

## **THE DEARTH OF NATIONAL HEROES IN PAKISTAN'S PRIMARY CURRICULUM: FROM THE PREVIOUSLY PRESCRIBED CURRICULUM TO THE NEWLY IMPLEMENTED SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The single national curriculum is the latest decision of the Government of Pakistan in the education sector. One of the aims of introducing a single national curriculum is to inculcate the values of national solidarity and social cohesion. This study aims to identify the weightage given to the national heroes in the primary curriculum (the books in English and Urdu from grades 1 to 5) to instill the importance and values of nationalism and national integration. The content analysis method is used to identify the inclusion of national heroes in the old versus new curriculum. The detailed analysis of the content reveals no significant difference between the old and the new curriculum. The almost same content is used without giving much importance to the nation's heroes. Also, there is the repetition of the same heroes. Moreover, the representation of local heroes and women role models from different fields of life are also scarce.

**Keywords:** single national curriculum, national heroes, curriculum reforms, national integration, value development

### **INTRODUCTION**

The educational curriculum is generally referred to all the content and activities taught in schools. Educational curriculum planning means planning the learning process in school (Akker, 2004). The famous French sociologist Emile Durkheim used the word curricula the social facts. According to him, the curriculum is an institution that shapes our minds regarding social facts. It draws boundaries between our beliefs, values, culture, and norms. Curricula are the hidden power that shapes the epistemology and ontology of social reality in young minds, especially in the early school years (Rauf, Muhammad, & Saeed, 2021). Curricula can strengthen beliefs or distort them. Therefore, it plays a huge role in social cohesion but can also be used as a source of national disintegration (Young, 2014). Several researchers explain the versatile impacts of the educational curriculum. Curriculum development has always been the choice and domain of academicians for the last 100 years, but the recent trend is swiftly shifting. Other societal parts are also playing their role in the formulation of the rules and regulations for the development of the content of the curriculum (Barnett, 2000).

Curriculum improvement at the supra stage is usually 'time-honored,' while precise strategies are applicable for the degrees nearer to school and classroom exercise. Moreover, the technique of curriculum improvement can be seen as slender (evolving a specific curricular product) or massive (a long-term, ongoing process of curriculum improvement, regularly along with many associated

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components of tutorial exchange, e.g., instructor schooling, school development, testing, and examinations). To understand problems of curriculum decision-making and enactment, a broader description of curriculum development is often most appropriate: usually a long and cyclic process with many stakeholders and participants; in which motives and needs for changing the curriculum are formulated; ideas are specified in programs and materials; and efforts are made to realize the intended changes in practice.

Education is the key to achieving a range of goals at the individual, societal or national levels. From an individual's personality development to the economic benefits, from culturing a corporative community to developing a harmonious society, education has distinct roles (Diana, Muhammad, & Raauf, 2022; Khalid, Muhammad, & Siddiqui, 2022). The educational curriculum is the source through which a particular set of values are intentionally transferred to the coming generations (Atta, Muhammad, & Mahmood, 2022; Khan, Muhammad, & Masood, 2021). The specific set of norms and values taught through the educational curriculum help culminate the young mind with the feeling of national integration, social cohesions, certain religious beliefs, and heroism (Lingard & Rawolle, 2010; Yasmin, Muhammad, & Siddiqui, 2021).

Heroism is an individual's commitment to a noble cause, commonly aimed toward furthering the welfare of others and regarding the willingness to accept the cost and outcomes of reaching that reason. In contemporary society, any behavior that seems tremendously challenging or strangely incredible is classified as heroic. National heroes are frequently portrayed as a pantheon of awesome and influential personalities who have control to get their names posted in history books by using distinctive features in their words and movements. Many believe that heroism involves violence in defense of others besides the point, but a few agree that genuine heroism is taking the danger of harming oneself while saving others (Cabrera, Omandam, & Canini, 2016). Baker observes that schools play a crucial role in making our social world (Baker & LeTendre, 2005).

Pakistan has recently introduced a single national curriculum in two provinces of Pakistan. Also, the government is trying to implement the same curriculum in the rest of the provinces. The philosophy behind a single national curriculum is to remove all the disparities in the educational system and impart quality education across the board. Another important aspect is to destroy the monopoly of the private school system in the education department and boost government schools. Teaching a single national curriculum will create a sense of equality and national integration. A significant chunk of researchers worldwide is in favor of single national curriculums to build national solidarity. The researchers also emphasized in various studies the importance of national history and national heroes (Khokhar & Muhammad, 2020, 2022; Muhammad & Brett, 2015a, 2017). They suggest that a natural sense of patriotism and brotherhood is developed in the young generation who are aware of their history (Muhammad, Masood, & Anis, 2019; Shahriar, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to study the latest curriculum reforms and the inoculation of the national heroes in the recently proposed single national curriculum.

Pakistan faces extreme threats of national disintegration, social stratification, cultural lag, class separatism, and much more (Muhammad, 2015). The sense of nationalism, brotherhood, integrity, commonly shared identity, and patriotism is missing. Especially our young generations are suffering from the national identity crisis. The fastest and the long-term remedy to these problems is the inculcation of the values of national inculcation, national brotherhood, provincial and regional integration, and social cohesion through the educational curriculum. The literature has a profusion of studies supporting this fact (Grant, 2018; Hosseini, Heidari, & Saadatmand, 2019; Njeng'ere, 2014).

Based on these literature findings, the current study explores the type of national heroes included in the early school curriculum. Moreover, the study will also investigate the difference between the national heroes in the traditional curriculum versus the newly introduced single national curriculum. This study is of extreme importance as Pakistan has recently endured its curriculum reforms. The single national curriculum was introduced to remove the disparity between the private school system and the government schools. Launching a single national curriculum aims to create social cohesion in society and impart quality education to students across the board. The study aims to identify the representation of national heroes in the national curriculum of Pakistan. Pakistan is recently done with educational reforms and introduced a single national curriculum for the country's schools. It is highly critical to analyze this curriculum as Pakistan is already facing extreme political and identity setbacks. The objective of the current study is to

1. Identify traditional heroes being taught in the new single national curriculum.
2. Identify which new heroes have been added to the new single national curriculum.
3. Contrast the traditional curriculum and the new single national curriculum.

This study will help in understanding the reforms introduced in the subjects like English and Urdu. The thorough research identified no significant difference between the single national curriculum and the traditional curriculum, especially in terms of the national stories and the national heroes. The national heroes in the single national curriculum and the traditional curriculum are more or less the same. The results of this study shed light on the facts of why certain types of heroes are recurrently taught to students and why our national curriculum does not entail the new heroes and their contribution to the betterment of society on every front, including social, moral, economic, science and defense.

This study is significant in its domain. The impact of studying national heroes in a student's mind will lead to national identity. Studying national heroes automatically creates a sense of pride and dignity in the young generation's minds about their national identity. This sense of national identity will build the base of nationalism. At this stage sense of nationalism is highly important for Pakistan as it is on the verge of disintegration under the influence of sectarianism, ethnicity, language issues, and numerous social and political evils (Muhammad & Brett, 2015b, 2019, 2020).

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The education sector of Pakistan is still underdeveloped. Since independence, the education sector of Pakistan has been neglected, and due attestation is never given. This gives rise to numerous problems in the education sector, including deprecating quality of education, monopoly of the private sector, multiple curriculums, hidden agendas of curriculums, social disparity, language barriers, social stratification, and much more. The planning of the educational curriculum must follow national goals. The curriculum should serve as a tool to integrate society towards a better future by achieving its goals (Muhammad, 2019). Education and learning play a strong role in the development of the country through shared norms and beliefs. They help develop the norms of trust, solidarity, inclusiveness, and prosperity at the individual, societal and national levels (Njeng'ere, 2014). While in the faculty, kids engage with instructors, peers, and the school curriculum. Textbooks constitute an essential issue of the college curriculum. The role of early literacy textbooks is tough to underestimate, considering kids examine and interact with primers simultaneously at school. Since an educational gadget is centralized, textbooks that can be distributed using fundamental publishing houses are then used in maximum faculties.

Consequently, cultural and ideological messages in primers are transmitted to each study room, shaping the countrywide identification of the nation. Curriculum texts constitute a key site where states interact in identification-creation work (Diana et al., 2022). The curriculum is contentious; the struggles amplify past simple debates of what content material we need to train our children and youth to embody complex questions about who we are and how to represent this identity (Muhammad & Brett, 2015a). As a result, curriculum 'wars' regularly conflict with the over-representation of (countrywide) identities and management of the expertise. The curriculum is the war ground for establishing members of the family of power wherein the strongest voices are of individuals who have the maximum financial, cultural, and social capital.

Special attention must be given to the early years of education or primary education as it is the best time to inculcate values in the young generations. Several kinds of early years curriculum models are present in the literature, but very few educationists have considered these models while developing curricula, and they are hardly known to the school administrations and trainers. The usage of these early years models is close to nothing. Among the best-known and most widely used early childhood curriculum models are the Creative Curriculum, the Developmental Interaction Approach (sometimes called the Bank Street approach), the High/Scope Curriculum, and the Montessori Method. Descriptions of these and other early childhood curriculum models, many of which extend into the kindergarten and primary grades, can be found in the literature (Hosseini et al., 2019; Luster & McAdoo, 1996).

Curriculum model development has its foundation in the theories of child development. Different curriculum models in the literature suggest that the different sets of values and approaches toward curriculum development indicate the importance of the respective values. It indicates the preference of the nation in what should be taught in the early years of the young generations. These values and beliefs developed a specific type of mindset in the young generations. These include the

efforts of the teachers, trainers, curriculum developers, counselors, and the overall societal approach towards the learning of the students. (Dzainudin, Yamat, & Yunus, 2018; Goffin & Wilson, 2001).

Curriculum debates centered on instructional skills and ideas about how students learn. The curriculum was to be made up of objectives and experiences with relatively traditional divisions of content, but all based on the health needs of society, the philosophy of scientific thinking, and the professional characteristics of physicians. Cognitive theories of development offer additional insights for curriculum designers to consider. In a discipline-based curriculum, knowledge, and skills are presented as subject areas in their own right, and integration has to occur entirely in the students' heads by putting it to use in practice. Curriculum design encompasses many other factors that derive from the democratization of social processes, the development of educational theory, political imperatives, and economic concerns (Gravett, Kinchin, Winstone, & Development, 2020).

The significant trials of curriculum development are growing balance and consistency between the numerous components of a curriculum (i.e., Plan for learning). The components of the curriculum must be planned wisely with a clear understanding. The planning of the curriculum must be around three points: Content, Purpose, and Structure.

Community-building values and character are the most important in national integration and reducing social stratification. Values can be planted by narrating the stories and struggles of national heroes. In promoting values of nationalism and social integration, historical figures and history studies contribute a lot. They generate a sense of self-confidence on the part of the nation and an urge to struggle for a better future. But these efforts are indeed underrepresented in the curriculum of Pakistan (Pramono, Ahmad, & Wijayati, 2019). Another scholar suggested that our education has no longer been capable of establishing a paradigmatic interplay between elements of servitude and the Caliphate. As a result, our training will become much less significant for human life that is intact and primary. This is what reinforces the need for character-building in society. Person improvement requires the satisfactory practice of exemplary values of heroism contained in lessons. Through historical learning, exemplary and heroic values may be transmitted to students.

One of the blessings in getting to know records in phrases of planting values is the presence of characters or heroes used as function fashions. Historical figures become best practices in instilling values. In history, gaining knowledge of protagonist characters, including heroes who set an instance for high-quality values. In addition, there also are antagonists, inclusive of invaders, who are the cause factors for the emergence of the importance of a belief (Ahmad, 2014). In this situation, college students are invited to conduct investigations primarily based on stories from heroes as ancient actors. Studying reading the story of the hero's existence it's been capable of facilitating college students in achieving an extra humanistic and empathic expertise of history, as well as knowledge of how ancient actors perceive the beyond (Colby, 2013). In literature, it is discovered how university or college students reconstruct hero ideas for the local context. By using primary files, students are invited to analyze the existence of close-by leaders around their houses. With this, it seems that college students' historic thinking capabilities are awakened. On the handiest hand, college students actively exhibit their participation as a part of a democratic society (Perrotta & Bohan, 2018). The national survival and the state's life are part of the historical study taught in any subject. The nation's collective memories can be inculcated in the generations of the primary medium of education (Hartono, Asrowi, & Haryanto, 2018). The nationalist perspective suggests that nations lose their identities when the collective memories erase from their minds. Nations that forget their histories and do not inculcate the values in their young generations usually face a significant identity crisis (Purwanta, 2018). That is why character education is an essential part of almost every subject curriculum. These values enlighten historical values and help students develop a sense of patience and cooperation by learning about different cultures, ethnicities, and geographical boundaries. The world is a global village; it is essential to develop an attitude of social acceptance in the generations to maximize cooperation and minimize the chances of conflict (Demircioğlu & Peker, 2021).

The above discussion and literature elaborate on the significance of the study of national heroes. Besides all these aspects, the literature also sheds light on the biases of curriculum development. There are enormous biases in the educational curriculum which need to be answered. The general bias of the textbook can be analyzed in many ways, including the perspective-oriented interpretation of the historical event or the text, personal bias in incorporating a certain school of thought, fragmented incorporation of the ideas, and the decorative aspect used to distort the original essence of the subject

in discussion. The deliberate under-representation of a certain set of population, ideas, and philosophies to reduce their influence is one of the major issues highlighted by the curriculum. But this technique can be used either way. Sometimes it is the best possible measure to reduce social evil by eliminating a certain mindset from mainstream education (Sadker, 2007). The world is a global village nation that needs its students to be creative, critical, unorthodox, and unbiased about facts. This is very important for their survival. The world no longer hears conventional thoughts. Therefore, the curriculum must develop these qualities in the students. But the intentional rigidity during curriculum designing and development suppresses these qualities of the students and hence creates a significant blockage in their intellectual growth. The social inequality of resources can easily analyze societal disintegration. The schools that possess a more substantial proportion of the resources tend to have elite-class students focusing on the typical set of values that intentionally or unintentionally promote the class system and social disintegration (Logan & Burdick-Will, 2016).

Literature highlights that students who belong to schools with a homogenous population rather than catering to all strata of the population create a greater sense of social inequality, racism, class difference, complexes, and feeling of separatism (Rothstein, 2017). Moreover, gender bias is also an important aspect to be discussed here. Bias towards women is one of the most significant realities of the world. The representation of heroism in the curriculum is also affected by this bias. A significant chunk of the heroism in the curriculum is always about men. The curriculum must not label people with the typical gendered roles and sideline their courage and struggle just because of their gender. The selection of the content of the curriculum must not be gendered. It must be sensitive enough that it can represent the marginal groups of society, including women, the disabled, and sexual orientations in society. The curriculum must curb and eliminate the racial and ethnic sentiments which dangerously threaten the national integration threat (Shaffer & Shevitz, 2001).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper aims to investigate the recent curriculum changes in Pakistan under the single national curriculum program, especially in English and Urdu. The paper examines the inculcation of national heroes in the curriculum and how they are different from the old curriculum. The content analysis method is used for this purpose. Content analysis is most suitable for this study as it is suggested and proved by the literature (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen, & Elo, 2020).

Content analysis is a systematic, rule-guided strategy used to investigate the informational contents of textual records. There are numerous forms of content material evaluation which include quantitative and qualitative methods, all sharing the relevant feature of systematically categorizing textual writings and data to make sense of it. Summative content evaluation involves counting and comparisons, usually of key phrases or content material, accompanied by the translation of the underlying context. The authors delineate analytic approaches unique to every technique and technique addressing trustworthiness with hypothetical examples drawn from giving up-of-lifestyles care.

For this study, the books in English and Urdu from grades 1 to 5, prescribed by the government, were analyzed. Comparative analyses were done on the representation of the heroes between the old and new curricula. Here it is essential to remind that the philosophy of the single national curriculum is to remove social inequalities, especially during the early years of education. The students who belong to public-private or any other school system must be taught a single curriculum to increase social coherence.

## **FINDINGS**

Heroism refers to splendid acts that show courage. It is possibly best in uncommon situations, and it calls for an excessive level of moral man or woman or competence. Countless acts of heroism went overlooked or unrecorded. In maximum instances, nearby history is taken without any consideration. Innumerable acts of heroism went left out or unrecorded in the course of records. In most cases, local heroes are taken without any consideration. History is looked at based on countrywide, generally forgetting that what underlies a tremendous history is found in nearby records.

The study aimed to identify the representation of national heroes in the national curriculum of Pakistan. Pakistan is recently done with educational reforms and introduced a single national curriculum for the country's schools. It is highly critical to analyze this curriculum as Pakistan is already facing extreme political and identity setbacks. The young generation is facing an identity crisis. The social

anarchy and the cultural rift between the provinces are increasing day by day. Also, external threats and extremist organizations are trying to gain maximum benefits from this national disintegration. It is the need of the hours to take steps that promote national integration and social cohesion. Literature suggests us a rightly guided way to enhance nationalism and combat identity crisis is the educational curriculum.

For this purpose, this study analyzed the content of the various national curriculums and the representation of national heroes and national history. Comparison has been drawn between the content of the old curriculum and the single national curriculum. Table 1 clearly shows a minor representation of the national heroes in the subjects of prime importance in the national curriculum. This is an alarming fact as the literature suggests that historical knowledge and study of heroism present through national heroes play a significant role in the psychological development of children. The values planted through the stories of national heroes develop a sense of patriotism and national integration and create a culture of harmony and social togetherness.

**Table No. 1 Content comparison of old curriculum and single national curriculum**

Subject	Grade	Old Curriculum	Single National Curriculum
<b>English</b>	1	Quaid e Azam	-
	2	My country (general themes)	-
	3	-	-
	4	Rashid Minhas	Soldiers (Nishan-e-Haider holders)
	5	Quaid e Azam Arfa Kareem	General patriotic poem
<b>Urdu</b>	1	Quaid e Azam	Allama Iqbal General patriotic poem
	2	Quaid e Azam	Allama Iqbal Quaid e Azam A patriotic poem
	3	Abdul Sattar Edhi Quaid e Azam	Quaid e Azam General patriotic poem
	4	Major Aziz Bhatti	A patriotic poem
	5	Major Tufail Ahmed Fatima Jinnah	Allama Iqbal General patriotic poem

Educational philosophy and previous literature guide that the study of national heroes, i.e., political, military, educational, scientist, or anyone who does exceptional services for Pakistan, enact as a source of inspiration for the young generation. That is why it is imperative to add the stories of the people who serve the nation to the national curriculum. This will motivate the young generations and provide them with a path to follow toward huge goals. Another distinct aspect of the curriculum is that various figures from Islamic history are highlighted in the curriculum. This is a crucial step for glorifying the Islamic perspective, values, and tradition in the minds of the young generations. The curriculum developers are rightly taking this into account, and the reconsideration of Islamic values, again and again, will help not only in national integration but also in developing a sense of brotherhood and unity among different Muslim nations.

The review of the single national curriculum and the old curriculum highlighted that a minimal number of heroes are represented in the curriculum. Stories of the same heroes are often taught in different classes with more or more minor content details. These include the founder of the Pakistan Quaid e Azam and the national Poet Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. A little representation of the Pakistan armed forces is also present in the curriculum. But the representation of the national heroes from science, technology, education, and philanthropy is close to nothing. A similar type of bias can be seen when it comes to the representation of female heroes.

This is a serious problem with the national curriculum of Pakistan, as the importance of national heroes is not highlighted properly. Even the definition of heroes, which this curriculum will perceive, is faulty. These curriculums suggest that Pakistan has scarce national heroes, including its founder or the martyred in the wars, which are awarded the highest military award. No doubt they are people of immense importance, and the curriculum and the educational sector must pay their regard to them. But

along with that, priority must be given to other sectors like scientists, educationists, professionals, and philanthropists to create an overall positive image of Pakistani society in young minds. The stories of cultural heritage and provincial brotherhood must be highlighted to combat this atmosphere of regional animosity that some black sheep create to achieve their heinous goals. The due representation must be given to every province and community's heroes and extraordinary people to foster social cohesion and nationalism (Mun, 2014). This also creates a professional imbalance as, from a young age, students only admire and idealize certain professions. General appreciation of Pakistani students towards the armed forces is evident, but very few students reach the heights of scientific knowledge and make a significant contribution in these fields. The same trends can be seen in philosophical studies because their national contributors are never highlighted with much significance.

The discourse of nationalism constructs the 'imagined framework of the nation by dividing the arena into 'us' and 'them,' which will produce internal coherence. Nationalism targets casting off all styles of differences primarily based on inscriptive functions—ethnicity, faith, language, gender, sexuality, and social class—that divide the populace internally. This unified countrywide identity is bolstered on the subject of 'other.' We know the alternative utilizing the self, also the self by using the opposite.' National identity is, as a result, relational; it indicates loyalty and attachment to one community and casts others as outsiders. However, because nationalism is a ready distinction, the imagined community cannot be all-inclusive. Internal hierarchies based on ethnicity, gender, faith, race, and sophistication often stand up, despite the rhetoric of internal unity. However, nationalist discourses downplay internal plurality. Pakistan, as a nation, must follow the rhetoric of nationalism. As a nation, Pakistan has already lost one-half in the form of Bangladesh. There may be many political reasons for this incident, but one cannot deny that a lack of nationalism and ethnic and communal issues also played a significant role in the disintegration of East Pakistan.

## **CONCLUSION**

Pakistan has major external and internal threats to its national solidarity. The growing frustration, intolerance, lack of patience, and loss of brotherhood result from the identity crisis and social stratification. This loss of sense of brotherhood and increased social stratification causes many distorted values in the mind of students. The lack of representation of heroism from all fields of life and all provinces of Pakistan is the main cause of the lack of national values and national integration. This also creates a professional imbalance and a lack of competent people in a certain field due to its under-representation. A single national curriculum can play an immensely significant role in this domain if developed and implemented substantially. The need of the hour for curriculum development is to set aside personal biases and create a curriculum that will help in the social integration of Pakistani society. Cultural cohesion, brotherhood, nationalism, and social inclusion are the values that must be given due preference in curriculum development and implementation.

The result of the study might be considered at the policy level. The study suggests the following recommendations.

1. Incorporation of local heroes in the curriculum.
2. Incorporation of local heroes in the curriculum from all fields of life
3. Due representation of the local heroes of all the provinces in the curriculum.
4. Due importance must be given to the values of national integration and social cohesion.

These steps will surely help train young minds and develop a sense of national integration by educating them about national heroes. This will help motivate the young generations to have a burning desire to achieve great goals for themselves and society's betterment. Including national heroes from all spheres of life in the curriculum will help in motivating students to join various fields of their choice.

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