

Social Studies Curriculum in Elementary Public Schools of Pakistan

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Abstract: Determining what should be the Social Studies curriculum in an elementary school is an important decision because the consequences of what is selected has a direct bearing on the scope and sequence of the content and on how it is enacted in the classroom. Usually, the main thrust of Social Studies as a school subject is to make the children understand and comprehend values that are quintessential for the well being of the individual, the society and the country. Therefore, it has important implications for teachers, parents and the community. In Pakistan the responsibility for planning and designing national curriculum rests with the educational bureaucracy, and the general perception is that the national curriculum concerning Social Studies seems to reflect the priorities and goals of the state. This reflective paper explores how the Social Studies curriculum is influenced by the stake holders at the state level and emphasizes the need for a progressive curriculum to be visualized and planned by way of its effective implementation in elementary public schools.

Keywords: Social Studies curriculum, textbooks, students, teachers

Introduction

Textbooks, particularly at school level, serve as the basic source of information for students besides being the foremost expression of the objectives desired by the curriculum. Together they constitute the necessary institutional cohesiveness, and continuity that allows an educational system to act as a national social process to shape children's' minds (Hasanain & Nayyer, 1997). An analysis of the content materials shows that the textbooks used in public schools contain material that is impacted by political manipulations and according to Yvette (2000) none of the subject disciplines has been subjected to such torturous stretching and contracting as the field of Social Studies because it is used to create civic identity and inculcate patriotism.

The national curriculum in Pakistan mostly tends to reflect the messages of the ruling powers and there are instances where formal education is used as a means to

publicize and advocate their hidden agendas. In a study by Shahab and Baxter (2007) on how Social Studies curriculum helps to determine political and social attitudes found that certain textbooks used in the elementary schools of India and Pakistan had been modified to serve political ends. The textbooks were not written by a prejudiced mind but with a particular purpose. Thus, curriculum serves as a vehicle to present chosen perspectives in a structured way and the growth of intolerance, fundamentalism and extremism, while having many other sources like family, friends and mass media, is strengthened by educational curricula and teaching systems operational in a country.

Aim

This paper investigates the use of Social Studies by the power structures to project their orientation and interpretation of Pakistan's national ideology and examines the content material of the Social Studies curriculum for elementary public schools as compared to its broader scope as a subject discipline.

Method

Since the available literature mostly offers content analysis of the text materials and presents an appraisal of what is stated in the curriculum documents, specific questions have been framed after examining the Social Studies textbooks used in the public schools over the past 30 years and probable explanations have been sought in order to reexamine the placement of Social Studies in the national curriculum. The cited literature tends to view Social Studies Curriculum in Elementary Public Schools of Pakistan on three counts: What was the idea of state perceived at the time of the creation of Pakistan in 1947? What was the influence of military regimes after the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 on reshaping Social Studies curriculum? What do Social Studies as a subject discipline mean in terms of imparting specific knowledge and skills to the students? Based on the assertions from the literature review the discussion is focused on allied and less addressed issues in Social Studies national curriculum, followed by suggestions for developing a pragmatic approach towards the teaching of this subject in elementary public schools of Pakistan. The case of Social Studies is contested through historical evidence and the arguments are backed by studies referred in the literature review.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Social Studies Curriculum

The relationship between an individual's world view and his/her values and attitudes and perceptions is symbiotic (Preston & Herman, 1981). The same applies to the character of nations. An essential constituent of Social Studies is to transform children into productive individuals in the society and preparation for the role means to help them to understand the need for participation in decision making, the worth of an individual, rule of majority, rights of minority, personal conduct and responsibilities and respect for law and authority. Moreover, such issues as racism, class consciousness, discrimination, sexism, prejudice and ethnocentrism which are essentially ingrained in a multicultural society constitute the scope of Social Studies. The most significant tool to address these topics is through imparting knowledge or information by way of a well integrated curriculum. Presenting materials with undistorted pictures of reality is a real challenge for curriculum workers and textbook writers. Apparently, it is assumed that in Pakistan the challenge has been focused more towards aligning historical facts to suit and support political ideologies of the federal power. Is it so? That is a key area to concentrate by the curriculum workers.

Concept of State

Coulson (2004) is of the view that whenever a new nation is formed, it is common for its state schools to actively advance a sense of nationalism. Nevertheless, over Pakistan's 60-plus year history, the state schools have actually grown out of what is commonly known as nationalism and through the text materials have been introduced to a more limited view of being patriotic. Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's first leader and the founding father of the country, wanted his country to be a true reflection of a democratic state. In an interview to Doon Campbell, Reuter's correspondent in New Delhi in 1946, Jinnah made it clear that, *The new state would be a modern democratic state with sovereignty resting in the people and the members of the new nation having equal rights of citizenship regardless of their religion, caste or creed* (Hoodbhoy & Nayyar, 1985). Jinnah's commitment to the state was different because he did not see the role of the state to parochially program the citizens whether through the school

curriculum or by other means. Subsequent leaders took a different view, and the state schools were increasingly viewed as indoctrination units. Even Jinnah was mischaracterized in the textbooks as an orthodox Muslim whereas in the presidential address to the constituent assembly, he explained his concept of a progressive State: *'Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous, we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work together in a spirit that everyone of you, no matter to what community he belongs, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his color, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make'* (Jinnah's presidential address, 1947).

Curriculum and State Control

In the historical context, after the separation of East Pakistan in 1971, there was a need to look at curriculum issues from the point of view of a new Pakistan. The military coup in 1977 was a classic example of how the institution of education was interfered with, to reinforce the personal stakes of a non elected government. By patronizing the political parties with deep seated faith based agendas, the military regime made a concerted effort to interfere with Social Studies curriculum to the extent of distorting history, and adding such elements as fascination of war, dislike for non-Muslims, disregard for female issues, and rejection of progressive thinking. The military dictatorship that took power in 1977, actively sought the support of religious parties, and textbooks were rewritten to fulfill a clearly stated objective. In 1981, the University Grants Commission issued a directive to prospective authors specifying that the textbooks should be able to: *To demonstrate that the basis of Pakistan is not to be founded in racial, linguistic, or geographical factors, but, rather, in the shared experience of a common religion--- To get students to know and appreciate the Ideology of Pakistan, and to popularize it with slogans--- To guide students towards the ultimate goal of Pakistan--- the creation of a completely Islamized State* (UGC, 1985).

The government under the military regime (1977-1988) rewrote the curricula

and changed textbook content in order to create the 'other' in order to suit the ideology and the politics of the day (Marie, 2008). The other meant any other who was not a Muslim, and thus the white color in the national flag which represents the rights of the minority groups was made to be perceived as nonexistent in the Social Studies textbooks. Aziz (1993) in his publicized work 'Murder of History,' analyzed in detail 66 school textbooks and identified historical errors and inaccuracies in them. Even after the restoration of civil governance, after 1988 to 1999, the reversal was by no means easy. Since the implementation of Sharia law served the vested interests of the majority parties and increased their vote bank, voices that expressed dissatisfaction against state controlled curriculum could not undo the effects of state intrusion reflected in the teaching of Social Studies in public schools.

The research studies initiated by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in 2001 and 2003 revealed that previously, children were taught the very early pre-Islamic history of South Asia and its contribution to rich cultural diversity of modern-day Pakistan. This long historical perspective of Pakistan is absent in the textbooks. Instead, children are taught that the history of Pakistan starts from the day the first Muslim set foot in India and includes perspectives that "encourage [prejudice](#), [bigotry](#) and [discrimination](#) towards fellow Pakistanis and other nations, especially against religious minorities, as well as the omission of concepts ... that could encourage critical self-awareness among students"(Nayyar & Salim, 2003).

Social Studies Themes: National Curriculum

In the salient features of the National Education policy from 1998 to 2010 it is clearly stated that, '*Education and training should enable the citizens of Pakistan to lead their lives according to the teachings of Islam as laid down in the Qur'an and Sunnah and to educate and train them as a true practicing Muslim*'. The non Muslims have not been mentioned in this statement. The significant themes that emerge from the curriculum document on Social Studies (1995) for classes one through five are centered around Pakistan as being a country for Muslims and the aim of the subject is to create an understanding and love for Islamic culture, acquire a deep and abiding love for Islamic values, learn the achievements of the great Islamic personalities of Pakistan, gain knowledge of duties towards God and on the basis of such knowledge acquire the ability

to seek, organize, interpret information and make predictions. Expecting children aged five to eleven years to make predictions the nature of which is not even clear to the teachers sound to be a limitation rather than the strength of such a curriculum. The word 'prediction' by itself is inappropriate considering the child's mental preparation required to perform such an activity. Agreed that Pakistan is an ideological country, but the curriculum is silent on the issue of how to treat minorities as equal fellow citizens. Although there is a specific mention of learning how to overcome regional prejudices, there is no hint whatsoever of how to adjust with people belonging to other religions and learn how to deal with religious prejudices. The term nationalism is addressed in a manner that leaves out other-religion abiding Pakistanis to be productive citizens and national integration is supposedly viewed as singularly Muslim integration.

The content analysis of the textbooks undertaken by SDPI (Salim & Khan, 2003) has shown that the books are narrowly focused on the Muslim world and the account is one sided. Pakistani nationalism is repeatedly defined in a manner that excludes non-Muslim Pakistanis from either being Pakistani nationals or from even being good human beings. Much of this material runs counter to any efforts at national integration. Most importantly, the content by itself makes it difficult for the teachers to develop thinking and analytic skills of the students. The books on social studies systematically misrepresent events that have happened throughout the Pakistan's history, including those which are within living memory of many people. A large part of the history of South Asia is also omitted, making it difficult to properly interpret events, and narrowing the perspective that should be open to students. Thus, the content by itself makes it difficult for the teachers to develop thinking and analytic skills of the students.

Although, changes have been made in new grade-school textbooks, which are supplied free to students in the public schools, but critics cite remaining problems, particularly regarding tensions with the neighboring country India, which are projected through biases against Hindus dating back in history to the time after the advent of Islam in the sub-continent. For example, a fifth-grade Punjab Provincial textbook called "Social Studies Class 5," published in September 2004, plays down the violence of the eighth-century Muslim conquest of South Asia and provides a narrow description of fierce resistance to it. "The Muslims introduced Islamic culture in this region and maintained

peace and order. . . . (But) the non-Muslims, especially the Hindus, did not like the Muslims as they looked upon them as usurpers". The root cause of religious extremism could be attributed to the fact that the text has been published over and over again for the last two and a half decades without taking into cognizance the changing realities that surround Pakistan today.

The inferences drawn from content analysis of Social Studies books by Ahmad (2004) clearly indicate that first, the selection of material and their thematic sequence in the textbooks present Islam not simply as a belief system but a political ideology that must be accepted by all citizens. Second, to sanctify Islamic ideology as an article of faith, the textbooks distort historical facts about the nation's cultural and political heritage. Third, the textbooks offer a biased treatment of non-Muslim citizens in Pakistan. Fourth, the main objective of the social studies textbooks is to indoctrinate children for a romanticized Islamic state as conceptualized by Islamic theocrats. Fifth, although the vocabulary in the textbooks underscores Islamic virtues, such as piety, obedience, and submission, little is mentioned about critical thinking, civic participation, or democratic values of freedom of speech, equality, and respect for cultural diversity (p.45). The findings have been confirmed by studies conducted by Yvette (2005).

Less addressed Curriculum Issues

Having said that, the findings in the White Paper (Javed, 2007) bring to the forefront other features apart from the criticism levied on content presented in the textbooks and the observations deserve to be viewed carefully from the perspective of curriculum designers. The conclusions drawn from studies on Social Studies curriculum in this paper point to the following weaknesses within the system:-

- Stakeholders, including those working directly in education, are unable to differentiate between curriculum and textbooks and most of the attacks on curriculum itself were supported by examples from the latter.
- A curriculum normally focuses on four areas: aims and objectives, content, methodology and evaluation. The curriculum documents perused were generally structured around these principles but there appeared to be a poor understanding of their meaning.

- Encased in a typical tabular format, the contents were of a low quality. In a number of cases, the contents under a specific head were repeated irrespective of the topic.
- Normally, a curriculum should have the teacher as the center but textbooks development appears to be the only activity flowing from the curriculum. In the classroom, teachers do not use it, being solely focused on the single textbooks assigned to them. Even assessments are based on this textbook and not the curriculum.
- Pakistan has a multitude of cultures and topographies; these fail to be adequately recognized and assimilated in the curriculum.
- Curriculum review exercises in Pakistan have been sporadic. Historically, the process has been non- standardized.
- Curriculum development is a specialized task and apparently there are very few specialists. Subject specialists do not necessarily have the capacity to write a good curriculum.
- There is no mechanism for feedback once the curriculum is implemented and, in any case, the government lacks the requisite evaluation capacity.

Social Studies as a Subject Discipline

Against this back drop, it is worthwhile to consider what is meant by Social Studies as an educational discipline in the developed countries. The term became popular after a curriculum committee's efforts appeared formally in a bulletin in 1916 entitled, 'The Social Studies in Secondary Education' in USA. Many different perspectives regarding the nature of Social Studies have been discussed over the years. In 1970's it was called by its critics as 'The Smorgasbord' curriculum and by its proponents as 'The Relevant' curriculum (McNeil, 2003). The general agreement reached so far is that the subject discipline is expected to transmit the cultural heritage of a society, to teach the knowledge and skills of the social sciences, to develop reflective inquiry, to encourage informed social criticism and to promote personal development (Shirley, 1976). The basic purpose of Social Studies as envisioned by Mortorella (1985) is to develop reflective, competent and concerned citizens. Reflective individuals are critical thinkers

who make decisions and solve problems on the basis of best evidence available. Competent citizens possess a repertoire of skills to aid them in decision making and problem solving. Concerned citizens investigate their social world, address issues they identify as significant, exercise their rights and carry out their responsibilities as members of a social community. Thus, the reflective, competent and concerned citizen is prepared to function effectively in today's world and that of the future (p.12).

An equivalent match for the purposes stated above could be found in the subject discipline of "Citizenship" at key stage 4 in the British system of education. The aims outlined in the national curriculum handbook for primary teachers are: *Citizenship gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to become informed, thoughtful and responsible citizens who are aware of their duties and rights.....It encourages pupils to play a helpful part in the life of their schools, neighborhoods and communities and wider world. It also teaches them about our economy and democratic institutions and values; encourages respect for different national, religious and ethnic identities; and develops pupil's ability to reflect on issues and take part in discussions* (DfEE/QCA, 1999, HST: 183).

The interpretations cited above lead to the assumption that Social Studies within the framework of a school is a program drawing upon other disciplines. The ten themes that commonly form this framework are: culture time, continuity and change; people, places and environment; individual development and identity; individuals, groups and institutions; power, authority and governance; production, distribution and consumption; science, technology and society and of course global connections; and connectedness with the rest of the world in terms of civic ideals and various practices. The way these themes are knitted in scope and sequence and how these themes are interpreted by the decision makers to cater to the needs of future citizens is the crux of curriculum and it would not be an exaggeration to state that the future of a Pakistan largely depends on it. Thus, the very nature of Social Studies puts increasing demands on the policymakers to know what students should be taught, how they will be taught, and how students' outcomes will impact vision, mission and goals laid out by such a curriculum.

While devising a curriculum for elementary school students, the curriculum planners have to consider that students are not mini adults. They have their own special needs and capabilities. During the formative years of schooling the students move

through the three of the four stages of cognitive development that Piaget (1970) has theorized i.e. from the preoperational stage in the primary school to the formal operation stage in the middle school and planning experiences for them should take into account this reality. Social Studies as a subject has both cognitive and affective dimensions in the sense that knowledge, skills and abilities are inextricably related to attitudes and values and therefore the curriculum has to be designed in a manner to reduce random learning by providing organized learning experiences for the students.

Curriculum and Instruction

A curriculum acquires life through the process of instruction. The teachers therefore, can expose children to many types of values-based, decision-making activities through a variety of approaches, including direct teaching, modeling, moral stories and lessons, and examination of personal actions and actions of others (Turner, 1999). In a Pakistani setting instruction in public schools is restricted to ‘chalk and talk’ strategy by the teachers and the textbook is usually rote learnt and reproduced verbatim by the students in the examinations. The most common approach to ‘read-recall-recite’ encourages short term retention of factual information and frequently thwarts creative thought. Yet, it is a preferred method and the teachers’ efforts are focused on disciplining the class and ensuring that the text is faithfully transferred to the students. Because curriculum is viewed as a scheme of studies and not as a blue print for instructional methodologies, teachers usually do not plan to teach Social Studies for various reasons namely, failure to set time priorities, procrastination, failure to communicate, lack of experience, lack of interest, and general dissatisfaction with the content itself. The Social Studies curriculum without the support coming through well organized instruction tends to be generally perceived by the students as a ‘Question/Answer’, True/False, and Fill in the Blank sort of format and the *raison d’être* of introducing the discipline per se is beaten by the process of its assessment.

Revision of Social Studies Curriculum

An attempt to revise the Social Studies curriculum in 2004 was ineffective because the revision (National curriculum, 2004) by the officials at the Ministry of Education was more of a reaction to international criticism launched against certain

specific topics highlighted in the curriculum. Later, in view of the consistent disapproval by the informed public, concerned citizens, educational experts, local and international media, the then military regime once again tasked the Ministry of Education to announce yet another revision for Social Studies curriculum in public schools in 2007. However, what needs to be realized at the level of curriculum makers is that *'without the ability or willingness to apply what is known to help seek the resolution of society's problems, a social studies program is of little consequence'* (Naylor and Dien, 1987).

A spiral curriculum approach towards curriculum has been applied in the revised version (National curriculum, 2007) and the teachers were involved during the process of its formulation. The curriculum documents include guidelines for instructional strategies and assessment practices to help the teachers to meet the standards and bench marks identified for each stage. The content material addresses history as a way to provide students with different perspectives to promote an appreciation of individual existence in a global context. Various topics from geography, political science, sociology and economics have been embedded in the conceptual format according to each grade. Expressions, such as problem solving, decision making, understanding perspectives, recognizing various view points, social problems and their solutions, rights and responsibilities of citizens, the way to live together, getting along with others, ways of resolving conflict, institution of socialization and 'everyone values something' have been used in the curriculum standards (Expectations for excellence, 2008) to prepare young children as citizens to participate actively and responsibly in a democratic society. The document itself offers new lenses to look at the subject discipline from the standpoint of how it is perceived in the developed countries like USA and UK. Nevertheless, it still raises many more queries.

Discussion

What follows in the light of the above is that the primary tension in curriculum reform efforts is between centralized and grassroots decision making. According to Ross (2001) when there are multiple participants and competing interests in the curriculum making process, the question arises where does control reside? Practically, in Pakistan since the curriculum is developed by the policy elites, such approaches are anti-democratic because they severely restrict the legitimate role of teachers and other

professionals, as well as members of the public from participating in the conversation about the origin, nature and ethics of knowledge taught in the Social Studies curriculum. It is difficult to infer that such a curriculum would be launched successfully because a curriculum design needs a specific framework. Since the practice mostly involves officials and high ranking administrators or influential political or religious parties to decide the curriculum content, the conditions of including the relevant stakeholders like school principals, textbook publishers, news media, parents and most importantly Social Studies teachers are barely met, the prescribed curriculum has a built in flaw of not being acceptable to all the effective parties. The dissonance thus created dominates and restricts its usage as an instrument of particularized behavioral change in the teacher and the taught. In the absence of clear cut guidelines issued to the teachers, the teachers whether they are teaching Religious Studies, Urdu or Social Studies tend to treat all the subjects as having the same treatment conditions.

As a curriculum designer, the fallacy that is perhaps unknowingly and most often committed when the aim is to have a progressive approach is to forget that what is called Social Studies in a country may be quite different from Social Studies in another country. A duplication of a model working successfully in one setting may not be relevant to another setting. There are contrasting contexts for the curriculum model. For example the Social Studies curriculum in United States of America has to be different than the one used in Pakistan. In USA, which is a highly developed, democratic and resource rich country, the school districts in each state are empowered to plan their own curriculum through the recommendations coming from the teachers. The same paradigm cannot be applied to public schools in Pakistan which has a history of military dictatorship and has a rural economy with majority of the people living on an income of less than two US dollars a day. Although there can be an overlap in the content of the social studies curriculum of what ought to be taught, there will be a telling contrast as regards needs of the students and needs of the society. Again as compared to United Kingdom, the objectives of Social Studies curriculum may differ from the stand point of national identity. In Pakistan a higher priority is given to the development of national identity; in the case of UK it is already well established.

Yet another aspect of curriculum planning relies on, 'cultural analysis' which is

a systematic process of examining a particular society in its social and historical context. Dennis (1981) argues that curriculum decision makers should examine such aspects of society's culture as language, technology, knowledge, values and beliefs in order to make judgments about what should be transferred to the next generation. Cultural analysis should not only take in to account the changing manpower needs but also deal with more fundamental questions about what binds a society. In other words if religion is a binding factor for 97% of the population in Pakistan , it should significantly surface in the content of Social Studies curriculum in manner that the rights of the remaining 3% people are respected and represented in the text as well. Much depends on the intention of the curriculum designers as to what kind of information they want to disseminate to the schools. Issues pertaining to race, gender, caste, and other minority differences must be carefully examined before coming to final conclusions about a common curriculum for everyone. Such decisions are difficult to reach because the society is changing rapidly. The dynamics of technology, communication and interpersonal relationships is increasingly becoming more complex and diversified. Thus, a revision of a national curriculum, if it is planned because of certain vested interests is bound to fall back again in the form of more unintended outcomes if a careful needs assessment has not been carried out before its implementation.

Marsh and Willis (2007) make three distinctions to acknowledge the working definition of curriculum. First, the term subsumes to mean syllabus and course of studies which in case of Pakistan is the Social Studies curriculum document issued by the Ministry of Education. Second, a curriculum necessarily involves some conscious planning and this in turn is reflected in what students actually learn. It also includes the priorities set by the educational and political authorities as to how such abstract concepts as justice and equity function concretely in society realizing that the way consensus may be reached could be always problematic. Third, it is undesirable to separate curriculum from instruction. Thus, what can be foreseen from this interpretation is that even if the state develops an ambitious Social Studies curriculum by addressing it evenly at the first and second level of its interpretation, the document, if it is not translated in to effective instruction in the realities of classrooms, the dichotomy between ends and means would be unnatural and frustrating for people engaged in it.

The fact that curriculum development is a planned activity further puts exacting

conditions on identifying who should be the individuals who should plan it. Ideally, the team would comprise of subject specialists, skilled teachers, curriculum designers, evaluators, organizers and curriculum writers. The purpose and scope of a Social Studies curriculum would include a list of activities such as to determine what type of new curricula is required, formulate particular goals and objectives, use research based results to plan students' activities, assess current societal changes, train teachers and plan prolonged continuous revision stages. Built within this frame work would also be anticipation as how to evaluate the curriculum for reasons such as, its strength as regards meeting students' needs teachers' expectations, school practices and any other significant outcomes that can affect the community. In other words, evaluation "grades" the curriculum and curriculum developers need to use it as a tool to make adjustments or improvements to the curriculum accordingly (Hlebowtish, 2005).

Along with the curriculum appraisals, the key issues to be probed are: how the subject discipline of Social Studies is taught in the schools and what are the implications of the use of Social Studies textbooks as regards students' outcomes in Pakistani schools? Closely related to the teaching component is how it is learnt by the students? The due or undue focus on textbooks as means of providing content knowledge deserves to be seen in the light of how the subject teachers use the textbooks? These questions are important and can be answered in a plausible manner through rigorous empirical research aimed at collecting information on the content and process of social studies education in public schools of Pakistan. In this respect, the research models used in curriculum studies in other countries with similar underpinnings need to be studied, contextualized and applied in Pakistani settings. Because present-day worldwide trends in citizenship education are impacting each individual globally, it would be a worthwhile exercise if Pakistani curriculum policy makers learn from the experiences of other developing countries including Islamic countries, that they may be able to realistically assess the educational impact of the revised curriculum on needs of their children and society and plan both short term and long term interventions to realize the meaning of how to be tolerant, and peaceable citizens.

Suggestions

The Curriculum Wing in the Ministry of Education represents one out of many stakeholders and there is no reason why their opinions be privileged as against the voices of other concerned citizens. Accepting that the curriculum is state controlled, a practical approach to design a centralized curriculum is one that is genuinely committed to empower the society to think and act democratically in a given set of its conditions. A minimum test of curriculum to its commitment is whether it includes among its goals preparing all young people to become equal citizens of a democracy (White, 2005). The curriculum designers have to define nationalism from the standpoint of what it means to be a Pakistani. The Social Studies curriculum can play a large part in helping the students to become more aware of their nationality. Education for citizenship is a topic relevant to Social Studies. If the students are made to know how they became Pakistanis they need to see this happen without distorting historical facts. As children progress onwards to middle and secondary classes the curriculum should enable them to apply the historical and geographical facts learnt in the elementary school to engage themselves in understanding political issues in relation to what is happening in other countries. Secondly, for Social Studies to perform its mission of promoting civic competence, students must learn not only a body of knowledge but how to think and how to be flexible in using many resources to resolve civic issues. To attain this objective, curriculum needs to be closely linked with instructional practices.

Such issues as how the curriculum is delivered, who teaches the curriculum, what is the cost incurred by the government and how the curriculum is evaluated are issues that merit utmost consideration at the Ministry level in Pakistan. Education in terms of how much the yearly budget is allocated to it, shows that so far, it has been a least priority with any government that has come in power till to date. Furthermore, curriculum evaluation refers to thoughtful focusing on questions and topics of concern, collecting appropriate information and then analyzing and interpreting the information for specific use or purpose (Powell, Steele & Doulah, 1996). Also, evaluation is much more than collecting information. It involves serious reflection on questions as what is the purpose of evaluation, why and what is required of the information and what use would the information serve after it has been collected. The purpose, content and desired outcomes have to be spelled out clearly to fit the programming effort. If the purpose is to

document behavioral changes or impacts, the assertions in order to be creditable need to be jacketed by formal evaluation which requires time, money and resources. Thus, the views of subject specialists or concerned citizens can at best be termed as opinions and in the absence of a proper evaluation model cannot be considered as formal evaluations. Managing evaluation i.e. how the results will be used is yet another set of concerns that have to be dealt with objectively, cautiously and responsibly at the ministry level.

Framing a curriculum and evaluating it calls for a systematic approach on the part of the curriculum designers. Most of the works cited in this paper are personal observations, comments, concerns and questions raised by professionals who are related to the subject discipline but as such scientific inquiries which are grounded in the theory and practice of research methodology have not surfaced significantly in the curriculum literature of Pakistan. The published works that have been reported are observations coming from the subject specialists who have in most of the cases not taught in state run schools and are perhaps not fully aware of how the Social Studies curriculum is perceived by the teachers and enacted in the classrooms. In this context, the priority accorded to Social Studies in comparison to Science and Mathematics deserves due consideration. The text itself in relation to weekly time that is accorded to it, the educational level of teachers who are teaching it, the resources that are available to the school, the assessment of learning outcomes, students' reactions to certain materials, parental attitudes, the involvement of community are such factors that have been understated so far and deserve attention from the curriculum makers.

It would be relevant to add here that the Ministry of Education should allocate time, funds and resources to carry out research studies to find the impact of Social Studies curriculum on students' learning outcomes, teachers' perceptions, teaching methodologies, parental involvement and community participation within and outside the school. In the absence of research data available, the significant voices from the concerned citizens and the media cannot be fully relied upon. The convincing statements coming from the print media are journalistic attempts to address issues such as terrorism, gender disparity, racism, rights of minorities etc. through the lenses of Social Studies curriculum at state run schools, constitute a simplistic approach to view problems having deeper origins and broader implications. Conceding to the fact that the curriculum has a

larger share in terms of causing permanent changes in the behavior patterns of the learners, one way of looking at it may be to subscribe to certain curriculum models and contextualize them within the set of conditions in which the curriculum materials are decided and developed in Pakistan. It would be worthwhile to compare the Social Studies curricula of developing and/or neighboring countries who are equally preparing themselves to respond to the demands of present day challenges rather than to overly subscribe to developed models from individualistic cultures and apply them to societies having collectivistic bearings.

Conclusion

The present Social Studies curriculum has resulted in impacting the culture of education in a number of outcomes that need to be addressed. Apparently, due to the inherent structure of public schools controlled by the government, the distortion of facts in Social Studies curriculum has contributed towards making students accept whatever is written and given in the textbooks as absolute without exercising any initiative to be critical or in other words to question authority. Similarly, at teachers' level, it has slackened the initiative to probe into the subject matter that is being taught and given the format to operate within its confines, the teachers feel unthreatened by committing themselves to accept what is written and given to them as the final word on curriculum. The issues and conflicts that are prevalent in the society and deserve to be addressed at grass root levels have been slid under the piles of distorted facts that have to be memorized by the students. The Social Studies curriculum, as yet has failed to create an intelligent mindset that addresses problems objectively and searches solutions competitively and collaboratively. The revised curriculum in 2007 for grades one through five tends to promise a change in terms of setting standards, bench marks and student' learning outcomes. The new curriculum whether it has been drawn because of external pressures on the government to avoid sanctions from the developed countries or there is a realization at the state level that a 'widening of horizons' approach is vital to the development of social consciousness amongst the masses is an open ended matter which can be considered in terms of outcomes after the implementation of the curriculum in real school settings. A curriculum if it is meant to create change requires unbiased and well researched textbooks, trained teachers, ample resource materials, and favorable teaching

cum learning environment in the public schools because curriculum in the final analysis is experienced by the students under the capable guidance of the teachers. The state if it designs a progressive Social Studies curriculum must also be responsible to foresee how schools are prepared to implement it.

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