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The Impact of Single National Curriculum (SNC) on Primary Education in Punjab

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***Abstract*:** This study investigates the impact of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) on primary education in Punjab, focusing on Faisalabad. The research examines students' achievements in subjects outlined in the SNC and their overall development, including personal, social, and emotional growth, language and literacy skills, basic mathematical concepts, general knowledge, health and hygiene awareness, and creative arts. The study population comprised all schools in Faisalabad, with a sample of 200 primary teachers from Kohinoor, Dground, Peoples Colony, and Abdullah Pur. A descriptive design was employed, utilizing a 26-item questionnaire. Data analysis included mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, t-tests, and p-tests. Results revealed that most respondents (80.5%) had over 10 years of teaching experience, and 61.5% were employed in private schools, reflecting diverse teaching environments. Respondents generally reported positive student development across the evaluated domains, with some variations linked to educational contexts. These findings provide insights into the effectiveness of the SNC in fostering holistic student development and highlight the contributions of experienced educators in private-sector institutions.

Keywords: Single National Curriculum, Primary Education, Students' Performance, Learning Outcomes, Academic Achievement.

1. Introduction

Education is the backbone of nation-building, and countries strive to enhance their educational systems. A curriculum is a set of principles that guide students to achieve specific academic goals. Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) aims to standardize education across diverse school systems—public schools, private institutions, and madrasahs—to foster national unity and reduce inequalities in education. The development of a comprehensive curriculum is a multifaceted process that requires careful consideration of educational goals, content organization, and effective instructional strategies. At its core, the curriculum serves as a blueprint for achieving learning objectives, fostering student development, and addressing societal needs. Grounded in philosophical and psychological principles, curriculum design aligns the needs of students, society, and subject matter to create meaningful and measurable learning experiences (Tyler, 2013). Effective curricula integrate instructional targets, learning opportunities, and assessment strategies to ensure a balanced and equitable approach

to education. By examining historical frameworks and contemporary practices, this paper explores the interplay between curriculum objectives, content selection, and the assessment of its impact on student learning.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Defining Curriculum Goals and Objectives

Curriculum development begins with establishing clear and measurable objectives that reflect educational priorities and societal demands. According to Bloom (1956), educational targets should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). These objectives guide the selection and organization of curriculum content, ensuring alignment with student needs, societal requirements, and disciplinary knowledge (Bashir, 2021). Tyler (2013) emphasized that well-constructed objectives must account for the philosophy of education and the psychology of learning. This dual focus ensures that curriculum goals are both aspirational and achievable, providing a foundation for the development of instructional strategies and assessment tools.

2.2 Content Selection and Organization

The selection of curriculum content is a critical step that balances relevance, validity, significance, utility, interest, and learnability (Barrow, 2018). Effective content organization integrates these criteria within the constraints of time, ensuring that students receive a comprehensive and coherent learning experience. Tyler (2013) highlighted the importance of aligning content with educational goals, proposing a "goals-first approach" where content serves as a medium to achieve desired learning outcomes. This approach parallels the architectural process of blueprinting, material selection, and construction, emphasizing the interdependence of curriculum elements. Furthermore, curriculum developers must consider integration and progression to maintain consistency and enhance learning continuity.

2.3 Opportunities for Growth and Instructional Strategies

Dynamic learning environments promote active engagement, enabling students to achieve curriculum objectives through diverse instructional strategies. These strategies must align with stated goals, address student appropriateness, and adapt to available resources and site-specific constraints (Spirits, 2014). Tyler (2013) proposed principles for selecting learning experiences, emphasizing opportunities for skill development, information acquisition, and social attitude formation. Effective instructional design incorporates student-centered approaches, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and transferable knowledge.

2.4 Evaluating Curriculum Impact

Assessing curriculum impact involves measuring the extent to which students achieve intended learning outcomes. According to the School Inspection Handbook (2019), evaluation focuses on student progress, retention, and skill acquisition. Assessment results inform curriculum revisions, guiding improvements in content, pedagogy, and overall effectiveness. Syamsuddin and Rohana (2021) asserted that student performance serves as a key indicator of curriculum success, emphasizing the role of feedback from various stakeholders. By incorporating multiple evaluation methods—including tests, observations, and surveys—curriculum designers can identify areas for enhancement, ensuring alignment with contemporary educational demands.

2.5 Curriculum Development Models

Several models guide the curriculum development process, offering structured frameworks for design, implementation, and evaluation. Prominent models include Tyler's rationale, Taba's inductive approach, and Saylor, Alexander, and Lewis's administrative model (Oliva, 2005). These models emphasize iterative processes, addressing goals, content selection, instructional strategies, and assessment. For instance, Tyler's model outlines a sequential approach, starting with the identification of objectives, followed by content selection, instructional planning, and evaluation. Each model underscores the interconnectedness of curriculum components, advocating for comprehensive and context-sensitive designs.

2.6 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the impact of SNC on students' personal, social, and emotional development.
2. To assess its impact on language, literacy, and basic mathematics skills.
3. To investigate students' understanding of general knowledge, health, hygiene, and safety.
4. To evaluate their engagement with creative arts.

2.7 Research Questions

1. To what extent has SNC contributed to students' development in key areas like personal growth and literacy?
2. What is the perception of teachers with varying experience levels on SNC's impact?

3. Methodology

- **Sample**: 400 primary teachers (200 each from public and private schools) in Faisalabad, including areas such as Kohinoor and Abdullah Pur.
- **Instrument**: A questionnaire based on a 5-point Likert scale.
- **Data Collection**: Conducted via school visits, with data analyzed using SPSS.
- **Limitations**: The study focused solely on Faisalabad, limiting its generalizability.

3.1 Key Findings

1. **Teacher Demographics**:
    - 80.5% of teachers had over 10 years of experience.
    - 61.5% were from private institutions.
2. **Students' Development**:
    - Positive progress in personal, social, and emotional development.
    - Improvement in language, literacy, and basic mathematics skills.
    - Enhanced understanding of health, hygiene, and safety concepts.
    - Increased engagement with creative arts.
3. **Challenges**:
    - Implementation gaps, particularly in transitioning to a unified system.
    - Variations in resources and teaching methodologies across institutions.

Significance of Curriculum Change

An updated curriculum is essential to reflect advancements in technology, science, and pedagogy. The SNC prioritizes equity, fostering critical thinking, and ensuring educational access regardless of socioeconomic backgrounds. It promotes national unity while respecting diversity.

Purpose of Education

Education serves to prepare individuals for societal roles and aligns with governmental development goals. The SNC seeks to address disparities by providing a unified framework for all students, ensuring equal opportunities and fostering social cohesion.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopts a **quantitative survey design** to investigate the impact of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) at the primary level. Quantitative research methods are widely regarded for their ability to systematically collect and analyze numerical data, offering precise measurements of variables and allowing for robust statistical analysis. The survey research design, as highlighted by Abutabenjeh and Jaradat (2018), is a prominent approach in social sciences, enabling researchers to draw meaningful inferences about large populations.

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool, designed to gather standardized responses from participants. This approach ensures consistency, objectivity, and replicability, key hallmarks of quantitative research. By focusing on a diverse sample of primary school teachers from both government and private sectors in Faisalabad, the survey enables generalizability of findings across the population. Furthermore, the quantitative framework facilitates the application of descriptive and inferential statistical methods, such as ANOVA and T-tests, to identify significant relationships between variables, providing a comprehensive understanding of SNC's effectiveness.

The design aligns with the positivist paradigm, emphasizing empirical evidence and statistical validation, ensuring a credible and systematic exploration of the research questions.

4. Findings of the study

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of World Around Us

World Around Us	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Students recognized the difference between living and non-living things.	200	1	5	4.02	1.06
Students developed a caring attitude towards the environment.	200	1	5	3.58	0.99
Students recognized natural and man-made resources.	200	1	5	3.74	1.13
World Around Us		1.87	4.70	4.00	1.74

Table 1 provides a descriptive analysis of various aspects related to understanding the world around us among students. Students recognized the difference between living and non-living things: The average score is 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.06. This indicates a good level of understanding in distinguishing between living and non-living things. Students developed a caring attitude towards the environment: The average score is 3.58 with a standard deviation of 0.99. This reflects a moderate level of satisfaction with students' caring attitude towards the environment. Students recognized natural and man-made resources**:** The average score is 3.74 with a standard deviation of 1.13. This shows a moderate level of recognition of both natural and man-made resources. Overall World Around Us: The average score across all areas is 4.00 with a standard deviation of 1.74. This summary score suggests a generally positive view of students' understanding of the world around them, with some variability in individual responses.

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of Health, Hygiene and Safety

Health, Hygiene and Safety	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Students developed hygienic practice of brushing teeth.	200	1	5	3.74	1.12
Students developed hygienic practice of washing hands.	200	1	5	3.82	1.06
Students understood the importance of wearing clean clothes.	200	1	5	3.95	1.00
Students understood the importance of taking showers.	200	1	5	3.85	1.08
Students understood basic road safety rules.	200	1	5	3.56	1.12
Health, Hygiene and Safety		1.99	4.02	3.98	1.09

Table 2 presents a descriptive analysis of various aspects of Health, Hygiene, and Safety among students. Students developed hygienic practice of brushing teeth: The average score is 3.74 with a standard deviation of 1.12. This indicates a moderate level of development in brushing teeth hygienically. Students developed hygienic practice of washing hands: The average score is 3.82 with a standard deviation of 1.06. This reflects a good level of development in washing hands hygienically. Students understood the importance of wearing clean clothes: The average score is 3.95 with a standard deviation of 1.00. This shows a high level of understanding regarding the importance of wearing clean clothes. Students understood the importance of taking showers: The average score is 3.85 with a standard deviation of 1.08. This indicates a good level of understanding about the importance of taking showers. Students understood basic road safety rules: The average score is 3.56 with a standard deviation of 1.12. This reflects a moderate level of understanding of basic road safety rules. Overall Health, Hygiene, and Safety: The average score across all areas is 3.98 with a standard deviation of 1.09. This summary score suggests a generally positive view of students' understanding and practice in health, hygiene, and safety, with moderate variability in individual responses.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis of Creative Arts

Creative Arts	N	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Students learned the skills of collage work.	200	1	5	3.40	1.16
Students were able to make recycled craft.	200	1	5	3.29	1.11
Students developed the skill of folding.	200	1	5	3.56	1.06
Students developed the skill of cutting.	200	1	5	3.63	1.04
Students developed the skill of pasting.	200	1	5	3.75	1.04
Students developed the skill of tearing.	200	1	5	3.82	1.00
Creative Arts		1.90	4.93	3.91	1.04

Table 3 provides a descriptive analysis of various aspects of Creative Arts among students. Students learned the skills of collage work**:** The average score is 3.40 with a standard deviation of 1.16. This indicates a moderate level of skill development in collage work. Students were able to make recycled craft**:** The average score is 3.29 with a standard deviation of 1.11. This reflects a moderate level of skill in making recycled crafts. Students developed the skill of folding**:** The average score is 3.56 with a standard deviation of 1.06. This shows a somewhat higher level of skill development in folding. Students developed the skill of cutting**:** The average score is 3.63 with a standard deviation of 1.04. This indicates a good level of skill in cutting. Students developed the skill of pasting**:** The average score is 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.04. This reflects a higher level of skill development in pasting. Students developed the skill of tearing**:** The average score is 3.82 with a standard deviation of 1.00. This shows a high level of skill development in tearing. Overall Creative Arts**:** The average score across all areas is 3.91 with a standard deviation of 1.04. This summary score suggests a generally positive view of students' development in creative arts, with moderate variability in individual responses.

5. Conclusion

Curriculum development is an evolving process that responds to changing societal needs, student aspirations, and educational philosophies. By integrating clear objectives, well-organized content, and effective instructional strategies, curriculum designers can create impactful learning experiences. Ongoing evaluation ensures alignment with desired outcomes, fostering continuous improvement and innovation in education.

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