

The Single National Curriculum

Strategies for Implementation

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According to the latest Pakistan Education Statistics report, there are more than three lac educational institutions operating in Pakistan, out of which 62 % belong to the public sector and 38 % are in the private sector. Additionally, there are around 31,115 madrassahs. Around six lac people are associated with the education system in Pakistan.

The concept of Single National Curriculum (SNC) is not a bad notion because it can bring equality among students of Pakistan. However, despite extensive planning, the PTI government has by and large failed to implement it because a number of private schools still have not adopted the SNC, on the other hand public schools are clueless on how to teach the new syllabus considering their current capacity and resources, moreover, there is resistance from madrassahs as well. Therefore, in my opinion the main problem with this current SNC policy is how to implement it quickly. Here goes some of the implementation strategies.

No.1: Ban of NOCs

There is no doubt that private schools did not want to teach SNC which is why hundreds of them had already gotten NOCs from Punjab Curriculum & Textbook Board (PCTB) for not implementing the SNC. Now government must immediately abandon its policy of granting NOCs at any cost if it really wants to implement SNC in true spirit and must also cancel already issued NOCs. In this way the private schools with sufficient budgets and resources should compete with public schools on the grounds of quality education instead of curriculum differences and mode of teaching. If they get successful in this, people would still like to send their kids to private schools but at least they should reduce their fees to an average level and should also introduce the teaching of the same curriculum but in a more efficient way.

No.2: Capacity Building of Teachers

There is an argument that country need training of teachers first before the whole system could be introduced. Currently, the government is training 300 public school teachers who will become master trainers and train other teachers. In this connection, government should increase the number of trainees up to at least 1000 per month with major focus on training of madrassah teachers while there is no need to train teachers of private system with the assumption that they are already well equipped to teach SNC.

No.3: Mode of Teaching

There should be only four subjects to be taught from grade 1 till 5 that are Mathematics and three languages (Urdu, English and Arabic). From grade 6 till 8 six subjects should be taught which are Mathematics, Pakistan History, Islamiyat, General knowledge, Computer Science and Business Studies. For grade 9 and 10 again two groups with arts and science options should be introduced. In general Mathematics, general science and social sciences subjects should be taught in English while all other subjects should be taught in the national language - Urdu as practiced by many countries e.g. China, Japan and Scandinavian countries. All this would require a more thorough curriculum development which could be done with the passage of time after implementing SNC.

No.4: 18th Amendment and SNC

According to the 18th amendment, education became a provincial subject which means that the federal government cannot formulate a new national curriculum, and then force a province to follow that. In this regard, Sindh is well within its right to reject and refuse the implementation of the SNC since the PPP is in power there. For this the PTI government should consult with the opposition and take them into confidence or even provide some extra incentives to implement SNC in Sindh province.

No.5: Teaching Methodology

As a general principal, teachers should emphasize the educational importance of understanding, instead of giving too much importance to memorization skills. It is evident that active processing of information leads to learning. That is, students must construct their own understanding of concepts and relationships. Teachers can encourage this process by reducing the total amount of factual information students are expected to memorize, reduce the use of the passive lecture format, and devote

much more effort to helping students become active, independent learners and problem solvers. Collaborative learning activities, interactive models, educational games and establishing a culture of inquiry are crucial in this regard. In this way students will be impatient to study and really learn.

Since curriculum change is not something new in Pakistan's education system, therefore, I am in strong favor of implementing this new SNC policy immediately with the possibility of changing it in the succeeding years based on active feedback received from all stakeholders. I am confident that it will open up opportunities for students of lower strata of society by providing them an opportunity to compete with the elite in a level playing field.

