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### SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AT SCHOOL LEVEL IN PAKISTAN: EXPECTED CHALLENGES, MERITS AND DEMERITS.

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#### ABSTARCT

Education is considered to be an important component in nation-building. In one system of education for all, in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction, and a common platform of assessment, all children have a fair and equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education. A Single National Curriculum is a step in that direction. One of the most significant benefits of having a unified national curriculum is the promotion of social equality. When it is fully implemented, all children will enjoy an equal and fair chance of receiving a good education. Education is considered a potent force that paves the way for any country's political, social, and economic development. A viable education system enables the nation to achieve its goals and is a key indicator of progress and prosperity. However, in Pakistan, the education system remains in shambles. Pakistan's recently introduced a Single National Curriculum for schools across the country, intending to unite the country's children under the umbrella of a single curriculum to promise uniform educational attainment. In 2018, when the ex-government of PTI assumed power, they promised a series of educational reforms that would improve outcomes across Pakistani schools and bridge the gap between private and public educational institutions. It was also thought that it would reduce the fragmentation and inequalities of

Pakistan's school system and organize a modernized "uniform education system." It has been observed that the primary school dropout rate is 22.7%, which is very alarming. Pakistan is flawed by convoluted problems that influence and affect children's education. It is more convenient to assume than achieve that one curriculum can address all those intricate problems. The present study is descriptive, and it investigates the importance of SNC and its merits and demerits at the school level. A mixed-method approach was used for the development of the report. A semi-structured interview protocol was applied to know the experts' opinions concerning SNC. To collect data, 150 senior subject specialists and educational administrators were randomly selected to know their perceptions about SNC. An open-ended questionnaire was designed for inquiry about relevant research answers. Similarly, the outcomes of the research were explained descriptively on the basis of the acquired data.

## INTRODUCTION

Curriculum refers to a planned succession of syllabuses or, to put it another way, whatever that makes up a course of study at any school or college (Barnes, 2018). Curriculum is a set of principles that students should be taught in order to meet subject requirements. The curriculum refers to what is taught in a particular course or subject. A curriculum is an interactive system of instruction and learning with specific goals, topics, strategies, measurement, and resources (Ku, Lee, Wei, & Weir, 2019). A variety of possible experiences are set up in the school with the purpose of disciplining children and youth in collective ways of thinking and behaving. This collection of experiences is referred to as the curriculum (Smith, Jayaraman, Clerkin, & Yu, 2018).

Single National Curriculum (SNC) is used as a single vision. It's based on a concept that advocates for universal education. It has a single curricular structure that applies to all classes. The medium of instruction is the same for all grades from 1 to 12. All provincial governments of Pakistan have been forced to implement a common system of education in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction, and assessment, ensuring that all children across the country have a fair and equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education as a result of the government's decision to provide a single system of education for all, eradicating inequality and class differences (Tayyab, Umer, & Sajid, 2022). The absence of integration in Pakistan's educational system has resulted in large learning gaps, resulting in socioeconomic inequality. The educational system in Pakistan is divided into three types: public or government schools, private schools, and madrassas. There are major discrepancies in the education provided in these three systems, resulting in a significant divide among the students educated in these schools. The SNC was established with the goal of bridging the gap between the three types of systems (Jahanzaib, Fatima, & e Nayab, 2021).

The recently introduced Single National Curriculum for schools across Pakistan promises uniform educational attainment for Pakistan's children, but there are several impediments to equal educational outcomes for Pakistan's children, as Maryam Naqvi argues, and only a multi-pronged, composite strategy can hope to overcome Pakistan's complex educational problems. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Mr. Imran Khan, recently launched the Single

National Curriculum (SNC) with the purpose of bringing all of the country's youngsters under one curriculum. However, there is little indication of what this curriculum's implementation will achieve, according to the government's plans (Irfan, 2021). The curriculum will be implemented in three phases: first, for Grades 1–5, in the academic year 2021–22; second, for Grades 6–8, in the academic year 2022–23; and third, for Grades 9–12, in the academic year 2023–24. The Federal government has directed that, with the exception of Sindh, all provinces implement the SNC in all public and private schools, as well as religious madrasas, in the first phase. It is unclear whether it will be able to remedy Pakistan's current educational disparities (Ahmed, 2020).

Complex difficulties plaguing Pakistan have a severe impact on children's education. It is easier to claim than to do that a single curriculum can address all of these complex problems. There are more reasons for educational inequality in Pakistan than the fact that students follow different curricula, attend private and public schools, are wealthy and poor, and (those who can afford it) pursue higher education abroad rather than local education; the reasons for educational inequality go beyond these factors. Poverty is one of the major factors prohibiting parents from sending their children to school. Parents' limited resources and purchasing abilities, as well as unsafe transportation services, jeopardize education, particularly for female children, with girls dropping out at a higher rate than boys. More information on how the SNC would result in more educated girls and close the gender gap in Pakistan's school system would be fascinating. The issue of girls dropping out of school is not related to the nature of the curriculum; as a result, adopting SNC in schools will not fix the problem. There are societal barriers that discourage girls from obtaining higher education, such as early marriage. School curricula will be useless if girls continue to marry at a young age as long as they are not the ones who benefit from it (Tahir, 2022).

The SNC strives for religious neutrality by developing interfaith tolerance and providing to the needs of minority religion students by teaching them according to their religious beliefs. However, implementation gaps make it a challenging task for the government, as not all private and public schools in every province will accept the SNC, necessitating the government's development of a strict monitoring system. Following the 18th Amendment to Pakistan's Constitution, provinces were given the rights to create their curriculum, syllabus, and education standards (Tahir, 2022). The SNC appears to be a breach of the Provinces' privilege, and the Federal Government appears to have violated the 18th Amendment by introducing it. Sindh's Education Minister, Mr. Sardar Shah, expressed this view while explaining why the province would not be implementing the SNC, claiming that the province has sole authority over the design and implementation of its education curriculum, and that the SNC imposed by the federal government was an unacceptable imposition. The SNC is no longer regarded "national" because the Sindh provincial government has refused to implement it (Bashir, Yasmin, & Ahmad, 2021).

### *Advantages Of SNC*

According to Qazi (2020) The promotion of socioeconomic equality is one of the most significant advantages of having a single national curriculum. When completely implemented, all children will have the same opportunity to receive an excellent education. There was social coherence at all levels, which contributed to national integration. Inequality and social class differences would be decreased, giving everyone an equal chance at upward social mobility.

### *Social Equality*

In Pakistan, one of the advantages of SNC is that it fosters social equality. One of SNC's key benefits is the reduction of socioeconomic inequalities. Students who attend public or private schools and live in common cities or the federal and provincial capitals, regardless of their socioeconomic status. The socioeconomic class of a child has an impact on their life. SNC could be utilized to reduce or eliminate the threat entirely.

### *Easier for Students to Migrate*

The general public, as well as government employees in particular, frequently change their destinations. Transfer orders, security concerns, or any other personal issue forces them to leave; in such cases, it is easier for their families to migrate their children from one school to another if the country has an SNC in place; otherwise, children risk wasting time.

### *Removal of Educational Gaps*

In the field of education, private schools are currently leading the way. In competitive sectors, students with degrees from private colleges are preferred, and the truth is that there is a quality difference between public and private school students. The implementation of SNC would contribute to closing the gap and levelling the playing field.

### *Achievement of Common Objectives*

Promoting national cohesion and integration will be easier because the SNC's contents will be applicable across the country. Pakistanis are divided by language, religion, customs, ethnicity, and other elements in a multilingual and multireligious country. SNC might be a first step toward uniting the country's varied peoples under a common platform.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Curriculum is frequently defined in dictionaries as a school's courses, however this definition is rarely used in schools. The learning standards or learning objectives that students are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects that students are given; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings

used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student performance are all examples of curriculum. A teacher's curriculum is the set of learning requirements, lessons, assignments, and resources used to plan and teach a certain course (Sinnema, Nieveen, & Priestley, 2020). A curriculum consists of a body of knowledge to be imparted, a set of expected learning outcomes, a road plan for achieving these objectives, and methods for monitoring the outcomes. The advocates of the SNC believe that the concept of a universal education system is a lofty one. The concept of an equal education system appeals to the majority of Pakistanis because education in Pakistan is so segregated on the basis of equal opportunity and access, learning quality, educational goals, social class, and parental money. In truth, the SNC is a centralized collection of goals, norms, and standards that aren't founded on solid research or national consensus.

Single National Curriculum (SNC) is a system in which all students in a country or state receive uniform education in all aspects. Academic imbalances created by public or government schools, private schools, and madaris are reduced to a minimum under this type of system, particularly in Pakistan, so that everyone has an equal chance in the state's education system. It refers to a single educational system that includes the curriculum, instructional medium, and student evaluation procedures for all students (Jahanzaib, Fatima, & e Nayab, 2022).

Public schools have a bad reputation in terms of all areas that contribute to quality education. The main issue is a lack of investment and oversight on the part of the instructors and staff. On the other hand, private schools invest more and provide a better education than public schools. Madaris, on the other hand, focuses solely on religious education. Considering all of this, it is plausible to infer that Pakistan's educational system is disjointed and inconsistent (Panjwani & Chaudhary, 2022).

Pakistan has fought for a sense of national identity for a long time. It has been concerned with developing a national identity since its founding in 1947, which is now reflected in the country's educational policies and curricula. The emphasis on forging an identity through public education in Pakistan has converted education into a weapon for nation-building at the price of critical thinking and civic imagination, as well as diversity, empathy, and coexistence. The goal of education-based uniformity has long been evident in Pakistani policy, and it is at the heart of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) party's proposed "Single National Curriculum (Tahir, 2022)." The gap between curriculum and learning outcomes criteria inspired the idea of a single national curriculum. The Curriculum comprises all of a child's learning experiences throughout the educational process, whereas learning standards are intended and necessary globally for effective learning. It includes infrastructure, texts, evaluation systems, co-curricular activities, and instructional methods. The government has adopted minimal learning standards, which are an increase from the minimum learning standards in the 2006 curriculum. The curriculum must be changed on a regular basis to address the difficulties of changing societal needs (Bari, 2021).

In Pakistan, the National Curriculum Council (NCC), a federal institution, is in charge of changing the curriculum on a regular basis. The current version of the curriculum changes, dubbed "Single National Curriculum" by the PTI government, is largely based on the PTI government's manifesto, which raised the issue of a Single National Curriculum to eliminate class conflicts in the educational process, such as secular vs. religious, private vs. public differences. They hoped it would level the playing field for everybody and enhance social and economic mobility. Because of significant scepticism about the nature of a curriculum established by a single organisation, the idea of a single national curriculum has been a difficult matter since then. Following the 18th amendment, education is now considered a provincial duty. The unified curriculum must be evaluated by the provincial textbook board, and the province may reject it, as the Sindh government did with the current government effort. In 2018, NCC began the process of developing a curriculum, assembling a task group made up of a variety of stakeholders, including members of many NGOs, educational systems, and well-known specialists in the field. Development practitioners carved out the real documentation. These professionals merely shared their strategic perspectives. Representatives from provincial and federal ministries, as well as instructors from private schools, formed various workgroups. They looked at prior study on the concept, utilised studies performed in bubbles in many fields, and produced a single curriculum that incorporated all of their findings (Rubab, Yousuf, & Dahar, 2021).

Pakistan has fought for a sense of national identity for a long time. It has been concerned with developing a common identity for the nation-state since its inception in 1947, and this fascination is still reflected in the country's educational programmes and curricula. The emphasis on forging an identity through public education has turned education into a weapon for nation-building in Pakistan, at the expense of critical thinking and civic imagination, as well as diversity, empathy, and coexistence. The goal of education-based uniformity has long been evident in Pakistani policy, and it is at the heart of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehrik-i-Insaf (PTI) political party's proposed "Single National Curriculum (Zaman, Saleem, & Ali, 2021)." Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been a hot topic among educators, scholars, and the media since its publication this year. The debate centers on why Pakistan requires a federally decided curriculum although education was devolved to the provinces in 2010 under the 18th constitutional amendment. Critics believe that the SNC is a vehicle to reverse this at the request of the powerful military establishment, which has always opposed the 18th Amendment, and that it is a tool to further indoctrinate an already conservative society (Khan & Nadeem, 2020).

The SNC places a premium on political and moral aims while ignoring the cognitive and behavioral purposes of education. This can be seen in the content of the curriculum overview document, as well as in the justifications given by the education minister and his advisers. It was built on the ambition to merge madrasahs (religious schools that only teach Islam) into mainstream public education and to create a homogeneous society (Durrani & Nawani, 2020). For years, the West has pressured Pakistan to reform and control its

madrasahs, believing they are safe havens for Islamic extremism and terrorism. Reforming madrasah education, on the other hand, has always been a sensitive issue; no administration has ever succeeded in doing so. Religious schools provide boarding schools for the poorest segments of society, where students can get not only a free education but also food and housing. In the past, the administration has constantly fought every attempt at reform. Now, it appears that the government is bowing in to religious leaders in an effort to mainstream madrasahs by mixing more religious content from madrasah curriculum into the public education system, which already has plenty of it. The present administration, led by cricketer-turned-politician Khan, uses Islamic symbols and slogans to appeal to common people's aspirational ideas in its drive to rule a polarized nation. This affected the creation of the SNC, which attempts to appease both influential religious figures and the security lobby. As a result, all textbooks emphasize Islamic beliefs and the importance of a united nation, as well as Urdu as a subject, philosophy, and media (Kausar, 2020).

Meanwhile, rather than being taught as a subject, English will be taught as a language. This seemingly simple term emphasizes that language is imbued with a certain philosophy, civilization, and ethos. Under the new curriculum, English will only be taught as a set of grammatical rules and a means of communication. How can a language be divorced from its past, power, culture, morals, literature, and imagination? This is a question that the designers of the SNC ignore. The SNC takes advantage of the political aspects of education by aiming to assimilate Pakistanis through assimilation, which achieves uniformity by imposing a single culture that denies the validity of other cultures. This is Pakistan's nation-building project. As a result of such indoctrination in the classroom, generations of Pakistanis will be bereft of creativity and critical thinking. This is done through instilling beliefs in students to the point that they are unable or unwilling to evaluate or question them on their own. It's a type of education that promotes students to accept a religious or political concept without question. Critical thinking, on the other hand, uses suitable facts and logic to assess ideas, judgments, and behaviors (Ahmad, Sultana, & Jamil, 2021). Opponents are also concerned about the inclusion of other Pakistani languages in public education. Social justice and respect necessitate that each group's values, customs, and beliefs be treated equally, and proponents of diversity claim that educational diversity should reflect cultural diversity. Pakistan is home to 66 different languages, including Punjabi, Pashto, Sindhi, Balochi, and Urdu, to name a few. Languages, customs, lifestyles, core ideas, and values must all be represented in a country's curriculum (Amirali & Halai, 2021).

The SNC ignores Pakistan's cultural diversity and believes that languages other than Urdu have no educational or cultural value in Pakistan. "Promotion of diversity of culture and languages, particularly regional languages of Pakistan," says the Urdu curriculum for classes 1 through 5. Languages that aren't labelled as regional will be overlooked. The SNC also mandates that "diversity of culture and languages" be taught in Urdu, suggesting that Urdu will be utilized to integrate all other languages and cultures. Regional languages are included because their speakers have political influence, but

those who speak the "others" have little political clout and live on the outskirts of society, and thus are refused recognition. Because of its obsession with education's political and moral purposes, as well as its contempt for Pakistan's cultural and linguistic variety, the SNC is a propaganda and brainwashing tool (Jabeen, 2020).

## RESEARCH METHODS

A methodology is a scientific study and logical process after selecting a problem. It is based on the selection of sampling and data collection to get the required results of the research. Usually, the researchers in this chapter mention the research design and the geographical area where the research is conducted. This study is descriptive, and it follows the mixed-method approach for the development of the research report. The data of the present study was collected using a mixed-method research technique. A questionnaire was designed for the research respondents who were educational administrators and senior subject specialists in the education department at the school level in Punjab. Likewise, an interview is a verbal conversation between two people with the specific objective of collecting relevant and important information for the research study. Hence, to get the perceptions of educational experts and subject specialists concerning the single national curriculum, a semi-structured interview was conducted. Some interviews were conducted face-to-face, and some were conducted online. Data was assembled through some open-ended research questions. A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects of research. The population of the present research was 150 senior subject specialists and educational administrators who were randomly selected to know their insights about a single national curriculum and its merits and demerits at the school level in Punjab. Similarly, based on the collected data, the study results were illustrated via percentages and in a descriptive way

### *Data analysis*

#### *Statistical Analysis of Senior Subject Specialists and Experts' Questionnaire*

Statements	N	Agree /Disagree	frequency	%
1. New SNC deliver Social Cohesion and National Integration.	150	Agree	128	85.3%
		Disagree	22	14.6%
2. SNC offers Equal opportunities for upward social movement.	150	Agree	134	89.3%
		Disagree	16	10.6
3. In new SNC all children will have a fair opportunity to receive high quality education.	150	Agree	137	91.3%
		Disagree	13	8.6%
4. Alleviation of inequalities in educational content across the multiple streams.	150	Agree	123	82%
		Disagree	27	18%
5. SNC facilitates to minorities for their religion, cultural and economic development.	150	Agree	103	68.6%
		Disagree	47	31.3%
6. New SNC offers cultural and	150	Agree	113	75.3%
		Disagree	37	24.6%
		Agree	141	94%
		Disagree	9	6%

social harmony.	150	Agree	93	62%
7. SNC provides national integration through knowledge about history of Pakistan.	150	Disagree	57	38%
8. New SNC covers various learning and teaching domains.	150	Agree	40	26.6
		Disagree	110	73.3%
9. New SNC is easy for all subject teachers.	150	Agree	70	46.6%
		Disagree	80	53.3%
10. New SNC is easy both for urban and rural area students.	150	Agree	111	74%
		Disagree	39	26%
11. New SNC offers and ensure basic and equal chances of learning to all citizens of Pakistan.	150	Agree	41	27.3%
		Disagree	111	74%
12. Single national curriculum is easy to teach both for new and older teachers.at school level.				

Results of Table 4.1 indicate that the majority of the subject specialists and educational experts argued that the new SNC would deliver social cohesion and national integration among the provinces, and almost 85.3% of the respondents agreed with this statement. 89.3% of the research participants agreed that SNC offers equal opportunities for upward social movement. In the same way, 91.3% argued that all children would have a fair opportunity to receive a high-quality education in the new SNC. The New SNC promotes the alleviation of inequalities in educational content across the multiple streams; 82% of the total respondents agreed with this statement. Likewise, 68.6% of the total respondents responded that the new SNC facilitates minorities' religious, cultural, and economic development. And according to the educational experts, SNC offers cultural and social harmony among the country's provinces. 75.3% agreed with this statement. 94% of the total respondents argued that the new SNC provides national integration through knowledge of the history of Pakistan.

Similarly, 62% of the research participants answered that the new SNC covers various learning and teaching domains. 73.3% of the respondents argue that the new SNC is not easy for rural students where the literacy rate is very low, and teachers are not well trained. In contrast, only 40% of the respondents agreed with this statement in favor of a uniform curriculum at the national level. All citizens of Pakistan are entitled to basic and equal chances of learning; 26% of the research participants argued in favor of this statement, while 74% of the experts commented against this question. A single national curriculum is easy for new and older teachers to teach. At the school level, 74% of subject specialists and educational experts argued against this statement that the new SNC is not easy for all subject teachers at the primary level. Teachers need training and refresher courses to teach this uniform curriculum.

**On the basis of findings of questionnaire and semi structured interviews, merits and drawbacks of Single National Curriculum have been explained in detail.**

### *Merits of Single National Curriculum*

One of the most important benefits of having a unified national curriculum is the promotion of social equality. When it is fully implemented, all children will have an equal and fair chance of receiving a good education. And at all levels, there will be social cohesion, resulting in national integration. Inequality and social class disparities can be reduced, resulting in equitable opportunities for upward social mobility for all.

The new SNC attempts to bring religious neutrality by promoting intra-faith harmony and catering to the needs of students from minority faiths by teaching them according to their religious beliefs.

A single national curriculum is supposed to be an important component of nation-building. To ensure national cohesion, integration, and preservation of the ideological foundation of the state, certain educational functions are the responsibilities, including curriculum, syllabus, planning, policy, and educational standards. After the 18th amendment, education is being devolved to the provincial mandate after the 18th amendment.

The ex-government of PTI planned to implement a single national curriculum (SNC) that would establish a uniform system in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction, and a common platform of assessment so that all children have a fair and equal opportunity to receive a high-quality education.

The ex-PM of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan introduced the Single National Curriculum (SNC), intending to unite the country's children under the umbrella of a single curriculum. The good thing about SNC is that it pushes the ball forward on a very important issue, but perhaps the not-so-good thing is that it seems to have been put together in undue haste for no reason at all.

According to the new SNC, the course of the different grades will be the same for everyone. Except for O level and A level, ninety percent of the country's students will study the same curriculum in their schools. It is easy for the local publishers to print these books on a local level according to the theme and model of the books with the government's permission.

The spirit of SNC rightly removes the disparity of equal educational opportunities among the children at the school level in the country where they can study the compulsory subjects in English medium. Moreover, the ministry of education will continue to update and revise the overall curriculum standard so that the different subjects being instructed are up to date in terms of global knowledge.

Like the previous National Curriculum in 2006, the current SNC will only provide the minimum learning standards that every child should be able to achieve in a particular subject at a certain grade level.

Religious education must be emphasized in a single national curriculum. It fairly generates an educational environment that brings uniformity of national

identity and greater national cohesion. According to the new SNC, it is also very important that subjects are taught in the language that allows the students to reach their educational objectives in the highest optimal way.

Policies of the new SNC are open to reproduction and revision for the betterment of the learners. It is hoped that the new single national curriculum will perform as a living standard document. The concerned higher authorities will adopt the same method to create useful and healthy discussion and timely amendment of the SNC in this direction.

According to the new SNC set, it has been directed that other than English, Math, Science, and all other subjects will be taught in a national language like China and Japan.

A single national curriculum is unswervingly short of providing a complete solution to the deteriorating quality of education in the country. It further states that those behind the idea seem obsessed with bringing national integration through SNC instead of fixing the fundamental educational mess. The existing progress in education is another effort by the ex-government of PTI.

In the new SNC, the early childhood Care education curriculum has been reviewed, keeping in view the local culture and environment alongside modern trends in ECCE and according to the national and international obligations. For underprivileged children, the new ECCE plays an imperative role in reimbursing for the difficulties in the family and contesting educational disparities.

### ***Striking Features of Single National Curriculum in Pakistan***

In view of the educational administrators and subject specialists of upper Punjab;

One system of Education for all, in terms of curriculum, medium of instruction and a platform of assessment which will ensure:

- All the children will have fair and equal opportunities to obtain high quality education
- They will enjoy impartiality and ultimate equity of education
- Their Social Consistency and National Integration will be preferred under SNC.
- Improvement of inequalities in education content across the multiple streams
- Equal opportunities for upward social mobility
- Complete progress of children in the light of emerging international trends and local aspirations
- Easy and smooth inter-provincial movement of students and teachers.
- In comparison to the 2006 curriculum, where standards, benchmarks, and learning goals were not defined for each subject curriculum, the Single

National Curriculum is based on standards, benchmarks, and outcomes across all disciplines and topics of the subjects.

- Beginning in 2006, Islamiyat was combined with General Knowledge up to grade 2 and then became a separate subject in Grade 3 onwards. Now Islamiyat is taught as a compulsory subject in the SNC from grade one to grade twelve.
- Formerly, from Grade 3 to onwards, non-Muslim students were required to take Ethics instead of Islamiyat. Now, a new subject of Religious Education has been introduced and offered for non-Muslim students from grade 1 to onwards in new SNC.
- The material and contents of the SNC for Maths and Science has been matched with the contemporary and test content structure, as well as with international commitments. The SNC aims to instil in students' values and characteristics such as honesty, tolerance, respect, peaceful coexistence, environmental awareness and care, democracy, human rights, sustainable development, global citizenship, personal care, protection and safety.
- The Single National Curriculum focuses on the development of logical, critical, and creative thinking skills through an activity-based methodology rather than a fixed teacher-centered strategy.
- Use of ICT has been unified in the national curriculum for the first time.
- The 2006 curriculum was applied and implemented only in the public schools and some low-cost private schools. The new SNC will be applied and implemented across the boards in all the schools of Pakistan including public and private schools as well as in Deeni Madaris.

### *Subject-Wise Salient Features of New SNC*

- In SNC Early Childhood Care and Education
- Curriculum has been reviewed keeping in view the social native culture and environment along with modern/inventive trends in early childhood care and education and national & international obligations. Fundamental learning areas in ECCE includes:
  - social and personal development of the child
  - literacy and language development
  - Ideal physical development of the children
  - Health, cleanliness and safety precautions
  - creative arts
  - Complete development and progress of a child through emphasis on understanding, skills and positive attitude
  - Development personality via practice of patience, tolerance, compassion and citizenship.
  - In new SNC there is an addition of basic concepts and ideas of science and social studies to serve as a bridge between class one grade 4.
  - New SNC Promotes constant learning through development of investigation and independent learning skills as well as there is an Inclusion of creative activities for learners to improve their learning.
  - New SNC offers improved emphasis on positive attitudes for general development of students. In the new SNC pattern, English will be taught as a

language rather than a subject, with a greater emphasis on communicative capabilities of the primary students.

- In SNC ultimate focus has been laid on the development of English language skills and proficiencies.
- Competencies regarding speaking skills and extra creative writing exercises have been added
- According to new SNC pattern, Islamiat now will be taught as a separate subject from grade 1 to onwards.
- Curriculum regarding teaching the Islamiat and the Holy Quran has been revised by representatives of the Federating ministry units as well as by the representatives of deni Madaris of Pakistan.
- Now Teaching of the Holy Quran will be compulsory along with translation.
- In addition, reading of Nazra Quran, from I-XII has been added in the new SNC.
- Another key feature of new SNC is that it offers steady progression and evaluation in teaching approaches from grade 1 to 5 with reference the pictorial, abstract and concrete learning. In it more focus has been laid on increasing solid theoretical and conceptual learning based on logical reasoning.

### *Drawbacks of Single National Curriculum*

According to the educational experts and subject specialists, following are the drawbacks of single national curriculum;

Pakistan's recently-introduced Single National Curriculum for schools across the country promises uniform educational attainment for her children, but according to the experts there are several drawbacks and obstacles to equal consequences for children via quality education in Pakistani schools, and only a multi-pronged, comprehensive policy and strategy can hope to address Pakistan's complex educational issues regarding SNC.

One of the most significant disadvantages of a single national curriculum is its lack of flexibility. It might be extremely prescriptive and act as a change limitation. This one national curriculum may stifle creativity in curriculum design. Both of the aforesaid disadvantages may have an influence on teacher sovereignty, resulting in a loss of professional judgment and independence.

Another crucial drawback of new SNC is that teachers across the country cannot teach this curriculum efficiently as it requires proper training for various subjects. The majority of the old teachers from all over the country are not familiar with this uniform curriculum and they educate new SNC properly. Books of uniform SNC are not available on time.

The change of Curriculum is not approximately new; the country's education system has been through this earlier. The major problem is the perfect implementation of this curriculum in the country which is not easy for stakeholders.

Under the SNC, the federation of religious seminaries has agreed to put madrassas underneath the umbrella of formal education. However, critics of the SNC point out that rather than mainstreaming madrassas, the SNC will require that deni madrassas follow certain educational procedures.

There are both merits and demerits of implementing a SNC, and it all depends on how it is handled properly so that the adopted system may provide even more benefits. It should not be implemented hastily and should be thoroughly considered. The governments' introduction of SNC is a positive move. It will prove to be a solution for many socio-economic problems in a society like Pakistan.

According to the educational experts and (SSS) Workshops and National Conference regarding implementing SNC were not called properly. It was observed that the opinions and feedback of provincial educationists were not effectively included into the Single National Curriculum.

However, inconsistencies in implementation make it a difficult assignment for the government, as not all public and private schools throughout every province will be ready to embrace the SNC. As a result, the government will need to develop a comprehensive monitoring structure to assure that the SNC is being implemented properly.

Following the eighteenth Amendment in the Constitution of Pakistan, the provinces were given exclusive rights to develop their curriculum, syllabus, and set their education standards. Now, the Federal Government seems to have violated the 18th Amendment by instituting the SNC, which appears to be a breach of the provinces' sovereignty.

Sindh's Education Minister expressed this viewpoint while explaining why the province would not be implementing the SNC, stating that the province has sole authority over the design and implementation of its education curriculum, and that the Federal Government's SNC was an unacceptably burdensome imposition for the provinces.

The negation to implement the single national curriculum by the Sindh government also divests the SNC from being 'national' any longer.

The SNC also infringes on parents' ability to choose the type of education they want to provide their children. Educational laws of Pakistan give parents the fundamental right to choose their children's religious and moral instruction based on their own convictions. The arrival of SNC, on the other hand, leaves parents with little choice than to allow their children to study whatever the government decides.

Nearly 22.6 million children in Pakistan are out of schools; in order to enroll them, current schools' capacity must be expanded, additional schools should be built, and, of course, more funding must be allocated to the education sectors for quality education.

Out-of-school children should be the government's top priority, since their enrollment in schools is important to resolve Pakistan's persistent educational inequities. Only once children have been enrolled in school will they be eligible to get advantage from new SNC.

Focusing exclusively on curriculum renewal is not a wise approach, especially when instructors are not adequately or properly qualified to provide excellent instruction. Before concluding that the implementation of SNC would improve the quality of education in Pakistan, the government must invest in and focus on teacher training.

In view of the experts that It's one thing to address this problem by implementing a standard curriculum; it's quite another to bash one together in a haste, without consulting too many stakeholders, and shove it down everyone's throats despite scholars and teachers raising plenty of warning signals.

Some of the courses that all students have in the country are supposed to learn in order to become better educated Pakistanis, but they are already underwhelming situation. In new SNC they have combined science and social studies for junior classes, despite the fact that part of the goal of the exercise was to prepare pupils to live and prosper in the contemporary world, and recognizing science as a professional subject from the start is an indispensable component of such preparation.

Minorities have been ordered to leave with particular subjects pertaining to each of them without much input. Overall, it appears that a policy item was pushed through the pipeline, despite its good intentions, to meet party deadlines for some well-calculated political point-scoring.

### ***Challenges Regarding Implementation Single National Curriculum***

According to the educational experts Pakistan's education system has following major problems in implementing unified single national curriculum at school level:

- Public Sector Schools have failed to deliver quality education
- Teaching at religious seminaries has remained unregulated

SNC appears to solve none of these issues. The most basic of infrastructures, such as libraries, labs, and even toilets, are in desperate need of investment at Pakistan's public schools. The students' dropout ratio at primary level is almost 40%. Madrassas, on the other hand, offer free education, boarding, and housing. However, learners in madrassas are ill-equipped for the job.

Significant investment in high-quality instructors and textbooks is required to improve the quality of education. Surprisingly, SNC does not talk about a vocational training program that provides practical skills training at primary level.

The (SNC) will not be as single or as national in implementation as the Sindh administration has uncertainties about it and will not adopt it in the country's second largest province, because education is a provincial matter under the constitution.

The education minister's threat that all schools, public and private, would have to accept the new curriculum or face disciplinary action is mostly hollow, given that provinces are free to make their own decisions it also diminishes the standard of SNC. Single national curriculum is unswervingly short of providing a complete solution to the deteriorating quality of education in the country.

## CONCLUSION

There are both merits and demerits of implementing a single national curriculum. It all depends on how it is handled properly so that the adopted system may provide even more benefits. It should not be implemented hastily and should be thoroughly considered. The government's introduction of SNC is a positive move. It will prove to be a good solution for many socio-economic problems in a society like Pakistan. One of SNC's positive aspects and the good thing is that it keeps the ball moving on an important issue. However, the disadvantage is that it seems to have been implemented together in haste for no apparent purpose. A unified national curriculum is a good step toward uniting the new generation. However, it is insufficient to bridge the current inequities in the Pakistani educational system. There are numerous other essential concerns that the government must deal with and address first since they are fundamental for the success of a single national curriculum. Out-of-school children should be the government's top priority because their school enrollment is necessary to overcome Pakistan's persistent educational inequities. Formerly, once children are enrolled in the government school, will they be eligible to get the advantage of a new SNC. Focusing exclusively on curriculum renewal is not wise, especially when instructors are not adequately or properly qualified to give quality education. Teachers' training is another related aspect the government needs to invest in and work on before assuming that SNC implementation will improve the quality of education in Pakistan. The single national curriculum also disrupts and violates the basic right of parents to select the benevolent kind of education for their children. The introduction and overview of the new single national curriculum leave parents with no option but to let their children learn what the government has determined for the students. The drop-out of rate school children, lack of trained and highly educated teachers, and insecure transportation facilities need to be resolved. The government needs to finance more in education sectors and not depend on limited and incomplete policies and strategies to overcome educational inequalities. Education became a provincial responsibility after the 18th Amendment to the Pakistani Constitution. Provinces should be certified to plan, design, and select curricula of their liking; similarly, parents should be authorized to choose what type of education their children should get.

Furthermore, eliminating poverty is a difficulty that the government must address since many parents cannot send their children to school due to

financial constraints. As a result, their children stay deprived of quality education, causing more educational disparities in Pakistan. To summarize, there are several challenges and hindrances which need to be resolved and overcome before considering the success single national curriculum in Pakistan.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Out-of-school children should be the government's top priority, because their enrollment in schools is necessary to overcome Pakistan's persistent educational inequities.
- Approximately 22.5 million children in Pakistan are out of school; in order to enroll them, existing schools' capacity must be raised and increased, additional schools must be built, and, of course, more funding must be provided to the education system.
- We can deliver all children with a uniform and unvarying education by reducing incredibly expensive policies which have nothing to do with excellent education rather limit students' creativity, analytical and logical thinking. Repression would push its way through our educational system; therefore we must be very careful. We might have strategic achievements, but in reality, it would be proof of quality educational strategic failure.
- Inter-provincial mobility of teachers and students regarding educational reforms and seminars should be arranged on first priority.
- Teachers should be trained according to the new SNC, so that they may be able to teach the uniform curriculum more efficiently.
- There should be holistic development of children via teaching new SNC.

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