

Curriculum Reforms in Pakistan – *A Glass Half Full or Half Empty?*

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Curriculum Reforms in Pakistan – Glass Half Full or Half Empty?

Curriculum Reforms have been underway since 2001 in Pakistan after a long period of neglect and stagnation. From 2001-2003 curriculum ‘revision’ was undertaken in measured and tempered phases to keep the influential religious lobby in government at bay¹. In 2005 -06, curriculum of all grades and subjects (grades I-XII including ECE and Literacy) underwent a comprehensive reform in response to critiques (Hoodbhoy & Nayyar 1985; Saigol, 1998 & 2002; Nayyar & Salim 2003; Aly J. H, 2007). The persistent charges against the curriculum in use have been that it is: exclusionary, ideologically driven, bigoted, generating negative stereotypes with outmoded content and resistance to change; all of which, leads to irrelevance and poor learning levels as corroborated by the latest National Education Assessment System reports (NEAS 2006 and 2008)².

The comprehensive national curriculum reforms began in 2005 embedded in three mega concurrent initiatives of the Ministry of Education, viz. i) the national education policy reform process (NEPR); ii) the national curriculum reforms, and the undertaking of the first ever national education census (NEC) of all service delivery units in education (www.moe.gov.pk). All three, were significant in Pakistan’s education landscape but strangely remained disconnected from each other. Why? This question remains unanswered and there has not been a lively debate to date on this issue in spite of the media explosion over the same period in Pakistan³. Whilst the draft NEP after four and a half years of process driven consultative deliberations⁴ is still not approved, the new National Curriculum was surprisingly formally approved by the Cabinet without much public debate as a separate focused activity of the ministry and so were its subsequent policy and action plan notifications on textbook development.

The National Curriculum 2006/2007, however remains the least disseminated document and implementation is planned for the academic year 2010-2010. The entire curriculum, developed in English is on the ministry’s website (www.moe.gov.pk) and is downloadable. Its circulation has remain restricted to public sector departments of education, literacy and training across the country and to civil society organizations who

¹ This was the period when the religious parties were provided formal political space for the first time in Pakistan’s history to form a coalition known as the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA). MMA a coalition of 5 major religious parties was in power in the two provinces of Pakistan (Balochistan and NWFP) heavily represented in the upper and lower houses (Senate & National Assembly) from 2002-2008. It rose to power in the general elections of 2002 and stayed in position of great influence politically until 2008.

² The draft National Education Policy 2009 (August 1, version) acknowledges the challenge for learning levels is enormous as corroborated by its own assessment machinery, the National Education Assessment System (NEAS). Assessments from 2005 to 2007 for grades 4 and 8 have confirmed low achievement levels of students across both public and private sectors in four subjects (Urdu/Sindhi; Mathematics; Social Science & Science). Whilst the private sector has a performance edge in languages but in mathematics and science its scores are below the passing mark of 500(50%)32..(p.69 -70 Aug. 1, NEP..www.moe.gov.pk)

³ ITA sent a formal response to the NEP Draft and raised this issue with reference to why the NEP draft has not used the valuable evidence generated by the NEC 2005/6 for targets and strategy setting and why the NEP is yet to be approved, but the National Curriculum 2006 has been approved for implementation? It is a case of putting the cart before the horse? (dated..) Media explosion in Pakistan Pakistan has over 60 TV channels, counting the regional ones in local languages .. Radio channels have risen to 120 with an ever expanding audience. Ironically this has occurred during military rule.(PEMRA)

⁴ NEPR process is a detailed layered well intended initiative of the MoE (www.moe.gov.pk), the process has not achieved closure. There have been major shifts in Governments, from a praetorian to a democratic mode of operation and many assumptions do not hold such as the economic growth projections as well as the local government set up of 2001, to name a few.

have formally requested, intending to disseminate and help the implementation process⁵. There has been little effort to ensure its availability for teachers/headteachers and the general public. On account of the National Curricula language being English, its use remains severely limited. Teacher training and interface which ought to have been the backbone of this initiative is yet to be officially launched and textbooks development is underway through private publishers as part of the deregulation drive of the Ministry of Education (MoE). Officially the national curriculum, as announced by the Ministry of Education and as agreed in the 11th Inter-Provincial Education Ministerial conference (IPEM) January 22, 2007 will be implemented in the academic year 2010-2011, three years after its notification. The critical question is, will it actually happen?

The paper is in four parts.

Part I will trace the curriculum reforms elaborating the process and scope of the reforms

Part II will focus on the wider context of reforms.. connecting the dots

Part III looks at compulsions of adjectival education

Part IV will highlight the implementation challenges of the National Curriculum 2006/7

Part I: Curriculum Reforms: Institutional process and scope of the reforms

In Pakistan, curriculum, syllabus, planning, policy, centres of excellence and standards of education are on the concurrent list of the Constitution of Pakistan. The Federal Ministry of Education has been empowered through the Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act, 1976 to supervise curricula, textbooks and other learning materials as well as to maintain standards of education.

In 2000 the Ministry of Education undertook a revision for Basic Science subjects and in 2002 for Social Science subjects. In 2003, the Government announced its intention as part of the Education Sector Reforms (ESR) Action Plan 2001-2005/6 to undertake a comprehensive revision of the curriculum after every 5 years. Curriculum revision was to be an institutionalized process of evaluation and development as iterative and concurrent.

The newly elected government in August 2004, launched the national education policy reform process (NEPR), the National Education Census (NEC) and expedited a comprehensive review of school curricula in 2005. According to sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Federal Supervision of Curricula Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act 1976, the Higher Education Commission (HEC)⁶ is charged with curriculum revision in all subjects for grade XII upwards. HEC reviews its curriculum every three years as agreed in its 44th Vice Chancellors' Committee in 2001. (http://www.hec.gov.pk/AECA/Curriculum_Revision.html)

⁵ ITA has been in the forefront of this work and the Curriculum Wing to date has provided more than 20 copies of the curriculum for dissemination at the district level and to organizations in India such as the NCERT and WISCOMP promoting pluralism, constructivist approaches in child-centered learning, gender sensitivity and peace education.

⁶ HEC was previously known as the University Grants Commission (UGC)

As admitted in the White Paper by the MoE's task manager for NEPR, the "Curriculum review exercises in Pakistan have been sporadic. Historically, the process has been non-standardized. However, in the last one year curriculum review has received great attention and has been reviewed systematically. Curriculum development is a specialized task...there is no mechanism for feedback once the curriculum is implemented and, .. the government lacks the requisite evaluation capacity". (p. 18)

Aly. J.A (2007) The White Paper Revised Feb. 2007 pp. - not official but a discussion document MoE.

In 2005, the Curriculum Wing's human resource capacity was expanded and two teams of 3 experts each were added as the 'National Curriculum Council to cover Basic Science and Social Science subjects to review, update and upgrade the National Curriculum from Early Childhood Education to Higher Secondary School level' (Majeed, 2009). The Curriculum Wing undertook comparative reviews of curriculum reforms in different countries⁷. It reviewed the scheme of studies, followed by the revision of curricula for 25 core subjects (classes I to XII) (annex), which were notified in 2006. The review of remaining subjects as listed in the scheme of studies shall continue until 2009 (NEP, Aug. 1, 2009). Elaborate stakeholder consultations were held 'with teachers, administrators, educationists, curriculum experts and students including field visits ...training of working teams through workshops and seminars; reviews of drafts by subject experts and working teachers leading to .. refinement of contents and preparation of a uniform curriculum format'. These comprised standards, benchmarks and learning outcomes as vital parts of the curriculum development process'. (Majeed, A. 2009 p. 2).

The key features of the National Curriculum 2006/7 are as follows:

- standards and competencies driven
- learning objectives correspond to students' learning outcomes (SLOs)
- progressive approaches for primary, middle, secondary and tertiary stages of learning
- life skills are integrated across subjects
- vertical and horizontal connections are ensured
- focus on promoting creative writing and analytical thinking for learners rather than rote learning
- detailed guidelines have been provided in the curriculum for textbook writers and teachers for delivery of the curriculum effectively.
- Guidelines have been provided for assessment and evaluation in addition to the learning outcomes specified in the Curriculum. (ibid. pp.5-6)

The government announced in 2007 that the new curriculum will be implemented in the new academic year beginning in August 2007⁸. However, that was not to happen as the Ministry of Education /Minister under-estimated the complexities involved in the processes of textbook development and production. (The Daily Times June 20, 2007)

⁷ NCERT's NCF 2004 was also shared by the author in 2006 with the ministry of education, policy and planning wing. The Joint Education Adviser Dr. Fayyaz Ahmed promptly made several copies of the materials and the discussion papers to share with the different wings of the ministry especially the Curriculum Wing.

⁸ Until 2007 the academic year was August – July which has since been changed in 2008 to the previous one of April – March. The shift to the Aug.-July academic year was part of the Sector Reforms 2001-2005.

Institutional-Legal Underpinnings, Policy & Action Plan

The Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act 1976 (www.moe.gov.pk) lists the terms of reference for the CW. The 1976 Act centralized certain functions to the curriculum wing.

Legal Mandate – Curriculum Wing

Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act, 1976 authorizes the Ministry of Education (Curriculum Wing):

- to prepare or cause to be prepared schemes of studies, curricula, manuscripts of textbooks and schedules or strategy for their introduction in various classes of an institution in connection with the implementation of the education policy of the Federal Government.
- to approve manuscripts of textbooks produced by other agencies before they are prescribed in various classes of an institution.
- to direct any person or agency in writing to delete, amend or withdraw any portion, or the whole, of the curriculum, textbook or reference material prescribed for any class of an institution within a period specified in such directive.
- to direct any person or agency in writing to delete, amend or withdraw any portion, or the whole, of the curriculum, textbook or reference material prescribed for any class of an institution within a period specified in such directive. www.moe.gov.pk

Accordingly the Federal Government through a notification in 1976 nominated the Curriculum Wing of the Ministry of Education as the ‘competent authority’ for classes’ I-XII and the University Grants Commission (predecessor of the Higher Education Commission) for ‘beyond class XII’.

Grades Early Childhood Education to XII -	Curriculum Wing
Grades XII - Onwards	Higher Education Commission

In each province the quality challenges⁹ are spread across the following institutions:

1. Bureau of Curriculum
2. Textbook Boards and
3. Teacher Training Institutions (in-service and pre-service)
4. Boards of Intermediate & Secondary Education (BISE) X & XII
5. National Education Assessment System (IV & VIII) and provincial education assessment centres (PEAC)
6. Punjab Examination Commission (PEC) (V & VIII) restricted to the province of Punjab.

The first five institutions are present in each province of Pakistan. Punjab is the only province which has launched its own examination commission for grades V and VIII. These institutions are responsible for quality education with direct links to the Ministry of

⁹ “..there are five- six basic pillars that have the major contribution. These are curriculum, textbooks, assessments, teachers, the learning environment in an institution and relevance of education to practical life/ labour market. (NEP Draft Aug. 1, 07 p. 42)

Education on assessing learning competencies, quality learning and teaching processes, textbook development, curriculum and inputs to policy reforms

Curriculum Reforms 2000-2009 – Milestones Achieved & Planned

2000 - review of Basic Science Subjects under Education Sector Reforms Action Plan 2001-06 and production of textbooks

2002 - review of Social Science Subjects under ESR and production of textbooks

2005 - comprehensive review of all subjects

2006/7- completion of review National Curriculum 2006/7 and its publication

2007 - National Textbook and Learning Materials Policy and Plan of Action – 2007-2010 Implementation of National Curriculum 2006/7

2007-9 - Development of textbooks in phases. Phase I = Grades I, VI, IX & XI

2010- (April) New Textbooks Planned to be in Schools

National Textbook and Learning Materials Policy and Plan of Action – 2007-2010 Implementation of National Curriculum 2006/7

The mission statement of the National Textbook and Learning Materials Policy & Plan of Action (2007-2010) is to : “introduce a well **regulated** system of competitive publishing of textbooks and learning..through enhanced public-private partnership’ .

Through encouraging and building capacity of private publishers and to ensure that “Textbook Boards are transformed into competent facilitating, regulating and monitoring authorities”.(annex).

The objective of the Policy & Action Plan 2007 is “ Improvement in the quality of education at all levels through better quality textbooks at affordable prices and other learning materials for promoting Pakistan as a knowledge-based society.

An Inter-Provincial Committee represented by the education authorities, Textbook Boards, private sector and others has been constituted to select and prescribe textbooks for use in public schools in the respective province or areas of jurisdiction.

The Implementation Schedule notified by the Federal Ministry of Education for the New Curriculum, the Provincial Textbook Boards with the assistance of private sector publishers required to prepare quality textbooks in various subjects for Grades I,VI, IX and XI was first scheduled for August 2007 but is now planned for the new academic session in April 2010.

Under the new dispensation of promoting multiple textbooks through private publishers the process is complex managed by the provincial textbook boards and finalized centrally at the federal level

Process for Production of the New Textbooks – (Curriculum Wing 2009)

1. Advertisement by the respective Textbook Boards (provinces) and National Book Foundation (ICTfederal/) for new textbooks based on the National Curriculum for Grades I, VI IX and XI

2. Inviting (advertising for) private publishers to produce manuscripts for the desired subjects (twice)
3. Manuscripts received, reviewed and sent back if required for amendments by Textbook Boards NBF
4. Reviewed manuscripts sent to CW for No Objection Certificate
5. NOCs received and then publishers given job orders for printing specified volume according to the terms and conditions agreed formally under the NTLMP & POA2007.
6. 'After selection by the Provincial Committee, the respective Textbook Boards shall purchase, from the publisher whose textbook is selected, a print license for a certain number of copies and a certain period of time for the government schools through the Education Department processes.
7. Private schools will decide and choose from the approved and certified textbooks by the Textbook Boards according to quality and price, and purchase textbooks directly from the publisher.
8. Textbook Boards will invite national/provincial publishers to submit manuscripts and samples of supplementary reading and learning materials to the Textbook Boards for review and certification as 'recommended learning materials' with age-wise and grade-wise classification.
9. For purchase and use of school reading and learning materials (other than textbooks) in government schools the recommendation certificate of Textbook Boards will be binding. Private schools are not bound by the recommendation certificate of Textbook Boards.' (Majeed 2009, pp.10-11)
10. Once printed these are with the TBB to be distributed to government outlets at district level according to estimates received.

The textbook boards are thus not authorized to author textbooks themselves anymore. In one province the process has reached step 5 but only for 2 out of 25 books. (interview with Chairman Textbook Board Punjab, August 4, 2009)

There is a deep rooted suspicion among the private sector publishers about the government's intentions in implementing this policy in letter and spirit. The latest setback to this trust has been when all but two of the 25 manuscripts in Punjab received the NOC. It is certainly not a good omen for private publishers, some of whom have suffered at the hands of various half hearted deregulation initiatives during the 90s as well (OUP,etc.)

Part II : The wider context of education reforms ..connecting the dots

Education reforms and policy shifts in Pakistan are synonymous with changes of government. Education has been at the centre of ideological and social construction and 'strengthening of the nation state' (Jamil 1999; Saigol 1998, 2002, Hoodbhoy 1985,

Saleem). After the change of government through a bloodless coup in 1999, led by General Pervez Musharraf, sector reforms initiatives began within 8 weeks of the praetorian dispensation. The clear brief to the Education reform committee will not be working towards a new education policy as per tradition of new governments, but instead an action plan for the recently approved National Education Policy 1998-2010. The outcome after nationwide consultations was the finalization of a sector wide Education Sector Reform Action Plan 2001-2005/6 (www.moe.gov.pk). The period 1999-2004 launched: the higher education reforms under the newly constituted HEC; madrassah mainstreaming project; phase wise curriculum revision; deregulation of examination boards and printing of books for all non-state players to participate; school wide reforms through district and provincial governments, and institutionalized initiatives towards public private partnerships (www.moe.gov.pk & www.pcp.org).

ESR was subsequently superseded under the newly elected government (2004), including a number of religious parties, by the NEPR and national curriculum reform in 2005. Sector reforms were concurrently designed, negotiated for financing¹⁰ and implemented at the provincial levels as well, since education is a provincial and a district subject under the devolved system of governance (2002). The policy and curriculum reforms were being undertaken amidst rejection of the madrassah mainstreaming project, critiques on Islamisation of the curriculum (SDPI, 2003) and pressure from the religious parties not to dilute focus on the fundamental tenets of Islam and Jihad. The period 2000 -2009 has been an intense period of religious extremism, terrorism in its worst forms, shifting increasingly from Afghanistan to Pakistan and FATA, with religious parties holding firm sway across political processes and extremists.

In 2008, the democratically elected government of President Asif Zardari/Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, took a wise decision to finalize the draft NEP, a process initiated in 2005 and also to implement the National Curriculum 2006/7. The new government with fewer religious party representatives in the upper and lower houses, in the spirit of continuity of sector reforms accepted the Inter –Provincial Education Ministerial (IPEM) Conference as the consultative policy forum for discussion on sector reforms, initiatives and policy shifts¹¹. The draft NEP has undergone 4 revisions with the provincial and area governments fully in the loop to give comments. Some of the NEP drafts have been put on the education ministry’s website to formally invite comments from the public and sometimes the drafts have not been shared transparently and in a timely manner, such as the most recently finalized draft of August 1, 2009 which is scheduled to be presented on August 12 or 13th 2009 to the cabinet, after its rejection four months ago in April 2009, inviting formal comments from the provinces. The latest NEP draft has added a new chapter on Islamic Education which may lead to the undoing of reforms

¹⁰ Punjab Education Sector Reform Project (PESRP); sector reforms in NWFP & Sindh; etc. negotiated with the World Bank under various financing instruments of the Bank as well as through European Commission, GTZ, UNICEF and others from 2002 onwards.

¹¹ IPEM was conceived and operationalized as a rotation field based policy forum in 2002/3 to discuss implementation challenges and pace of ESR reforms and has now become the apex policy body for major decisions on sector reforms attended by the Ministers, Secretaries and relevant officers and special invitees.

Throughout the policy and curriculum reforms period, from 2001/2 to 2009 the international development partners have continued to support and strategically finance: sector, policy, curriculum, teacher education and assessment reforms and institutional strengthening at the national and provincial levels. The support resonates with government's identification of five to six basic pillars of quality in the draft NEP August , 2009. These are, curriculum, textbooks, assessments, teachers, the learning environment in an institution and relevance of education to practical life/ labour market. (Draft NEP 2009. p. 42)

As succinctly indicated by Saigol, ..'The more the project of national integration and nation building failed, the more ardently was religion invoked as a unifying force. The State's main imperatives of control and domination through centralisation did not change, despite changes in governments and regimes. As a result, there does not appear to be a major shift in curricular and textual practices from the period of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to the time of General Pervez Musharraf' (2003)

Part III: Curriculum Wing's – Adjectival Education Initiatives

To counter the multiplying problems of environmental degradation, global warming, HIV Aids, terrorism and extremism, human rights violations, the easiest approach is to create space for adjectival education. This had already been suggested in the 1998-2010 NEP (Majeed, 2009,p.2) and reinforced in the NEP draft August 1 2009 (p. 45). In the new National Curriculum “ New emerging developments and modern trends like human rights education, population and development education, environmental education, disaster and risk management, preventive education against HIV/AIDS and other fatal diseases, peace and value education, inclusive education, preservation of cultural heritage, inter-faith harmony, citizenship and other related aspects have been included in the curriculum at appropriate level in different subjects”. (Ibid.p.6).

Issues of holistic citizenship cannot be taken on aboard in an adjunct manner but must be embedded in the foundational conceptualization of core subjects. Sterling (2001), Scott (2002), Scott & Gough (2003) and Rauch (2004)

Adjectival initiatives with respect to curriculum development have been many launched at the federal level in cooperation with the provinces/area governments in the areas of human rights, civics, population, HIV aids, environment, inclusive education, life skills, disaster management etc. however, these are yet to be seen as mainstreamed knowledge bytes, but as optional and peripheral, placating, the government, donors and citizens demands alike to upgrade the curricula, textbooks and classroom transactions. .

The implications for textbook writers, teacher education programs (pre and in-service), and classroom interactions are immense to ensure that trade offs between content and pedagogy are minimized for respective subjects integrated into both social science and science disciplines.

Part IV.

The challenges of implementing the national curriculum and curriculum reforms

There are several critical challenges to implementation which need to be shared in the concluding section.

Challenge I – the practical hurdles in implementation

Based on a meeting with Mr. Sohail Masood, Chairman Textbook Board Punjab – August 4, 2009

Punjab and Implementation of Curriculum Reforms - A scuttling scenario!

The Punjab Textbook Board sent 25 manuscripts for grades 1, 6, 9 and 11 to the Curriculum Wing, Ministry of Education for the No Objection Certificate (NOC) but we received clearance for 2 only! Now we cannot launch the national curriculum on the basis of 2 books/subjects.

With over 65,000 schools to serve only in the public sector for free textbooks production and distribution we cannot wait. August 31, 2009 is the deadline for books to go in print (amidst massive loadshedding/Ramazan) so that they are ready for distribution to the districts in January/February 2010 for the new academic year beginning in April 2010. It appears that we would miss the planned implementation for 2010-2011 academic year. The implementation will have to be in 2011.

I must admit that the National Curriculum 2006 /7 is far better than what we have had before. It lays out benchmarks, student learning outcomes, standards, so the emphasis is on these rather than prescriptive textbooks.

However, as per the National Textbook and Learning Materials Policy & Plan of Action (2007-2010), making the production and publishing of textbooks the domain of the private sector may have been too drastic or perhaps ambitious. The private sector is pleased at this development, but it does not trust the government and is hesitant to tie in large resources if the scheme is scuttled for some reason. Change takes time, and the government has put all eggs in one basket.

We hear that in NWFP, no responses were received even after two advertisements for submitting manuscripts for the new curriculum. The NWFP Textbook Board decided to put together their own manuscripts and send to the CW of MoE. But the latter has put that on hold because it contravenes the policy of 2007. In Balochistan there is no reported activity in this regard. Sindh has requested to shift the implementation year to 2011-2012. Punjab may have to do the same despite our positive intentions and proactive stance on negotiating and sorting out all production and pricing procedures with private publishers. The capacity of private publishers is an issue. The capacity of the Ministry of Education/CW for issuing NOCs is also a constraint. The delays are unnecessarily long as trained personnel are not available or depleted.

The translations of the national curriculum in Urdu have yet to take place and yes it has not been disseminated widely to the public or the teachers”.

We have also been given the task of inserting appropriate texts in existing textbooks on ‘Nazria-e-Pakistan¹², as endorsed by the Chief Minister recently. (The Nation, June 20, 2009).

Challenge II – the ideological hurdles in implementation – recent wave of Ideology and Islamization

Two recent initiatives to reintroduce ideology and religion into policy and curriculum reforms are set to push back the moderate pluralist agenda in education.

1. The revival of imposing Nazria Pakistan (two nation theory) and Islamic Education in curriculum, teacher education and classrooms is a concern and a challenge to curriculum reforms being derailed to the 1979 and 1998 policy positions. The 1998 -2010 National Education Policy is critiqued for communalization of the Objectives Resolution of 1949’ (Siagol 1997). General Zia’s 1979 education policy states that:

‘The highest priority would be given to the revision of the curricula with a view to reorganising the entire content around Islamic thought and giving education an ideological orientation so that Islamic ideology permeates the thinking of the younger generation and helps them with the necessary conviction and ability to refashion society according to Islamic tenets’ (NEP 1979).

This interpretation of education embedded in communalism and majority religion to serve the purpose of building the ‘nation state’ anchored in religion was deeply embedded in the ethos of Bhutto, Zia, Nawaz Sharif and Musharraf governments from 1971-2008.

Since the past few months, the Chief Minister Punjab, belonging to the Pakistan Muslim league – Nawaz Group (PML-N) has paid rich tributes to Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust and its iconic vanguard leaders for their commitment to creating inter-generational awareness about the objectives and sacrifices for the creation of Pakistan and the Pakistan Movement. He has also promised extra-ordinary state support to this effort. The Chief Minister announced, that to keep the ‘spirit alive of Hazrat Quaid-e-Azam and other leaders of Tehrik-e-Pakistan, their contributions towards an independent homeland, a subject should also be included in the curriculum for this purpose.. a strategy is being evolved with the consultation of Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust and Punjab Text Book Board’.. ‘Committing all out cooperation of the Punjab government, he ordered the DG PHA (Parks and Horticultural Authority) to accelerate the work of converting the Madr-e-Millat Park into an ideological, educational and informative park .. (and)..directed Secretary Schools to extend all out cooperation for teachers training programme conducted by the trust.. (and).. expressed his satisfaction over the performance of mobile ideological educational units and assured that government would provide financial

¹² Nazria means both the Ideology and the Purpose of Pakistan.

assistance in this regard' (the Nation June 23, 2009).

2. The insertion of Chapter IV titled "Islamic Education" (pp.31-34) in the latest version of the NEP 2009 – August 1, 2009, without any public debate is yet another set back to the policy making and reform exercise in 'enlightened moderation' .

Chapter IV (www.moe.gov.pk) is remarkable in its identical heritage to the current National Education Policy 1998-2010 Chapter 3, which is also titled Islamic Education (p.9-14). Like the 1998 policy the latest draft NEP August 1 2009, places the chapter prior to the core operational chapters on access and quality as an underpinning to the entire draft NEP 2009. This is not incidental but will have longstanding repercussions, endorsing the legacies of General Zia ul Haq. The 1998 -2010 NEP categorically states: "We are not a country founded on its territorial, linguistic, ethnic or racial identity. The only justification for our existence is our total commitment to Islam as our sole identity". Subsequently the chapter draws upon the 1973 Constitutional provisions (article 31) and the Objectives Resolution as incorporated by Presidential Order No. 14, of 1985 by General Zia Ul Haq¹³. A poignant reminder by Saigol (1995) that,

'Almost all the official sites of the production of knowledge, were put to the task of re-imaging an Islamic nation in an exclusionary exercise, which involved the diminution of the citizenship of non-Muslim and female citizens of Pakistan'. (ibid.)

The August 1, 2009 draft of NEP does exactly the same by drawing heavily upon the 1998 NEP in all its forms and clauses, but with a culminating section on the madrassahs which is highly sinister in terms of its institutional arrangements (Ibid. para 13 p. 34) :

Madrassah Education authority shall be established by Ministry of Interior with the following mandate:

- a. Provide an opportunity for all existing and future Madaris to excel and enhance the services they already provide to the nation.
- b. Provide funds for education and socio-economic welfare of students.
- c. Provide infrastructure and equipment for improvement of existing facilities.
- d. Provide further training to enhance skills of teachers.
- e. Provide support in vocational training to equip students to generate income.
- f. Provide advice and assistance in streamlining policies, objectives and syllabi to give graduates a competitive edge (Ibid. p. 34)

Many of the 120 Pakistan Coalition of Education (PCE) members across the country have called it sinister (August 7, 2009) because the Ministry of Interior's Mission Statement, Core areas of business and rules have nothing to do with education, training, infrastructure development, vocational training, income generation and syllabus inputs in their purview (annex).

The Objectives Resolution was passed by the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan in March, 1949, and was made a substantive part of the Constitution of Pakistan by [P.O \(Presidential Order\) .No.14 of 1985](#), Art.2 and Sch.item 2 (with effect from March 2, 1985)..

Are we relegating Madrassah education (private sector faith based education) to the Ministry of Interior because it is a high security issue and we are condemning that no education or learning takes place in the Madarassahs? If so, then why are we on the one hand providing exclusive space to Islamic Education which needs to be integrated in every nook and cranny of our education system, (hiring Qaris not Arabic linguists) including teacher training institutions (Policy Actions 6-7 p. 33 2009) and the Curriculum Wing (Ibid. p. 33) to review all texts and learning materials for Islamic injunctions and Nazria-e-Pakistan. This is yet another policing function!

Moreover, many revisionists researches have demonstrated that infact Madarassahs are not to be condemned as dens and production houses for suicide bombers as they do not necessary hail from the madrassahs but mainstream institutions (Bergen 2005, Swati & Pandey, Sageman (2004) Zahab and Roy (2004) World Bank Study (2005), Fair (2008), Sikand (2008/9) and Ali 2009,). Madrassahs must be provided systematic support for upgrading their facilities and learning options. Unfortunately the latest draft of NEP 2009 will relegate madrassahs once again into the clutches of intelligence agencies to be manipulated for the political economy of state survival.

It is indeed a tragic chapter in the NEP 2009. Some of its valid policy actions ought to have been integrated in the main chapters on Access, Quality, Vocational Technical, Higher Education and equity concerns. The Madrassahs should be part of the institutional arrangements for handling non-state provision through the Educational Foundations¹⁴ with special personnel who have required skills for interfacing and upgrading Madrassah education. This ofcourse means building technical capacity to handle 15000 or so madrassahs, their technical and professional challenges in a proactive manner. Many of us believe that this is totally doable. What is not doable is to recreate an infrastructure that could be leveraged during the Afghan War, Cold War & Post Cold War, 9/11, talibanization within, terrorism in the name of Islam as witnessed in the FATA Malakand debacle, the legislation and legacies of article 295- C Blasphemy law (descretation of Quran/Holy Prophet's sayings) and its daily carnages.

It is important to question, why we have Islamic Education as an anchor chapter in the upcoming National Education Policy 2009, when there is no such chapter on Islamic Health, Islamic Sanitation; Islamic Micro-Credit; Islamic IT..etc? Why is education singularly targeted for Islamic Education?

The separation of religion from education and the state is long over due in all South Asian countries. The citizens deserve better.

Challenge III – Curriculum Reforms Delayed is Learning Denied ...

¹⁴ There are Six Education Foundations across the country managing non-state provision through grants in aid, support for quality and capacity building. These semi-autonomous were created during the 90s and many restructured since 2001 as part of the ESR Action Plan 2001-2005/6 to augment private sector initiatives to address equity and girls education through a sector wide mandate.

The new curriculum on a relative scale has made several positive shifts. There is a conscious move towards standards, indicators, teaching tolerance and respect for diversity both within and across borders. It also does not insist on imposing Islamic religious teaching on non-Muslim students. Religion was to be taught in focused courses, rather than being infused in Social Studies, Civics, Urdu and English. However, this may change with the new chapter included in the NEP August 1, 2009 as well as the insistence on incorporating Nazria-e-Pakistan in relevant subjects etc. It will certainly delay the process of producing textbooks even more and perhaps may lead to the adjustments in the already approved National Curriculum!

Once again the subjects of history, geography and civics, as social studies in primary grades, or separate in grades VI-VIII will become 'deeply implicated in the production of national identity'..providing the nexus of time, space and power' for imagined constructs of a homogenized identity (Saigol, 2002).

As lamented by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) authors who wrote the provocative *Subtle Subversion* in 2003 and are continuously engaged in research and analysis on curricula and textbook trends

Unfortunately, so far, no move has been made to introduce new textbooks that reflect the changes. "The revised curriculum is a huge departure from the earlier one. But whether the changes it prescribes will be implemented at all is not clear to us. The more it is delayed, the less and less we are sure it is going to come," said A.H. Nayyar, research fellow at SDPI and one of the initiators of the project... Since the 2003 critique on the curriculum, the 22 million children have moved on and those who were 11 years old have completed their matriculation'. ..Another generation has been lost because the process has taken too long," he said. *The Hindu June 9, 2009, Awaiting changes to a syllabus of hate by Nirupama Subramanian*

Concluding Remarks

This paper was originally titled, "**Curriculum Reforms : a glass half full**". However during the course of the preparation, the NEP 2009 latest draft appeared as did the list of new directives on the inclusion of the 'two nation theory and Nazria-e-Pakistan in Punjab. These developments once again threaten to crowd out the curriculum, leaving little room for reform and engagement of learners to enquiry and new knowledge options. These two developments led to the change in the title to one which is not so unequivocal anymore, "***Curriculum Reforms : a glass half full or half empty?***"

The challenges of learning and education will continue to be shouldered by the citizens of Pakistan, who remain committed to informing and demanding from the state, alternative learning solutions, respecting diversity, promoting peace, progress and human enlightenment.

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Annex I :

National Curricula for the following 25 subjects have been developed ...and notified for implementation in three academic sessions. Provincial Textbook Boards, with the assistance of private sector publishers, are required to prepare quality textbooks in various subjects for Classes I, VI, IX and XI by the start of the new academic session: -

1. Early Childhood Education
2. Urdu for Grades I-XII
3. English for Grades I-XII
4. General Knowledge for Grades I-III
5. Islamiat for Grades III-XII
6. Ethics (for non-Muslims) for Grades III-XII
7. Mathematics for Grades I-XII
8. General Science for Grades IV-VIII
9. Social Studies for Grades IV-V
10. Geography for Grades VI-VIII
11. History for Grades VI-VIII
12. Computer Education for Grades VI-VIII
13. Drawing for Grades VI-VIII
14. Arabic for Grades VI-VIII
15. Pakistan Studies for Grades IX-X
16. General Mathematics for Grades IX-X
17. Physics for Grades IX-X, XI-XII
18. Chemistry for Grades IX-X, XI-XII
19. Biology for Grades IX-X, XI-XII
20. Physiology & Hygiene for Grades IX-X
21. Food & Nutrition for Grades IX-X
22. Textile & Clothing for Grades IX-X
23. Essentials of Home Economics for Grades VI-VIII, IX-X
24. Environmental Studies for Grades IX-X
25. Literacy and Adult Literacy (Basic Literacy and Numeracy, Functional Literacy and Income Generating Skills)

(p. 5)

Annex 2. Higher Education Commission : www.hec.gov.pk

Curriculum Revision

Government of Pakistan has appointed Higher Education Commission (erstwhile UGC) as the competent authority for the supervision of curricula and text-books beyond class XII. HEC has also been entrusted to maintain the standards of education in keeping with the nation's changing social and economic needs which are compatible with the basic national ideology. The aim is to ascend from general education to more purposeful agro-technical education. The Curriculum Section guides all Degree colleges, Universities and other Institutions of higher learning in designing curricula that provides appropriate content regarding Basic Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities along with Engineering and Technology. It also guides them to establish minimum standards for good governance and management of Institutions. HEC may also advise the Chancellor of any institution on its statutes and regulation. Educational programs are thus designed not only to meet the needs of the employment market but to promote the study of Basic and Applied Sciences in every field of national and international importance. HEC may also advise the Chancellor of any institution on its statutes and regulation.

- [National Curriculum Revision Committee](#)
- [HEC Approved Curriculum](#)
- [List of Experts](#)
- [Proforma for constitution of NCRC 2006-2007](#)
- [Schedule For National Curriculum Revision Committee Meetings 2005-06](#)
- [Minutes of meeting of NCRC in business administration held on March 2-3, 2007](#)
- [Road Map For Business Education](#)
- [Standardized Format For Four-Year Integrated Curricula For Bachelor Degree In Basic, Social, Natural And Applied Sciences](#)
- [Framework for BS Engineering Program](#)
- [Framework for Model BS Engineering Program](#)

Curriculum of a subject is said to be the throbbing pulse of a nation. By looking at the curriculum of a subject, one can judge the state of intellectual development and the state of progress of a nation. The world has turned into a global village where new ideas and information are pouring in a constant stream. It is, therefore, imperative to update our curricula by introducing the recent developments in the relevant fields of knowledge.

In exercise of the powers conferred by Sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Federal Supervision of Curricula Textbooks and Maintenance of standards of Education Act 1976, Higher Education Commission has been appointed as the Competent Authority to look into the Curriculum Revision Work beyond Class XII at Bachelor level and onwards regarding all Degrees, Certificates and Diplomas awarded by Degree Colleges, Universities and other Institutions of higher education.

In pursuance of the above decisions and directives, the commission is continually performing curriculum revision in collaboration with the Universities. According to the decision of the 44th Vice-Chancellors' Committee, curriculum of a subject must be reviewed after every 3 years. For this purpose, various Committees are constituted at the national level comprising senior teachers nominated by the Universities. Teachers from local degree colleges and experts from user organizations, where required, are also included in these Committees.

http://www.hec.gov.pk/AECA/Curriculum_Revision.html

In pursuance of the mandate, given under Act of Parliament and recommendation of Vice-Chancellors Committee HEC launched an extensive programme for periodic revision of the curricula of different subjects taught at graduate & postgraduate levels. During the year 2000-2001 twenty-nine Curricula of science and humanities were reviewed and revised, while 539 scholars / subject experts participated in the process.

HEC adopted a procedure, to review/ revise curriculum, which ensure the quality of the updated curricula. Following are the steps initiated to ensure quality in education.

STEPS INVOLVED IN CURRICULUM REVIEW/REVISION PROCESS

The curriculum review and revision process has been divided in two phases;

PHASE-I Curricula under consideration.

PHASE – II Circulation of the draft curriculum, the details of step involve in the said process under each phase is as follows:

PHASE-I Step – I Constitution of National Curriculum Revision Committee (NCRC) in the subject.

The Vice-Chancellors of all public and private sector universities, R&D organizations, Directorate of colleges and industries in relation to the subject under consideration, are requested to nominate their representatives, for appointment of National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC).

Step –II Assessment/Analysis of the existing curriculum:

The existing curricula is circulated amongst the members of NCRC to discuss it with their colleagues and bring collective proposals for review and revision of existing curricula in relation to: a) objectives (of teaching the subject). b) Scheme of studies c) Course-content d) weightage e) reading materials f) teaching strategies g) methods of evaluation. In this way participation of maximum number of subject experts is ensured.

Step – III NCRC meeting-I: draft preparation. The first meeting of the NCRC is organized at the HEC Headquarter Islamabad or one of its Regional Centers at Peshawar, Lahore and Karachi, where maximum local input could be made available in the exercise of revising a curriculum. Other universities at different places may also be chosen to serve the purpose. The meeting which normally runs for 3 days consecutively comes up with a draft of the revised curricula, after detail discussion and deliberation on the proposals prepared by the NCRC members.

PHASE – II CIRCULATION OF THE DRAFT CURRICULUM

Step – IV Appraisal of the first draft The Ist draft prepared is circulated among the universities, institutions and organization soliciting their views for its further improvement. The view/recommendations collected on the Ist draft curriculum were deliberated upon to design and finalize the curriculum of specific subject of study in a final meeting.

Step – V NCRC meeting-II: Finalization of draft The second meeting of the NCRC is held to finalize the draft of the revised curriculum in the light of comments/suggestions/recommendations received from the college and university teachers and institutions all over the country. The meeting would again take 3 days to finalize a curriculum. The draft so finalized support expertise of all faculty members of the subject under consideration, who are directly or indirectly involved in this process.

Step – VI Approval of the revised curricula by the Vice-Chancellors' Committee:

The final draft curriculum is submitted to the Vice-Chancellors' Committee for approval.

Implementation: -

The curricula designed is printed and sent to universities/institutions for its adoption/implementation after the approval of the Competent Authority.

<http://www.hec.gov.pk/content/NCRC1.html>

TO BE PUBLISHED IN EXTRA-ORDINARY GAZETTE OF PAKISTAN

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(CURRICULUM WING)

Islamabad 13 June, 2007

NOTIFICATION

No.F.8-16/2005-SSG (.) In exercise of powers conferred by clause (a) to sub-section (2) of section 3 of the Federal Supervision of Curricula, Textbooks and Maintenance of Standards of Education Act, 1976 (X of 1976) and in pursuance of the decision taken in 11th Inter-Provincial Education Ministers' meeting held on 22 January, 2007 in Islamabad and after consensus of the Provincial Governments and all other stakeholders, the National Textbook Policy and Learning Materials and Plan of Action is hereby notified for its implementation across the country with immediate effect and until further orders. All the Provincial Governments will take appropriate measures for its effective and timely implementation.

Sd/-
(Muhammad Nasir Khan)
Assistant Educational Adviser
Tele: 9257387

The Publisher,
Gazette of Pakistan,
Printing Corporation of Pakistan Press,
Islamabad.

Copy to:-

1. All Provincial Education Secretaries and AJK.
2. All Provincial Textbook Boards and National Book Foundation.
3. All Provincial Curriculum Bureaus and DCRD AJK.
4. All JEAs /JS and Director, Monitoring Cell, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
5. Director General NISTE, Ministry of Education, Islamabad.
6. Mrs. Nighat Lone, Consultant for Coordination, NCC.
7. Pakistan Publishers & Booksellers Association, Karachi/Lahore.
8. Others concerned.
9. PSO to E.M.
10. PS to MOS
11. PS to ES
12. PS to AS

Annex 4.

Ministry of Interior (website www.interior.gov.pk)

The primary responsibility of Interior Division is to ensure internal security. Besides, the Interior Division deals with:

- National registration of population and issuance of identity cards.
- Nationality, citizenship and naturalization.
- Immigration, passports, regulation of entry and exit of foreigners.
- Control and administration of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Civil Armed Forces i.e. Frontier Corps, Frontier Constabulary, Pakistan Rangers and Coast Guards, Capital Development Authority and Islamabad Capital Territory.
- Coordination of Policy matters relating to Police, Police reforms and training of Police officers through National Police Academy (NPA).
- Anti-smuggling measures and enforcement of Anti-corruption Laws.
- Arms policy, issuance of licenses for non-prohibited weapons.
- Policy coordination and higher training of Civil Defence.
- Coordination of jail reforms with Provinces and training of Jail staff at Central Jail Staff Training Institute (CJSTI), Lahore.

Business functions of the Interior Division

This Division works under Ministry of Interior which is responsible for maintaining law and order in the country. This Division also regulates the working of various security forces, including Police, to provide protection to the common man and to defend the country. It also deals in issuance of National ID cards and passports. (www.interior.gov.pk)

Annex: 5.

Shahbaz pays tributes to Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust - the Nation... June 23, 2009 Staff Reporter Lahore—Punjab Chief Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has paid tributes to Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust for creating awareness in the new generation about the aims and objectives of creation of Pakistan and supreme sacrifices of leaders of Pakistan Movement. He also commended the efforts of prominent journalist and Chairman Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust Majid Nizami, Justice (Retd.) Javed Iqbal and other office-bearers of the Trust in this regard.

He was talking to office-bearers of Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust during a meeting at Aiwan-e-Karkunan-e-Tehrik-e-Pakistan, here today. Shahbaz said that Pakistan was achieved after supreme sacrifices and there is a need to promote awareness in the new generation about the historic struggle and tireless efforts of Hazrat Quaid-e-Azam and other leaders of Tehrik-e-Pakistan for the achievement of an independent homeland.

He said that a subject should also be included in the curriculum for this purpose. He said that a strategy is being evolved with the consultation of Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust and Punjab Text Book Board in this regard. He said that Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust is rendering invaluable services and Punjab government will extend all out cooperation in this regard. He said that the work of developing Madr-e-Millat Park into an ideological, educational and informative park will soon be started.

Earlier, Prof. Dr. Rafique Ahmed informed about the performance of Nazria-e-Pakistan Trust. He lauded the efforts of Chief Minister Punjab Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif for the promotion of education in the province and said that the setting up of endowment fund with a sum of Rs.2 billion will yield positive results and talented students will be able to fully benefit from this programme.

Sat. Jan 24, 2009 The Pakistan Observer <http://pakobserver.net/200901/24/news/Lahore01.asp>

NPT rendering commendable services: CM

Published: June 09, 2009

The Chief Minister also gave approval for an annual medical grant of Rs 1 million for the treatment of workers of Pakistan Movement besides issuing instructions for provision of land for the construction of Aiwan-e-Nazria Pakistan

He ordered DG PHA to accelerate the work of converting of Madr-e-Millat Park into educational ideological park. He directed Secretary Schools to extend all out cooperation for teachers training programme conducted by the trust.

Appreciating the services of the trust on ideological front, the Chief Minister expressed his satisfaction over the performance of mobile ideological educational units and assured that government would provide financial assistance in this regard.

Chairman Nazria Pakistan Trust Majid Nizami while addressing the meeting said the purpose of setting up of the trust was to apprise the future generations of the aims and objectives of creation of Pakistan. He said Nazria Pakistan Trust was the only institution, which had been working for the promotion of two-nation theory and students were enlightened through special programme in educational institutions why Pakistan was created and the sacrifices made by our forefathers for this purpose.

He said PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif made the defence of the country impregnable by testing nuclear devices without cowing down to foreign pressure. He said Pakistan was created on the basis of two-nation

theory and it would live forever.

Secretary Nazria Pakistan Trust Shahid Rashid informed about the trust and the details of ongoing projects.
This news was published

<http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/09-Jun-2009/NPT-rendering-commendable-services-CM/1>

Annex: 6
salim@sdpi.org

Two years ago, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute released a report on textbooks from the perspective of correcting the fallacies, prejudices, and historical falsehood in them.

The subjects selected for the report were Pakistan/Social Studies, Civics, Urdu and English, taught in first to twelfth grades. After 15 months of hard work, education experts – from all over Pakistan and SDPI – launched the report.

It was thought that the Ministry of Education, educational circles and media would evaluate the report after healthy and positive debate and help in forwarding the SDPI's work, ultimately correcting the shortcomings in the textbooks. However, instead of looking at the contents of the report, it was criticized for elements which were not part of the report.

The National Curriculum Wing of the Ministry of Education formed a committee to review the report. The majority of the committee members approved the report's recommendations with few changes. But the ministry announced that the report had not been approved.

A portion of the media was also negative about report, but a large number of people, including educational circles and concerned citizens, expressed their concern over the revelations made in the report. In the last one year, some parliamentarians and sections of the national and international media want to know if the hate material, prejudice and historical falsehood in the textbooks – documented in the report – have been taken out or not.

New Research Project

On the other hand, after the arrival of the new education minister, there has been visible seriousness in correcting the textbooks' content. There have been number of encouraging government measures in this direction. For quite sometime, the president and the new education minister have been hinting at making the textbooks content balanced, positive and religiously tolerant. Keeping in view these developments, the SDPI thought it fit to have a review of the four subjects – Pakistan/Social Studies, Civics, Urdu and English – to see what changes have been made.

The old team at SDPI again shouldered the responsibility. The first phase was to collect the textbooks that have been published in 2005, to compare the changes made in the textbooks published in 2002-03. The keenness to update our own work was natural, especially when the government also seemed serious in bringing changes in the textbooks.

The Ministry of Education has a Curriculum Wing, under which a National Review Committee works. The committee approves the textbooks of the four provinces. No provincial textbook board can publish any textbook without the approval of the review committee. Therefore, every province prepares separate books for every subject, but they are written in the light of the Ministry of Education's instructions and they cannot be published without the approval of the National Review Committee.

The basis of our research are the textbooks of the four provinces. Their study will explain the changes made in the last three years. But we are not only relying on the textbooks. We are trying to contact and solicit views of the subject specialists of the four textbook boards, current and former heads of these boards, experts of textbooks, primary and intermediate teachers, parents and education experts. We visited the provincial textbook boards' offices, and acquired new and old textbooks.

According to initial findings of the project

- In 2004, the National Textbook Wing changed the Social Studies curriculum for the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, and also announced the introduction of History and Geography in its place. We have acquired its' text, and it hints at a number of positive changes. But we could not find textbooks of History and Geography, and the staff of the textbook board and the shopkeepers were unaware of any such change. In the market the 2005 editions of Social Studies were available. An official of

the Punjab Textbook Board said that the History and Geography books were being written and that they would be introduced in 2006.

- The text concerning Islam in the textbooks of Pakistan Studies in 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th grades has been reduced, and made part of the Islamiyat textbooks. Similarly, the teaching of Pakistan Studies was reduced to one year in the 9th, 10th, and the intermediate grades.
- Civics is also being taught for one year in the 9th, 10th, and the intermediate grades.
- Some officers of the Ministry of Education revealed that the current curriculum has been prepared in 2002 under the guidelines of the last government's education policy (1998-2010). However, the old education policy does not allow room for many changes. Keeping in view the current needs, work is being done on another education policy, which is expected to be made public this year.
- In 2005, the National Curriculum Wing placed a number of advertisements in the newspapers, looking for textbooks experts for two years on attractive remuneration packages to prepare curriculum in harmony with the present times. We do not have the information about the number of consultants recruited for the job, but it hints at the government's seriousness in this regard.

Here is an update on our on-going research:

- In depth study of the textbooks is under way. The findings would be published in the form of a report. The initial findings point towards some positive changes.
- Our basic and important task is to compare, (after a thorough study of the) current textbooks with the textbooks of 2002-03, and review how many changes have been made. Apart from the SDPI team, friends and some authors of the first report are also part of the team.
- The research team would also review if, in the presence of National Curriculum Wing's control and a particular mindset, positive changes are possible or not?
- The research team would review if by making the education a provincial matter, any improvement is possible or not. And why efforts should be made to make provincial curriculum wings empowered and effective to get better results.
- The research team would also look into the possibility of forming an independent National Education Board, which should have members from the Ministry of Education, education experts, teachers, parents and members of the civil society. The board should have main role in the education policy and preparation of curriculum.
- The training of teachers is vital to bring them out of the old mindset, so that they can teach constructively.

http://www.sdpi.org/help/research_and_news_bulletin/july_aug_05/review_of_the_textbooks.htm

SDPI Research and News

Vol. 12, No. 3 July — August 2005

Annex :

Press release

Serious reservations on Draft Education Policy Policy dubbed revisionist, continuing the focus on Zia's Islamisation drive by Education Specialists

Islamabad: "The Draft Education Policy (August 2009 version) is not acceptable. We have serious objections to some of the clauses stated here", said Zehra Arshad, National Coordinator of the Pakistan Coalition of Education, a forum for 120 civil society organizations working on education issues in Pakistan. She was speaking at the 'emergency' meeting of the Pakistan Coalition on Education which had been scheduled to discuss the Draft Policy. The meeting was attended by 12 civil society activists from different non-governmental sector organizations.

Speaking at the meeting, AbuBakr from ActionAid Pakistan said that the Draft Education Policy was indicative of the misplaced priorities of the policy makers. The Draft Policy proposes that Madrassa curriculum will be mainstreamed and an Education Authority will be set up for their improvement. It also states that "Islamic teachings shall be made a part of teacher training curricula and the curricula of other training institutions. Arabic teachers preferably having the qualification as Qaris shall be appointed in such institutions". "Teachers need to be recruited, investments are needed in college education and teacher training for better learning outcomes, rather than hire *qaris* at this point. The government seems to have buckled down under pressure from the conservative elements" Hassan Mirani from Cavish Development Foundation said. "Broadening access and quality more serious and bigger issues than the teaching of Islamiyat and hiring of *qaris* for teaching institutions. The focus on ideology and Islamiyat needs to be seriously reviewed", Zehra Arshad added.

A report with comments on the Draft Policy had been developed by Ms. Baela Raza from Idara e Taleem o Agahi. This was circulated and discussed among the PCE members. The report questioned the rationale for setting up and placing the proposed Madrassa Education Authority under the Ministry of Interior calling this proposal "highly sinister". "Ministry of Interior's Mission Statement, Core areas of business and rules do not have education, training, infrastructure development, vocational training, income generation and syllabus inputs in their purview", the report said. The report also argued that this move could relegate the Madrassas once again into the clutches of intelligence agencies to be manipulated for the political economy of state survival. Some of the Policy's old valid positions ought to have been integrated in the main chapters on Access, Quality, Vocational Technical, Higher Education and equity concerns. Madrassah education should be part of the institutional arrangement handling non-state provision or the Educational Foundations with special tasks and skills for Madrassah education. This would mean building technical capacity to handle 15,000 or so madrassahs, their technical and professional challenges in a proactive manner, the report said.

"On the whole, on the issue of Islamic Education, the 2009 Draft is strengthening the old ideological lines and Zia's Islamization policy", said Fawad Virk, Idara e Taleem o Agahi. The Education Policy development process had been initiated in 2005. A number of consultations had been held. A White paper and at least 3 Draft Policies had been issued. The civil society had also provided a set of recommendations for the Policy.

Zehra Arshad said that a series of recommendations had been provided to the Education Ministry last year. “We feel that the government has succumbed to the pressure from the conservative elements. The Government says it is fighting the Taliban, and then they propose to hire qaris for teachers and teaching institutions. Has the Government thought about its repercussions? We demand that the policy be reviewed by the cabinet and the parliament before it is taken up.”

Additional Notes

Pakistan Coalition on Education is a forum set up in 2004 comprising 120 civil society organisations working in Pakistan on education sector issues as its members. This network of diverse civil society organizations and individuals is committed to quality education for all. It acts collectively to influence policies and practices through research-based advocacy and mobilization. Among other activities, the PCE has sensitised the public and policy makers on education related issues on a larger scale so that they understand their rights and are able to identify their roles and responsibilities. Its aims to increase participation of civil society in decision-making processes, in development and fine-tuning of local and national level strategies and policies.

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