developing the content but it's a whole process that how that content is being implemented in real classroom situations where there are diversified and pluralistic societies engaged based on some common national as well as

international goals giving priority to cognitive processes that are developed through socially constructed and mediated experience (Burden, Williams P:67). In a single national curriculum although efforts have been made to eradicate the social disparity by following the goals and targets of SDG-4 and, the trends in international mathematics and science study (TIMSS) standards. But the main challenge is to meet the standers of SDG-4 and TIMSS. Because the education ratio in Pakistan is low as compared to other developed as well as developing countries, the average student-to-teacher ratio in Pakistan is 44.08 students per teacher. The situation in our schools is a desperate one, particularly in the sciences. As in a very rough guess, in all Pakistani schools combined, there are probably no more than a few hundred science teachers, who understand what they teach and can be therefore considered proper teachers (Hoodbhoy p:13) in this situation it will be very difficult to achieve the national curriculum goals, especially in science and mathematics. The only drafting of a curriculum may not be guaranteed to bring the quality unless it is implemented properly on gross root school level. A poor quality education system may be one of the most important reasons that the poor countries do not grow (Memon, 2007). Although there are a number of challenges but still have hope that this SNC will be a harbinger to bring uniformity because the aim of changing the national curriculum is to eliminate the curricular diversity which has been faced in almost all educational policies since 1947

Research Approach

In this particular domain, the research approach is chosen as policy analysis (historical research) where the previous documents and policies related to national curriculums like 1992, 1998, and 2009 policies and curriculum reforms cycles will be discussed and compared the previous challenges and obstacles which may cause of failure to bring the uniformity in the education system. In this regard, the other available sources like different books related to curriculum development, media, social media, and the opinions of public and private sector educationists and stakeholders will be considered the key source of changes and especially the discussion and debate on correspondence in the Pakistani media concerning different forms of social, religious, ethnic, and cultural difference. The concerns of various private and public sector stakeholders in education concerning the draft of a single national curriculum document, the process of consultation, national debate, and negotiations are the main source of reference regarding curricular reform and uniformity.

Race, Gender, Class, Religion, Ethnicity

Pakistan is a multicultural and multi-ethnic country where different ethnic people are living together and these ethnic groups have their own cultures and identities. From the ancient Indus Valley civilization to the modern era, the demographic history of Pakistan includes the arrival and settlement of many ethnic groups and cultures in the modern region of Pakistan Eurasia and the nearby Middle East. And with the amalgamation of these different cultures, new cultures emerge. According to the 2017 census In Pakistan Muslims are 96.2 percent but among these Muslims, there are many sects who have their different religious practices and creeds. There are religious and sectarian groups such as Ahmadis, Christians, Sikhs, Hindus, Parses, and Kailash. On the other hand, there are many ethnic regional communities in Pakistan these ethno regional communities have their own identities these ethnicities are Sindhis, Punjabis, pushtons, Baloch, Gilgities, Balties, Kashmiris, and several smaller groups within these regional communities. The representation of these multi-ethnic communities,

their cultures, and customs on a national level is the prime responsibility of Curriculum developers. These diversities are the strength in a manner to diversify the inter-ethnic harmony but the equity of representation is challenging for the curriculum developers. Similarly, these ethnicities have their own culture and representations. On one hand, this diversity sign of national unity that despite having a difference we are one nation but on the other hand these diversified cultures have their own roots and identities which may cause them to develop their own curriculums like Slattery states “If the curriculum ignores Social constructions, identity formation, and suppresses individual visions and dreams in the content, context of education, and if the individual learners are constantly required to adopt someone else world view then either hopes will be suppressed and dreams will be repressed. People will implement the other’s vision on themselves, and they will express their anger against the system that excludes their voice”. (Slattery, 1995, p. 135). in Public sector school’s curriculum, Cambridge system, private schools curriculum, and Deeni Madrasses have their own curriculum, which is quite different from one another, exemplary in most of the Deeni Madaris, science and Mathematics isn’t taught and focus is only on the lower level cognitive domain like remembering and understanding levels but on the other side the Cambridge and private schools focus on the science, Mathematics and on the higher level of cognitive domain like synthesis, analysis, and creativity.

The Old National Curriculum

Work has been done on various education policies and curriculum cycles to promote quality education in Pakistan, some of these educational policies and curriculum reforms are the National education policy of 1972 and 1973 -76 first curriculum reform cycle, the national education policy of 1979, and second curriculum reform from cycle 1982-85, the national education policy of 1992 and third curriculum reform cycle 1992-95, the national education policy of 1998 and fourth curriculum reform 1998-2001 and national education policy of 2009 and fifth curriculum reform cycle 2009-2012. Although policies and curriculum reforms have been done no significant results have come out yet. Despite all these efforts, there seems to be a double standard somewhere in the implementation of national curriculum across the country, such as different education boards and their different education systems have always been obstructing to bringing uniformity in the education system. There are three main types of education systems in Pakistan, these education systems are, on one hand, the elite class that attaches great importance to English education or English medium schools which include the Cambridge education system and many other private sector institutions that prefer to send their children in these schools. On the other hand, there are middle-class people who give importance to Urdu medium schools or Urdu medium institutions, it either shows their love for the national language or they are forced to teach Urdu to their children as they do not have access to English medium schools. On the third hand, all the students of Deeni madrassas love to learn the Arabic language due to their affinity to the Quran and Sunnah.

All these English medium, Urdu medium schools, and Deeni madrassas have different learning objectives and goals, which directly or indirectly influence the national education policies and national curriculum goals, for example in

English medium schools the prime education concern and its goal is to access the latest scientific development, research work and its practical implementation in a real-life situation, on the other hand, the basic concern and the goals of Deeni Madrassas is to learn the basic principles and learning of Islam in this situation the implementation of curriculum and to achieve the national goals, have been very difficult. Even if it is presented as an educational draft but its implementation in real classroom situations is a very difficult task.

The New National Curriculum.

A new national curriculum has been developed with mutual consultation with stakeholders like all federating units, public sector, and private sector educational institutions, LUMS and Aga Khan University Institute of Educational Development AKU-IED, Deeni Madaris. The process of reform discussed the involvement and attempt at widespread participation by various stakeholders, educationists from all provinces including Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir, teachers, educators, parents, and luminary educational institutions were involved. All federating units and especially for English, Mathematics, and Science the consultation and guidance have been taken from the Cambridge University UK. The learner's standards have been compared with the learning standards of Singapore, Malaysia, the United Kingdom, and Italy. Some of the key considerations in a single national curriculum are aligned with the goals and targets of SDG-4, focus on skill-based and inclusive education, emerging international trends in teaching and learning, respect and appreciation for different cultures and Religions in a local and global context, alignment with trends in international mathematics and science study (TIMSS), usage of ICT and development of 21st-century skills including analytical, critical and creative thinking

Discussion

Challenges and concerns in New National Curriculum

The development of the new single national curriculum is a positive step to bring uniformity in the education sector which will lead toward the elimination of individual disparities in society however this only step towards change in the education sector but we have not only emphasized it on the written curriculum. The actual attention needs to focus on the other types of curriculum as well for example: taught curriculum, supported curriculum, assessed curriculum, recommended curriculum, hidden curriculum, excluded curriculum, learned curriculum, social or societal curriculum, phantom curriculum, rhetorical curriculum, concomitant curriculum, received curriculum, the curriculum in use and electronic curriculum and internal curriculum. The new national single curriculum implementation is a real challenge for the stakeholders because so far what the development has been done is only about the planned curriculum but the operational and hidden curriculum is challenging for stakeholders as well as for teachers. As Eisner differentiates between planned and operational curricula. After considering several options, the planned curriculum is developed by the curriculum wing. It is usually prepared by the curriculum wing or curriculum committee but as the result of actual and real classroom situations the \operational curriculum emerges and teachers require to adjust the situation according

to its need. The hidden curriculum which arises from interactions among students and between students and teachers is also a challenge for stakeholders.

Secondly: the educational expenditure in Pakistan is nearly two percent of its Gross domestic product GDP. According to United Nation Development Program (UNDP) Human development index (HDI), Pakistan ranked at 152. This low budget allocation for the education system makes it difficult to bring uniformity in the education system because uniform education should mean that in the country all the children should get uniform opportunities to the quality education, disregarding their economic and social background in this regard teachers professional development training, training regarding single national curriculum is indispensable but current budget is negligible in this regard.

Thirdly: the curriculum should be designed in such a way that learning goals should be aligned and complement each other from one stage to the next but in a single national curriculum from 2022 single national curriculum is being implemented in the primary section but especially in madrassas students even don't know simple addition and subtraction then how the mathematics and science concepts will understand without having the previous knowledge.

Fourth: there are sixteen thousand registered madrassas and many more unregistered madrassas (GoP, 2006) five madrassa boards namely: Ittihad Madaris Al-Islamia Pakistan, Ittehad Madaris Al-Arabia Pakistan for Deobandi school of thought, Nizam-ul-Madaris Pakistan for Barelvi- Minhaj- ul- Quran), Majma-ul- Madaris Taleem-ul-Kitab wal Hikmat for Ahle- Tashee and Wafaq-ul- Madaris Al- Rizvia Pakistan for Barelvi. Most Islamic subjects are taught in these Madrassas such as Memorization of the Quran, Interpretation of the Quran, Hadith, Usul ul hadith (Rules of Hadith) Fiqh, usul ul fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence and principle of Islamic Jurisprudence, Sarf and Nahu, Muslim History shariah (Islamic law) and Mantaq (Logic). If SNC is implemented then approximately forty thousand teachers will be required for science and Mathematics if two teachers are hired for each Madrassa.

Fifth: all Madrassas and many public and private schools are focused on the lower cognitive domain like memorization, cramming, and understanding on the other side private sector schools emphasize on the holistic development of the child by developing all learning domains and even SNP has been designed based on SDG-4 goals and targets, and alignment with trends in international mathematics and science study (TIMSS), and in SNC urged the usage of ICT and development of 21st-century skills including analytical, critical and creative thinking. So in the current situation, the implementation of the curriculum in real classroom situations will be a challenge for curriculum developers as well as for teachers that how these sophisticated SDG-4 targets and TIMSS alignment trends with international mathematics and science study and ICT will be integrated where the students are and even teachers are unaware about the mathematics and science development. As somebody. A.H. Nayyar writes in his article "Madrasah Education" that the present-day existing Madrasah education indicates the intellect of the ice age when for reasons that are still debated. For the Madrassah teachers and students, human progress has no meaning and Knowledge is immutable truth and unchallengeable. The teacher considers the student as empty vessels to be filled up with knowledge. The questioning, logical reasoning, and percepts are not welcomed. Punishment is common, the teaching style is authoritarian and memorization is crucial. Moreover, there are seven hundred schools in Pakistan that are affiliated with Cambridge international education system and these schools are not bound to follow the single national curriculum. According to Cambridge international results June 2021 exam series to A-level schools in Pakistan more than 25,000 Cambridge international students in Pakistan have received their AS and A-

Level results. The education minister of Pakistan and curriculum developers consider it a modicum number of students and if these seven hundred schools are not following or implementing a single national curriculum then it doesn't impact. It shows the government's real intention and double standard towards the uniformity of education in Pakistan because all elite class students are studying in Cambridge international schools and these modicum number is enough to occupy the hegemony in the education system.

Recommendations: Suggestions for Single National Curriculum.

It's a laudable step to bring uniformity and to eliminate the disparity in the education sector however challenges need to focus by giving autonomy at the grass root school level to encourage the learners and teachers to develop school curriculum by involving the school community by considering and comparing the national goals and local milieu. For the change, continuous and supportive leadership, a visionary change agent, and inspirational stimulus is deemed essential in this regard the professional development of teachers according to the new curriculum is required. Further suggestions could be

1. The development of a written curriculum is not a guarantee to bring uniformity in the country unless the implementation at the grass-root level is not focused, therefore there should be alternative and backup and follow-up plans that how the challenges will be addressed and focused after the implementation of the single national curriculum.
2. As the planned curriculum is developed after considering several options and is usually prepared by the Curriculum committee or curriculum wing the operational curriculum emerges in the classroom as a result of the actual situation and requires that teachers make adjustments as needed. Therefore at the grass-root level, there should be an implementation plan that how all teachers will be trained to handle emerging situations at the classroom level.
3. There should be training and sessions for teachers that how to handle the emerging situations which develop as a cause of hidden curriculum. The hidden curriculum is a type of curriculum that arises from interactions among students and between students and teachers is also a challenge for stakeholders
4. There should be allocated special budget for the implementation of a single national curriculum and the existing education budget needs to increase from 2.5 percent to 5 percent.
5. For the implementation of the single national curriculum in Madrassas On an urgent basis approximately forty thousand science and math teachers need to be hired.
6. Uniformity of the education system will be questionable until its implementation to the elite class who prefer to study in Cambridge international schools and this modicum number shows hegemony in higher-level jobs.
7. To eliminate the curriculum design gap the curriculum implementation should be in a sustainable way, especially in deeni madrassas where there in most of the Madrassas science and math subjects are taught as new subjects.

8. The education system reflects and strengthens cultural, ethnic, social, and moral values, therefore, Pakistan's educational interventions have to be based on equity representation of ethnic, cultural, and common social customs.

References

- Benedict, R., & Mead, M. (2019). *Race: Science and politics*. University of Georgia Press.
- Burden, R. and Williams, M. (2002). *Thinking Through the Curriculum*. 29 west 35th Street, New York, NY 10001.
- Dean, B. L. (2005). Citizenship Education in Pakistani Schools: Problems and Possibilities. *International Journal of Citizenship and Teacher Education*.
- Fullan, M., Miles, M.B., 1992. Getting reform right: what works and what doesn't. *Phi Delta Kappan* 73 (10), 744–752.
- Gitlin, A., Margonis, F., 1995. The political aspect of reform: teacher resistance as good sense. *American Journal of Education* 103 (4), 377–405.
- Govt. of Pakistan (1998) National Education Policy 1998-2010. Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- Govt. of Pakistan (1978) National Education Policy 1979 1st Draft, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- Govt. of Pakistan (1979) National Education Policy 1979, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- Govt. of Pakistan (1990) National Education Policy 1990, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- Govt. of Pakistan (1992) National Education Policy 1992, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
- Hoodbhoy, P. (1998). *Education and the State: fifty years of Pakistan*. Karachi Oxford University Press. Islamabad.
- Memon, G. R. (2007). Education in Pakistan: The key issues, problems, and the new challenges. *Journal of Management and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 47-55.
- Ornstein, A. C., Levine, D. U., Gutek, G., & Vocke, D. E. (2016). *Foundations of education*. Cengage learning.
- Slattery, P. (1995) *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era*. New York: Garland Publishing.