

Citation: Amin, M., Ali, S., & Mahmood, T. (2023). Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing Single National Curriculum in Punjab. *Global Educational Studies Review*, VIII(I), 508-514. [https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023\(VIII-I\).44](https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2023(VIII-I).44)

Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing Single National Curriculum in Punjab

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Abstract: The article examines teachers' perceptions of challenges in implementing the Single National Curriculum (SNC). Teachers working in primary schools were considered for data collection. For the collection of information regarding above mention issue, a five-point Likert scale was used. Collected information was tabulated and through an analysis of response data, key issues were identified, including difficulty understanding the SNC, preparing daily lessons, and concerns about teacher competence. Gender-based differences were not significant, but teachers' qualifications had a notable impact. Bachelor's degree holders reported higher challenges compared to those with master's or M. Phil./Ph.D. degrees. The findings suggest a need for tailored support and training to address these issues and improve SNC implementation, particularly for teachers with lower qualifications. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing these challenges to ensure effective curriculum delivery across different qualification levels.

Key Words: Single National Curriculum, Implementation Problems Primary Schools

Introduction

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) represents a recent endeavour by the Pakistani Government, seeking to establish a consistent educational curriculum applicable to both public and private schools throughout the nation. While the SNC's overarching goals encompass fostering national cohesion, equitable access, and high-quality education, the initial rollout specifically at the primary level has been met with a range of difficulties, as noted by educators (Malik & Rana, 2021). This review of existing literature delves into the challenges that have arisen during the primary-level implementation of the SNC and explores

the suggested remedies as perceived by teachers.

Exploring the challenges within Pakistan, a developing nation, the focal point inevitably turns to its foundational elements, with particular emphasis on its education system. The educational landscape in Pakistan exhibits a division stemming from its historical connection to British colonialism within the Indo-Pak subcontinent. This division manifests through distinct mediums of instruction: English medium schools, Urdu medium schools, and Deni Madaris, contributing to a disparity between students and the general

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populace within the country (Kausar, 2020; Muhammad, 2019).

Recognized as a cornerstone in nation-building, education assumes a pivotal role (Jamil, Muhammad, Masood, & Habib, 2020). A singular education mechanism that encompasses uniform curriculum, language of instruction, and standardized assessment opens doors for every child to access quality education equitably. The Single National Curriculum (SNC) stands as a stride in this direction. Among its merits, a unified national curriculum stands to mitigate social disparities. Once comprehensively implemented, it promises equal opportunities for all children to receive a robust educational foundation (Irfan, 2021).

Champions of the SNC hold the belief that the concept of a universally applicable educational framework is a lofty ideal. This resonates within Pakistan, given the stark educational segregation based on factors like access, learning quality, educational objectives, social strata, and financial means. However, critics argue that the SNC represents a centralized compilation of goals, norms, and standards lacking robust research or nationwide consensus (Sinnema & Nieveen, 2020).

In this milieu, the role of teachers as implementers comes to the fore (Ahmed, Muhammad, & Anis, 2020). Regrettably, their participation in the SNC's development and evaluation processes has been limited, leading to outdated syllabi. This lack of engagement results in incomplete understanding and subsequently affects both teacher performance and the efficacy of the teaching-learning process. Unlike developed countries where educators actively contribute to curriculum design, Pakistan faces a gap. This disconnect between the education staff's recommendations and policy-making decisions is evident. Bridging this gap necessitates an alignment between national policies and educator-influenced professional practices, a pursuit the SNC is actively engaged in (Tahir, 2022).

It's apparent that the government and advisory bodies might not be fully heeding the

insights of educators when formulating policies. However, the curriculum should ideally reflect government-endorsed interests, underpinning the notion of a 'unified country, unified curriculum.' The effectiveness of the SNC will ultimately be gauged through future assessments. Achieving this alignment demands a strong connection between national policy and educator-guided professional execution. To this end, the SNC is diligently striving. During the curriculum's dynamic creation process, educator input is crucial for shaping governmental policies (Panjwani & Chaudhary, 2022).

According to Abbas, Basit, and Akhtar (2021), Pakistan's education system grapples with a series of significant obstacles in implementing a uniform SNC at the primary school level. Public sector schools struggle to deliver quality education, while religious seminaries face regulation challenges. Basic infrastructure deficiencies, high dropout rates, inadequately trained teachers, and disparities in educational backgrounds further compound the issues.

A salient limitation of the SNC lies in its apparent lack of flexibility. This rigidity could stifle creativity in curriculum design and impede teacher autonomy, potentially eroding professional judgment and independence (Lipman, 2017). Additionally, the insufficient training of educators and the delayed availability of SNC-related materials hinder effective curriculum delivery (Zaman, Saleem & Ali, 2021).

Bashir, Yasmin, and Ahmad (2021) observed that workshops and national conferences on SNC implementation were inadequately organized, with provincial educators' insights not thoroughly integrated. Given the disparities in implementation readiness among schools across provinces, a robust monitoring system becomes essential to ensure accurate SNC implementation.

In essence, Pakistan's journey toward a harmonized education system through the Single National Curriculum is riddled with complexities and multifaceted challenges. Balancing national unity and educational

equity while addressing pedagogical and infrastructural realities requires a concerted and adaptive effort.

Methodology

The study employed a questionnaire containing closed-ended inquiries to amass insights regarding the challenges encountered during the application of SNC in primary classes, along

with recommendations to surmount these difficulties. The questionnaire, structured on a 5-point Likert scale, encompassed 36 closed-ended items. The gathered data underwent tabulation and was subjected to analysis using the SPSS software. The accrued data was scrutinized to address the research query.

The results of analysis are given below:

Table 1

Teachers' Comment on Challenges Encountered for SNC

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	389	4.123	.453
Inability to create daily lesson plans	389	3.981	.532
Lack of proficiency among educators	389	4.011	.399
Insufficient teaching skills	389	3.789	.411
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	389	4.111	.512
Limited access to training opportunities	389	4.019	.429
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	389	4.101	.491
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	389	3.881	.399
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	389	3.991	.401
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	389	4.200	.459

Table 1 summarizes teachers' perspectives on challenges encountered during the application of SNC. The table comprises responses from 389 participants, detailing mean values and standard deviations (S.D.) for each statement.

The table reveals that teachers face notable difficulties in comprehending SNC content, as indicated by a high mean score of 4.123 (S.D. = 0.453). Similarly, educators express struggles with crafting daily lesson plans, with a mean of 3.981 (S.D. = 0.532), and acknowledge a lack of proficiency among their peers, registering a mean of 4.011 (S.D. = 0.399). Challenges extend to insufficient teaching skills, yielding a mean of 3.789 (S.D. = 0.411), and limited access to training

opportunities, indicated by a mean of 4.019 (S.D. = 0.429). The data also emphasizes the difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework (Mean = 4.101, S.D. = 0.491), and the presence of conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology (Mean = 3.881, S.D. = 0.399). Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC is evident with a mean of 3.991 (S.D. = 0.401), while concerns about selecting appropriate teaching materials are highlighted by a mean of 4.200 (S.D. = 0.459).

In summary, this table provides a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted challenges teachers confront when implementing the SNC, encompassing both technical and ideological dimensions.

Table 2

Male Teachers' Comment on Challenges Encountered for SNC

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	193	4.213	.499
Inability to create daily lesson plans	193	3.883	.511
Lack of proficiency among educators	193	4.121	.401
Insufficient teaching skills	193	3.991	.349

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	193	4.010	.491
Limited access to training opportunities	193	4.210	.500
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	193	4.210	.410
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	193	3.999	.401
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	193	3.899	.501
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	193	4.112	.491

Table 2 presents the viewpoints of male teachers regarding challenges encountered in implementing the Single National Curriculum (SNC). The table encompasses various facets with responses from 193 participants, showcasing the mean scores and standard deviations (S.D.). On average, male teachers perceived a significant hurdle in grasping the SNC content (Mean = 4.213), along with difficulty in creating daily lesson plans (Mean = 3.883) and a perceived lack of proficiency among educators (Mean = 4.121). Insufficient teaching skills (Mean = 3.991) and exclusion from curriculum development (Mean = 4.010) were also noted challenges. Moreover, male

teachers expressed the constraint of limited access to training opportunities (Mean = 4.210) and encountered difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework (Mean = 4.210). Some male teachers experienced conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology (Mean = 3.999) and acknowledged inadequate experience in teaching the SNC (Mean = 3.899). Lastly, recognizing a weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials was another challenge (Mean = 4.112). These mean values, along with standard deviations, provide insights into the levels of consensus and variability among male teachers' responses to these challenges.

Table 3

Responses from female teachers concerning issues faced by educators during the implementation of the SNC

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	186	4.020	.491
Inability to create daily lesson plans	186	3.899	.502
Lack of proficiency among educators	186	4.121	.518
Insufficient teaching skills	186	3.991	.411
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	186	4.012	.477
Limited access to training opportunities	186	4.112	.399
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	186	4.021	.401
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	186	3.991	.349
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	186	3.986	.491
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	186	4.199	.401

Table 3 outlines female teachers' viewpoints regarding challenges faced by educators during the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC). This table comprises responses from 186 participants and provides mean values as well as standard deviations (S.D.) for each statement.

The data reflects that female teachers encounter substantial obstacles in comprehending the SNC content, evidenced by

a mean score of 4.020 (S.D. = 0.491). They also struggle with creating daily lesson plans, as indicated by a mean of 3.899 (S.D. = 0.502), and perceive a lack of proficiency among educators, yielding a mean of 4.121 (S.D. = 0.518). Challenges extend to insufficient teaching skills, registering a mean of 3.991 (S.D. = 0.411), and being excluded from curriculum development, as suggested by a mean of 4.012 (S.D. = 0.477).

Moreover, limited access to training opportunities is noted with a mean of 4.112 (S.D. = 0.399), along with difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework (Mean = 4.021, S.D. = 0.401). Female teachers also grapple with conflicting beliefs regarding the SNC ideology, scoring a mean of 3.991 (S.D. = 0.349). The data additionally reflects a perceived shortage of experience in teaching the SNC, indicated by a mean of 3.986 (S.D. =

0.491), and challenges in selecting appropriate teaching materials, as denoted by a mean of 4.199 (S.D. = 0.401).

In essence, Table 3 offers insights into the multifaceted challenges faced by female teachers during SNC implementation, touching on content comprehension, curriculum development, training opportunities, and ideological alignment.

Table 4

Bachelor's degree holder Teachers' Comment on Challenges Encountered for SNC

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	71	4.231	.544
Inability to create lesson plans	71	4.342	.467
Lack of proficiency among educators	71	4.221	.419
Insufficient teaching skills	71	4.355	.499
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	71	4.291	.501
Limited access to training opportunities	71	4.202	.501
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	71	4.390	.496
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	71	4.399	.449
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	71	4.223	.513
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	71	4.411	.500

Table 4 provides insights into educators with bachelor's degree qualifications and their perspectives on challenges encountered during the Single National Curriculum (SNC) implementation. The table is comprised of responses from 71 participants, showcasing mean values along with standard deviations (S.D.) for each statement.

The data reveals that teachers holding bachelor's degrees confront notable hurdles in comprehending the SNC content, with a mean score of 4.231 (S.D. = 0.544). They express challenges in creating daily lesson plans (Mean = 4.342, S.D. = 0.467) and perceiving a lack of proficiency among educators (Mean = 4.221, S.D. = 0.419). Additionally, insufficient teaching skills (Mean = 4.355, S.D. = 0.499) and being excluded from curriculum

development (Mean = 4.291, S.D. = 0.501) are significant challenges.

Furthermore, limitations in accessing training opportunities are noted (Mean = 4.202, S.D. = 0.501), along with difficulties in interpreting the SNC framework (Mean = 4.390, S.D. = 0.496). Teachers with bachelor's degrees also encounter conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology (Mean = 4.399, S.D. = 0.449). The data indicates a perceived lack of experience in teaching SNC and struggles in selecting appropriate teaching materials.

In summary, Table 4 unveils the challenges that educators with bachelor's degrees face in effectively implementing the SNC, highlighting areas like content comprehension, curriculum development, training access, and alignment with ideological beliefs.

Table 5

Masters' degree holder Teachers' Comment on Challenges Encountered for SNC

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	288	4.565	.557

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Inability to create daily lesson plans	288	3.872	.533
Lack of proficiency among educators	288	4.132	.498
Insufficient teaching skills	288	3.781	.576
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	288	4.110	.511
Limited access to training opportunities	288	4.299	.576
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	288	4.171	.500
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	288	3.882	.491
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	288	3.883	.399
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	288	4.002	.488

The data underscores that teachers with master's degrees encounter substantial difficulties in comprehending the SNC content, evident from a high mean score of 4.565 (S.D. = 0.557). They also face challenges in creating daily lesson plans, with a mean of 3.872 (S.D. = 0.533), and perceive a lack of proficiency among educators, scoring a mean of 4.132 (S.D. = 0.498). Teachers in this group highlight insufficient teaching skills (Mean = 3.781, S.D. = 0.576) and experience exclusion from curriculum development (Mean = 4.110, S.D. = 0.511).

Limited access to training opportunities is noted with a mean of 4.299 (S.D. = 0.576), along with difficulties in interpreting the SNC

framework (Mean = 4.171, S.D. = 0.500). Educators with master's degrees also express conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology, scoring a mean of 3.882 (S.D. = 0.491). The data highlights perceived inadequacy in experience teaching the SNC (Mean = 3.883, S.D. = 0.399) and challenges in selecting suitable teaching materials (Mean = 4.002, S.D. = 0.488).

In summary, Table 5 offers insights into the nuanced challenges faced by educators holding master's degrees during SNC implementation. This encompasses content comprehension, curriculum development, training access, and alignment with ideological beliefs.

Table 6

M. Phil degree holder Teachers' Comment on Challenges Encountered for SNC

Factor	N	M	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	21	4.200	.404
Inability to create daily lesson plans	21	3.389	.493
Lack of proficiency among educators	21	3.232	.495
Insufficient teaching skills	21	3.302	.341
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	21	3.343	.501
Limited access to training opportunities	21	3.768	.410
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	21	3.877	.391
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	21	3.391	.510
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	21	3.401	.399
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	21	3.791	.389

Data indicates that educators with M. Phil. qualifications encounter hurdles in grasping SNC content, evident from a mean score of 4.200 (S.D. = 0.404). Challenges in creating daily lesson plans are notable, with a mean of 3.389 (S.D. = 0.493), along with a perceived lack of proficiency among educators, scoring a

mean of 3.232 (S.D. = 0.495). Insufficient teaching skills (Mean = 3.302, S.D. = 0.341) and exclusion from curriculum development (Mean = 3.343, S.D. = 0.501) are prominent challenges.

Furthermore, limited access to training opportunities is indicated by a mean of 3.768

(S.D. = 0.410), along with difficulty interpreting the SNC framework (Mean = 3.877, S.D. = 0.391). Educators with M. Phil. qualifications also express conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology, scoring a mean of 3.391 (S.D. = 0.510). The data reflects perceived inadequacy in experience teaching the SNC (Mean = 3.401, S.D. = 0.399) and challenges

in selecting suitable teaching materials (Mean = 3.791, S.D. = 0.389).

In summary, Table 6 sheds light on the specific challenges faced by educators holding M. Phil. degrees during SNC implementation, encompassing content comprehension, curriculum development, training access, and alignment with ideological beliefs.

Table 7

Ph. D. degree holder Teachers' Comment on Challenges Encountered for SNC

Statement	N	Mean	S.D.
Teachers struggling to grasp the SNC content	11	3.190	.421
Inability to create lesson plans	11	3.197	.510
Lack of proficiency among educators	11	3.112	.430
Insufficient teaching skills	11	3.500	.411
Exclusion of teachers from curriculum development	11	3.231	.299
Limited access to training opportunities	11	3.398	.289
Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework	11	3.491	.400
Conflicting beliefs with the SNC ideology	11	3.091	.391
Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC	11	3.310	.398
Weakness in selecting appropriate teaching materials	11	3.295	.400

Table 7 presents valuable insights into the challenges faced by PhD degree-holding teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum, referred to as SNC (possibly the Subordinate Normal Curriculum). The table includes 11 statements, each accompanied by relevant statistics, including the number of respondents (N), the mean score indicating the severity of the challenge, and the standard deviation (S.D.) reflecting the variability in responses.

Several noteworthy findings emerge from the table. Firstly, teachers seem to struggle the most with "Inadequate experience in teaching the SNC" (mean score of 3.310) and "Difficulty in interpreting the SNC framework" (mean

score of 3.491). These challenges indicate a need for clearer guidelines and professional development opportunities. On the other hand, "Insufficient teaching skills" (mean score of 3.500) and "Limited access to training opportunities" (mean score of 3.398) also emerge as significant concerns, suggesting a demand for pedagogical support and continuous teacher training.

Overall, this table underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by PhD educators in implementing the SNC, emphasizing the importance of tailored professional development and resources to support successful curriculum adoption.

Table 8

Male and female teachers' responses about problems

	Gender	N	M	S. D.	p
Teachers' response	Male	193	4.120	.846	.510
	Female	196	3.959	.801	

The table includes the number of respondents (N), mean values, standard deviations (Std. Deviation), and the significance level (Sig.) of the comparison.

The data indicates that male teachers (N = 193) have an average mean value of 4.120, suggesting a relatively higher perception of challenges (Std. Deviation = 0.846). In

contrast, females exhibit a slightly lower value of 3.959, implying a somewhat lesser perception of challenges (Std. Deviation = 0.801).

P value at .510 implies that the gender-based variations in how teachers perceive the encountered challenges during SNC implementation are not strong enough to be considered statistically noteworthy.

Table 9

Responses from teachers about problems in SNC

Qualification	S. of Sq.	d.f.	M. Sq.	F	p
Between	2.833	2	1.416		
Within	14.489	376	.100	14.175	.000
Total	17.322	378			

The table presents the analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the results reveal that there is a significant effect of teachers' qualification on perceived challenges (F = 14.175, Sig. = 0.000). The between-groups analysis indicates that the variations in teachers' qualifications contribute to differences in their perceptions of challenges related to SNC implementation. The

sum of squares between groups is 2.833, while within groups it is 14.489, highlighting that the variations between teachers' qualifications explain a substantial proportion of the overall variability. In summary, teachers' qualification plays a significant role in shaping their perceptions of challenges encountered during the implementation of the SNC.

Table 10

Post hoc analysis of problems in SNC

	Teachers' qualification	Teachers	M	Std. Dev.	M. D.	Sig.
1	B. A.	80	4.091	.789		
	M. A.	277	3.711	.712	.879*	.000
2	B. A.	80	4.091	.789		
	Ph. D/ Phil	32	3.190	.502	.901*	.000
3	Ph. D/ Phil	32	3.190	.502		
	M. A.	277	3.711	.712	-.710*	.000

The table presents the results of a post hoc analysis conducted following an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test aimed at understanding the impact of teachers' qualifications on problems within the SNC (presumably, the educational context). The table is divided into three rows, each representing a different comparison.

In the first row, the comparison is between teachers with a B.A. qualification (80 individuals) and those with an M.A.

qualification (277 individuals). The table shows mean scores (M), standard deviations (Std. Dev.), mean difference (M. D.), and statistical significance (Sig.). The mean difference of 0.879* is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), indicating that teachers with a B.A. qualification experience significantly more problems in the SNC than those with an M.A. qualification.

The second row compares teachers with a B.A. qualification to those with a Ph.D./Phil

qualification (32 individuals). Again, the mean difference of 0.901* is statistically significant, suggesting that teachers with a B.A. qualification face significantly more problems in the SNC compared to those with a Ph.D./Phil qualification.

The third row reverses the comparison, showing that teachers with a Ph.D./Phil qualification face significantly fewer problems in the SNC than those with an M.A. qualification, with a mean difference of -0.710*. Overall, these findings highlight that teachers' qualifications have a significant impact on the problems encountered in the SNC, with higher qualifications generally associated with fewer issues.

Findings

Challenges in Understanding and Interpreting SNC: Across all qualification levels, teachers expressed difficulties in comprehending and interpreting the Single National Curriculum (SNC). This challenge was particularly pronounced among teachers with master's and Ph.D. degrees, indicating the need for more targeted support in curriculum understanding.

Training Development Needs: Teachers consistently identified a lack of training and professional development opportunities as a significant problem. This issue was highlighted by teachers with diverse qualifications, emphasizing the importance of continuous training to enhance their ability to implement the SNC effectively.

Material Selection and Preparation: Teachers across qualification levels reported challenges in selecting suitable teaching materials and preparing daily lessons. This struggle was particularly notable among bachelor's and Ph.D. degree holders, indicating a need for guidance and resources for effective curriculum implementation.

Alignment with Curriculum Objectives: A common theme was the misalignment of teachers' beliefs and ideologies with the SNC. This challenge was evident across all qualification levels and underscored the

importance of addressing discrepancies to ensure effective curriculum delivery.

Professional Competence and Experience: Teachers with lower qualifications (bachelor's) expressed concerns about their professional competence, while those with higher qualifications (M. Phil./Ph.D.) noted insufficient teaching skills. This highlights the need for tailored professional development programs to enhance both pedagogical skills and subject expertise.

Conclusions

The study reveals that teachers at various qualification levels encounter challenges in implementing the Single National Curriculum. These challenges encompass comprehension of the curriculum, training deficiencies, material selection, alignment with curriculum objectives, and professional competence. Effective solutions should involve targeted training initiatives that address curriculum understanding, instructional techniques, and material preparation. Additionally, efforts should focus on promoting a shared understanding of the curriculum's ideology among teachers. Tailoring interventions to the specific needs of teachers with different qualification levels will foster a more successful implementation of the SNC, ultimately benefiting the quality of education in the country.

It is recommended to develop customized training programs that cater to the specific needs of teachers at different qualification levels. These programs should focus on improving curriculum comprehension, pedagogical skills, material selection, and alignment with curriculum objectives, addressing the challenges identified in the study.

Organize workshops that facilitate open discussions and dialogues among teachers to bridge the gap between their beliefs and the ideology of the Single National Curriculum. These workshops can promote a shared understanding and acceptance of the curriculum's goals, fostering a more cohesive implementation approach.

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