

Challenges and issues in the implementation of Single National Curriculum:
Perspective of Primary School Teachers

Sajid Ali

PhD Scholar Department of English Riphah International University Faisal Abad Campus
at- sajidali90880331@gmail.com

Saleha Amin

MS Applied Linguistics National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences-FAST at-
salehaamin275@gmail.com

Maryam Khalid

MS Applied Linguistics National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences-FAST at-
ch.maryamkhalid786@gmail.com

Hafiz Muhammad Jawad Yousuf

PhD Scholar, Department of English Linguistics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur,
Pakistan

Abstract

Globally, curriculum change has become a major problem. In the education sector, primary level education is the one that establishes the foundations of learning, therefore progressive improvements in that domain are critical, and curriculum creation and implementation are prominent among nations all across the world and have long advocated for a common national curriculum at the secondary level. This study intended to examine the obstacles and issues associated with the implementation of a single national curriculum from the perspective of primary school teachers in Pakistan. This study will also assist in identifying the problem of instructors in the SNC implementation process, as well as in suggesting ways for its effective implementation. In addition, this study will serve to investigate teachers' perceptions of SNC changes and improvements, as well as its efficacy in the teaching-learning process. The survey was only given to eight to ten teachers as part of the study approach used to gather information about the attitudes of primary school teachers. Tehsil City Lahore was chosen as the primary study site, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect data. Teachers feel that SNC will help Pakistan become a stronger and more affluent country by combating poverty, improving national unity, and reducing educational imbalance. However, due to limited resources, teacher capacity, resistance, and hurdles to quality education, adoption is challenging. It assisted us in recognizing the problem of teachers in the SNC implementation process, as well as in suggesting solutions for its effective implementation.

Keywords: Single National Curriculum (SNC), Perspective of primary school teachers, Issues in implementation of SNC, Curriculum creation and implementation

Introduction

Similar to the concept of education, the term curriculum has been defined in various ways (Ertürk, 2016). (Dewey, 1902) defines curriculum as a “composition of planned experiences”. Every nation sets its own national curriculum to ensure its citizen are getting proper education. The National Curriculum is a set of educational standards that are used to guide the development of curricula in schools around the world (Green, 2019). Every country makes sure that national curriculum is implemented in true spirit. The curriculum implementation is divided into four stages planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation. Planning includes setting goals and objectives, identifying content and resources, and determining how the curriculum will be evaluated. Accordingly, (Saba Iqbal, 2022), curriculum development and implementation are the pillars of a nation’s character-building and development. Preparation includes creating materials, organizing resources, providing professional development for teachers, and ensuring that all necessary resources are in place (JOSEPH, 2021). Implementation includes introducing the curriculum to the students, providing instruction, and assessing student progress. The final step in curriculum implementation is to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. This includes examining student achievement data, analyzing teacher feedback, and evaluating the overall impact of the curriculum. (Weiss, 1980).

The education system plays the most significant role in the implementation of educational reforms. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the education is last priority and so the education system and the related departments are also doomed. This flawed system has been struggling since the foundation of Pakistan and there was never census on educational uniformity across the nation. Among many other factors like minimum budget allocation, lack of trained staff, political interruptions, and dropout and poor examination system; outdated and heterogeneous curriculum across country is also a factor that is contributing towards this catastrophe. The education system is divided into many categories including English medium, Urdu medium, and Madaris under the influence of the British Raj, Indo-Pak separation, and the establishment of an Islamic State. Under such developments by the time, the education system of Pakistan suffered the most and divided the country on these grounds (Irfan, 2019) Pakistan needs a curriculum that supports genuine research developments, scientific knowledge, reflective observation, intellectual growth, and character building (Ashraf, 2016). The single national curriculum was first initiated in 2019-2020 by the Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan and Educational Minister Shafqat Mehmood Chaudhry. The purpose behind this idea was to bring uniformity,

responsibility, conflict management, tolerance, and equality to the educational system of Pakistan.

A single national curriculum can have both positive and negative effects on education. On the positive side, a single curriculum allows for the standardization of educational content and expectations across the country, so that all students have access to the same level of education. This can help ensure that all students are given the same opportunities to excel in their studies. Additionally, having a single curriculum can help students to transition more easily between schools and districts, allowing them to focus on their studies rather than having to adjust to a new curriculum (Caswell, 1935). On the negative side, a single national curriculum can limit the ability of teachers to be creative and innovative in their teaching. It can also lead to an emphasis on standardized testing, which can create an environment of competition rather than collaboration among students. Additionally, a single curriculum can limit the diversity of perspectives presented in the classroom, which can lead to an oversimplified view of the world. Finally, a single curriculum can be difficult to maintain and update as educational standards change over time (Ragan, 1960) In developing countries like Pakistan, a single national curriculum is a big challenge. The implementation of a single national curriculum is divided into three phases. Phase I includes “Class 1 to 5 (Pre I-V) (March 2021)”, “Phase II includes Class 6 to 8 (VI-VIII) (March 2022)”, and “Phase III includes Class 9 to 12 (IX-XII) (March 2023)”. Until now, phase I has been introduced across Pakistan and people are influenced by it in many forms. Single national curriculum highly depends on the flaws of the educational system of Pakistan and issues regarding the system are to be sorted first. (Shaukat, 2021)

The concerned study aimed to analyze the challenges and issues in the implementation of a single national curriculum from the perspective of primary school teachers. A single curriculum allows for the standardization of educational content and expectations across the country so that all students have access to the same level of education. The existing literature in this regard is growing as this is a three-year-old initiative only and needs maximum research. Besides, the data on the perspective of primary school teachers in this regard is minimum and those teachers are the ones which are going to influence directly. Moreover, the existing literature is mostly quantitative. This study will also help to identify the problem of the teachers in the implementation process of SNC, moreover, it will help us to suggest ways for its effective implementation. Alongside this, this study will help to explore the perception of teachers regarding changes and improvements in SNC and its effectiveness in the teaching learning process.

Objectives

1. To identify the perception of primary school teachers about SNC.
2. To identify the problems faced by primary school teachers in the successful implementation of SNC.
3. To suggest ways to make the implementation of SNC more effective.

Methodology

A qualitative research method was selected for this research to achieve the objectives of this study. The literature (Yin, 2014) suggests that qualitative research is acceptable since it enables a comprehensive analysis of activities in a naturalistic setting without the researcher's impact on the data. This makes qualitative research an appropriate method of enquiry.

Design of the Study

The research made use of a fundamental interpretative technique in order to better understand the challenges that educators face throughout the implementation process, as well as to identify the current conditions that exist. Questions were asked from selected officials and their responses were recorded.

Population and Sample

The population in this study were all of the 2513 elementary school teachers who are employed in Tehsil City, Lahore (Punjab Education Statistics, 2020) As a result of issues related to logistics, the survey was only given to eight to ten instructors. Tehsil City Lahore was selected as the major site for the study because the researcher had a restricted amount of time and resources to work with. In order to choose the final sample, the approaches of purposeful and snowball sampling were utilized. Researcher was able to recruit educators who were already familiar with the study's goals with the assistance of deliberate sampling, and with the assistance of snowball sampling, researchers were able to increase their pool of eligible educators. Both sampling methods were utilized by the researchers. Table 3.1 shows the background information of the schools and the teachers who were interviewed for this study.

Table3. 1: Background information of participants

S. No.	Type of School	Participants/ Volunteers	Gender	Qualification	Experience
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1	Urban	Primary School Teacher	M	BA	5
2	Urban	Primary School Teacher	F	MA	10
3	Urban	Primary School Teacher	M	MA	3
4	Urban	Primary School Teacher	F	BA	4
5	Urban	Primary School Teacher	M	BA	5
6	Urban	Primary School Teacher	F	M Honors Degree	4
7	Urban	Primary School Teacher	F	MA	8
8	Urban	Primary School Teacher	F	BA	4
9	Urban	Primary School Teacher	F	BA	3
10	Urban	Primary School Teacher	M	M DIPLOMA	3

Instrumentation

In order to collect data for this study, the researchers relied primarily on semi-structured interviews. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants. The interviewee was asked broad, open-ended questions, and their responses determined the course of the conversation.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data that was acquired from the semi-structured interviews were subjected to thematic analysis so that it could be analyzed. Because of this strategy, a thorough evaluation of the data was possible, which, in the end, led to the identification of recurring themes and trends associated to the implementation of the Single National Curriculum. Data administration and analysis were both performed in NVivo. The data were coded by giving labels to fields that stood in for various types of information. This allowed the data to be sorted and organized. The initial coding structure was developed with the study aims and newly emergent subjects serving as sources of inspiration. The codes were revised and improved upon after it was revealed that the data contained additional information. Because the data have been meticulously organized and categorized using this approach, the results may be comprehended more easily. The relevant data have also been grouped together. Following the categorization process, the data underwent interpretation, during which they were evaluated to identify pertinent connections. The investigator explored the connections among various subjects, as well as the distinctions and subtleties inherent in each subject

matter. An exhaustive data analysis was performed during the interpretation phase to facilitate the formulation of conclusions and provide a comprehensive overview of the educators' perspectives and responses towards the implementation of the Single National Curriculum.

Findings

The findings from the interviews are discussed in depth in the sections that follow.

Table 4.1: Statistical Analysis of the Answers Acquired from the Research Questions

Sr No.	Research Question	No. of participants	Yes/ NO	Frequency	%
1.	Do you believe SNC promotes national integration and social cohesion?	10	Yes 8 No 2	80%	20%
2.	Do you believe SNC provides equal opportunity for social advancement?	10	Yes 5 No 5	50%	50%
3.	Do you believe that the SNC will provide every child a fair chance to obtain a highquality education at every level?	10	Yes 2 No 8	80%	20%
4.	Do you believe that the disparities in curriculum across the various streams would decrease with the implementation of SNC?	10	Yes 6 No 4	60%	40%
5.	Do you believe SNC supports minorities' religious, cultural, and economic development?	10	Yes 3 No 7	30%	70%
6.	Do you believe SNC provides to support social and cultural harmony?	10	90% 10%	90% 10%	90% 10%
7.	Do you believe that SNC promotes national integration among students by teaching them about Pakistan's history?	10	Yes 8 No 2	80%	20%
8.	Do you believe the new SNC addresses different areas of teaching and learning?	10	Yes 5 No 5	50%	50%
9.	Do you believe that the Single National Curriculum is simple to teach at the primary school level for both new and experienced teachers?	10	Yes 2 No 8	20%	80%
10.	Do you believe that students from both urban and rural areas will find SNC to be easy to	10	Yes 4 No 6	40%	60%

	understand?				
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Results of Table 4.2 show that over 80% of respondents agreed with the majority of subject teachers teaching at primary level in various schools of Lahore that SNC would encourage social cohesion and national integration between the provinces. According to 50.0% of study participants, SNC presents equal opportunity for social advancement. Similarly, only 20% of respondents thought that under the new SNC, every child will have an equal opportunity to acquire a high-quality education. According to 60% of all teachers, the disparities in curriculum across the various streams would decrease with the implementation of SNC. Similarly, 30.0% of all respondents said that the new SNC helps minorities develop their cultural, and economic traditions. Additionally, SNC promotes cultural and social unity throughout the nation's provinces and 90% of people endorsed this assertion. 80% of those interviewed stated that the new SNC promotes national integration by educating people about Pakistan's history.

The new SNC encompasses a variety of learning and teaching domains, according to 50% of research participants. According to 20% of respondents it has been believed that the single national curriculum is simple to teach at the primary school level for both new and experienced teachers. In contrast, just 40% of those surveyed concurred with this assertion in favor that students from both urban and rural areas will find SNC to be easy to understand. Overall the perspective made it clear that primary schools subject teachers find the implementation of SNC challenging. To teach this single national curriculum, teachers must complete training and refresh courses accordingly. Based on the questionnaire and semi-structured interview findings following themes have been generated.

Research Questions Themes

1. What are the experiences and challenges encountered by the school stakeholders (SMT and teachers) in implementing a Single national curriculum in selected elementary schools of Lahore?

Theme 1: Teaching experience before and after the implementation of SNC.

Theme 2: Views on curriculum changes after 2020.

2. Do you believe SNC promotes national integration and social cohesion?

Theme 3: Examining the Role of the Single National Curriculum in Promoting National Integration and Social Cohesion.

3. Do you believe SNC provides equal opportunity for social advancement?

Theme 4: Equal opportunities for both students and teachers.

Theme 5: Examining the role of SNC in social advancements.

4. Do you believe that the SNC will provide every child a fair chance to obtain a high-quality education at every level?

Theme 6: Equal possibilities for high-quality education for all children of the country.

5. Do you believe that the disparities in curriculum across the various streams would decrease with the

Theme 7: Exploring the Potential Impact of Implementing the Single National Curriculum implementation of SNC? on Reducing Disparities in Curriculum Across Different Educational Streams.

6. Do you believe SNC supports minorities' religious, cultural, and economic development?

Theme 8: Challenges and opportunities for the minorities

7. Do you believe SNC provides to support social and cultural harmony?

Theme 9: Investigating the Role of the Single

National Curriculum in Facilitating Social and Cultural Harmony.

8. Do you believe that SNC promotes national integration among students by teaching them about Pakistan's history?

Theme 10: Role of national integration and Pakistan's history

9. Do you believe the new SNC addresses different areas of teaching and learning?

Theme 11: The support and development of teachers professionally

10. Do you believe that the Single National Curriculum is simple to teach at the primary school level for both new and experienced teachers?

Theme 12: Perceptions of Teachers on the Ease of Teaching the Single National Curriculum at the Primary School Level.

Theme 13: Challenges encountered by New and Experienced Teachers in Implementing the SNC at the Primary School Level.

11. Do you believe that students from both urban and rural areas will find SNC to be easy to understand?

Theme 14: Assessing the Perceived Ease of Understanding the Single National Curriculum by Students from Diverse Urban and Rural Backgrounds.

Below is a summary of the responses against themes that have been depicted in table 4.2.

Theme 1:

The majority of participants agreed that they felt stable in their teaching positions prior to the implementation of SNC.

Theme 2:

To move beyond the previous decade and foster national unity among diverse races, all participants believed in the necessity of a new single national curriculum.

Theme 3:

Through educational reforms, Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) is essential in fostering social cohesion and national integration. The SNC strives to promote a shared national identity by putting an emphasis on common principles, history, and heritage of culture through standardizing the curriculum across the nation.

Theme 4:

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan has provided equal opportunities for students and teachers by standardizing the curriculum, eliminating regional disparities, and promoting inclusivity.

Theme 5:

Pakistan's Single National Curriculum has served as a catalyst for social progress, encouraging social cohesiveness, inclusivity, and national unity while giving students the skills they need in this ever changing world.

Theme 6:

The implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan look forward to provide every child with a fair chance to obtain a high-quality education at every level. By standardizing the curriculum, the SNC makes sure that all students have access to the same comprehensive and current educational curriculum, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status.

Theme 7:

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan aims to reduce disparities in education across various educational streams by applying a standardized curriculum nationwide.

Theme 8:

SNC is essential to helping minority groups thrive spiritually, culturally, and economically. The SNC's dedication to tolerance and diversity, which guarantees that the curriculum includes many viewpoints, historical narratives, and cultural components from various religious and ethnic origins, is one of its defining characteristics.

Theme 9:

The SNC attempts to close the barriers between various cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds, building a sense of togetherness and understanding among students by supporting a standardized and inclusive curriculum.

Theme 10:

It has been believed by most the respondents that the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan promotes national integration by teaching students about the country's history. It emphasizes a comprehensive and accurate historical narrative, encompassing diverse regions, cultures, and communities.

Theme 11:

Responses from participants indicate that they tend to rely primarily on official seminars and trainings offered by the Ministry of Education.

Theme 12:

At the primary school level, the Single National Curriculum (SNC) is made to be straightforward and approachable for both new and seasoned teachers. It is simple for instructors to understand and use in their classrooms thanks to its standardized format and distinct learning objectives

Theme 13:

Dealing with continuing curricular changes presents the biggest obstacle because every change necessitates a corresponding adjustment on the part of the institution. Ineffective seminars and training for staff and teachers, a lack of departmental support, demotivated and oftentimes improperly trained educators, and a lack of resources to meet school needs were a few of the challenges mentioned.

Theme 14:

Regardless of where they are located or their socioeconomic situation, the SNC seeks to offer equitable opportunity to all students.

Conclusion

This research aimed to study teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) at the primary school level in Lahore. Teachers believe that SNC will contribute to Pakistan being a strong and prosperous country, advance Quaid-e-Azam and Allama Iqbal ideas to reality, combat poverty, improve national unity, and reduce educational inequity. However, adoption is difficult due to limited resources, teacher capacity, resistance, and barriers to excellent education. However, it has been concluded that teachers in all schools have similar expectations for a single national curriculum of Pakistan.

Recommendations

According on the study's findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Before and after the SNC is implemented, Teacher should be provided with refresher courses to provide them the tools they need to resolve problems and get through opposition to the new curriculum.
2. Utilize print and electronic media for the awareness about the importance of the SNC and the benefits associated with it.
3. Increase funding for schools which lack resources, ensuring effective execution of the SNC.
4. Recognize and reward teachers and students for their efforts to foster enthusiasm and camaraderie in implementing the SNC at the primary school level.
5. To provide quality education to all students of the country full implementation of single national curriculum should be considered at all cost.
6. Consider further measures to deal with the matter of "Education for all," which means awarding scholarships to students from low-income homes and recognizing extraordinary student talent.
7. Loans should be available by the government to private sector schools that lack the resources to implement the SNC.

8. Consider expanding the research beyond the current ten participants to gather more comprehensive data for future studies of same kind.

9. In terms of educational reforms and seminars, interprovincial mobility of instructors and students should be prioritized.

10. The new SNC should be used to train teachers, enabling them to deliver the universal curriculum more effectively.

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