
Curriculum power and its policy framework at secondary level in Pakistan

Poder do currículo e sua estrutura políticas no nível secundário no Paquistão

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to review the national curriculum framework of secondary grades in Pakistan. The study employed qualitative research a bibliographical review, paradigm within it the discourse analysis technique was used to analyze the framework of curriculum document. Discourse analysis helps in understanding the written, spoken and signs language used in any document analysis. At secondary level curriculum is designed by national curriculum council and national curriculum framework. They prepare overall curriculum for secondary level nationally. After 18th amendment curriculum planning and policies making were assigned to each state/province in the country now every state is preparing their own curriculum according to societal needs despite they are adopting the old curriculum framework. Also, currently government is trying to prepare a uniform curriculum for all nation at secondary level but not implemented properly.

Keywords: Curriculum power; Curriculum framework; Secondary level in Pakistan;

RESUMO

O objetivo do estudo foi revisar a estrutura curricular nacional das séries secundárias no Paquistão. O estudo empregou a pesquisa qualitativa a partir de uma revisão bibliográfica, adotando técnica de análise do discurso como paradigma para analisar o quadro de documento curricular. A análise do discurso ajuda a compreender a linguagem escrita, falada e gestual utilizada em qualquer análise documental. No nível secundário, o currículo é elaborado pelo conselho curricular nacional e pela estrutura curricular nacional. Eles preparam o currículo geral para o nível secundário nacionalmente. Após a 18^a emenda, o planejamento curricular e a formulação de políticas foram atribuídos a cada estado/província do país, agora cada estado está preparando seu próprio currículo de acordo com as necessidades da sociedade, apesar de adotarem a antiga estrutura curricular. Além disso, atualmente o governo está tentando preparar um currículo uniforme para toda a nação no nível secundário, mas não foi implementado adequadamente.

Palavras-chave: Poder curricular; Estrutura curricular; Nível secundário no Paquistão;

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INTRODUCTION

Education is playing the most powerful role in acquiring skills and improving wellbeing in the development of citizens and nation. Knowledge can be gain and transmitted through the process of education outside and within the school. It nourishes and train students to grow up differently and raised their personality and behavior to make them better and perfect person of society. The major aim of education is to increase student knowledge, understanding and practical skills which enable them to serve their country. Therefore, a question come to everyone's mind that how education is implemented, directed and evaluated in practical? As it is recognized that all educational programs have provided an instrument or a framework which give direction to educational programs to implement it practically that called curriculum. Also reported by MBAKWEM (2011) said that curriculum is like a vehicle through which educational goals can be archived. Another thing comes to mind is that where to implement curriculum for the achievement of educational goals. Then institution comes to mind that might be school, college and university to use curriculum set to fulfill goals. Educational institute is an agent that working for society to enroll students and pursue curriculum of specific course to achieve educational goals.

Curriculum is planned and designed on a systematic procedure through high experience and knowledge with support of school of the learners (ACHOR AND WILFRED-BONSE, 2013). It has a set of rules for learning, intended objectives and outcomes. It is known as that all learning of students can be achieved within educational system. It is an organized and written pattern for each subject which made on the basis of societal needs, problems, desire and value (ABOHO, 2010). Curriculum is used like an instrument in school to structure learning goals and pedagogical practices, as it shows the way of delivery, communicates and executes rules, norms. (MØLSTAD AND HANSÉN, 2013). It gives a track to cover a course that contribute to basic question; 'What is taught?' and 'What ought to be taught in educational institutions?'. Curriculum development process varies from lower level to modify current practices for the upper-level innovations where new updated and high-level curricular possibilities arise (TAYLOR AND RICHARDS, 2018). Through curricula students are scientifically presented to the material and non-material world. It is a representation of past, current perspectives of human culture that considered the most important to transmit

knowledge to new generation. It brings innovative diversity of knowledge according to educational requirement in different contexts of curricula.

These concept of curriculum and guided learning has main focus on differences of views and beliefs, nature of knowledge, students, teaching and learning process to achieve educational goals. The ideological perspective is a considered very useful to help in characterizing the nature of current discussion in education (TAYLOR AND RICHARDS, 2018). Education and curriculums cannot be separated because both are connected and share a relationship in which both of them are enhanced in educational setup therefore, effective curriculum is a base for high standard education. That's why it is necessary for students to pay close attention to curriculum and education when selecting field and schools to attend (CAMPBELL-PHILLIPS, 2020).

Pakistani schools are adopting a national curriculum that is produced by the responsible commission 'Curriculum wing of the federal ministry of education'. Pakistan has four provinces therefore; each province has assigned goals to implement curriculum in their province. For that the four provincial textbook boards are accountable for the implementation of the national curriculum, primarily through textbook production within their respective authorities. The curriculum provided by textbook boards covered all details of instructions in the textbook; authors, contents, topics, chapters and lesson that need to be taught at school level. According to the federal supervision of curricula and textbooks and maintenance of standards of Education Act 1976, the Curriculum Wing reviews all textbooks and reserves the right to amend/delete/reject a part or the whole of any textbook. Therefore there is available research on the representation of characteristics in Pakistani curriculum texts but there are very less research on the way curriculum uses (ROSSER 2003, DEAN 2005, LALL, 2008).

Curriculum framework is a set of document or policy on curriculum that is based on the national policy or the constitution of Pakistan. In Pakistan the new policy is adopted 'National education policy and vision 2025' which aim to provide a curriculum framework that includes all the teaching learning mechanisms, duration of time, elements and requirements for the development or revision of curricula and all other related stuffs about learning in schools. It sets all logical foundation for the curriculum though which knowledge, understanding, skills, values, and attitudes can be accomplish by students who are predictable to obtain learning outcomes in speccific areas at a specific level. It provides a comprehensive policy and guideline for the curricular to increase effectiveness

of subject, teaching and learning delivery system, assessment and evaluation of students for learning and professional development of teachers for teacher success also that includes recommendations for systemic changes that are required for effective implementation of curriculum (NCF, 2018).

In Pakistan national curriculum council (NCC) delivers a plan for national curriculum framework (NCF) that was established by a sub-committee of NCC which consist representators from all provinces and tribal areas. Curriculum framework for secondary level was developed on the basis of national ideology, integrity, cohesion and national goals. The NCC and NCF thoroughly observe curriculum foundation (philosophical, psychological and sociological), national and provincial curriculum contexts, integrity of Muslim Ummah, academic concerns, school level and study scheme, curriculum and learning materials under the reference of 18th amendment of constitution of Pakistan. In addition, medium of instruction at different school levels, socio-cultural concerns including compassion, care, fairness, honesty, integrity, respect, humbleness, and responsibility of the Pakistani society under provincial/regional context are among others. Curriculum preparation is focusing on implementation, feedback, evaluation, school environment, classroom delivery, teacher preparation, examination and assessment and research.

Secondary education is considered a basic education for every field in Pakistan therefore, the base of a students should be clear with a vision to select best field according to their expertise for future. As it is mentioned in curriculum policy framework students have to opt subject of their interest at secondary level. Where some students select science subject, other select arts general subject and vocational. The aim of this paper is to drag out the power of curriculum framework in its creation to its implementation at school level. The current review was based on available online literature and policy documents related reports by government and non-governmental institution issued in the period of from independence to current in Pakistan. The documents issued by the following government organizations were sampled: national education policies; governmental bodies; NGOs; local members of the academic or non-academic community or stakeholders. Further selected data were followed by few steps such as exploring relevant documents and statements with a specific focus on structure that addressing process of curriculum learning at secondary level; after that researcher critically evaluate the major aspects from policies after 2000-2022 in which researcher discussed some major areas

such as curriculum development, its implementation, responsible authorities and their duties.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION ON CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK IN PAKISTAN

Federal ministry of education works in collaboration with provincial authorities for the management and implementation of educational resources in the country. Where the major task of federal ministry of education is to create and articulate the national education policies to all provinces. Therefore, the provincial ministries are responsible for the implementation of policies in their respective provinces (BARWELL ET AL., 2007). The major responsibilities of the federal ministry of education are to assigned responsibilities to supervise curricula, textbooks and to maintain educational standards Act 1976 of the government of Pakistan that was grounded to advance curricula, textbooks and maintain the standard of education in the country (BARWELL ET AL., 2007; JAMIL, 2009). The authorities and policy makers are doing there best to create and plan the policies for secondary level but sometimes at provincial level while implementation they fail to apply policies properly for standard education in the country.

All these responsibilities were remained under the supervision of the federal ministry of education before 18th amendment of the constitution of Pakistan. After 18th amendment in 2010 these responsibilities were decentralized to the provincial ministries of education in the country therefore now every province is responsible for the creation and implementation of the policies. Currently it is the duty of every province ministerial organization to develop curricula and textbooks for their region (HAMEED-UR-REHMAN AND SEWANI, 2013). Still, all the provincial authorities are obliged to approved their curricula and textbooks by the federal ministry of education for final implementation in the province or state. Therefore, the federal ministry of education holds the authority to supervise and approve the curricula and textbooks of all provinces. In addition, also it is reported that provinces have authority to develop their own curricula after the 18th amendment in the constitution of Pakistan in 2010, but till date the provincial ministries have not yet devised their own curricula. But they are still following the same National Curricula that was developed by the federal ministry of education

moreover, the textbooks that are currently using in the provinces are also based on the same national curricula.

National bureau of curriculum and textbooks (NBCT, commonly known as the curriculum wing) was selected for the supervision of national curriculum and textbooks, to develop and approve curriculum according to curriculum standards from primary to higher secondary level. The curriculum wing took an initiative act to establish provincial textbook boards (PTTB) for every province that will follow the approval of national bureau of curriculum and textbooks. In their respective authorities, PTTBs are responsible to prepare, publish, stock, distribute and do school marketing of textbooks. In all provinces another committee that is boards of intermediate and secondary education (BISE) is responsible for conduction of examinations at Secondary level in the country (IX-X). Bise is developed and approved by national-provincial government for different divisions in the province where they are responsible for evaluation of students.

Pakistan has established committee for curriculum design and development in each province of the divisional headquarters. Subsequently, inter-board committee of chairmen (IBCC) was another major organization of education wing that following the objectives:

To communicate information regarding new rules among all member of divisional boards on every aspects of secondary and higher secondary education; further it aim to measure uniformity in academic evaluation standards; To promote inter-board curricular and extra-curricular activities; To serve as a board chief executives' discussion and consultation forum for all matters relating to secondary and higher secondary education development, and making suitable recommendations to the government of Pakistan; advise on and facilitate the exchange of teachers and students; perform such other functions as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives. (NCF, 2018)

On the basis of curriculum objectives and scheme for the studies, syllabi are prepared for each subject with consultation and collaboration of provincial curriculum centers, where the included members were subject experts, psychologists and serving teachers at secondary level. Mutually, they guarantee that the syllabi must satisfy all aspects for that they follow some conditions; it must be based on the needs of the learner; they focus on the existing knowledge and environmental experience of the learner; level of the learner is considered in the cognitive, effectiveness and psycho-motor domains;

The contents should be focused on attaining the objective(s). After approval of syllabi provincial textbook boards (PTBB) were assigned the duty to develop text-books according to the approved syllabi. These lists of textbook development are assigned to experts where writers in various subjects are reserved. After completion of listing, they send invitations to writers who are selected write and submit a draft of materials within the prescribed syllabus parameters. They select material based on quality and relevance of materials local circumstances. Finally, the selected materials are transformed into the textbooks and the final versions of books were sent to the NBCT for approval.

Ministry of education (MOE) is responsible for the secondary schools. At secondary level they follow a common curriculum, implementing a general education in languages (English and Urdu), Pakistan Studies, Islamiyat (Religious subject) and mathematics are compulsory for all students. Besides these chapters they arranged different groups: science, arts or general, vocational. The science group includes mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology; the general of arts group includes mathematics or household accounts or home economics, general science, computer science, ethics, Islamic studies. The vocational group provides choices from a list of commercial, agricultural, industrial or home economics courses. The Secondary School Certificate (SSC) taken at the end of the tenth grade is administered by the government's Board of intermediate and secondary education (SECONDARY EDUCATION, 2020).

The experts recognized that the national curriculum wing tries in shifting the orientation from the authoritarian approach (top-down) of curriculum development and implementation towards (down-top) approach which must be based on cooperation from all the stakeholders at regional level. After the consideration of science education project (reviewed in the preceding section) the education ministry had proved its willingness to take stand for change as it provided a forum for teachers from the college cadre and school cadre to think together about what and how science should be taught to bring innovative innovation at decentralized level. As a result, it is noted that these efforts could not bring a significant effect because of two reasons;

First, it was founded difficult to adopt a sustainable cooperative approach in curriculum development and implementation in an authoritarian society. There are many forces acting in these societies which play a discouraging role in bringing about any improvement in the curriculum. Second, many individuals who were engaged in curriculum development did not seem to have

enough experience, knowledge and attitude about their role as science educators and curriculum developers. (NCF, 2018; NEP, 2009)

It is reported that there were contradictory in ideologies in the effort to reform the curriculum between the stakeholders. For example, different groups from many societies were participated where they emphasized that science curriculum must have a cultural consideration in the curriculum. On the other hand, most of expert express that culture is not stagnant to continuously shaped through schooling and curriculum. The expectation from societal groups within the country school and curriculum should act as change agents for country political authorization and social change through science education.

Social structure and country economy is based on a gender and class differences therefore students from different backgrounds and socioeconomic status received different kinds of educational experiences. Therefore, it is also reported by KHAN in 1993, that education of the country does not support people in the lower strata of the society to move up the socioeconomic ranking in the country similarly this problem is also faced by society in the current time. Due to several reasons children from backward rural areas and poor urban families can't afford education at high class. Therefore, it is suggested on the basis of evidence government of Pakistan must provide a financial support to the poor and needed families for their educational support (ISMAIL ET AL., 1994). With the harmony of ZAHUR, BARTON AND UPADHYAY (2002), they explored the role of science education in poor urban communities in Pakistan to bring a political empowerment and social change in the backward areas to develop therefore they argued science education should be the study of nature despite only learning of few sciences experiments. In another study HALAI, 2002 founded that majority of teachers perceived science as a motionless body of knowledge which can be acquired through the scientific method. It is reported that professional training courses for teachers are delimited that had a great influence on teachers' outset about the nature of knowledge (AHMED, 2000 AND HALAI, 2010). Therefore, it suggested to bring unambiguous curriculum orientation for teacher direction.

It is recommended by experts that national educational policies need to bring modification in the secondary school curricula but these efforts remained unsatisfactory the curricula remained fixed, rigid and unchanged. On the basis of recommendation of the education policy 1972, they bring changes to add compulsory, optional and elective subjects at secondary level (NEP, 1972). Reviews and suggestion were taken at different

times but they didn't take any action to review curricula (MALIK, 2007). The curriculum scheme that developed in 1970's was revised and reviewed in 2002 and 2006, unfortunately, Pakistan has facing crucial educational challenges due to different issue and they lack to meet national and international standard in the current era.

In the 20th century the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan introduced the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in the country that aim to unite the education of the country under the umbrella of a single curriculum. However, there is not proper evidences about its execution to be achieved by the government. Although it is divided into three phases:

In the first phase, it will be implemented for Grades 1-5 in the academic year 2021-22; in the second, it will be implemented for Grades 6-8 in 2022-23; and in its third phase, Grades 9-12 in 2023-24". (DAWN, 2022)

Single national curriculum (SNC) at national level hasn't implemented properly according to its designed framework (IRFAN, 2021). Where the federal government directed to implement the SNC in all provinces at public and private schools except Sindh province also, it is implemented in religious madrasas, in the first phase. It is not clear either SNC will be implemented and able to adjust Pakistan's current educational differences in all provinces (AHMED, 2020). Unfortunately, in 2022 the government of Prime minister Imran khan has demolished and his rules and regulations were changed. So, the current government has followed the old curriculum framework at school level. Also, Pakistan faced may issue during covid-19 because of low economy and other resources as it is a developing country.

CONCLUSION

Curriculums is a booster to enhance the productivity of education and standardized reputation of an institute that help to attract learners. Also, in the curriculum there are some pros and cons which should be considered before implementation. The strengthen point of curriculum is to tell 'what is to be taught' it provides details of assessing and evaluating the learning goals. That is completely based on research which matches with political agendas and it provides educational opportunities for both teachers and students. Where the negative point of curriculum included lack of interaction between

teachers and students. There is lack of abilities emphasis too much on observable behaviors, lack problem-solving ability and critical thinking, main focus on societal needs rather than individual needs, standards and principles is not set by educators. Also, in Pakistan the policy makers and curriculum development wings faced many issues due to lack of resources, expertise and funds. Currently new initiative was taken by prime minister Imran Khan to bring single national curriculum but it failed due to different political and social issues in all provinces of Pakistan.

The study is concluded that by implementation of quality curriculum individual can understand the needs and demands of current world. Curriculum framework and policy is very comprehensive in context of its creation and implementation. The responsible committees have set proper rules and guidelines for its implementation. Also, they have assigned duties to provincial and divisional level to different organization for supervision and improving high quality education by standard curriculum. Curriculum is well planned but not updated as they are using the old curriculum guidelines for education at secondary level. Therefore, the content of curriculum should be updated with time and current needs and it should align with the goals and objectives set in the national curriculum. The curriculum is a guiding document which must be updated according to the needs of society. There should be a mechanism of constant feedback so that curriculum could meet the challenges of the new era. It is suggested that the curriculum developers should revisit the policy on social constructive approach so curriculum can be taught conceptually rather than standard based. Moreover, formative assessment should be included throughout the year rather taking annual examinations.

It is recommended that teachers should impart mathematics education by linking math to social context and encourage students to socially construct meaning of the world. Additionally, they need prepare a draft by that teacher participate with students during class to enhance teaching learning of the class. Examinations should be taken twice or thrice in a year from specific chapters for assigning grades. Assessment should be integrated according to the requirements of each subject. The curriculum should be designed and implemented by the schools under the benchmarks set by the Education department. Education with knowledge and skills should be provided to students so they live their life confidently and successfully.

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