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EXPLORING HEAD TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE EXECUTION OF THE SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM (SNC) IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is envisioned to provide a balanced platform for all learners belonging to all sections of society to burgeon fair and equal opportunities for all children. This research was supposed to explore the views of the school head teachers. A purposive sampling technique was used in the research. A sample of 12 primary head teachers of government schools were selected. It was a qualitative study and Interview protocols were used to assemble data from primary school head teachers. Qualitative data were analyzed and themes were generated manually. Results showed that the majority of the head teachers believed that SNC would help remove social disparities and promote equity in education, improve language and literacy skills, increase critical and creative thinking, and contribute to personal, social, and emotional development. Primary teachers' demographics, perceptions, and inferential analysis revealed that SNC would help remove social disparities, improve language and literacy skills, increase critical and creative thinking, and contribute to personal, social, and emotional development. Head teachers in Pakistan view the implementation of the SNC positively, believing it has the potential to create a more equitable and accessible education system. However, they emphasize the need for proper training, guidance, and monitoring to ensure the success of SNC. Overall, the findings suggest a collective understanding of the benefits of SNC and a commitment to realizing them through cooperation, and collaboration and further to widen fair and equal educational opportunities for all learners.

Keywords: Single national curriculum; Implementations; Opinions of head teachers.

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INTRODUCTION

In any educational setting, the curriculum is considered the fundamental route for attaining academic goals. There are several categories for curriculum. The national curriculum serves as a representation of a country's fundamental perspective on the world, values, morals, customs, and educational objectives. Put otherwise, the national curriculum comprises a state's past, present, and future. In contrast, the use of disparate curricula, syllabuses, and educational systems within a single country curriculum creates a variety of assumptions, misunderstandings, complexes, and ratios between diverse societal sectors. Everyone in the country follows the same curriculum that shapes their attitudes, behaviors, and mentalities in a predictable way (Sehgal, 2021).

The content of instruction and educational material imparted in an institute, in a particular progress of the study, or a program is referred to as the curriculum. Although the dictionary usually defines curriculum as an institute's progress, the progress is hardly applied in actual classroom settings. The learning goals or objectives that students must accomplish; the units and lessons that educators teach; the projects for homework and assignments that learners complete; the paperwork, resources, films, presentations, and

readings. Pakistan's one national set of courses for schools comprises expected challenges, merits, and demerits utilized in a course; examinations, evaluations, and other techniques for evaluating student achievement are every aspect of the curriculum. An educator's set of courses is the collection of instructional materials, programs, projects, and learning objectives that are used to plan and execute a particular way (Sinnema et al., 2020).

Single National Curriculum

The single National Curriculum (SNC), as it is known, is one vision that is followed. It is based on a notion that encourages universal access to education. The sole curriculum that is used in all classes is the same one. The same educational method is used for all grades, from 1 to 12. So that all children in the nation have an equal chance to receive a high-quality education, the government decided to provide a single education system for all citizens, eliminating socioeconomic status disparities and inequality. This decision forced provincial governments in Pakistan to implement a common education system, including the curriculum, medium of instruction, and assessment methods (Tayyab et al., 2022).

Due to significant knowledge inequalities brought about by Pakistan's academic system's lack of integration, socioeconomic inequalities have occurred. Pakistan's educational system has been divided into three classifications: madrassas, private schools, and public, or government, schools. There is a noticeable gap between the pupils who attend these schools because of the significant disparities in the education that these three systems offer. The establishment of the SNC aimed to close the disparity that exists in the middle of the three different kinds of systems (Jahanzaib et al., 2021).

In recent times, Pakistani schools have guaranteed equal educational attainment for all students. However, as Maryam Naqvi claims there are multiple obstacles to equal educational outcomes for Pakistani students, and the country's complex educational issues can only be solved with a complex, composite material strategy. The Single National Curriculum at the School Level in Pakistan: Expected Challenges, Merits, and Demerits was revealed by Mr. Imran Khan, the country's prime minister. (SNC) was founded to provide a common curriculum for all of the nation's kids. However, given the goals of the government, there is little evidence of what the adoption of this curriculum will accomplish (Irfan, 2021). Implementation of the curriculum will take place in three phases: Grades 1–5 in 2021–2022, Grades 6–8 in 2022–2023, and Grades 9–12 in 2023–2024 (Dilshad et al., 2023). During the program's initial phase, the federal government has mandated that the SNC be implemented in all provinces—save for Sindh—in both public and private schools, as well as religious madrasas. Whether it will be competent to discourse Pakistan's existent disparities in education is debatable (Ahmed, 2020).

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to;

1. To ascertain the opinions of public primary school head teachers on the feasibility of implementing SNC in public primary schools.
2. Investigate the various aspects of the SNC as perceived by head teachers in public primary schools.

Research question

The study's research questions are as follows:

1. What opinions do head teachers of public primary schools have regarding the Single National Curriculum?
2. What are the various aspects of the SNC as perceived by head teachers in public primary schools?

Statement of the Problem

A single national curriculum is a good idea, provided it is well-planned with input from all parties. The government should prioritize providing primary schools with all the necessary facilities, as elite schools

do. Schools should provide students with an enabling environment where they can learn and develop their skills without interruption. A Single National Curriculum is envisioned to provide a balanced platform for all learners belonging to all sections of society. Soon after the formulation of the committee, debates started among stakeholders. Different arguments were raised, some were in favor and some arguments rejected this proposal. The school's head teachers are the key stakeholders in the implementation of SNC. This is supposed to explore the verdicts of head teachers.

METHODOLOGY

In this research qualitative research design was used. This research was intended to examine the head teachers' perceptions about the Single National Curriculum. 12 head teachers from public primary schools were the population of the study. The Purposive sampling technique was used to choose a sample of head teachers from the different schools of District Sargodha. An unstructured interview technique was used to conduct interviews with government head teachers. The voice recorder's cell phone app was utilized to record the interviews. The transcribed data from the interviews were evaluated using thematic analysis. The Qualitative data were analyzed and themes were generated manually. In this research, the researcher used a self-constructed tool, for head teachers. For the head interview, a protocol-based questionnaire was used.

ANALYSIS

The study deals with the qualitative analysis of interview questions. Table 1 reflects the opinion of the head teacher about the first theme incorporated 3 categories which are Equity in education and social Cohesion mobility.

Table 1. Themes, Categories, and Frequencies of Head Teachers' responses regarding "equal opportunities for all".

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency
equal opportunities	Equity in education	3
	Social Cohesion	3
	social mobility	2
	Fair opportunities	2

Participants in this study were asked what they thought about the concept of SNC providing equal opportunities for all. All respondents agreed that SNC will be very helpful in providing equal and fair opportunities, promoting equity in education, and promoting social cohesion and social mobility among teachers across all provinces of the country. One participant thought that *"SNC is a good step taken by the government to enhance the learning of students, which will promote equal opportunities to all the students because all the students will have the same syllabus to study with Standard of education across the country. "The new curriculum divides concepts into different parts and organizes everything in a pattern." (HT1)*

"The content of books is organized logically for the mental grooming of students," one respondent said, "and students maintain their interests and never become disheartened by their forms of study; they did not consider learning to be a burden, but they considered it fun and enjoyed their classroom environment." *"Students will be entertained with new activities, and new concepts according to the demands of time and society will be introduced. "The use of technology will make our students more competent, our standards of learning will improve, and the same curriculum will promote equity in the education system no child will be left behind" (HT2). "A single curriculum will be very helpful in promoting social cohesion among the society because every student will get the same education without any class difference, especially in rural areas, and they will get a chance to fulfill their dream of getting higher education," one of the participants stated (HT3). Participants No. 4,5,6,7, and 8 all agreed that "with the implementation of SNC, students, and teachers from backward areas will have a chance to be part of mainstream education, as there were a*

variety of curriculums practiced in our previous system" (HT4,5). *In Punjab province, the standard of instruction is English, but in KPK and Baluchistan, the standard of instruction is Urdu and English, which are introduced to students when they reach class five. Similarly, this type of setup is being carried out across the country. "But this is a game-changing step, and we hope that this curriculum will eliminate student class differences and promote interprovincial mobility of teachers and students."*

Another respondent said, "Yes, according to me, the new curriculum is easier than the previous curriculum because everything is separate in the book; for example, plus (+) questions and subtraction (−) questions are separate and in sequence form. In the old curriculum, all concepts were mixed indices, for example, plus, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Word problems are given in proper sequence form in the exercises; for example, 100, 1000, 10,000; all numbers are given step by step in a sequence form, whereas in the previous curriculum, all numbers were given in mixed form. (HT8).

Overall, the feedback from participants suggests that SNC has the potential to create a more equitable and accessible education system, promoting social cohesion and social mobility, and improving the standard of learning for all students

Table 2. Themes, Categories and Frequencies of Head Teachers' responses regarding "Class difference among students".

Themes	Categories	Frequency
class differences	Discrimination removal	6
	Not sufficient to remove the class difference	2

Table 2 reflects the second theme incorporated 2 categories which are the source of discrimination removal and not sufficient to remove class differences.

Participants in this study were asked what they were thinking and why they believed SNC would help to eliminate class differences in our education sector, particularly among different schools, including elite and public schools, and among their students 1, 2 said, *"As the standard of education has been set the same for all students, all the students will be taught according to the same standard. Because the books and course materials will be taught the same in all schools, this will be a source of changing the minds of parents and students about the public sector, which will aid in motivating people to enroll their children in the public sector. (HT 1 AND HT2). Similarly, participants No. 3, 4, 5, and 6 gave almost the same opinion: "that with the implementation of SNC curriculum, all the education systems are on the same page and there is no curriculum discrimination in the country. Before this initiative, there were three social classes in our education system the upper class or elite class, the middle class, and the lower class. Due to this class difference, many students belonging to the middle and lower classes were considered not bright or intelligent students, and also the standard of instruction was not the same in all these social classes". (HT3). "In the private sector, the standard of instruction was English including the Oxford syllabus and public sector the medium of instruction was Urdu. Due to this many students enrolled in the public sector when get into their higher education, they cannot survive or perform well as compared to the students of the private sector. Due to SNC same curriculum for all will be very helpful in the removal of this difference and also be very helpful in promoting social harmony in society and every student should be validated on the same basics". (HT4, 5, 6)*

Participants 7 and 8 stated that "SNC will not be sufficient in removing the class difference because the government is not taking the implementation process seriously. *"Teachers and students are also not very happy with this curriculum "(HT7)." The private sector is well equipped with facilities as compared to the public sector similarly, the elite class will not completely implement this curriculum they will include some other subjects with this curriculum to maintain their class difference ". (HT8)*

Based on the opinions of the head teachers, it is evident that the participants overwhelmingly believed that the implementation of the SNC would lead to a more equitable education system. The new curriculum is

expected to remove class differences among students, both from the public and private sectors, by providing an equal opportunity for all to receive high-quality education. This will promote equity in education, as every child will have access to the same regardless of education, regardless of their socioeconomic upbringing. Furthermore, the new curriculum is expected to promote collaboration between private and public sectors, which will further enhance the quality of education. The curriculum has been designed to promote the complete improvement of children in light of emergent worldwide trends and local aspirations. This means that students will be equipped with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world.

Table 3. Themes, Categories and Frequencies of Head Teachers' Responses Regarding "Implementation of SNC.

Themes	Categories	Frequency
Practicability of SNC	Easy to implement	5
	Tough to implement	1
	Training should be required to implement	2

Table no 3 describes the perceptions of head teachers about the theme "implementation of SNC with its 3-sub-themes including easy to implement, same as old curriculum, tough to implement, and training should be required to implement."

Respondent no HT1 said " that, in terms of content, instruction method, and a shared platform for evaluation, SNC is a single educational system for everyone. The implementation of SNC will be easy because its structure is simple and we don't need any new setup or any chasings in our schools to implement it as the mechanism to performing daily school activities is same". (HT1). Another respondent said "that According to me it's a very good step to implement SNC in the public sector as the previous curriculum was based teacher-centred approach in which teacher was active and students remain passive. Students only remain silent and listen to the teacher. Now the focus of SNC is on student-centred approach in which discussion between students and teacher will take place which enhances the learning of the students and its implementation will be easy as compared to the previous curriculum" (HT2). Similarly, participant no 3, 4 said "that before implementation of SNC government has aligned this curriculum with the previous curriculum to make the implementation process easy for teachers. As Head of the institution, the implementation of this curriculum is very convenient in our present education context. Another respondent stated, "I have not found such significant changes in this curriculum. The basic structure of this and the previous curriculum is the same. The only difference in this curriculum is the change of name."(HT5).

"It was not a good initiative; we should give equal opportunity, not equal curriculum," said a participant "Basically, a new curriculum was mixed up by the curriculum developer; they added easy and hard topics in this curriculum because, in Pakistan, there is a variety of curricula taught by different schools, and in government schools, the easiest curricula are taught, while in well-known private schools, the most difficult curricula are taught. *"Training will be required to implement this curriculum for the private and public sector because with training many teachers will not be able to perform in front of students. Many teachers in the public sector are less qualified than those in the private sector, so training should be required before implementation.* (HT8)

The head teachers who participated in the study seemed to have a positive outlook towards the implementation of SNC. They recognized the importance of considering the interests and needs of students and highlighted the student-centred nature of the new curriculum. They also emphasized the need for collaboration and joint efforts to ensure the successful implementation of SNC, which they viewed as a

necessary step in the development of the education system. In their opinion, SNC is easy to implement, and its adoption will not be a major issue if everyone works towards the common goal of improving the worth of teaching for scholars. Overall, the responses of head instructors suggest a collective understanding of the benefits of SNC and a shared commitment to realizing these benefits through cooperation and collaboration.

Table 4. Themes, Categories and Frequencies of Head Responses Regarding “SNC IS GOOD initiative.

Themes	Categories	Frequency
Good initiative	Very Beneficial	6
	Required	2
	bring a positive change	2

Table 4 describes the perception of head teachers about the theme “SNC is a good initiative with its 2-sub theme including might be good, very suitable and required. Participants in the study were asked to provide feedback on whether they thought SNC was a good initiative. One of the participants was of the view *that the SNC would define a good step. It has improved the quality of education as students work more actively and enthusiastically. As we are one nation, we must work on the "SNC."* (HT1). Another participant said *that the purpose of the SNC is to provide a particular organization for education for all, to erase class differences, and to promote equality. It is the action that has compelled governments to put in place a uniform educational system with concerning curriculum, instruction medium, and assessment platform, ensuring that every child in the nation has an equal chance to get a top-notch education.* (HT2). Similarly, one of the respondents said, *"It is good for the students as the curriculum will remove discrimination among the students of the public and private sectors as well as those from backward areas like FATA, Baluchistan, and Kashmir"*(HT3). Respondents 4, 5, and 6 all agreed: *"it's a good step forward for the betterment of our education system because we are all working on an out-of-date curriculum and our standard of education is also very low."* This initiative will assist us in improving our education system and the standard of quality of education. *Respondents no 7 and 8 said that it might be good we cannot judge this curriculum now because it is in its implementation process and till now we are not in a position to make a judgment on the positivity and negativity of SNC. "But we are hopeful this step will bring a positive change in our education system"*(HT8).

From the opinions of different head teachers, we can say that almost all the head teachers thought the initiative because it would provide equal benefits to all the students around the country, whether they are from an elite class or a lower class. SNC will help make a single system for education for all, erasing the class difference, and promoting equality. It is the first step to providing a fair and equal opportunity to every child in the country to make him able to receive a high-quality education.

Table 5. Themes, Categories and Frequencies of Head Teachers' responses regarding “Implementation issues of SNC”.

Theme	Categories	Frequency
Implementation issues	Lack of Teacher training	3
	Lack of guidance	3
	Lack of monitoring and evaluation	3
	Lack of resources	2

Table 5 describes the perception of head teachers about the theme “implementation describes its 3 sub-themes including Lack of Teacher training and resources, Lack of guidance, and Lack of monitoring and evaluation.

Participants in the study were asked to give their feedback on implementation issues with SNC. One of the participants was of the view that *"implementation is the most important phase of any curriculum and the success and failure of a curriculum are directly related to the implementation process."* This curriculum is a good initiative, but unfortunately, a lack of teacher competence in the public sector will result in its failure. *"In our public education sector, there is a lack of teacher training programs to implement SNC; similarly, the public sector is not very strong in its infrastructure, and due to this, the implementation of the curriculum at the class level is not according to its principles"* (HT1). Another participant said *"the government should start a teacher training program before implementation because it is a new step and many teachers are feeling hesitation while performing their duties and there is a lack of direction in implementation"* (HT2). Similarly, participants 3, 4, 5, and 6 expressed nearly identical views.

Participants 7 and 8 stated that *"we cannot get the desired result of the SNC curriculum without monitoring and evaluation,"* but *"the government is not serious about the implementation process because there is no monitoring system working to monitor whether they are moving in the right direction or not, and evaluation is also the same as that used to evaluate the previous curriculum. "SNC has several distinguishing features.*

- I. Focus on Beliefs, Life Skills-Based, and Comprehensive Education
- II. Local and global respect and gratitude for different beliefs and religions
- III. Encouragement of learners' intelligent, spiritual, visual, passionate, social, and physical development
- IV. Avoid rote memorization in favour of projects, inquiry, and activity-based learning.
- V. Acquisition of 21st-century skills such as logical, critical, and innovative thinking.
- VI. Using Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

To measure the above-described features of SNC, there is no proper evaluation system present, and if we cannot evaluate our students in all aspects related to SNC, how can we determine whether we are moving in the right direction to achieve our aim or not?

The perception of head teachers regarding the implementation of SNC highlights the importance of proper training, guidance, and monitoring. While the curriculum is a step in the right course, the lack of teacher training and infrastructure in the public sector may hinder its success. Participants emphasized the need for a monitoring and evaluation system that can measure the unique features of SNC, including values-based education and 21st-century skills development. Without a comprehensive assessment system, it will be challenging to regulate whether the curriculum is accomplishing its objectives of holistic student development and promoting inclusivity. The government must take these concerns seriously to ensure the successful implementation of SNC and the provision of high-quality education for all students.

Finding

Equal Opportunities for All

The responses of head teachers about equal opportunities for all indicate that the concept of an SNC is well received by head teachers and has the potential to create a more equitable and accessible education system. All participants agreed that SNC will be very helpful in providing equal and fair opportunities, promoting equity in education, and promoting social cohesion and social mobility among teachers across all provinces of the country. The new curriculum is seen as easier and better organized, which will help maintain student interest and make learning more enjoyable. The use of technology is also expected to make students more competent, and the same curriculum will promote equity in the education system, leaving no child behind.

Class Difference

Based on the opinions of the head teachers, about “Class difference” among students it is evident that the participants overwhelmingly believed that the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) would lead to a more equitable education system. The new curriculum is expected to remove class differences among students, both from the public and private sectors, by providing an equal opportunity for all to receive high-quality education. This will promote equity in education, as every child will have access to the same standard of education, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Furthermore, the new curriculum is expected to promote collaboration between private and public sectors, which will further enhance the quality of education. The curriculum has been designed to promote the all-inclusive improvement of children in the light of developing worldwide tendencies and local aspirations. This means that students will be equipped with the skills and knowledge required to succeed in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world.

Implementation of SNC

The perception of head teachers about the “implementation of SNC” seemed to have a positive outlook towards the implementation of SNC. They recognized the importance of considering the interests and needs of students and highlighted the student-centred nature of the new curriculum. They also emphasized the need for collaboration and joint efforts to ensure the successful implementation of SNC, which they viewed as a necessary step in the development of the education system. In their opinion, SNC is easy to implement, and its adoption will not be a major issue if everyone works towards the common goal of improving the quality of education for students. Overall, the responses of head teachers suggest a collective understanding of the benefits of SNC and a shared commitment to realizing these benefits through cooperation and collaboration.

SNC a good Initiative

From the opinions of different head teachers regarding “SNC IS GOOD initiative” we can say that almost all the head teachers say that SNC is a good initiative because it will provide equal benefits to all the students around the country, whether they are from an elite class or a lower class. SNC will help make a single system for education for all, erase class differences, and promote equality. It is the first step to providing a fair and equal opportunity to every child in the country to make him able to receive a high-quality education.

The perception of head teachers regarding the “implementation issues of SNC” highlights the importance of proper training, guidance, and monitoring. While the curriculum is a step in the right direction, the lack of teacher training and infrastructure in the public sector may hinder its success. Participants emphasized the need for a monitoring and evaluation system that can measure the unique features of SNC, including values-based education and 21st-century skills development. Without a 21st-century evaluation system, it will be difficult to determine whether the curriculum is achieving its goals of holistic student development and promoting inclusivity. The government must take these concerns seriously to ensure the successful implementation of SNC and the provision of high-quality education for all students

Discussion

The findings of the qualitative analysis show that head teachers are generally positive about the application of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan. This is a promising development that can potentially lead to a more equitable education system, as well as improved student outcomes. The head teachers' emphasis on the need for proper training and monitoring highlights the importance of investing in human resources to ensure the successful implementation of SNC. Additionally, the need for an observing and assessment system suggests a focus on evidence-based decision-making and a commitment to continuous improvement.

To further enhance the success of SNC, it is recommended that the training of teachers and head teachers should continue and be scaled up to ensure all teachers receive the necessary support. Additionally, there

should be a clear framework and guidelines for the checking and assessment system to ensure its effective application. Moreover, engaging parents and the wider community in the SNC process can also be valuable as it can help to create a shared understanding and commitment to the importance of education.

CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative analysis findings suggest that the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan is viewed positively by head teachers. They believe that it has the potential to create a more equitable and accessible education system by removing class differences and providing equal opportunities for all students. The new curriculum is also seen as more organized and easier to follow, which can enhance student interest and enjoyment in learning. However, head teachers also emphasized the need for proper training, guidance, and monitoring to ensure the success of SNC. They also emphasized the importance of a monitoring and evaluation system that can measure the unique features of SNC, including values-based education and 21st-century skills development. Overall, the 21st century suggests a collective understanding of the benefits of SNC and a shared commitment to realizing these benefits through cooperation and collaboration.

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