SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN PAKISTAN: A CHALLENGING EDUCATIONAL ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is designed to critically examine the scheme of studies for 9th-10th grades practiced in the Government Secondary Schools and to identify the major difficulties in the process of implementing secondary school curriculum in Pakistan in accordance with National Education Policy 1998-2010. The study also aimed at to determine the challenges including ineffectiveness of secondary curricula with reference to Sindh. The research study is carried out by descriptive survey method. For collection of data, a questionnaire was developed and distributed among secondary school teachers. The population comprised of all Government high schools and teachers of Sindh Province. 308 teachers were randomly selected as respondents and 210 responded. After analyzing data, conclusions were drawn from the findings of the study. The paper finds out many drawbacks in the curriculum system and concludes that scheme of secondary school curriculum must be improved to fulfill the requirements and objectives of the secondary education set by the National Education Policy.

Key words: Curriculum, Scheme of studies, Implementation, Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

After partition, along with other economic and social issues Pakistan also faced educational problems. The education system of newly created state was not in a situation to handle the youth of time. In this regard Pakistan educational conference was held in 1947 to develop education and curriculum but due to other immense problems serious attention was not paid at that time. It is also alleged by almost all the educationalist that no serious efforts were made for the improvement of system of education till today. Secondary level education being a very essential and critical period of student life was not given due attention. All the policies, plans, national documents including National Education Policy 1998-

2010 identified the secondary level of education as a very serious period of academic life and considered it a very crucial stage. The overall activities and curricula at this stage are not up to mark. According to Good 1973 curriculum at this stage refers to the programme of studies, detailed syllabi, activities and experiences as provided in the schools.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CURRICULUM

Curriculum is an educational programme and the source for fulfilling the internal and external demands of institutions. Pupil also gets intellectual, sentimental, social, economic consistencies resulting individuals could serve for better society. Curriculum according to Kerr (1968) is, all the activities are provided for students by the school. "Curriculum is the formulation and implementation of an educational proposal to be taught and learned in school." (Jenkins & Shipman 1976:6) In the words of Wiles and Bondi, "the curriculum as a goal or set of values which activated through a development process culminating in a classroom experience for students" (1993:10),

Right from the very beginning of the introduction of secondary school curriculum in Pakistan, it has remained under criticism for its non functional nature. First education conference, educational policies and documents consistently and repeatedly recommended the diversification of secondary school curriculum. Every policy emphasized the necessity of purposeful, innovative, scientific and skill oriented education at secondary school level. National educational policies repeatedly recommended the diversification of secondary school curricula but efforts towards diversification remained unsatisfactory and the secondary school curricula remained fixed, rigid and unchanged. As a result of the recommendation of the education policy 1972, the large numbers of compulsory, optional and elective subjects were introduced at secondary level keeping in view introducing any one of these courses depending upon the availability of resources in the school. According to Parveen (1996), Curriculum at secondary level has been diversified but lack of integration in scientific disciplines has been left and not promoted the practical and social problem solving approaches. The issues pertain to tolerance and peace in society, religious and cultural diversity did not given proper consideration

in the program of studies (ANTRIEP, 2005). Efforts were made for developing secondary school curriculum with half-hearted. Serious steps have not yet been taken to review curricula (Malik, 2007). The scheme of studies for secondary school level was revised 35 years ago and curriculum reviews were made in 2002 and 2006. Unfortunately the quality of secondary school curriculum could not meet national and international standard and the challenges of current centaury. Secondary school curriculum in Pakistan has remained a crucial and challenging educational issue.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of study was designed to identify and analyze the problems which specifically pertained to the scheme of studies and curricula (9th-10th grades) and implementation of secondary school curriculum particularly in the light of National Education Policy 1998-2000.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the adequacy of the present scheme of studies and curricula (9th-10th grades).
2. To identify the problems faced in the implementation of scheme of studies and curricula.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Is the scheme of studies and curricula (9th-10th grades) adequate for the present needs of children?
- What are the main problems and challenges for implementing secondary school curricula?
- How far lacks of physical facilities and infrastructure greatly affects on implementation of curricula?

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive-survey research method was used. The accessible population of the study comprised of government school teachers of Sindh. Simple random sampling technique was used for selecting sample. The subjects for this study were selected from all districts of Province of Sindh making a total sample of 308. Male and female high school teachers were randomly chosen from the list of government owned High Schools.

RESEARCH TOOLS

A survey questionnaire was designed to get responses from working teachers regarding development, implementation and problems of scheme of studies and curricula (9^{th}-10^{th} grades) in Pakistan with main focus on the province of Sindh. Questionnaire was related to the objectives of study. Before going to the field the tool was properly validated with proper methods. After making proper changes questionnaire was administered to the 308 respondents and 210 subjects responded.

DATA ANALYSIS

Research Question No.1: Is the scheme of studies and curricula (9th-10^{th} grades) adequate for the present needs of children?

TABLE: 1
SCHEME OF STUDIES AND CURRICULA (9TH-10TH GRADE)

Item	**Yes**		**No**		**Uncertain**	
	f **(out of 210)**	***%***	***f*** **(out of 210)**	***%***	***f*** **(out of 210)**	***%***
The schemes Scheme of studies and curricula taught at secondary school level (9th-10th) is… i) Overloaded	174	82.85	29	13.80	7	3.33
ii) Opinion Based	158	75.23	38	18.09	14	6.66
iii) Irrelevant	136	64.76	59	28.09	15	7.14
iv) Flexible	36	17.14	160	76.19	14	6.66
v) Integrated	60	28.57	144	68.57	6	2.85
vi) Diversified	39	18.57	163	77.61	8	3.80

f = frequencies
% = percentage **Source**: Questionnaire.

Table-1 shows that in item No.(i), 82.85% teachers responded in positive that the scheme of studies taught at secondary level is overloaded, where as 13.80% responded in negative. Only 3.33% were uncertain. In item No.(ii), 75.23% responded that the scheme of studies taught at secondary level is

opinion based, where as 18.09% responded in negative. Only 6.66% were uncertain. In item No.(iii), 64.76% respondents viewed that the scheme of studies taught at secondary level is irrelevant, where as 28.09% disagreed 7.14% were uncertain. In item No.(iv), 17.14% responded that the scheme of studies taught at secondary level is flexible, where as 76.19% responded in negative. Only 6.66% were uncertain. In item No.(v), 28.57% were in favor of that curricula taught at secondary level are integrated, where as 68.57% responded in negative. Only 2.85% were uncertain. In item No.(vi), 18.57% responded in positive, where as 77.61% responded in negative. Only 3.80% were uncertain.

Research Question No.2: What are the main problems and challenges for implementing secondary school curricula?

TABLE: 2
PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FOR IMPLEMENTING CURRICULA

Item	**Yes**		**No**		**Uncertain**	
	f **(out of 210)**	***%***	***f*** **(out of 210)**	***%***	***f*** **(out of 210)**	***%***
i) Traditional methods of Teaching	158	75.23	35	16.66	17	8.09
ii) Shortage of A.V.Aids	184	87.61	17	8.09	9	4.28
iii)Lack of Financial Resources	115	54.76	74	35.23	21	10.00
iv)Improper monitoring & Evaluation	133	63.33	60	28.57	17	8.09
v) Rote Memorization based examination	191	90.95	14	6.66	5	2.38
vi) Non Availability of Text Books	168	80	37	17.61	5	2.38
vii) Lack of Teachers	136	64.76	70	33.33	4	1.90

Source: Questionnaire.

f = frequencies
% = percentage

Table 2 indicates that in item No.(i), 75.23% teachers responded in positive that traditional methods is used during teaching, where as 16.66% responded in negative. Only 8.09%

were uncertain. In item No.(ii), 87.61% responded in positive, where as 8.09 % responded in negative. Only 4.28% were uncertain. In item No.(iii), 54.76% responded in positive, where as 35.23% responded in negative. Only 10.00% were uncertain. In item No.(iv), 63.33% responded that improper monitoring and evaluation is one of the main problems, where as 28.57% responded in negative. Only 8.09% were uncertain. In item No.(v), 90.95% responded in positive that existing examination system at secondary school level is rote memorization, where as 6.66% responded in negative. Only 2.38% were uncertain. In item No.(vi), 80% responded in positive, where as 17.61% responded in negative. Only 2.38% were uncertain. In item No.(vii), 64.76% replied in positive, where as 33.33% responded in negative. Only 1.90% was uncertain.

Research Question No.3: How far lacks of physical facilities and infrastructure greatly affects on implementation of curricula?

TABLE: 3
AVAILABILITY OF PHYSICAL FACILITIES

Item	**Yes**		**No**		**Uncertain**	
	f **(out of 210)**	***%***	***f*** **(out of 210)**	***%***	***f*** **(out of 210)**	***%***
Which of the following facilities are available in your school?						
i) Suitable Building	55	26.19	154	73.33	1	0.47
ii) Science Laboratory	89	42.38	121	57.61	Nil	Nil
iii) Computer Laboratory	27	12.85	183	87.14	Nil	Nil
iv) Vocational/Technical workshop	16	7.61	194	92.38	Nil	Nil
v) Equipments of workshop	7	3.33	203	96.66	Nil	Nil
vi) Library	42	20	168	80	Nil	Nil
vii) Play Ground	69	32.85	141	67.14	Nil	Nil

Source: Questionnaire.

f = frequencies
% = percentage

Table 3 shows that in item No.(i), 26.19% teachers responded in positive, where as 73.33% responded in negative. Only 0.47% was uncertain. In item No.(ii), 42.38% responded in positive, where as 57.61% responded in negative. There was no response in the category of uncertain. In item No.(iii), 12.85% responded in positive, where as 87.14% responded in negative. There was no response in the category of uncertain. In item No.(iv), 7.61% responded in positive, where as 92.38% responded in negative. There was no response in the category of uncertain. In item No.(v), 3.33% responded in positive, where as 96.66% responded in negative. There was no response in the category of uncertain. In item No.(vi), 20% responded in positive, where as 80% responded in negative. There was no response in the category of uncertain. In item No.(vii), 32.85% replied in positive, where as 67.14% replied in negative. There was no response in the category of uncertain.

FINDINGS

- It was found that majority of respondents 82.85% agreed that the scheme of studies taught at secondary level is over loaded.
- 75.23% respondents had the opinion that scheme of studies taught at secondary level is opinion based.
- 64.76% of the respondents were of the opinion that scheme of studies taught at secondary level is irrelevant.
- 76.19% were of the view that scheme of studies taught at secondary level is not flexible/broad based.
- 68.57% teachers expressed their view that scheme of studies taught at secondary level is not integrated.
- 77.61% respondents were of the opinion that curricula taught at secondary level are not diversified.
- It was found that 75.71% respondent agreed with the view that they use traditional methods of teaching at secondary level.
- 87.61% teacher's respondents said that shortage of A.V.Aids in the schools is one of the main problems.
- 54.76% teacher's respondents said that lack of financial resources affects on the promotion and implementation of curriculum.
- 63.33% teacher respondents agreed that improper monitoring and evaluation is one of the main problems.
- 90.95% teacher respondents agreed with the view that the existing examination system at secondary school level is rote memorization.

- 80% respondents expressed their view that textbooks are not available in time.
- 64.76% teacher's respondents said that lack of teachers in the schools affects on the implementation of curriculum.

CONCLUSION

The present secondary school curriculum does not match with the nature of Pakistani students and the actual prevailing condition of Pakistan. It is just an opinion based scheme of studies made by different persons working in various educational organizations. The present secondary school curriculum is heavily overloaded with books. It is not job oriented and do not train students for employment opportunities. The curriculum is out dated as it does not meet the needs of the students. The problem is that Secondary School curriculum lacks proper identification of objectives. More emphasis is given to the subject matter rather than learner. Text books are not available in time. Teaching learning process in the secondary school is very much traditional and supervisory; monitoring and evaluation system at secondary level is very weak. Examination system is rote memorization based and certificate oriented. Result shown that desired objectives as recommended in the National Education Policy 1998-2010 pertain to secondary school curriculum have not been achieved.

There is need to develop secondary school curriculum and to review and update the curricula by incorporating new developments in all disciplines. In addition new subjects such as computer, business, math, and marketing can be introduced. The disciplines of environment, health education, drug abuse, population education and issues relating to socio-economic needs to be included. In service training, refresher courses especially for secondary school teachers should be taken up. Science and computer laboratories, vocational/technical workshops and equipments are needed to be properly utilized for the implementation of secondary school curriculum. In the light of National Education Policy 1998-2010, secondary school curriculum as much as diversified as possible so that every pupil may select the fields or courses relevant to specific talents and aptitude.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is suggested that the scheme of studies for 9th-10th grades contains large number of subjects must be reviewed. Funds should be released for curriculum development. Copies of the scheme of studies of secondary school curricula may be supplied to all libraries. Continuous process of making curriculum should be adopted by establishing centre of excellence. Good number of high school teachers, curriculum experts should be called for participation in the training of curriculum development. Teacher's activity books of each subject must be prepared. Teacher should be involved in the system of curriculum revision on regular basis.

It is suggested that availability of text books 9th-10th grades should be made on time and unnecessary repetitions in the text books should be avoided. Outdated concepts and methods should be removed from the text books. Technical/vocational subjects should be introduced and locally available skilled persons should be appointed in the high schools.

It is suggested that more attention should be given to improve the quality of secondary school teachers. Refresher courses on modern methods and techniques should be organized for teachers. For implementation of secondary school curriculum audio visual aids & instructional materials should be provided in the school and proper trainings should be organized for use of teaching materials. Lecture method may be replaced by activity based method.

It is suggested that efforts may be made to establish science and computer laboratories and vocational workshops.

To fulfill the requirements of science and math teachers, qualified teachers may be appointed on merit basis.

Follow up support of the curriculum development should be made. Effective monitoring, evaluation and accountability system should be developed to solve the matters and problems concerning with implementation of Secondary school curriculum in the schools.

It is suggested that to minimize unfair means in the examination, midterm exam may be conducted by the Board and marks secured be added in annual matriculation examination.

It is suggested that suitable school buildings and adequate furniture should be arranged in the schools where ever required. Funds/financial resources may be released for proper development

and maintaining of school buildings and for purchasing school lab equipments and materials.

It is suggested that efforts may be made to establish adequate science and computer laboratories and vocational workshops.

It is suggested that for the promotion of sports and games activities in the secondary schools, play grounds facility may be provided.

Secondary school curricula should be made effective, diversified, need based by including social, economical and global demands.

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