

THE SINGLE NATIONAL CURRICULUM: A PATH TO CENTRALIZED EDUCATIONAL REFORMS IN PAKISTAN

Thesis

Submitted to meet the Graduation Requirements of

Master's Degree MA in Education



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Embracing the uncharted horizons of knowledge, I venture forth with
curiosity as my compass, forever seeking to illuminate the unknown
and redefine what is possible.

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ABSTRACT

This research is set within the context of educational reform in Pakistan, specifically the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC). The SNC is a significant policy initiative aimed at standardizing education across the nation and addressing educational inequalities. This initiative represents a substantial shift towards centralization in Pakistan's education system, which significant disparities in access to quality education across different regions, urban and rural areas, and socio-economic groups have traditionally characterized. The SNC's implementation could have far-reaching implications for the country's quality and equity of education.

This study explores the challenges and indicative outcomes of implementing the SNC across different regions and schools in Pakistan. It seeks to understand how the SNC has influenced local educational systems and practices and to capture the experiences and perceptions of local communities, stakeholders, and educators regarding the SNC's impact on the quality of education and academic achievement. The study also aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the SNC and its implications by exploring the perspectives and experiences of various stakeholders, including government agencies, schools, teachers, and communities.

The research holds significant value as it addresses a policy initiative that can transform Pakistan's education. By examining the potential impacts of the SNC on educational outcomes and inequalities, this research contributes to understanding how policy initiatives like the SNC can address these issues. The findings could provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders, informing future policy decisions and practices in Pakistan. The research is significant because it can inform future policy decisions and practices in Pakistan. The findings of this research could provide valuable insights for policymakers.

The study employs a qualitative approach, guided by the need to explore and understand the complex interplay of factors that shape the experiences of individuals affected by implementing the SNC. The research design is a qualitative case study, an empirical investigation exploring a current phenomenon in its actual setting. The case study design is helpful for collecting comprehensive, in-depth insights into complicated phenomena where context is crucial. The intellectual foundation of this study is the constructivist paradigm, which is frequently associated with qualitative research.

The study reveals a wide range of viewpoints among local stakeholders and the community, representing the complexity and multidimensionality of this essential educational reform. Despite anticipation that the SNC will promote social equality, findings also point to serious concerns about the accessibility of high-quality education, particularly for pupils learning in their native tongues.

The study suggests that future research should analyze the SNC's capacity to accept linguistic variety and explore ways to ensure that students from various linguistic backgrounds can benefit equally from the curriculum. Further investigation should also concentrate on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs created per the SNC. This research hopes to advance the conversation about educational reform in Pakistan, particularly in light of the SNC, and guide future policy choices for efficient and effective implementation of the SNC.

Keywords: *Educational Reform Pakistan, Single National Curriculum, Centralization*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ICT	Islamabad Capital Territory
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EFA	Education for All
SNC	Single National Curriculum
UN	United Nations
NC	National Curriculum
AJK	Azad Jammu and Kashmir
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“In the pursuit of educational reform, we navigate the delicate balance between uniformity for equality and diversity for individuality”- Numan

In this chapter, the stage is set for discussing the Research Background and Context, providing an overview of the socio-cultural and political contexts that have shaped Pakistan's educational landscape, followed by an exploration of the 'Administrative Structure' and 'Educational Structure of Pakistan,' offering insights into the roles of various entities and the different levels of education. The chapter also outlines the 'Research Aims' and 'Research Questions' guiding the direction of this study. The 'Significance of the Study' highlights the potential contributions of this research, and finally, the 'Limitations of the Study' acknowledges the constraints and challenges encountered during the research process.

1.1 Research Background and Context

On August 14, 1947, Pakistan became an Islamic Republic state. Its original provinces are Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Baluchistan, and Sindh. There are also other federating entities, such as Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), and two regions of Kashmir that Pakistan controls: Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Pakistan's capital, Islamabad, is located in the north of the nation, close to Rawalpindi city. Urdu is the official language of the country. While in various regions of the country, different regional languages are also spoken (Ali, 2003).

Since the country's independence, efforts have been undertaken to connect the educational system to its requirements and sources of inspiration as directed by Quaid-e-

Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, in the first All-Education Conference conducted in 1947. He laid forth the fundamental principles for the future growth of education that attain spiritual attachment to history and culture, instilling the highest sense of honesty, duty, and selflessness towards the country that also supply scientific and technical expertise to strengthen economic existence (Ali, 2003). The appointment of numerous commissions that periodically filed their reports came next. In the history of educational reform, the 1959 Report of the Commission on National Education occupies an odd place. Up to 1973, numerous further commissions and policy pronouncements were also made (Ali, 2003).

The Federal Government is responsible for policy, planning, and promotion of educational institutions in the federating units, as stated in the Pakistani Constitution 1973. Education is a provincial matter unless this duty is included in the overall policymaking, coordinating, and advisory power. The Federal Ministry of Education manages the educational institutions in the federal capital territory. Despite being handled by the provincial governments of the individual provinces, the federal government only finances universities through the Higher Education Commission, the only institute run by the federal education ministry (Shah, 2003).

The Minister of Education is in charge of the Federal Ministry of Education. The Education Secretary, supported by the Joint Secretaries and Joint Educational Advisors of each arm, is the most senior civil servant in the Ministry. The Federal Ministry of Education is divided into six wings, each led by a Joint Educational Advisor. The Provincial Education Ministers are in charge of each province's education department. The Provincial Education Secretary is the official in charge of the division. For administrative purposes, the provinces are further divided into districts. Executive District Officer is a district's top education official (EDO). The Executive District

Officer (EDO) literacy oversees the literacy department, which operates Punjab and Sindh's cases. The Education Department is responsible for literacy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan provinces. The District Education Officer, Subdistrict Education Officer, Supervisors, or Assistant Sub-district Education Officers are the next in line. Learning Coordinators (LCs) oversee the schools and provide academic supervision at the local level (the union council level). Under the Devolution Plan, the administrative structure has been decentralized. At the local level, village education committees (VECs) and school management committees (SMCs) have been established in the provinces (Ali, 2003).

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan was introduced in 2019 by the Pakistani government to standardize the content and curriculum across all schools in the whole country (Government of Pakistan, 2021). The SNC was developed by a committee of experts and stakeholders and is intended to be a path to centralized educational reform in Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 2021). The SNC is designed to improve the quality of education and increase access to educational opportunities for all students in Pakistan, regardless of their location or socioeconomic status (Government of Pakistan, 2021). The curriculum covers grades 1-12 and includes mathematics, science, social studies, language, Islamic studies, and vocational and technical subjects (Government of Pakistan, 2021). The SNC is intended to be implemented in all schools in Pakistan, including public and private schools, to standardize the curriculum across the country (Government of Pakistan, 2021).

Centralization of education systems has been a common approach in many countries, aiming to improve the quality of education and increase access to educational opportunities. Here are a few comparisons between the decentralization of education in Pakistan and other countries. For instance, India has implemented a centralized

education system to standardize the curriculum and improve the quality of education across the country (Singh & Singh, 2010). The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in India is responsible for developing and implementing school curricula nationwide (Singh & Singh, 2010). Similarly, China has also implemented a centralized education system to improve the quality of education and increase access to educational opportunities (Yin, 2015). The Chinese Ministry of Education is responsible for developing and implementing school curricula nationwide (Yin, 2015). Likewise, in contrast to Pakistan and other countries with centralized education systems, the United States has a decentralized education system with significant decision-making authority and responsibility for education at the state and local levels (Chubb & Moe, 1990). This decentralized approach allows for more local control and flexibility in education but can also lead to disparities in education quality and outcomes between states and districts (Chubb & Moe, 1990).

The idea of centralizing education through the curriculum in Pakistan is similar to the approach taken by many other countries, aiming to improve the quality of education and increase access to educational opportunities for all students. However, the specific procedure for centralization can vary significantly between countries, with some countries, such as India and China, implementing more centralized systems, while others, such as the United States, have very decentralized systems (Yin, 2015). The introduction of the SNC in Pakistan represents a significant shift in the education system to standardize the curriculum and improve the quality of education for all students. The implementation of the SNC has not been without challenges, however, and it is essential to assess the impact of the policy on education quality and outcomes in the country.

Pakistan's education system has been characterized by fragmentation and inequality, with significant disparities in access to quality education across different

regions, urban and rural areas, and socio-economic groups. These disparities have been attributed to various factors, including differences in resource allocation, teacher quality, school infrastructure, and socioeconomic and cultural factors (Andrabi, Das, & Khwaja, 2008). In response to these challenges, the Pakistani government has embarked on a series of educational reforms with the SNC being a key component. Over the past decade, Pakistan has undertaken a series of comprehensive educational reforms aimed at addressing the long-standing challenges in its education system. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2017 served as a significant milestone, laying the foundation for subsequent initiatives. The NEP 2017 focused on enhancing access to quality education, promoting equity, and fostering critical thinking and creativity among students. One of the pivotal reforms that followed was the introduction of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in 2020, which standardized the curriculum for grades I to XII across all public and private schools in Pakistan. The SNC aimed to provide equal educational opportunities and improve learning outcomes for students from diverse backgrounds (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017) (Government of Pakistan, 2020).

During this period, there has been a keen emphasis on early childhood education (ECE), with the government implementing various programs to enhance ECE curricula, teacher training, and the establishment of early childhood education centers (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017). Teacher training and professional development were also prioritized to equip educators with modern teaching methodologies and effective classroom management skills (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017).

Another significant reform involved the integration of technology in education, which included providing schools with digital resources and promoting e-learning

platforms to enhance the learning experience for students (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017). To address the demand for skilled workers and reduce unemployment, there was an increased focus on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs, aimed at providing practical skills aligned with the needs of the job market (Government of Pakistan, 2020).

Gender parity and female education have been key areas of focus, and the government launched initiatives to increase female enrollment and improve the learning environment for girls (Government of Pakistan, 2020). Various education-for-all campaigns were also introduced to raise awareness about the importance of education and encourage parents to send their children to school, thereby reducing the prevalence of child labor (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017).

These reforms reflect the policymakers' commitment to tackling educational disparities and enhancing the overall learning experience for all students in Pakistan. As with any evolving educational system, ongoing efforts and further updates may have occurred beyond the scope of this summary (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017) (Government of Pakistan, 2020). The SNC aims to provide a unified, standardized curriculum for all public and private schools in the country, ensuring that all students, regardless of their location or socio-economic background, have access to the same quality of education (Government of Pakistan, 2020).

However, the implementation of the SNC has also raised several questions and concerns. These include issues related to the content and quality of the curriculum, the capacity of schools and teachers to implement the new curriculum, and the potential impact on local languages and cultures. There are also questions about how the SNC can

address the underlying socio-economic and structural factors contributing to educational inequality (Malik, 2020). This research seeks to comprehensively analyze the SNC and its implementation, drawing on various data and perspectives. The study aims to contribute to the ongoing debate about educational reform in Pakistan and provide insights that can inform future policy decisions and practices.

1.2 Administrative Structure

Evaluating how well schools are performing has become essential in education, and numerous scholars have identified the best strategies for doing so (Welsh, 1999; Botha, 2010 & Alam et al., 2021). Decentralization has become a reality in recent decades, leading many nations to give up centralizing education to achieve good performance in educational planning and implementation (Sabir et al., 2021; McGinn & Welsh, 1999). Botha (2010) also notes that during the past 30 years, there has been a rising trend toward self-management and self-governance in education, taking several forms, in various nations, including Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and some regions of the United States of America. Long-term debate is expected to focus on the effectiveness of educational decentralization and whether it can be superior to educational centralization (Lubell & Robbins 2022).

The centralization of education has been heavily criticized in many countries, which has led many to decentralize, yet many countries remain highly centralized, including China, Russia, Finland, and Singapore, although much criticism has been raised in recent years. Despite criticism, some nations perform well in centralized systems; on the other hand, numerous countries, including Pakistan, have low standards in decentralized systems, meaning quality is low (Abbas et al., 2022). The level of education in Pakistan varies widely, with significant disparities in education quality and access to educational opportunities across the country. According to the World Bank,

Pakistan has recently made significant progress in increasing access to education, with the primary school enrollment rate increasing from 72% in 2002 to 88% in 2016 (World Bank, 2021). However, there are still significant challenges facing the education system in Pakistan, including a high dropout rate, low levels of student achievement, and a lack of resources and trained teachers (Ahmed et al., 2012).

Similarly, according to the Pakistan Education Statistics report (2017), the primary level's gross enrollment ratio (GER) has increased from 72% in 2005-2006 to 92% in 2015-2016. At the secondary level, the GER has risen from 37% in 2005-2006 to 60% in 2015-2016. However, the GER for girls at both the primary and secondary levels remains lower than for boys, with a gender gap of about 10%. There are also significant disparities in education levels among different regions of Pakistan. For example, the GER at the primary level is highest in Punjab (96%), followed by Sindh (90%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (87%), and Baluchistan (78%). At the secondary level, the GER is highest in Punjab (72%), followed by Sindh (64%), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (56%), and Baluchistan (41%). During the tenure of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, Pakistan's educational system witnessed notable and transformative changes, setting his leadership apart from previous administrations. One of the key highlights of his tenure was the introduction of a new curriculum that applies uniformly to all public and private schools, a significant departure from the fragmented approach taken by previous governments (Abbas et al., 2022). This centralized curriculum aimed to create a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape across the country, ensuring that all students, regardless of their location or socioeconomic background, receive the same quality of education.

Moreover, Prime Minister Imran Khan's government demonstrated a strong commitment to tackling the deeply rooted challenges in Pakistan's education sector.

Emphasis was placed on improving teacher training and professional development, empowering educators with modern teaching methodologies and effective classroom management skills (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017). Additionally, strides were taken to integrate technology into the education system, providing schools with digital resources and promoting e-learning platforms to enhance the learning experience for students (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan, 2017).

Furthermore, Prime Minister Khan's administration recognized the urgency of addressing gender disparities in education and launched initiatives to increase female enrollment and improve the learning environment for girls (Government of Pakistan, 2020). Efforts were made to strengthen technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs, aiming to equip students with practical skills aligned with the needs of the job market (Government of Pakistan, 2020).

In comparison to previous administrations, Prime Minister Imran Khan's tenure was marked by a proactive and determined approach to reforming the education sector. By centralizing curriculum implementation and focusing on key areas such as teacher training, technology integration, and gender parity, his government demonstrated a strong commitment to enhancing the learning experience for all students in Pakistan. This wind of change signaled a new era of educational development in the country, showcasing the transformative potential of visionary leadership in the realm of education.

Following the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in 1947 and the adoption of the first Pakistani constitution in 1973, the country's provincial ministries oversaw the development of the educational system (i.e., the Ministry of Education). Decentralization was deemed provincial in the national constitution in 1973, despite

claims to the contrary. However, because there is also a federal ministry of education, changes to provincial education have occasionally been made by the federal government (Amir et al., 2020).

According to Hafeez and Fasih (2008), the provincial Ministry of Education is responsible for government education policy and administration. The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training manages all public schools in Pakistan and any private institutions affiliated with the national education board (headed by a Minister in federal and four ministers for each province). Since some schools, like foundation schools and military schools, are run by the federal government, the provincial governments of each province in Pakistan were in charge of overseeing the administration of education, including the control of the educational law, the creation of educational bills, teacher salaries, funding for school building construction, textbooks for students, the development of curriculum, and other educational requirements (Khan, 2017).

As one of the goals of this Single National Curriculum is to provide equal education opportunities at the international standard to all citizens, this study thus analyzes the dynamics of centralized educational reforms on the quality and equity in education across the country. Similarly, this study looks at how administration and leadership have changed in Pakistan's public schools in the context of SNC and Education Policy 2021. This study examines the results of centralization on the roles of teachers, subject experts, head teachers, headmasters, and principals in Pakistan based on a description of the country's educational system and highlights certain implications for the SNC. This study also evaluates and criticizes the ideal approach for advancing Pakistan's educational system and if a balance between centralization and decentralization can be as successful as in other developing countries. The question of

which regions should be more efficiently consolidated and which ones should stay decentralized is also a major topic of discussion in this study.

1.3 Educational Structure of Pakistan

The educational structure of Pakistan consists of five levels: primary, middle, secondary, higher secondary, and higher education (Pakistan Education Statistics, 2017). Primary education in Pakistan is provided at the elementary level, which includes grades 1-5. This level of education is compulsory for all children between the ages of 5 and 9 (Ministry of Education, Pakistan, n.d.). Similarly, Middle education in Pakistan is provided at the middle school level, which includes grades 6-8. This level of education is not compulsory but generally required for admission to secondary school (Ministry of Education, Pakistan, n.d.). Secondary education in Pakistan is provided at the high school level, which includes grades 9-10. This level of education is compulsory for all children between 14 and 16 years of age (Ministry of Education, Pakistan, n.d.). Likewise, Higher secondary education in Pakistan is provided at the intermediate level, which includes grades 11-12. This level of education is not compulsory but generally required for admission to higher education (Ministry of Education, Pakistan, n.d.). Higher education in Pakistan is provided at universities and tertiary institutions. It includes programs at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels (Higher Education Commission, Pakistan, n.d.).

One of the major challenges facing the education system in Pakistan is the high level of inequality in access to education. According to the World Bank, there are significant disparities in education quality and outcomes based on socioeconomic status, with students from poorer households and rural areas often experiencing lower levels of education quality and outcomes than their urban and wealthier counterparts (World Bank, 2021). Additionally, there are disparities in education access and outcomes based

on gender, with girls in Pakistan facing several barriers to education, including cultural and social norms, lack of access to schools, and limited resources (UNESCO, 2021). While there have been some improvements in the education system in Pakistan in recent years, significant challenges remain to improve education quality and increase access to educational opportunities for all students.

1.4 Research Aims

This qualitative study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of the Single National Curriculum on the quality of education and academic achievement in Pakistan through exploring the experiences and perceptions of local communities, stakeholders, and educators. The study focuses on the following research aims:

- To reveal the challenges of implementing the Single National Curriculum in different regions and schools in Pakistan.
- To uncover the indicative positive outcomes of implementing the Single National Curriculum in different regions and schools in Pakistan.
- To generate perceptions of local communities, stakeholders, and educators regarding the indicative influence of the Single National Curriculum on the quality of education and academic achievement in Pakistan.

1.5 Research Questions

The improvement of educational quality, the provision of equal education to all citizens free from provincial and sectarian jealousies, and the alignment of public and private institutions through the SNC appear to be the long-term goals of the current education reform in Pakistan. Therefore, the study set out to analyze the implementation of SNC and the educational policy 2021. To determine whether provincial governments and schools are fully capable and prepared to implement the Single National Curriculum without any controversies and to learn how this curriculum can make a difference in

providing the same quality of education across the country, the researcher intended to provide an answer to following questions through this study.

1. What are the challenges of implementing the Single National Curriculum in different regions and schools in Pakistan?
2. What are the indicative positive outcomes of implementing the Single National Curriculum in different regions and schools in Pakistan?
3. How do local communities, stakeholders, and educators perceive the indicative influence of the Single National Curriculum on the quality of education and academic achievement in Pakistan?

1.6 Significance of Study

The significance of this research lies in its potential contribution to the understanding of educational reform in Pakistan, specifically the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC). The SNC is a major policy initiative to standardize education nationwide and reduce educational inequalities. However, the SNC implementation raises several important questions and challenges, which this research aims to explore.

Firstly, this research is significant because it addresses a major policy initiative that can potentially transform education in Pakistan. The SNC represents a significant shift towards centralization in Pakistan's education system, and its implementation could have far-reaching implications for the country's quality and equity of education. By examining the implementation of the SNC, this research can provide valuable insights into the processes and challenges involved in educational reform in Pakistan.

Secondly, this research is significant because it focuses on a topic of critical importance to the future of education in Pakistan. Educational inequality is a major issue in Pakistan, with significant disparities in access to quality education between different regions, urban and rural areas, and socio-economic groups. By examining the potential

impacts of the SNC on educational outcomes and inequalities, this research can contribute to understanding how policy initiatives like the SNC can address these issues.

Thirdly, this research is significant because it adopts a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to understanding the SNC and its implementation. By exploring the perspectives and experiences of various stakeholders, including government agencies, schools, teachers, and communities, this research can provide a nuanced understanding of the SNC and its implications.

Finally, this research is significant because it can inform future policy decisions and practices in Pakistan. The findings of this research could provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders involved in educational reform in Pakistan. By identifying the factors that influence the effectiveness of the SNC, this research could help to inform strategies for improving the implementation of the SNC and other similar policy initiatives in the future. In a nutshell, this research is significant because it addresses a major policy initiative in Pakistan, focuses on a critical issue in Pakistani education, adopts a comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach, and has the potential to inform future policy decisions and practices.

1.7 Limitations of Study

In this investigation, the researcher monitors Pakistani public schools, particularly middle and high schools, during the SNC's implementation and interviews teachers, school administrators, and even representatives of local education management. The study's conclusions cannot be generalized because it employs a qualitative approach and is based on a current policy that is still not implemented. A context of a Single National Curriculum is provided to help readers comprehend the study's context. Similarly, a language barrier may restrict the study because the original writings on some of the documents were done in Urdu, the national language of Pakistan, which has not yet been

translated into English. The quotations shown here may have also been translated from Urdu into English.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter delves into the literature review and theoretical framework. It explores education reforms, the concept of a national curriculum, centralized curriculum models, and debates surrounding the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Overview of Education Reforms

The ongoing goal of enhancing educational outcomes and educating individuals for an ever-more-complex world has propelled educational reform initiatives across the globe. Education has undergone several changes and developments due to societal demands, technological advancements, and altered economic structures. Since the turn of the 21st century, teaching techniques have emphasized the 4Cs: critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). These skills are crucial for student education in a world that is becoming increasingly networked and digital. The curriculum was revised to highlight these talents by abandoning traditional methods of instruction and memorization. Several nations enacted school reforms in response to this movement. Education increasingly emphasizes equity and diversity, which is another noteworthy development. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Education for All (EFA) efforts of the United Nations stress inclusion and equity in excellent education for all (United Nations, 2015). As a result of this global objective, several governments have opened up their education systems and reduced physical, social, and financial barriers to education.

Evidence-based practices and policies have been a prominent component of education changes in recent years. Educators and officials utilize research and statistics

to inform choices more regularly (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2015). As a result of these changes, many educational institutions now employ evaluation and assessment frameworks, such as standardized testing, to monitor and improve student learning. In addition, the current COVID-19 epidemic, which necessitated remote learning, has increased interest in EdTech, often known as education technology. Digital literacy and technology are now widely used in classrooms and for student learning at many educational institutions (Selwyn, 2011). Educators have also prioritized decentralizing educational systems, making them more successful and responsive to local needs (Hanushek, Link & Woessmann, 2013). Some nations have adopted more centralized approaches, such as Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC), which will be discussed in further detail in the next sections of this literature review. These educational changes and trends demonstrate how education is always evolving to fulfill the needs and desires of society. They highlight the difficulties of education reform, the necessity for a balance between national and international interests, and the pursuit of equity and excellence in education.

2.1.2 Concept of a National Curriculum

The National Curriculum isn't always a novel idea, and it's been the focal point of training policy discussions worldwide. In step with Cox's (1987) definition, a national curriculum is hard and fast of essential requirements or directives that outline what students at various ranges have to understand and be capable of achieving. Even as countrywide curricula vary notably in their precise structure and content material, they regularly encompass a country's educational goals and produce a common imagination and prescient for educating its kids. The countrywide curriculum has a large role in schooling, similarly to serving different vital duties. In societies with big nearby inequalities in schooling, they're critical for guaranteeing equity and uniformity (Bray,

1999). In addition, they provide a uniform framework for reading and comparing academic development, which facilitates monitoring outcomes. Similarly, the national curriculum can play a good position in fostering social cohesion by encouraging students from numerous backgrounds to share data and interact in effective talk (Alexander, 2008).

Despite these potential advantages, however, the concept of a national curriculum has been questioned. Some argue that because a national curriculum dictates what should be taught and how it should be taught, it may restrict the creativity and independence of instructors, resulting in a one-size-fits-all approach that disregards the diverse situations and needs of learners (Stenhouse, 1975). In addition, because national curricula usually reflect the views and ideologies of those in power, there have been concerns that they may be used for political indoctrination (Apple, 1993). Implementing a national curriculum requires significant resources and knowledge, which can be challenging in many contexts (Oates, 2011).

Similarly, despite criticism, some nations have elected to incorporate national curricula into their educational systems, including centralized methods such as Pakistan's National Curriculum, which will be discussed in the following sections. When considering whether to implement a national curriculum, the potential advantages of standardization, equity, and social cohesion must frequently be weighed against the potential downsides of reduced teacher autonomy and diversity in teaching and learning. This literature review will investigate this equilibrium's significance to contemporary educational reforms.

2.1.3 Centralized Curriculum Models

The concept of centralized curricular models, in which decisions regarding education and its content are primarily made at the national level, has gained worldwide favor in

recent decades. These methods are characterized by standardization in education, ensuring that all students, regardless of location or socioeconomic background, have access to a comparable level of education (Bishop, 1997). The contributions of renowned theorists such as Ralph Tyler, Michael Apple, Rondinelli, and Cheema have substantially enhanced our understanding of these models and their implications. "Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction," Tyler published in 1949, provides a valuable framework for examining centralized curriculum models. According to Tyler, a well-structured curriculum should contain educational objectives defined by national authorities in centralized models (Tyler, 1949).

In countries such as France, Japan, and Singapore, centralized curriculum approaches have been employed for decades with different results (Wang, 2001), either in effectiveness, national unity, and social cohesion. Singapore's high-performing educational system is effective with a centralized educational system (OECD, 2019). Moreover, centralized curriculum models might provide a chance to incorporate national ethos, ideas, and aspirations into the education system, bolstering the feeling of national identity worldwide (Yao, 2005). Nations such as Japan use a national curriculum to build social cohesion and shared values among their diverse people (Schoppa, 1991). However, in a centralized setting, Tyler's model may restrict instructors' ability to adapt the curriculum to local conditions and students' individual needs (Priestley & Humes, 2010).

Rondinelli and Cheema's work on centralization and decentralization argues that while centralized institutions may increase standards, they may fail to consider regional contexts and desires (Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983). "Ideology and Curriculum" (1979) by Michael Apple offers an alternative perspective on centralized curriculum systems. Education and its courses, according to Apple, can facilitate hegemony and cultural

reproduction. A national curriculum risks being utilized to further a political or ideological agenda across the nation under these circumstances (Apple, 1979). Historical occurrences such as the politicization of the curriculum in China during the Cultural Revolution highlight this danger (Law, 2004). Centralized curricular models provide numerous advantages, such as standardization and common values, but also disadvantages. There may be restrictions on teachers' freedom of activity, neglect of regional educational needs, and political influence. A balance between national coherence and local flexibility must be established when adopting such models.

2.1.4 Decentralization and Centralization in Education

Centralization and decentralization theories have garnered significant attention in educational policy and administration. Decentralization distributes power at a system's local or lower level, whereas power is centralized at the national or higher level (Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983). Each educational theory has its proponents and detractors, as well as its benefits and drawbacks that might impact the effectiveness of an educational system. Standardization and regulation of education quality are the primary sources of centralization in educational administration (Oates, 1972). It may diminish regional variations in educational quality by standardizing educational policies and practices at the national level (Bishop, 1997).

Through centralization, national educational objectives and strategies can be developed in a clear and unified manner, facilitating their execution (OECD, 2012). For example, countries with highly centralized educational systems, such as Singapore and Finland, typically rank highly in global education rankings (OECD, 2019). Opponents of centralization, however, argue that it may inhibit local innovation and adaptation (Hargreaves, 2009). By limiting decision-making authority to the national level, centralization may limit the capacity of local educators to adjust the curriculum and

instructional practices to match the unique needs of their students (Priestley & Humes, 2010). Moreover, centralization may result in a "one-size-fits-all" strategy that disregards regional, linguistic, or cultural diversity (OECD, 2012).

In contrast, decentralization permits delegating decision-making authority to lower levels, such as regional, district, or school (Rondinelli & Cheema, 1983). This authority could result in a more responsive and flexible education system for local situations (Fiske, 1996). In the United States, for example, school districts have significant control over their curricula, allowing schools to design learning experiences that are more relevant to their local communities (Han, 2018). Such freedom in learning decisions could raise students' interest and relevance, improving learning outcomes (Hanushek et al., 2013). Critics of decentralization argue that this could lead to unequal educational opportunities between regions or schools, frequently aggravating preexisting social and economic disparities (Hanushek et al., 2013).

Decentralization may permit the replication of regional prejudices or biases in the educational system if there are insufficient checks and balances, which would contradict the greater goals of educational equity (Apple, 1979). In education, both centralization and decentralization offer significant advantages and disadvantages. Choosing between these models frequently requires a delicate balancing act, considering factors such as the sociopolitical climate of the nation, educational goals, and the skills of various levels of the education system. Using the theories of Rondinelli, Cheema, Tyler, and Apple, it is necessary to analyze these intricate dynamics in order to make justifiable conclusions regarding educational policy and administration.

2.1.5 Single National Curriculum: Global Perspectives

As in the earlier discussions, it has been stated that the idea of a Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been used and studied in many situations outside of Pakistan.

The adoption of an SNC reflects the larger tendency toward centralization in education, which aims to provide a standardized and unified method of instruction (Bishop, 1997). Students should have fair access to high-quality education, regardless of location or socioeconomic status, and that is frequently the driving force behind implementing SNC. In line with the nation's educational priorities, it aims to provide pupils with a consistent, superior education (OECD, 2012). For instance, nations with centralized curricula, like Singapore, Japan, and Finland, frequently rank highly in international education examinations (OECD, 2019). These nations have balanced local autonomy and centralization by adjusting their SNCs to the unique socio-cultural settings of their respective nations. For instance, the national curriculum in Finland acts as a broad framework outlining the core ideas of education, the goals for various topics, and transversal competencies. Local education providers, however, have the freedom to modify the national standards to fit their unique circumstances, thereby delivering a well-balanced blend of centralization and decentralization (Halinen, 2018).

In contrast, England's National Curriculum (NC) is more prescriptive and specifies the material that must be taught in each topic. The NC was established in the late 1980s to boost academic standards and maintain uniformity among institutions. It has, however, drawn criticism for its top-down method and lack of adaptability, which can restrict teachers' independence and creativity (Priestley & Humes, 2010). Equity in education may be affected by the deployment of an SNC. On the one hand, an SNC offers a uniform standard by which all students are taught and evaluated, potentially reducing differences in educational quality between areas and schools (OECD, 2012).

On the other hand, an overly centralized curriculum might overlook regional educational needs and diversity, resulting in some pupils becoming disengaged and achieving lower academic results (Apple, 1979). However, an SNC's success frequently depends on the

strength and resources of the larger educational system. A lack of local resources and capacity may prevent an SNC from being implemented successfully, potentially resulting in increased rather than decreased educational disparities (Hanushek et al., 2013). The idea of a single national curriculum is a complicated and diverse topic with various ramifications for educational quality and equity. When designing and putting into practice an SNC, it is essential to take a careful and context-sensitive approach, as demonstrated by the experiences of several nations. The ideas of Tyler, Apple, Rondinelli, and Cheema give a valuable framework for understanding these complexities and their implications; hence the debate is conducted through the lens of these theories in the previous and upcoming discussions.

2.1.6 Single National Curriculum in Pakistan: A Historical Overview

Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) requires a thorough knowledge of history for comprehension. The origins of Pakistan's curriculum creation and changes may be traced back to the country's early years of independence when it battled to establish an educational system that would aid in forging a new nation (Rahman, 2004). In the 1970s, under the administration of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, all public schools adopted a uniform curriculum as part of the nationalization of educational institutions. Standardized procedures and a sense of national identity drove this development (Manzoor, 1993). However, these reforms were criticized for their perceived strong political and ideological bias and lack of emphasis on innovation and critical thinking (Rahman, 2004).

Pakistan has experienced several significant changes in its curriculum over the years. These reforms reflect the nation's ongoing efforts to address the challenges and needs of its education system. One of the notable instances occurred during the 1980s under the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, where the curriculum was rewritten to

emphasize Islamic themes, resulting in an ideological bias that was deemed less relevant to the nation's economic and social reality (Ali et al., 1996). Subsequently, in the early 2000s, during President Musharraf's administration, the government took steps to enhance the quality, applicability, and accessibility of the curriculum. As part of this initiative, the "Curriculum 2002" and "Curriculum 2006" were introduced as initial measures toward decentralization (Malik, 2007). However, despite these efforts, challenges such as a lack of financing, inadequate teacher preparation, and insufficient political commitment impeded the smooth implementation of these reforms (Rizvi & Elliot, 2007). In more recent times, a major educational reform known as the Single National Curriculum (SNC) was introduced in 2020. The SNC aimed to provide a unified, standardized curriculum for grades I to XII in all public and private schools across Pakistan (Government of Pakistan, 2020). These significant curriculum changes demonstrate Pakistan's commitment to continually evolve its education system to better cater to the needs of its diverse student population and the changing demands of the modern world.

Moreover, "Curriculum 2006" emphasized student-centered learning, critical thinking, and life skills. In addition, a minimal learning capability was introduced, and the significance of learning assessment was highlighted (Government of Pakistan, 2006). As with past changes, implementing this curriculum was highly challenging due to factors such as inadequate teacher preparation and a lack of resources. Taking a step back from a more decentralized approach, the SNC chose a more centralized one to ensure uniform educational quality throughout all regions, regardless of socioeconomic position. Pakistan seeks to eliminate success inequalities between different types of schools (public, private, and religious) and to align its educational system with global standards as part of the SNC, established in 2019. (Government of Pakistan, 2020).

The history of curriculum development in Pakistan has been marked by an ongoing conflict between ideology and practical relevance, as evidenced by the fact that one government centralized it while the other decentralized it and the process is ongoing, reflecting the country's complex sociopolitical dynamics. With its lofty objectives, the SNC is the most recent effort to resolve these conflicts. As Tyler, Apple, Rondinelli, and Cheema's proposal reveal, the success of the SNC would likely depend not only on the design of the curriculum but also on its implementation within the larger educational system and Pakistani sociopolitical climate, as was previously discussed in the debates.

2.1.7 Analysis of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is a bold attempt in Pakistan's modern educational environment. It was introduced in 2019 to establish a more uniform and equal educational system throughout the nation and bridge the gap between public, private, and religious institutions of learning (Government of Pakistan, 2020). The SNC uses a competency-based approach, emphasizing important subjects such as languages, math, general knowledge, ethics, and religious studies (for Islamic and non-Islamic faiths). The framework for each subject lists the learning standards, relevant competencies, and grade-level benchmarks. The curriculum emphasizes establishing fundamental values, such as respect for diversity, social responsibility, and democratic citizenship, to foster cognitive growth, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities (Government of Pakistan, 2020).

In terms of politics, the SNC was created in light of Pakistan's dedication to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 4, which aims to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for everyone" (United Nations, 2015). The SNC demonstrates the aim of the national

government to harmonize educational standards and lessen inequalities between regions and socioeconomic categories, a crucial issue in a nation with high levels of inequality (World Bank, 2018).

When it comes to social justice, the SNC is viewed as a step-in in the bridging of Pakistan's entrenched class division in education, as children from wealthy households often attend English-medium private schools while those from lower-income backgrounds attend Urdu-medium public or religious schools (Andrabi et al., 2008). The SNC tries to reduce linguistic disadvantages and enhance learning outcomes by advocating a uniform teaching medium in the early years (the mother tongue or regional language) (Government of Pakistan, 2020). Pakistan's continual battle to define its national identity is culturally reflected in the SNC. There have been discussions about how to balance religious and secular education because Islamic Studies is now a required subject, and secondary-level courses like Sociology and Mass Communication are not included (Dawn, 2020). The SNC is criticized for failing to effectively prepare pupils for life in the modern, globalized world and for risking the reinforcement of religious bias (Malik & Mirza, 2020).

However, many obstacles are in the way of the SNC's implementation. According to Tyler's model, the SNC's success from the standpoint of the curriculum will depend on how well its lofty objectives are translated into efficient learning opportunities and how well student learning is evaluated. Given the enormous disparity in teacher quality and preparation across the nation, the ability of teachers to deliver the new curriculum is a serious worry (Warwick & Reimers, 2015).

Furthermore, the SNC may encounter opposition from a social standpoint because of its centralizing tendencies, as Apple, Rondinelli, and Cheema's views suggested. Private and religious schools may object to the SNC's implied

standardization because they are accustomed to having a great deal of autonomy in their curriculum. The SNC may also be seen as a violation of the constitutional authority of provincial governments to oversee education (Dawn, 2020). The SNC is a fundamental reform of Pakistan's educational system with serious implications for the nation's future. Its structure and declared objectives align with current educational theories and global norms. However, overcoming significant obstacles—including teacher competence, balancing centralization and local autonomy, and controlling the sociopolitical complexities inherent in such a sweeping reform—is essential to its successful implementation.

2.1.8 Criticisms and Debates Surrounding the SNC

Significant discussions and objections have been sparked by Pakistan's introduction of the Single National Curriculum (SNC), particularly among academics, educators, and policymakers. Rondinelli and Cheema's warning about the potential negative effects of centralization in education is echoed in one significant criticism of the SNC's tendency toward centralization. Critics contend that the SNC risks compromising the independence of local governments and schools by enforcing a uniform curriculum across the country (Malik & Mirza, 2020). Private schools, which have had a great deal of discretion in curriculum design and execution, have raised worries about the possibility of losing their academic autonomy and their capacity to meet the requirements of a wide range of students (The News, 2020). Provinces with distinctive cultural identities and educational priorities, like Sindh and Baluchistan, have also demonstrated opposition, seeing the SNC as an intrusion on their constitutional rights to control education (Dawn, 2020). The debate has also been had on the SNC's teaching method and content. Given Pakistan's current teacher training and classroom conditions, critics of the SNC's competency-based approach have raised doubts about its viability

(Nayyar & Salim, 2020). Tyler's curriculum design model emphasizes the value of successful learning experiences and evaluation, which presents a substantial issue in the Pakistani setting since teachers are frequently underprepared or under-supported to offer such a curriculum (Warwick & Reimers, 2015).

Concerns have also been made about the focus on Islamic Studies and the usage of Urdu as the major language of instruction. Some opponents say this portrays a constrictive and homogenizing perspective of Pakistani identity and may marginalize religious and linguistic diversity (Malik & Mirza, 2020). Additionally, emphasizing Urdu could put pupils at a disadvantage in the global job market, where English ability is frequently a crucial necessity (The Nation, 2020). The SNC's implementation plan has additionally come under fire for its top-down methodology and lack of stakeholder involvement. The SNC appears to be an example of how, in Apple's theory, educational reforms can reflect and strengthen societal power dynamics. Critics claim that the SNC's development process lacked openness and inadequately involved educators, parents, and other stakeholders (Dawn, 2020). They contend this may restrict the SNC's acceptance and efficacy locally (Malik & Mirza, 2020). Despite being a bold attempt to modernize Pakistan's educational system, the SNC has drawn a lot of criticism and discussion. These center on its centralized tendencies, pedagogical and content approach, and implementation plan. To ensure the SNC is implemented effectively and in line with the various requirements and situations of Pakistani students, officials must consider these complaints and participate in candid discussions with many stakeholders.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The basic principles of curriculum and instruction by Ralph Tyler (1949), ideology and curriculum by Michael Apple (1979), and Rondinelli and Cheema's idea of centralization and decentralization (1983) make up the theoretical framework for this

study. This robust and diverse theoretical framework enables a thorough analysis of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan, both from an instructional and ideological standpoint, while considering the major administrative change associated with its implementation. Michael Apple's theory, which examines the ideological implications of curricula, and Ralph Tyler's model, which focuses on the fundamental concepts of curriculum construction, play a vital part in assessing the SNC's design and sociopolitical consequences. According to Tyler's model, a curriculum should have specified educational objectives, relevant learning experiences based on these objectives, an efficient organization of these experiences, and the evaluation of these objectives, which emerged in the middle of the 20th century. The late 1970s theory by Apple emphasizes the link between social ideology, power dynamics, and the educational curriculum and contends that curricula frequently reflect a society's hegemonic inclinations.

In addition to these models, the idea of centralization and decentralization, first put forth by Rondinelli and Cheema in the early 1980s, offers a crucial lens for analyzing the administrative facets of the SNC. They postulated that while centralization, as seen in the SNC, can result in advances in standards and quality at the national level, decentralization can foster local accountability and stakeholder participation. Applying Tyler's model to the SNC enables a comprehensive assessment of the curriculum's design and execution, ensuring that the objectives are precisely stated, pertinent learning experiences are found, are efficiently structured, and are properly evaluated. Parallel to this, Apple's theory offers a sociopolitical prism to view how the SNC might replicate or contradict dominant ideas and power structures in the Pakistani setting. The notion of centralization and decentralization also allows for a

detailed analysis of how the SNC, as a centralized reform, might result in national standardization while also perhaps omitting regional educational demands.

The chosen theoretical framework integrates components of curriculum design, ideological consequences, and administrative changes, but other theories like critical pedagogy or social constructivism may provide alternate viewpoints. This structure permits a more thorough examination of the SNC and closely adheres to the study's goals. Despite these theories' thoroughness, it's important to recognize any potential shortcomings. Tyler's model, according to critics, may oversimplify the complex processes involved in curriculum development and learning. Similarly, Apple's idea might emphasize education's political dimensions too much, thus overshadowing other important variables.

Furthermore, the centralization and decentralization theories could simplify complex educational system dynamics into a binary framework, omitting subtle differences between centralized and decentralized systems. However, the confluence of these theories creates a strong and thorough framework for my investigation, somewhat minimizing individual weaknesses. This study seeks to provide a nuanced perspective of the SNC by examining it through these lenses, considering its instructional design, ideological ramifications, and the systemic change it symbolizes in Pakistan's educational system. This theoretical framework provides the study with a crucial road map, supporting the investigation of the SNC and adding to the understanding of this important educational reform.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter systematically outlines the qualitative approach, research design, data collection methods, and analysis procedures. It also discusses the researcher's positionality, ethical considerations, and the time and place of the study.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

3.1.1 Qualitative Approach

In the landscape of scientific research, the choice of methodology depends significantly on the nature of the research question and the study's objectives. The current research study employs a qualitative approach, guided by the need to explore and understand the complex interplay of factors that shape the experiences of individuals affected by implementing the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan. This decision aligns with the perspective of Denzin and Lincoln (2011), who define qualitative research as an umbrella term encompassing an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world.

Qualitative research, as an investigative methodology, emphasizes words rather than quantification in data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2013). Unlike a quantitative approach, which might distill human behavior to a set of variables, the qualitative methodology focuses on understanding social phenomena from the participants' perspective, their lived experiences, and the context of these experiences (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research thrives in the intricacy and depth of these contextualized human experiences, helping the researcher uncover the richness of subjective human experiences.

The qualitative methodology used in this study makes it possible to thoroughly explore participants' experiences, views, and interpretations of how the Single National Curriculum has been implemented. It does so by focusing on the participants' words, narratives, and meanings, which helps the researcher understand how these individuals make sense of their experiences within the broader socio-educational context (Patton, 2002). Through this qualitative approach, the study aims to reveal the complexities of this issue in a way that would be less easily accessible through a quantitative research approach.

3.1.2 Research Orientation or Paradigm

This study's intellectual foundation is the constructivist paradigm, frequently connected to qualitative research. According to the study paradigm constructivism, people have varied perspectives on reality depending on their social settings and personal experiences (Crotty, 1998). This study, which tries to explore the many realities and experiences of individuals impacted by these reforms and is focused on understanding the dynamics and experiences of stakeholders in the context of centralized educational reforms in Pakistan, is in line with this paradigm for several reasons. First, it highlights the significance of how subjectively people see and interpret the world, reflecting how stakeholders' experiences and views of the backdrop of educational reforms are also subjective (Lincoln et al., 2011). By capturing and respecting these various experiences and views, the constructivist paradigm enables the study to produce a rich and complex knowledge of the investigated phenomenon. Second, the constructivist paradigm promotes the researcher's active participation in knowledge formation and is consistent with the study's methodology, which calls for the researcher to actively engage with the data gathered via the Google Form, analyze the responses, and make sense of them in the study context (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The

constructivist paradigm also acknowledges the possibility of social world change (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

In the context of this study, it makes it easier to examine how stakeholders' experiences and perceptions of the Single National Curriculum's implementation in Pakistan have changed and become more dynamic. The constructivist paradigm supports this study and influences its qualitative methodology. It also establishes the conceptual foundation for comprehending the many realities and experiences of individuals impacted by the educational changes in Pakistan, recognizes the researcher's active participation in interpreting the data, and admits the possibility of social change.

3.1.3 Research Design

A qualitative case study design was used in this investigation. According to Yin (2014), a case study is an empirical investigation that explores a current phenomenon in its actual setting, particularly when the distinctions between phenomenon and setting are not immediately apparent. The Single National Curriculum's implementation and effects across Pakistan's various regional and educational contexts are of interest in this study, as this topic lends itself well to a case study methodology. A case study design is helpful for collecting comprehensive, in-depth insights into complicated phenomena where context is crucial. It helps the researcher to investigate the topic under consideration from various angles, relying on numerous data sources for a more thorough understanding (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher in this study explored the complexities of educational reform implementation across multiple settings and uncovered the numerous aspects impacting its impact by employing a case study design.

Additionally, a qualitative case study is naturally adaptable, allowing for the use of various data collection techniques following the objectives and setting of the study (Stake, 1995). This adaptability is useful in the current study because it involved remote

data collection using a Google Form due to the researcher's geographical restrictions. A case study approach furthers the constructivist bent of the investigation. In accordance with the constructivist theory that knowledge and reality are created and interpreted by individuals, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) claim that case studies are particularly effective in studies where the researcher seeks to uncover the meanings individuals or groups ascribe to a social problem. The implementation and effects of the Single National Curriculum across Pakistan's diverse areas and schools are provided in-depth, nuanced understanding via a qualitative case study approach, ideally matched to this study's research goals. This design accommodates the researcher's method of data collecting and is consistent with the qualitative methodology and constructivist direction of the research.

3.2 Justification for Qualitative Research

The necessity of a qualitative approach in the present study arises from the focus of the research itself - to explore the complex dynamics, experiences, and perceptions of individuals and groups affected by the centralized educational reforms in Pakistan, particularly the implementation of the Single National Curriculum. Qualitative research, in its essence, is a suitable means to unearth the complex fabric of subjective experiences and interpretations that are critical to understanding this phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

For this study, a qualitative method is recommended for several reasons. First, qualitative research, as Stake (2010) points out, is especially good at capturing people's lived experiences, the meanings they attach to those experiences, and the social context in which those experiences occur. The qualitative method provides a detailed understanding of how these changes are experienced and perceived by the various parties participating in Pakistan's educational reforms.

Second, by its very nature, educational research frequently examines complicated phenomena that cannot be distilled into straightforward numerical information or isolated variables. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) argue that a thorough grasp of the complexity and breadth of the human experience is more important for comprehending the social environment than merely measuring variables. Using a qualitative approach in this study enables a thorough investigation of the complicated dynamics of the Single National Curriculum's implementation and its effects on many stakeholders.

Third, a qualitative method promotes an iterative, responsive, and adaptable research process that enables the researcher to modify the research design in response to newly discovered information which is crucial for the current study since the environment around Pakistan's educational reforms is dynamic and ever-changing (Charmaz, 2014). The necessity to comprehend the complex dynamics essential to implementing the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan justifies the decision to use a qualitative approach in this study. It offers the instruments required to capture this phenomena's rich, intricate, and nuanced nature, making it feasible to produce insightful data that may guide practice and policy.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Interviews & Types of Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used extensively in the data-gathering process for this study. According to Gray (2013), semi-structured interviews are a versatile strategy that offers breadth, specificity, and personal viewpoints while enabling enough control and concentration to answer the research issues. They provide a defined set of parameters for questions and allow for exploring unexpected and developing subjects, combining the advantages of structured and unstructured interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

The semi-structured interview format was chosen because it can elicit in-depth and detailed responses about individual experiences, attitudes, and feelings. These responses are crucial for comprehending the complexities and subjective experiences of the Single National Curriculum's implementation and impact in Pakistan. It provided the opportunity for open-ended, probing inquiries, allowing the participants to freely share their experiences and opinions and resulting in a comprehensive, in-depth grasp of the subject (Longhurst, 2003).

Additionally, because of geographical limitations, Google Forms was used to conduct the interviews. The researcher first approached the participants either through phone calls or text messages. When the participant agreed, they were then given the link to Google Forms to answer the questions. Face-to-face interviews are frequently the preferred approach for qualitative research; however, when researchers and participants are geographically scattered, remote methods like online questionnaires can be a useful substitute (Jowett et al., 2021). The researcher spoke with participants while being geographically separated by using Google Forms to conduct interviews with them in various Pakistani regions and educational institutions. Selecting semi-structured interviews using Google Forms was a practical and successful choice that enabled a thorough exploration of the research issue, meeting both the study's goals and logistical limitations.

3.3.2 Selection of Interviewees

The participants in this study were carefully chosen based on their direct engagement with and experiences with the Single National Curriculum's implementation in Pakistan. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research frequently concentrates on relatively small samples that are carefully chosen to allow for in-depth analysis and investigation of a phenomenon.

In the study, data was collected from four distinct groups of participants: parents, teachers, policymakers, and school administrators. The data was gathered from 5 individuals for each group, with participants represented as A, B, C, D, and E for parents, teachers, policymakers, and school administrators.

The study had a total of five participants from each group, making a diverse sample with a total of twenty individuals representing parents, teachers, policymakers, and school administrators. The diversity in the sample allows the study to gather a wide range of viewpoints on the research issues, contributing to the richness and depth of the findings. These groups were chosen because they play key roles in the Single National Curriculum's implementation and have firsthand knowledge of its difficulties, accomplishments, and impact on regional educational systems and practices (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

The data collection instruments, which consist of interview questions tailored to each participant category, are available in the appendix section of this study. The interviews were designed to be consistent with the research questions and aimed to provide comprehensive information to gain in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon under study. In order to reflect the main goals of qualitative research, these questions were designed to elicit descriptive data on participants' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of the Single National Curriculum implementation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). In order to ensure that the study's focus was on collecting in-depth insights into the research issue from multiple viewpoints, the selection of participants and the design of the interview questions were based on the concepts of purposive sampling and qualitative inquiry.

3.3.3 Interview Process and Ethical Considerations

The research interviewing procedure was meticulously planned to ensure reliable data collection while upholding the ethical standards necessary for qualitative research. The semi-structured style allowed for facilitated talks that kept the discussion on the research goals while allowing participants to share their opinions (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The geographical restrictions on face-to-face interviews were handled using Google Forms as an interview platform. The anonymity feature of Google Forms may have prompted participants to comment more honestly (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Similarly, in order to protect data security and participant confidentiality with any technique of online data gathering, stringent measures were implemented.

The term "interview" was chosen over "questionnaire" as the data collection method for this study due to the qualitative nature of the research. Qualitative research aims to explore and understand complex phenomena in-depth, seeking rich and detailed insights from participants. Interviews provide a direct and interactive means of engaging with participants, allowing for open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their thoughts, experiences, and perspectives freely. This approach enables the researcher to delve deeply into participants' responses, capturing nuanced details and contextual information. In contrast, questionnaires, commonly used in quantitative research, consist of structured, closed-ended questions with fixed response options, which may limit the depth and richness of the data. By opting for interviews, the study seeks to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research issues by eliciting candid and elaborate responses from the participants, aligning with the qualitative nature of the research endeavor.

All participants gave informed consent after being informed of the study's goals, their voluntary involvement, how the data would be used and stored, and the precautions taken to protect their identity (Bryman, 2016). It was clear to participants that they could

leave the study at any time without suffering consequences, which aligns with the principles of respect for persons and voluntary participation as outlined in the Belmont Report (National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, 1979).

3.4 Research Subjects and Instruments

3.4.1 Description of Participant Criteria

The participants' experience with the Single National Curriculum's implementation in Pakistan was a key factor in the selection criteria for research participants. It was crucial to select participants who have been deeply involved in or affected by this process because this study aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of those affected by this educational reform (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The teachers and school administrators chosen as participants had a direct hand in putting the Single National Curriculum into practice. They were instrumental in making the policy a reality in their different classrooms and schools; thus, their perspectives and experiences were pertinent to our study (Patton, 2015). These professionals were chosen based on their position in the school, length of service, and familiarity with the new curriculum.

Parents were chosen based on whether or not their kids attend a school that has adopted the Single National Curriculum. Parents' opinions on the new curriculum and its effects on their children's education are crucial since they have a critical stake in their children's education and are frequently seen as their children's first teachers (Mackenzie et al., 2021).

Based on their familiarity with the Single National Curriculum, students were chosen. Understanding how the curricular changes have affected the learning experiences and results of the students is crucial (Lodico et al., 2010). The notion of deliberate sampling served as the basis for participant selection. Participants were

chosen based on their involvement and direct experience with the topic under study, guaranteeing that the data gathered would be comprehensive and extensive (Patton, 2015).

3.4.2 Description of Data Collection Instruments

Google Forms was used to collect data for this investigation. With the flexible tool of Google Forms, researchers can create and send questionnaires to various individuals. Open-ended questions can be created using the program, which is appropriate given that this study is qualitative (Bryman, 2016).

Each participant, including school administrators, parents, teachers, and policymakers, had specific interview questions in Google Forms. The main research questions of this study were addressed by the questions created to explore the Single National Curriculum's impact on local educational practices and systems as well as the experiences and perceptions of local communities, stakeholders, and educators concerning its effects on educational quality and academic achievement.

For instance, school administrators were requested to discuss the Single National Curriculum's implementation process and any modifications to teaching and learning procedures they had noticed. Parents were asked to share their observations regarding changes in their child's learning, while teachers were asked about the adaptations, they made in their teaching methods to meet the new curriculum's requirements.

Using Google Forms facilitated the data collection by providing a user-friendly interface, speeding up the collection process, and ensuring respondents' anonymity (James, 2012). While it was chosen primarily due to geographical restrictions, this online method provided unique advantages, such as avoiding transcription errors and facilitating data analysis by generating organized data sets (Fielding & Cisneros-Puebla, 2009).

However, it's essential to acknowledge that the data collected through Google Forms are self-reported and may be subject to social desirability bias. Efforts were made to mitigate this by assuring respondents of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses (Bryman, 2016).

3.5 Validity and Reliability

3.5.1 Ensuring Validity in Qualitative Research

How accurately the study findings and conclusions represent the phenomena they purport to represent is a measure of validity in qualitative research. Triangulation was used in this investigation to assure validity. By examining a research question from various angles, triangulation, as described by Denzin (1978), is used by qualitative researchers to assess and establish validity in their investigations.

4.5.1.1 Triangulation of Data Sources

Utilizing many data sources in tandem allows for a more thorough picture of the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 1999). Although interviews were used to collect the majority of the data for this study, various sources, including school administrators, policymakers, parents, and teachers, served as diverse sources, and each contributed a distinct viewpoint and set of experiences regarding implementing the Single National Curriculum. So, in essence, the interviews served as numerous sources, offering rich and varied data to better understand and examine the phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2018).

It is crucial to remember that the breadth of triangulation is somewhat constrained in the absence of additional data sources like focus group talks and document analysis. Despite this, the interviews' breadth and depth, which included a variety of stakeholders, improved the research's internal validity. They offered a sophisticated understanding of the subject, reflecting the Single National Curriculum's implementation's complicated and multifaceted reality (Maxwell, 2012).

Additionally, care was taken during the analysis phase to guarantee that the results accurately reflect the participants' responses. The participants' words were verbatim to preserve the integrity of the participants' input and provide an accurate representation of their perspectives and experiences (Silverman, 2016).

3.5.1.2 Member Checking and Peer Debriefing

Another essential method for guaranteeing the validity of qualitative research is member checking, also known as responder validation. This procedure comprises going back to the participants with the final report or specific descriptors or themes to see if they resonate with their experiences (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Participants were allowed to validate and further explain their responses in this study. They were allowed to review their remarks, rectify mistakes, and contest what they believed to be incorrect interpretations. As a result, it made sure that their experiences and perspectives were adequately portrayed, enhancing the research's trustworthiness (Birt et al., 2016).

Alongside member checking, peer debriefing was also utilized. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), peer debriefing is a process where a disinterested peer is asked to review the research process and product to reduce the potential for investigator bias. A peer reviewer, aware of the research's purpose, helped the researcher to question and examine the study assumptions, improving the validity and trustworthiness of the study findings (Elliott et al., 1999). Through these methods, this research ensured robust validity, offering a detailed and accurate portrayal of the implementation and impact of the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan.

3.5.2 Establishing Reliability

3.5.2.1 Consistency in Data Collection and Analysis

Reliability, often equated to the consistency and repeatability of research findings, is equally crucial in qualitative research. While the dynamic nature of social interactions

and the unique context of each research can challenge perfect consistency, there are ways to enhance reliability in qualitative studies (Morse et al., 2002). This study also maintained consistency in data collection using a standardized semi-structured interview guide across all participants, which was carefully developed considering the research questions. This instrument's use ensured that the same broad areas of information were collected from each interviewee, allowing for comparability of data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Additionally, thorough data coding and categorization led to uniformity in data analysis. A codebook that outlined how various responses should be categorized and coded was created and utilized to guarantee that data analysis was done consistently. In order to verify that related data points were consistently categorized, each response was examined and coded in accordance with this manual (Saldana, 2015). These measures sought to establish a consistent framework for gathering and evaluating data while understanding that the total elimination of variability in qualitative research is impractical due to qualitative data's subjective and interpretive nature (Shenton, 2004).

3.5.2.2 Inter-Rater Reliability

Another crucial component of maintaining reliability in qualitative research is inter-rater reliability, or the degree of agreement among various people in rating or coding data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By removing any potential bias or misunderstanding from a single coder, this procedure adds an extra layer of rigor to the data analysis. Inter-rater reliability was established in this study by having a second coder who can independently assess and code a sample of the data that had been gathered. This method is called double coding or dual coding and is commonly used in qualitative research (Miles et al., 2014). Any conflicts or inconsistencies were found by comparing the codes provided by the two coders, and they were then discussed until an

agreement was reached. By ensuring that one person's subjective interpretation did not overly influence the coding scheme, the implementation of this technique improved the coding scheme's dependability. Additionally, it made it possible for various viewpoints to participate in the process of interpreting and coding the data, which promoted a more thorough comprehension of the data. Multiple researchers' involvement can result in a richer and more sophisticated understanding of the data, increasing the overall dependability and trustworthiness of the conclusions Elo et al. (2014).

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Data Management and Organization

In qualitative research, managing and organizing the data is essential for assuring the validity and trustworthiness of the results (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). After being collected for this study, the data was systematically maintained and arranged to ensure effective analysis.

Grouping the replies obtained through Google Forms into a textual format appropriate for analysis was the first step in the procedure that concurs with Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestion that transcription is an essential component of data analysis in qualitative research since it enables the researcher to become familiar with the material.

The transcriptions were then reviewed for accuracy, any extraneous or incorrect information was removed, and the data was anonymized to protect participant confidentiality. This action is congruent with Gibbs' (2007) suggestions, which emphasized the significance of data cleansing in qualitative analysis for obtaining accurate and dependable results.

Following data cleaning, the respondent categories (teachers, school administrators, parents) were used to categorize the data, enabling an effective, structured, and systematic approach to data analysis. In order to improve the research's

traceability and replication, a codebook was constructed to keep track of the various themes and codes discovered during the investigation, which concurs with Saldaa's (2015) recommendations, according to which a codebook improves the transparency and objectivity of qualitative analysis. Thus, this methodical approach to data management and organizing guaranteed a complete, exacting, and open analytical process.

3.6.2 Coding and Categorization of Data

Coding and categorizing the data were the next steps in examining the data. The widely utilized qualitative data analysis technique known as thematic analysis was employed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this method, patterns or "themes" within the data directly connected to the study objectives were found, examined, and interpreted.

Essentially, coding is the process of segmenting data into smaller, more manageable units and giving each unit a label that most accurately describes the information inside (Saldana, 2016). In this investigation, manual coding was used. The researcher's desire to immerse themselves in the data and obtain a deeper knowledge of the participants' perspectives—an essential process in qualitative studies—influenced the decision to manually code rather than use a software tool (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

The codes were then organized into potential topics after coding. Each theme represented a unique pattern or idea throughout the data, consistent with Nowell et al. (2017) claim that a theme should represent some level of structured response or meaning within the dataset and convey something significant about the data regarding the research objectives.

Recreational patterns or themes were found with the help of classifying and categorizing the data, which provided a framework for comprehending the complicated dynamics, experiences, and perspectives of the research subjects.

3.6.3 Interpretation of Findings and Themes

A crucial component of qualitative data analysis is interpretation. It entails making sense of the data gathered, identifying trends, themes, and patterns, and drawing conclusions regarding the significance of these patterns (Maxwell, 2012). The themes that emerged from the data in the context of this study were attentively and thoroughly analyzed in accordance with the research objectives.

An in-depth comprehension of the themes that had been identified was the first step in the process of analyzing the results. The participant replies were carefully considered in light of each theme. The study also drew from the concept of "data weaving" put forth by Creswell and Poth (2017), in which the researcher weaves the data into the story to support the interpretation. This method pushes researchers to keep going back to the original data to make sure their interpretations are based on the experiences and viewpoints of the participants.

The relationships between themes were looked at after each theme was examined. This method entailed figuring out how various themes linked to one another and how they all contributed to our comprehension of the study's goal, which is in keeping with the recommendations made by Miles et al. (2014), who advise that researchers deepen the interpretive analysis by considering the interplay of themes and viewing the data from many perspectives.

Finally, a comprehensive and organized report of the findings was provided. The narrative was skillfully written to emphasize the analysis's most important findings and explain how those findings relate to the study's goals. To ensure the authenticity and reliability of the research, Merriam and Tisdell's (2015) recommendation to preserve the participants' "voice" was considered. The study sought to give an accurate, thorough, and insightful evaluation of the experiences and perceptions of the stakeholders about adopting the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan using these methodical procedures.

3.7 Researcher's Positionality

3.7.1 Researcher's Background and Perspective

In qualitative research, the researcher's background and perspective, also called 'positionality,' play an integral role in shaping the research process and outcomes (Bourke, 2014). It happens due to the interpretive nature of qualitative research, where the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, inevitably intertwining their perspectives with the research process (Liamputtong, 2013). In this study, the researcher acknowledges their positionality and potential influence on the research. Having grown up and been educated in Pakistan, the researcher has personal experience with and understanding the Pakistani education system. While this familiarity provides an insider perspective and a nuanced understanding of the context, it also entails potential biases and preconceptions that could shape the interpretation of the data.

These potential influences were acknowledged and consciously managed throughout the research process to ensure transparency and reflexivity. As Maxwell (2012) suggests, the researcher consciously tried to separate personal beliefs and experiences from the data interpretation process and remain open to the multiple realities presented by the participants. The researcher also maintained a reflective journal to document personal reflections and biases, a practice recommended by Ortlipp (2008) to enhance reflexivity and the integrity of the research. Moreover, the researcher's academic background in educational research equipped them with the methodological skills and theoretical knowledge necessary for conducting rigorous qualitative research. Their understanding of research ethics, cultural sensitivities, and commitment to giving voice to the participants' experiences further enriched the data collection and analysis process. By recognizing and addressing positionality, the researcher aimed to enhance the credibility, authenticity, and ethical soundness of the

study while also enriching the understanding of the research context and the participants' experiences.

3.7.2 Reflexivity and its Influence on Research

Reflexivity, a practice where researchers examine how their biases, experiences, and social identities may influence the research process and outcomes, is a central tenet of qualitative research (Finlay, 2002). By being reflexive, researchers acknowledge the impossibility of "objective" research, accepting that they are part of the world they study and, therefore, cannot be detached from it (Berger, 2015).

In this study, the researcher conscientiously engaged in reflexivity throughout the research process. The researcher's background, preconceptions, and experiences with the Pakistani education system undoubtedly shaped the interpretation of data and thus influenced the outcomes of the research. This influence is especially crucial in a qualitative investigation where the researcher is the main tool for data gathering and interpretation (Malterud, 2001).

The researcher kept a reflective notebook to encourage reflexivity throughout the research process. This notebook served as a place to record individual thoughts, presumptions, and sentiments regarding the study process, as proposed by Boud, Keogh, and Walker (1985). Reflective journaling is a crucial tool for recognizing and correcting the impact of the researcher's subjectivity on the conduct and results of their research (Ortlipp, 2008).

In order to engage in reflexivity, the researcher needed to strike a balance between the insider perspective that comes from their own experience with the Pakistani educational system and the requirement to maintain a certain degree of analytical objectivity. Being an insider gave the researcher important knowledge of the research site's contextual features and cultural nuances. The researcher also tried to critically

reflect on and not take for granted the insider information and assumptions (Hellowell, 2006). The study's credibility and ethical soundness were thus greatly improved by the practice of reflexivity. It allowed the researcher to spot and counteract potential subjectivities and biases, improving the research findings' validity and dependability.

3.8 Ethical Issues

3.8.1 Ethical Considerations and Approval

Every research study must consider ethical considerations, and they have been carefully followed in this study. The appropriate ethical review from the researcher supervisors at the researcher's institution was completed before data collection, and approval was granted based on ethical considerations. This is in accordance with the fundamentals outlined by international guidelines on conducting human research, which demands that studies involving human subjects obtain the necessary ethical clearance before they begin (Emanuel, Wendler, & Grady, 2000).

First, each participant gave their agreement after being fully informed. They were informed about the nature of the study, the goals, how their data would be used, any potential dangers, the advantages, and their right to discontinue the study at any time without repercussions as part of this procedure (Israel & Hay, 2006). The method used to record consent protected the participants' privacy and anonymity. Given the possible vulnerability of research subjects, this is a key ethical responsibility (Mackenzie et al., 2017).

Another very important ethical problem was the security and privacy of participant data. All comments were made anonymous, and any identifying information was removed or replaced with pseudonyms to address, and the researcher securely stored and accessed data only (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, this study aimed to ensure equity and fairness, including participants from diverse backgrounds and regions of Pakistan, thereby giving a voice to individuals who might otherwise be overlooked.

This principle of equity aligns with the ethical principle of justice, which asserts that the benefits and burdens of research should be equitably distributed among all potential participants (Liamputtong, 2007).

Similarly, another ethical issue considered was the potential for researcher bias and influence, mitigated through reflexivity, as discussed earlier. By acknowledging and reflecting on potential biases and preconceptions, the researcher endeavored to reduce their impact on the findings (Berger, 2015). In sum, the study adhered to ethical standards involving informed consent, confidentiality, equity, and reflexivity, ensuring that the research was conducted in a manner that respected the rights and dignity of the participants.

3.8.2 Informed Consent and Participant Confidentiality

In research involving human subjects, obtaining informed consent and maintaining participant confidentiality are two cornerstones of ethical practice. Following these tenets is critical to uphold ethical standards and enhance the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings (Emanuel, Wendler, & Grady, 2000). Informed consent is a process where a research participant is provided with all necessary and relevant information about the research project in a clear, comprehensible manner, enabling them to make an informed decision about their participation (Beauchamp & Childress, 2013). In this study, informed consent was meticulously procured from all participants. They were apprised of the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, any potential risks and benefits, and their rights as participants, which include the right to withdraw from the research at any point without facing any repercussions (Israel & Hay, 2006). The entire process was conducted to ensure voluntariness, preventing any form of coercion or undue influence (Emanuel et al., 2000).

The principle of confidentiality in research refers to the commitment made by the researcher to protect the participant's identity and personal information from unauthorized disclosure (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). In this study, participant confidentiality was vigorously maintained. Participants' identities were anonymized, and a coding system was adopted to refer to the participants in place of their real names. Further, the data gathered was stored securely, accessible only to the research team. Any public presentation of the data was conducted so that the individual participants could not be identified, thus upholding their privacy (Bryman, 2016). In short, by meticulously adhering to the principles of informed consent and participant confidentiality, this study successfully respected the autonomy and privacy of the participants, thereby maintaining high ethical standards in the research process.

3.8.3 Potential Conflicts of Interest and Bias Mitigation

The essence of ethical research also encompasses the identification, disclosure, and management of potential conflicts of interest, as well as the mitigation of possible biases. These components are crucial for preserving the integrity of the study and ensuring that the results are trustworthy and not unduly influenced by external or personal factors (Liamputtong, 2013).

A conflict of research interest occurs when the researcher, who is in a position of trust, has interests or relationships that could interfere with their professional judgment or objectivity (Thompson, 1993). In this study, the researcher was cognizant of any potential conflicts of interest that might occur. These might have resulted from close ties to the participants on a personal level, financial incentives, or potential career benefits related to the study's findings. Transparency was promoted by quickly disclosing potential conflicts to the participants and the ethics review board (Resnik & Rasmussen, 2019).

On the other hand, bias in research refers to any systematic inaccuracy that can impact the research findings (Bryman, 2016). The researcher used numerous measures to reduce potential biases. First, a thorough and open data collection and analysis procedure was used. That included asking each participant the same interview questions and methodically coding and categorizing the data (Maxwell, 2009). Second, the researcher engaged in reflexivity at every stage of the investigation. Reflexivity is the researcher being conscious of and considering how their own biases, prejudices, and experiences may affect the nature and results of the research (Berger, 2015). The researcher actively engaged in reflexivity to reduce the impact of personal bias on the research findings. Thus, the researcher attempted to conduct the study ethically and neutrally, strengthening the credibility of the research findings by acknowledging potential conflicts of interest and putting forth methods to mitigate potential biases.

3.9 Time and Place of Study

3.9.1 Research Duration and Timeline

Conducting research necessitates careful planning, including a clearly defined timeframe, especially qualitative research that largely relies on interviews and direct contacts. Time management, according to Cohen et al. (2018), is essential to any research effort. The timing of the research process is crucial, affecting data collection, analysis, and reporting. This research on the Single National Curriculum's implementation in Pakistan lasted a full year, starting in July 2022 and ending in July 2023. The complexity of the research question, the participants varied locations, and the need to obtain a complete picture of the curriculum's effects throughout an academic year all impacted the duration decision.

Thanks to the timeline's systematic organization, the study phases smoothly progressed. The first few months (July to September 2022) were devoted to a literature study, the creation of research topics, and the creation of the interview guide, as Yin

(2017) indicated. The following months (October 2022 to March 2023) were devoted to gathering participants, conducting interviews, and gathering the first round of data. Finally, April 2023 through July 2023 were designated for doing a more thorough analysis of the data, interpreting the results, and writing the research report. This prolonged duration made it possible to interact with the data repeatedly and helped the reflective and iterative analytical process essential to qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The year-long timeframe also allowed enough time to contact participants again for member verification, increasing the study's credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

3.9.2 Description of Study Setting

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the study setting in research because it directly impacts data collection, analysis, and interpretation. "The setting is not only a backdrop for study, but an intrinsic aspect of what is being investigated and how it is being studied," claims Bryman (2016). The study context can significantly impact the findings in qualitative research.

This study included both urban and rural settings, examining the implementation and effects of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum in various regions and schools. The study's goal, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum's impact on Pakistan's many populations, guided the choice of setting. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the complexity and scope of the research questions are frequently reflected in the breadth and depth of the chosen study setting.

The study sites were spread out geographically, and the researcher was unable to go; thus, the research was conducted digitally. Google Forms was used to conduct interviews remotely, making it feasible to reach participants across Pakistan without any physical restrictions. This way of gathering digital data reflects an increasing tendency

in social research to leverage online platforms, which enables researchers to gather data over vast geographic areas, enhancing the diversity and richness of the data obtained (Hesse-Biber, 2017). The transition to a digital environment presented certain difficulties, including the need to guarantee a dependable internet connection and devise strategies for building rapport with interview subjects in a non-face-to-face situation. However, the remote data collection was advantageous since it provided a wide-ranging and thorough perspective on implementing the Single National Curriculum, capturing perspectives from various stakeholders in various geographical and sociocultural contexts within Pakistan.

3.10 Conclusion

3.10.1 Recap of Methodological Choices

Reflecting on methodological choices is an essential aspect of wrapping up a research study since it not only summarizes the actions followed but also explains why the selections were chosen in light of the goals of the investigation (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study's research technique was created to elicit a thorough understanding of the effects and consequences of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum on various educational environments because it allowed for the investigation of personal experiences and interpretations; a qualitative research approach was chosen because it produced a deep, nuanced understanding of the studied phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Semi-structured interviews were used as the main mode of data gathering because of their adaptability and potential for depth. Semi-structured interviews are especially well adapted for examining people's experiences, viewpoints, and interpretations to gain insightful information on intricate phenomena (Bryman, 2016).

The researcher was able to direct the dialogue while allowing participants to express their views and perspectives in their own words by employing a set of predefined open-ended questions. These interviews were conducted via Google Forms

due to the participants' geographical spread. Numerous benefits, including accessibility, cost and time efficiency, and the potential for a larger geographic reach, were offered by this method of data gathering. Digital platforms have evolved into an essential tool in modern research, Bryman (2016) notes, assisting in data collecting and analysis processes, particularly in situations when face-to-face engagement is difficult. Despite some difficulties, such as establishing rapport in a virtual environment, the methodological decisions chosen for this study were crucial to achieving the study's goals. They made it possible to conduct a thorough analysis of the SNC's implementation by gathering numerous viewpoints from different Pakistani stakeholders, which enhanced the study's conclusions and advanced the field of study.

3.10.2 Alignment with Research Objectives

A key element of reliable, moral, and significant research is the compatibility of the research objectives with the methodological decisions made (Miles et al., 2014). The main goal of this study was to acquire an in-depth understanding of key stakeholders' opinions and experiences with the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan's various educational environments. Given its emphasis on deeply examining human experiences and perceptions, the qualitative research approach adopted was intrinsically well-suited to achieve these goals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Through semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to delve deeply into the participants' actual lived experiences by giving them a forum to tell their tales, express their emotions, voice their opinions, and discuss their interactions with the new curriculum. The flexibility of the semi-structured approach allowed the researcher to investigate new themes or unexpected results (Bryman, 2016).

Additionally, the Single National Curriculum implementation process was the focus of the purposive sample technique, which ensured the inclusion of a varied range

of opinions and experiences, coinciding with understanding the effects of this reform from many angles (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While a realistic solution to geographical restrictions, using Google Forms to conduct interviews also fits with the study's goals. The virtual approach increased the number of potential participants and made it possible to include opinions from a larger range of Pakistani educational contexts. As a result, the data's breadth and depth were increased, advancing the goal of comprehending various experiences and perspectives. The methodological decisions adopted in this study were carefully coordinated with the research goals, ensuring a thorough, in-depth investigation of the research problem and facilitating significant contributions to the field.

3.10.3 Anticipated Challenges and Limitations

In qualitative research, acknowledging anticipated challenges and limitations is of paramount importance. It lends credibility to the study, enhances transparency, and guides future research by suggesting areas that need further exploration or alternative approaches (Maxwell, 2012). One anticipated challenge in this study was using Google Forms for data collection. Although a convenient tool for reaching a geographically dispersed population, this method relies heavily on the participants' technological literacy and internet access (Given, 2008). In a country like Pakistan, with considerable digital divides, especially in rural areas, this could potentially exclude certain individuals from participating in the study, limiting the diversity of experiences and perspectives captured.

Another potential limitation is linked to the use of the English language for conducting the interviews. Although English is one of the official languages in Pakistan, proficiency levels vary widely, particularly between urban and rural areas and among different socioeconomic groups (Coleman, 2010). That could create language barriers

that limit the participation of some stakeholders or constrain their ability to express their experiences and perceptions fully and authentically. The chosen sampling technique, purposive sampling, while enabling the selection of individuals directly involved in implementing the Single National Curriculum, may introduce selection bias. The findings might not represent all the stakeholders impacted by the curriculum reform, limiting the study's generalizability (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

The researcher's positionality in qualitative research can impact the data collection and interpretation process. While reflexivity can help in addressing this issue, there is always the possibility of personal biases influencing the results (Pillow, 2003). To address this potential, the researcher used the triangulation technique, as well as supervision from two experts in educational decentralization. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, this study offers valuable insights into the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders involved in implementing the Single National Curriculum in Pakistan and opens avenues for further research to address these challenges.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study and provides a comprehensive discussion. The research results section presents the findings of the study. It covers the challenges, indicative positive outcomes, and perceptions of the Single National Curriculum implementation in Pakistan and its indicative consequences on the quality of education and academic achievement. The chapter also includes a discussion part that covers the interpretation of key findings, indicative influences of the Single National Curriculum (SNC), and comparison of the findings with prior research.

4.1 RESULTS

4.1.1 Challenges of Implementing SNC

In terms of challenges, the findings indicate that transitioning to the Single National Curriculum (SNC) required redesigning the existing pedagogical practices, learning materials, and assessment methods. This process was not simply about changing what is taught in classrooms but also how it is taught, how learning is assessed, and how education professionals are prepared and supported. Furthermore, the SNC's aspiration to standardize education across regions, cultures, and socioeconomic classes was introduced. Also, some additional layers of complexity require sensitive handling to ensure the curriculum is adaptable to diverse contexts. The difficulties encountered during the SNC's implementation could be divided into four categories: (1) adaptability and resistance to change, (2) insufficient resources and support, (3) adapting to local needs, and (4) uncertainty and under-preparedness. The following sections extend to give the readers a thorough knowledge of the problems encountered during implementation, but it also presents viable solutions for upcoming educational changes.

For the first challenge on adaptability and resistance to change, it became apparent that the implementation of the SNC in Pakistan was met with significant resistance and adaptational challenges. A school leader, Principal A, pointed out:

“Adjusting to a new educational framework often comes with its own set of difficulties, including adapting to new teaching methodologies, curriculum content, and evaluation methods” (Principal A).

This statement underscores the complexities involved in transitioning from a known and comfortable system to one that is new and potentially unfamiliar. In this regard, Principal A elaborated that the aversion to change is due to their worries about how new teaching and learning techniques affect the students’ academic achievement. According to Principal A, people are more likely to support change if they know why it is necessary, have the chance to participate in the change process, can see that the advantages exceed the drawbacks, and are encouraged to make the necessary adjustments. Given the resistance and adaptational challenge in implementing the SNC, it is evident that the education authorities in Pakistan need to implement effective change management strategies. These strategies should mitigate resistance and enable teachers and students to adapt to the new system effectively.

Meanwhile, the second challenge revolves around insufficient resources and support for effectively implementing the SNC. One school leader emphasized:

“We have digital screens, computers, and laboratory equipment, but they are insufficient for the bulk of crowded students” (Principal E).

This comment illuminates a profound concern; the insufficiency of resources not only undermines the overall effectiveness of the SNC but also exacerbates the inequality among students due to a lack of equitable access to educational resources. Principal E further asserts that resource scarcity can severely limit the successful realization of the intended outcomes of educational reform. In this context, resources do not just mean physical or financial resources but also extend to human and time resources. This

insufficiency of resources in Pakistan's education system is not confined to physical infrastructure but extends to teachers' lack of instructional resources and professional development opportunities. This issue was illustrated by Principal F, who pointed out that:

“Most of the newly hired teachers are untrained and have no acquaintance of the newly established curriculum” (Principal F).

This assertion highlights the significant lack of resources and professional assistance needed to give teachers the abilities and information necessary to deliver the SNC most efficiently. Such deficiencies can be viewed as outward expressions of the underlying problems that plague Pakistan's educational system. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive planning that ensures the effective allocation and distribution of resources and robust support mechanisms to enhance the successful implementation of the SNC in Pakistan.

The third challenge is the SNC implementation is related to how to adapt the curriculum to local needs. As one school leader poignantly noted: "The existing curriculum does not fulfill or meet the needs of the local students" (Principal E). This testimony highlights a possible mismatch between the national-level educational objectives encapsulated in the SNC and the specific requirements and expectations at local levels. Such incongruities can present formidable obstacles in implementing and accepting nationwide educational reforms. This challenge of adapting national curricula to local contexts is not unique to Pakistan. In the broader discourse on educational reforms, the relationship between the global and local is a prominent topic. The interplay between the 'global' and 'local' becomes relevant, particularly in implementing national curricula. For instance, the statement from Principal E implies that there might be particular regional, linguistic, cultural, or socioeconomic aspects that the SNC may not fully address, leading to potential limitations in its effectiveness. Similarly, Principal

D elaborated that they facilitate teachers to make the students more practical and generalize certain things to adapt the SNC to meet local needs.

This finding underscores the need to balance the desire for national unity and standardization through the SNC and the requirement to adapt the curriculum to the specific needs of local students and communities. Consequently, the SNC would benefit from strategies that allow for flexibility and adaptation to the diverse needs of different regions in Pakistan. Such a strategy should not compromise the overall aim of the SNC but rather enrich it by including local contexts, thus enhancing its relevance and acceptance.

Meanwhile, the fourth challenge is related to uncertainty and unpreparedness.

One participant said:

"The single curriculum slogan has been restricted to Primary Level only. It has not been properly implemented in the classrooms. The teachers are not formally equipped for such new changes. Most newly hired teachers are untrained and are unfamiliar with the newly established curriculum" (Principal F).

This comment encapsulates a key concern: teachers' preparedness and their level of knowledge and understanding about the Single National Curriculum (SNC). Unpreparedness, lack of formal training for new pedagogical practices, and insufficient acquaintance with the new curriculum can all engender a sense of uncertainty among teachers. Principal F's feeling indicates that the teachers were not effectively prepared for the switch to the SNC and did not have enough opportunity for professional development to become acquainted with it.

4.1.2 Indicative Positive Outcomes of SNC

Despite the challenge as outlined above, the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan, has resulted in various notable indicative positive outcomes. These could be categorized into (1) encompassing improvements in the standardization and uniformity of education, (2) enhanced relevance of educational

content to contemporary societal contexts, (3) the promotion of equity within the educational system, these indicative positive outcomes play an essential role in the study's narrative, which sought to assess the indicative influence of the SNC on Pakistani education. Their significance is in justifying the time and money put into implementing the SNC and in illuminating the future by offering insightful information on what is effective in Pakistani education and what approaches should be expanded further. Each success story adds a new dimension to understanding educational reform dynamics and hints at the tremendous potential these programs have to improve educational outcomes.

The first indication of SNC's positive outcome as echoed by the study participants was the move towards greater standardization and uniformity in the education system. Comments from the various principals interviewed corroborated this achievement. Principal B stated, "SNC policy has been successfully implemented in my school as it runs through Army Public Schools & Colleges System (APSACS), which ensures uniformity and standardization in the education system." Another principal, Principal D, added to this sentiment, expressing that "the biggest benefit is that it unites the nation." Although the trend toward standardization and uniformity is unquestionably a significant success, it is important to note that this is not enough to achieve educational justice and excellence. The SNC's implementation must be followed by initiatives to raise standards for instruction and learning, promote school leadership, and give teachers the necessary resources. The entire potential of the SNC can then be realized.

The second indication of SNC's positive outcome is related to the enhanced relevance of educational content to contemporary societal contexts. According to the

school principals, this relevance is another area in which the Single National Curriculum (SNC) has demonstrated significant success. The Principal A noted:

"By introducing new and updated content, the Single National Curriculum aims to equip our students with the necessary skills and competencies to thrive in the 21st century" (Principal A).

This statement resonates strongly with the intentions behind the development of the SNC. Inherent in its design is the recognition that today's learners must be equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global environment. The SNC shifts from traditional, rote learning toward a more practical, skills-based education by emphasizing relevance.

The third indication of SNC's positive outcome is creating an equitable and inclusive learning environment that gives all students equal chances, regardless of their backgrounds or socioeconomic status. In order for students to realize their full academic potential, it is necessary to ensure that they have access to the tools, opportunities, and support they require. The research findings indicate that Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) has made progress toward promoting educational parity. Principal A made note of this accomplishment by saying:

"It is admirable how well it has affected our children and the learning environment. Since its inception, the Single National Curriculum has demonstrated exceptional efficacy in giving our pupils a uniform and thorough education. Students from various backgrounds now feel more united and equal, guaranteeing that every child obtains the same high-quality education regardless of socioeconomic level" (Principal A).

Such a claim demonstrates the SNC's capacity to redress educational disparities in Pakistan. The SNC seeks to close this gap and guarantee that every student, regardless of background, obtains a quality education by implementing a standard curriculum for all pupils. By doing this, the SNC aims to develop a more inclusive and equal educational system. It is crucial to understand that ensuring all children have access to the same resources does not constitute educational fairness. The SNC has made a

substantial step in promoting equity in educational opportunities in Pakistan. It has provided a more even playing field to students of different backgrounds by standardizing the curriculum across all schools. However, ongoing efforts to modify the curriculum to local settings and offer appropriate assistance to fulfill the needs of all students are required if the aim of educational fairness is to be completely realized.

4.1.3 Perceptions of Local Communities and Stakeholders on SNC

4.1.3.1 Overview of Perceptions

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan has prompted a variety of perceptions among local communities and stakeholders, as with any essential educational change. The diversity of opinions shows the complexity of the shift. These opinions can be broadly grouped into three key themes: (1) the expected social equality by a standardized curriculum, (2) worries about the accessibility and caliber of education, and (3) the necessity of strong teacher support and training for its implementation.

4.1.3.1.1 Anticipated Social Equality

A Single National Curriculum's (SNC) implementation has given rise to a perception of social equality with a solid literary foundation and roots in the real-life experiences of diverse stakeholders. The SNC is perceived as a tool that can "bridge the gap between the haves and have-nots," based on Parent A's view. This impression is based on the notion that by establishing uniform learning standards for all students, a unified curriculum can equalize learning chances and foster social equality. Teachers A and E have a similar opinion, believing that the SNC if completely implemented, may give all children an equal opportunity to get proper education. However, there are particular concerns with the optimism regarding the SNC's potential to promote social equality. Parent B, for instance, raised worries that despite the SNC's assurance, students

in public schools would still face disadvantages due to scarce resources. In essence, the SNC has the potential to promote social equality and integration, but for its implementation to be successful, it will need sufficient funding and consideration for any potential delivery discrepancies between different socioeconomic groups.

4.1.3.1.2 Accessibility and Quality of Instruction Concerns

Concerns about accessibility and the caliber of instruction temper the euphoria surrounding the Single National Curriculum (SNC). The two main areas of concern here are the mode of instruction and the cost of education. Given the variety of languages spoken in Pakistan, the problem of the teaching medium is essential. Concerns have also been raised regarding the cost of the SNC's required materials. According to Parent C, families from lower income categories may face financial hardships due to the expense of textbooks, supplemental learning materials, and other supplies required for effective learning under the SNC. It brings to light a crucial facet of accessibility: even if the curriculum is the same throughout, the expenses of executing it may result in differences in access to high-quality education.

These problems highlight the requirement for laws that guarantee the application of a prescribed curriculum and equal access to high-quality instruction. The government needs to consider strategies to help kids and families adapt between languages and how to deal with any potential financial hardships the new curriculum may cause. The SNC's successful implementation depends not only on the standardization of curriculum material but also on resolving issues with the teaching method and the cost of education.

4.1.3.1.3 Teacher Support and Training

Teachers play a significant role in determining the outcomes of the Single National Curriculum (SNC), as they are its leading implementers. They are in charge of

carrying out the curriculum in the classroom, deciphering its instructions, and modifying it to meet the various needs of the students. The remarks made by the teachers in this research underline the need for regular assistance and proper training for teachers in order for them to carry out these jobs successfully. The idea put out by Teacher A for regular workshops and professional development sessions emphasizes the importance of ongoing education for teachers. Institutions like PITE might conduct training sessions to give instructors the skills and expertise they need to deliver the curriculum as part of implementing the SNC. The topics covered in these sessions might include curriculum material, pedagogical approaches for effective delivery, and methods for customizing the curriculum to meet the requirements of particular students and local situations. Teachers need continual support and formal training to deal with the difficulties when implementing the curriculum. Such assistance might be provided by the administration of the school, professional learning groups, or even governing authorities that regulate education.

The demand for various instructional strategies, as made evident by Teacher B, highlights the difficulty of the job at hand. The inquiry-based learning approach promotes critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and a thorough comprehension of the subject matter by encouraging students to actively participate in their learning process. To properly use such a system, teachers must have a solid grasp and the capacity to modify it for their educational environment. As a result, exposure to various teaching methods and advice on using them successfully should be part of teacher training and support. Coordinated measures to support teachers and give them the essential training and skills will be necessary to ensure the SNC's successful implementation. Critical components of this undertaking include exposure to various

teaching philosophies and techniques, continual professional growth, and ongoing support.

4.1.3.2 Perceived Indicative Influence on Quality of Education

While the Single National Curriculum (SNC) can dramatically enhance education in Pakistan, some worry about possible detrimental effects on educational quality. Parent B's primary concern is the potential linguistic barrier that could develop due to the SNC's implementation. Children learning in their native tongues may encounter challenges that inhibit learning and lower the standard of instruction. Another reported drawback of the SNC is the rigidity of the curriculum, which Teacher D has expressed as a source of concern. The concern is that an overly rigid curriculum may prevent creative and flexible teaching strategies, potentially reducing student learning opportunities. These issues highlight the significance of considering the unique demands of pupils from various regions and socioeconomic backgrounds, even if the SNC attempts to harmonize Pakistan's educational system. The SNC must be implemented to foster equity and inclusivity without unintentionally lowering educational standards.

4.1.7.3 Perceived Indicative Influence on Academic Achievement

Both educators and parents are interested in learning more about how the Single National Curriculum (SNC) affects academic attainment. The majority of the comments point to an overall beneficial influence. According to Teacher A, the program has significantly improved student learning. Students have been encouraged to think beyond the box by focusing on critical thinking and applying what they learn in the classroom to real-world problems. Teacher E agreed that the SNC's emphasis on giving students' education a purpose and relevance had a positive impact. Nevertheless, despite the upbeat viewpoints, potential difficulties can affect academic success. Parent C, for instance, voiced worries about the SNC's resource requirements being within reach. Due

to financial limitations, some students would not have access to necessary materials, which could lead to differences in academic performance based on family income. Despite the SNC's perceived sound effects on academic attainment, issues still need to be resolved. The SNC's performance, and thus the student's academic success, depends on how well these problems are solved. All kids must get an equitable and high-quality education regardless of socioeconomic situation.

4.1.4 Summary of Findings

Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) analysis has revealed that there is a hopeful belief that by bridging educational disparities between socioeconomic groups, the SNC can advance social equality and racial integration. Parents and educators who believe in the SNC's transforming capacity share this opinion. However, issues with accessibility and training quality have been brought up. Concerns about potential linguistic difficulties and the price of the resources needed by the SNC are of particular concern. These issues highlight the requirement for laws that guarantee equal access to high-quality education. Teachers, who are essential participants in the SNC implementation process, also need ongoing assistance and expert instruction. They emphasize the necessity of professional development workshops and sessions, as well as the significance of using a variety of teaching approaches to meet the various learning needs of students. While many apparent advantages, such as advancing social equality, improving inclusive and thorough material, and fostering critical thinking, specific unfavorable effects have also been noted, the inflexibility of the curriculum and language difficulties were seen as potential hindrances to educational excellence.

The SNC generally benefits academic achievement since the curriculum improves student learning and helps students make connections between their studies and practical applications. However, issues regarding the cost of necessary resources

and their potential impact on academic performance were also raised. Similarly, the SNC also has much potential for Pakistani education in the future, but its implementation will be successful only if stakeholders' concerns are addressed, everyone has equal access to quality education, and teachers are given adequate support and training.

4.2 DISCUSSION

4.2.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) has been implemented in Pakistan, and this has given rise to a wide range of viewpoints among local stakeholders and the community that represent the complexity and multidimensionality of this essential educational reform. According to stakeholders' most common expectations, the SNC could be a tool for socioeconomic equity and national integration (Memon, 2007). Parents and educators generally hold the same opinion, believing that a unified curriculum will lessen the gaps between various socioeconomic classes in Pakistan's educational system. This vision aligns with the education policy's larger goals, which include encouraging diversity within the educational system. This objective aligns with current worldwide trends (UNESCO, 2017). No of their socioeconomic status, all students should have access to, engage in, and benefit from high-quality education, according to the concept of inclusivity in education. This idea is becoming increasingly well-known globally as it is thought to promote social harmony and economic development (UNESCO, 2017).

Despite the widespread anticipation that the SNC will promote social equality, our study's findings also point to serious concerns about the accessibility of high-quality education, particularly for pupils who are learning in their native tongues. It is consistent with Brock-Utne's claim that quality education depends on the medium of teaching in a language learner can understand (2007). Our analysis shows that specific stakeholders are concerned that students more fluent in local languages may have linguistic issues due to the SNC's teaching medium. This viewpoint emphasizes the significance of considering linguistic diversity within the framework of education, a feature that has also been underlined in the international literature (Benson, 2002; Brock-Utne, 2007).

Additionally, our findings show that parents are the primary source of anxiety regarding the SNC's required materials affordability. The SNC is anticipated to

minimize educational inequities, but if the resources required for its implementation are not accessible, it may unintentionally lead to new disparities. It aligns with the discussion by UNESCO (2017), which emphasizes the need for policies assuring equal access to high-quality education to effectively promote inclusion within a system of education.

The teachers are on the frontline of SNC implementation and play an instrumental role in its success or failure. Our findings reveal that teachers emphasize the importance of consistent support, professional development, and training for the successful implementation of the SNC. The significance of teacher quality and development is supported by a plethora of research, demonstrating that well-trained and well-supported teachers are more likely to implement curricular changes effectively and improve student outcomes (Yoon et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2000). It implies that teachers must be adequately prepared, trained, and supported for the SNC to be effectively implemented. The findings shed light on the multifaceted perceptions of the SNC's implementation, pointing towards the complexity and multidimensionality of this educational reform. The themes emerging from our study indicate that while the SNC holds substantial potential for fostering inclusivity and social equality, its successful implementation hinges upon careful consideration and effective management of the challenges identified by the stakeholders.

4.2.2 Indicative Positive Influences of SNC

4.2.2.1 Standardization

The curriculum has been uniformed through the SNC, signaling a conscious move toward centralization. According to the administrators, this centralization makes the learning objectives consistent and coherent throughout all schools and areas (Interviewees A, B, C). This modification is consistent with Rondinelli and Cheema's classification of centralization from 1983, which can be seen as an effort by the federal

government to rein in the decentralization that has long defined the nation's educational system.

The trend towards a uniform curriculum shows a considerable change from a somewhat decentralized to a centralized educational system. The administrators claim that this standardization's primary goal is to eliminate the educational gaps in the nation, particularly between rural and urban areas and between different kinds of schools (Interviewees A, B, C). This idea aligns with Tyler's first curriculum development principle, which emphasizes the significance of precise and articulated objectives (Tyler, 1949). The government has established a distinct set of learning objectives for all pupils, regardless of socioeconomic background or geographic location, by offering a unified national curriculum. The SNC is a model for what every student in Pakistan ought to understand and be able to perform, according to one administrator (Interviewee B).

Additionally, curricular standardization reflects the philosophy of the state. According to Apple, the curriculum reflects the values, philosophies, and beliefs of the society it serves (Apple, 1979). The state essentially supports an ideology of equality, inclusivity, and high-quality education for all by enacting the SNC. It is a declaration of the state's views on what education should be and what it should accomplish. One of the administrators said, "The SNC covers more than simply academic material. It also concerns the type of society we want to establish—one that is just, inclusive, and gives everyone the same opportunity " (Interviewee C). Therefore, implementing the SNC and its emphasis on uniformity is a blatant manifestation of centralization and the societal values the state wants to advance (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). (Apple, 1979). This vital change in Pakistan's educational environment promises a more united and inclusive educational system. However, as detailed in the following sections, the fulfillment of

this promise depends on how well the problems associated with such a significant transition are handled.

4.2.2.2 Updated and Relevant Content

Introducing the Single National Curriculum allows Pakistani schools to modernize and rejuvenate their curricula. According to the administrators, the SNC has given a platform for integrating modern and globally pertinent subjects, enhancing the educational experience for pupils (Interviewees A, B, D). This result is consistent with Tyler's second principle, which recommends linking educational experiences to goals (Tyler, 1949). According to this idea, the curriculum should specify the learning objectives and offer valuable learning opportunities that aid in accomplishing these goals.

According to the administration, the SNC has considered contemporary trends and international standards to ensure the curriculum content is still relevant and significant (Interviewees A, B, D). The revised material teaches kids critical thinking, digital literacy, environmental awareness, and 21st-century skills to flourish in a more connected, globalized society (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2020). This change makes sure that pupils are more ready for both their current educational experiences and their societal duties in the future. The SNC is not just about passing tests but also about educating our students for the world they will inherit, as one administrator put it (Interviewee D).

The SNC's incorporation of timely and up-to-date material is also consistent with Apple's view of the curriculum as a window onto societal views (Apple, 1979). The SNC is positioning itself to prepare students to participate in a globalized world and contribute to Pakistan's socioeconomic development by embracing 21st-century skills and globally relevant themes. It emphasizes the state's philosophy of offering all

students a prosperous, competitive, and forward-looking education regardless of background or region. Ball (2016) asserts that a curriculum is a political and social tool that substantially impacts forming the next generation. The SNC's updated curriculum represents the government's dedication to developing a skilled workforce to fuel the nation's future economic growth. Updated content does, however, provide specific difficulties. The ability of teachers to impart these new topics and areas of knowledge successfully, the accessibility of resources, and the system's capacity for change will all affect their relevance and application. As the SNC is still being implemented nationwide, these areas need careful thought and planning.

4.2.2.3 Student-Centered Approach and Skill Development

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) has signaled a change in emphasis toward a more student-centered approach to education in Pakistan. The SNC focuses not just on academic information but also on skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and social-emotional learning to promote pupils' overall development (Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2020). Administrators stressed the importance of this emphasis on skill development in preparing students for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century (Interviewees B, C, D). This strategy adheres to Tyler's third curriculum development principle, which urges structuring educational experiences to promote meaningful learning (Tyler, 1949). According to Tyler, when learning experiences are carefully planned to promote the understanding and application of knowledge, a curriculum's efficacy can be considerably increased. The SNC's emphasis on student-centered learning and skill development might be interpreted as an effort to make the curriculum more meaningful and applicable to students' daily lives.

Furthermore, the SNC's shift away from conventional educational power structures and emphasis on skill development could be considered a divergence. In his work "Ideology and Curriculum" from 1979, Michael Apple makes the case that the curriculum is not objective but rather an expression of society's ideas and political institutions. The traditional teacher-centered approach views the instructor as the primary source of knowledge and the student as a passive recipient. It depicts a power dynamic in which the teacher has authority over the learning process and subject matter. The emphasis, however, is on encouraging students' active participation in learning and the development of their skills and abilities in a student-centered approach. It puts the student at the center of the learning process and disrupts conventional power dynamics. The SNC has allowed us to reevaluate our instructional strategies and provide a more motivating and engaging learning environment for our children, as one administrator put it (Interviewee C).

While moving toward a student-centered strategy is a big step toward raising Pakistan's educational standards, it also comes with difficulties. To adapt to this new approach, teachers must have proper training and support, and the learning environment must facilitate active learning and skills development. In order to accommodate a range of learning demands and situations, standardization and flexibility must be balanced. As Pakistan continues its journey towards educational transformation with the SNC, these difficulties underscore the need for continual monitoring and assessment and capacity-building initiatives.

4.2.2.4 Improved Student Outcomes and Holistic Development

Administrators have noted increases in academic achievement and more comprehensive development of students as a result of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) implementation. In the administrators' opinion, the SNC has promoted a more effective

and engaging learning environment, enhancing student involvement, academic performance, and readiness for real-world difficulties (Interviewees A, B, D). It fits with Ralph Tyler's curriculum creation model's fourth principle, which emphasizes reviewing the curriculum to see if the learning objectives are met (Tyler, 1949). Tyler asserts that thorough evaluation is essential to determining the efficacy of the curriculum and making the required modifications to improve student learning and outcomes. The reported gains in student outcomes in this situation imply that the SNC positively influences the accomplishment of the stated learning objectives.

Furthermore, the state's ideology of fostering well-rounded individuals who are academically competent and have the skills and values necessary to contribute positively to society is reflected in the SNC's emphasis on holistic development, including social-emotional learning and skill development. It supports Michael Apple's idea that societal beliefs and power structures are embodied in the curriculum (Apple, 1979). However, it is crucial to understand that the SNC's goals of enhanced student outcomes and holistic development cannot be met without addressing the implementation problems. The requirement for thorough teacher training and professional development, resource alignment, and ongoing monitoring and assessment are some of these difficulties. Applying Rondinelli and Cheema's classification of decentralization-centralization, these challenges can be understood as administrative challenges associated with centralization. According to the administrators, these challenges have posed significant obstacles in implementing the SNC effectively (Interviewees A, C, and E) (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). These difficulties may restrict the SNC's positive effects on student outcomes and prevent the successful attainment of its learning objectives.

Additionally, Apple's criticism of curricula as potentially oppressive power systems is reflected in these difficulties (Apple, 1979). The need for flexibility in the

curriculum to consider local contexts and demands is suggested by worries that the SNC may be unable to meet the different local educational needs. This analysis offers a more in-depth assessment of the SNC's influences on Pakistani education and the challenges posed by its implementation. It is founded on the theoretical frameworks of Rondinelli and Cheema, Tyler, and Apple. It emphasizes how important it is to implement and improve the SNC thoughtfully and flexibly to improve Pakistan's educational standards and outcomes.

4.2.3 Indicative Negative Influences of SNC

4.2.3.1 Challenges in Teacher Training and Professional Development

Even while the Single National Curriculum (SNC) has the potential to transform Pakistani education completely, it has not been without its share of difficulties, notably concerning teacher preparation and professional growth. The root of this issue is the necessity to switch from conventional teaching techniques to fresh, cutting-edge pedagogical approaches, which the SNC epitomizes. Administrator A emphasized the value of professional development for teachers in helping them get familiar with the goals and teaching techniques of the new curriculum. Administrator B made a similar point about how crucial it is to give teachers the tools they need to deliver the curriculum properly. Administrator C shared these ideas and emphasized the need to give instructors regular opportunities for peer cooperation through workshops, training sessions, and conferences.

This focus on professional development and teacher preparation is not new. According to academics in education, teachers are crucial to implementing curriculum improvements (Avalos, 2011; Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Since teachers are in charge of putting the curriculum into practice, their knowledge of it and their capacity to do so effectively have a direct bearing on the outcomes of the students. A change in teaching strategies was required because of the SNC. The SNC differs

significantly from Pakistani classrooms' typical teacher-centered, rote learning method in its emphasis on student-centered teaching and learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical application of knowledge. As a result, instructors need professional development to get familiar with these novel pedagogical approaches and successfully implement them into their teaching practices.

It has been demonstrated that continuous, content-focused, active learning-involved professional development programs integrated into instructors' everyday work positively affect teaching methods (Desimone, 2009). However, effectively planning and delivering such projects can be challenging, especially in low-resource environments like Pakistan. As indicated by Administrators A and B, this emphasizes the necessity of thorough training programs, workshops, and mentorship opportunities for instructors. Unfortunately, opportunities for teachers in Pakistan to get high-quality professional development have been few and sporadic. Effective professional development has been hampered by scarce resources, a lack of skilled trainers, and poor follow-up support (Warwick & Reimers, 2019). The Pakistani educational system's size and diversity, encompassing both urban and rural areas and having a wide range of resources and quality, exacerbate these difficulties.

A significant financial commitment to thorough, superior teacher professional development is essential for the SNC's successful implementation. Such investments should focus on giving teachers the pedagogical abilities necessary to present the curriculum effectively and provide them with an understanding of its subject matter. To ensure that professional development programs fulfill the unique requirements of teachers and students, it is also necessary to consider the particular context of each school and location. The adoption of the SNC in Pakistan holds the promise of a uniform, high-quality education for all students, but achieving this goal will largely

depend on the effective professional development of teachers. For the SNC to be implemented successfully and eventually improve student results, addressing the issues in teacher preparation and professional development will be essential.

4.2.3.2 Need for Resource Alignment

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) transition has highlighted the importance of appropriate resource alignment. This change has posed a substantial challenge for educators as they work to ensure that their teaching tools and materials comply with the demands of the new curriculum. Additionally, the creative and updated content of the SNC necessitates an equivalent transformation in the teaching tools and resources to enable its delivery. Administrator B emphasized the importance of providing high-quality learning resources to support the implementation of the new curriculum after Administrator A had underlined the necessity for fair access to resources. Administrator C emphasized the difficulties encountered in coordinating resources and instructional materials with the SNC requirements, a crucial component of improving the educational experience for students.

A crucial component of implementing a curriculum is resource alignment. O'Donnell (2008) asserts that students' success depends critically on aligning the curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Using aligned materials ensures that the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes are all geared toward accomplishing the same learning goals. Regarding resource alignment, the shift to the SNC in Pakistan provides a particular issue. Ensuring that teaching materials and resources align with the new curriculum is challenging, given the diversity and complexity of the nation's educational environment, which comprises a mixture of public, private, and madrasa schools (Mustafa, 2013). The discrepancies in resources between schools and areas make these problems even worse. As Administrator A pointed out, a critical component

of ensuring successful curriculum implementation is the requirement for fair access to resources.

Many schools, especially those in underprivileged regions, may struggle to make the financial investments necessary to align resources and teaching materials with the new curriculum. Without the proper funding and assistance, even the best-laid plans to modify the curriculum are prone to failure, as Fullan (2007) emphasizes. Additionally, the SNC's transition to a more inquiry-based, student-centered approach to teaching and learning requires a parallel change in the resources and teaching materials employed. For instance, it could be necessary to supplement or replace traditional textbooks with more engaging and interactive tools that encourage students to think critically, solve problems, and be creative (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

The particular demands and settings of various schools and areas must therefore be considered in addition to resource alignment by education policymakers and administrators. Customized resource provision and assistance can help ensure the SNC's successful implementation, providing all students in Pakistan with a more equal and high-quality educational experience.

In conclusion, resource alignment is essential for successfully implementing the Single National Curriculum despite its difficulties, and to meet this challenge, careful planning, investment, and consideration of the particular requirements and circumstances of various schools and localities are required. The SNC has the potential to provide all students in Pakistan with a uniform, standardized, and high-quality education. This potential can be fulfilled with efficient resource alignment.

4.2.3.3 Requirement for Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

Successful curriculum implementation depends on ongoing monitoring and evaluation. In order to make sure that the Single National Curriculum (SNC) is

successful, relevant, and responsive to the changing needs of students and society at large, administrators highlighted worries about the necessity for constant monitoring and review. In order to maintain the SNC's relevance and responsiveness to the changing requirements of students and society, Administrator B underlined the significance of routine monitoring and review. According to Administrator A, one of the SNC's shortcomings was the requirement for ongoing implementation and supervision to satisfy the various demands and regional contexts of students. Administrator C echoed the sentiment and emphasized the need for continued assistance and funding to enable successful implementation and adaption of the curriculum to meet the varied requirements of students.

Implementing any curriculum, particularly one as extensive as the SNC depends on ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring enables educators and decision-makers to keep track of the implementation's progress, pinpoint areas of success and difficulties, and take the necessary support or corrective action as needed (Kirk & MacDonald, 2001). The opportunity to evaluate the success of the curriculum and its impact on student learning outcomes, on the other hand, allows for any necessary adjustments to be made (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead & Boschee, 2012). Monitoring and evaluating the curriculum can also guarantee that it remains adaptable to changing student requirements and settings. Effective curricula are dynamic and developing, continuously adjusting to the altering landscapes of student needs, societal expectations, and educational best practices, as Fullan (2007) suggested. Without continuous monitoring and evaluation, the curriculum risks becoming obsolete or out of touch with student needs and societal realities, undermining its efficacy and relevance. The difficulty, however, is in having the ability to continuously monitor and evaluate a country with such a diversified and intricate educational system as Pakistan. Pakistan's

education system is distinguished by various public, private, and madrasa schools, each with its settings and requirements, as Mustafa (2013) emphasizes. Adopting efficient and reliable monitoring and evaluation techniques across these many educational institutions is difficult.

Additionally, the capability for monitoring and evaluation is reliant on the resources and knowledge that are accessible. The procedure calls for skilled employees who can carry out routine observations in the classroom, offer constructive criticism, and evaluate data to aid in decision-making (Wayne & Youngs, 2003). Effective curriculum monitoring and assessment might be hampered by insufficient funding and adequately qualified staff. The demand for ongoing monitoring and review is a significant obstacle to the SNC's implementation. It must be overcome to ensure that the curriculum is implemented successfully and continues to be relevant and responsive to the changing requirements of students and society. Routine monitoring and evaluation capability needs to be built, resources must be provided, and staff needs to be trained. This investment is required of policymakers and administrators of education. The SNC may realize its promise to offer a top-notch, uniform education to all children in Pakistan through ongoing monitoring and review.

4.2.3.4 Balancing Standardization with Local Context

The effort toward a Single National Curriculum (SNC) undoubtedly encourages uniformity and standardization, but the trick is to strike a balance between standardization and recognizing the diversity and uniqueness of various regions within Pakistan. The necessity for a flexible and adaptable curriculum to take into account regional settings and idiosyncrasies was raised by administrators. This worry reflects discussions in the larger area of education about the conflict between the necessity of standardization and the value of contextualization in the development and

implementation of the curriculum. In order to address the different needs and regional context of pupils, Administrator A emphasized the necessity for "careful implementation and monitoring." They proposed that the curriculum may be made more effective by introducing flexibility and customization. Administrator C reiterated this idea by highlighting the difficulty in modifying the curriculum to satisfy the various demands of pupils. They emphasized the need for ongoing assistance and funding to ensure the program adequately meets local needs.

Standardizing the curriculum ensures consistency and equality in education (Benavot & Tanner, 2007). It makes it easier to provide all learners with quality basic knowledge and abilities regardless of location or socioeconomic status. A highly standardized curriculum, however, runs the risk of becoming rigid, monolithic, and disengaged from the realities of pupils (Bishop, 2008).

In a nation like Pakistan, with its rich tapestry of distinct cultural, racial, and linguistic groups and a wide range of socioeconomic realities, this is especially crucial. In light of this, academics have advocated for the value of contextualization in developing and implementing curricula. Young (2013) contends that while having a uniform curriculum is vital, it is also crucial for the curriculum to be flexible and adaptive in order to accommodate students' various requirements and settings. According to Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008), effective curricula balance uniformity and contextualization, maintaining relevance and meaningfulness for learners. In order to keep the SNC relevant and practical, this balance is essential. The curriculum must be adaptable enough to consider these disparities because it is intended to serve diverse students from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds (Khan, 2020). It may entail adding local languages, histories, and cultural practices to guarantee that the curriculum is uniform, locally relevant, and culturally sensitive in Pakistan.

However, achieving this equilibrium is problematic. In order to preserve a certain level of uniformity and standardization across the nation while simultaneously allowing for changes that take into account regional contexts and realities, policymakers and educators must strike a delicate balance. Planning and having a thorough awareness of the various socio-cultural contexts of the various regions of Pakistan are necessary for this. The SNC is a significant step toward achieving educational fairness and standardization in Pakistan, but it is equally crucial to make sure that it is considerate of and reflective of the varied local contexts of the nation. As a result, the SNC's effective implementation will depend on a well-balanced strategy that balances standardization and contextualization. Policymakers and educators must remember the difficulty in this balance as they continue to implement and improve the SNC.

4.2.4 Comparison with Prior Research

Our findings build on the existing body of literature, highlighting the complex dynamics of educational reform globally and specifically in Pakistan. The study reveals that the implementation of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) harbors significant potential for enhancing social equality, echoing the optimism found in the works of scholars such as Verger et al., (2012) and Memon (2007). These authors underscore the role of uniform curricula in fostering social cohesion and reducing socio-economic disparities.

However, our findings also draw attention to critical challenges that could impede the successful realization of the SNC's goals. The concerns primarily revolve around the language of instruction and the affordability of required resources for effective implementation. These concerns align with the research conducted by Benson (2002) and Rana, Akhtar & Akram (2011), which emphasized the importance of the language of instruction and highlighted language as a significant barrier to education, especially for marginalized communities. The concern around the affordability of

resources resonates with Aslam & Kingdon's (2008) research that underscored the role of economic disparities in inhibiting access to quality education. Furthermore, our study's emphasis on teacher support and training aligns with the theoretical framework provided by Ronald D. Lee and several other studies (Yoon et al., 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Mehmood et al., 2016).

When viewed through Rondinelli and Cheema's classification of decentralization-centralization, our findings illustrate the multifaceted implications of a centralized approach to curriculum reform. On the one hand, the SNC, a product of centralization, is perceived as a tool for achieving social equality. On the other hand, the findings suggest a need for some decentralization to address the unique needs and contexts of different learner populations. This study offers valuable insights into the perceptions and potential impacts of the SNC in Pakistan, enriching the existing literature on educational reform and shedding light on the dynamics of centralization and decentralization in education policy implementation.

4.2.5 Conclusion of Discussion

The Single National Curriculum (SNC) has brought about a new age of educational change in Pakistan characterized by ambition, hope, trepidation, and worry. The researcher aimed to identify stakeholders' perspectives on this new policy's potential effects, opportunities, and challenges. These stakeholders represent various parts of the educational system. There is much hope that the SNC would catalyze social equity and national integration, especially among parents and educators (Memon, 2007). The hope is that a uniform curriculum will promote social inclusion by bridging the educational gap between various socioeconomic groups. It is consistent with global trends in education policy that highlight the value of providing inclusive education for everyone (UNESCO, 2017).

However, some worries temper this optimism. The most notable is the possible linguistic barrier that can develop, especially for kids who study local languages in school. The existing study supports this worry by consistently identifying language as crucial to educational success (Brock-Utne, 2007). Concerns concerning the availability of the resources needed to implement the SNC also underscore the requirement for additional steps to guarantee fair access to education. These findings echo the sentiments of educators and teachers, who emphasize the importance of professional development, proper training, and diverse teaching methods. They acknowledge the need for flexibility in implementing the curriculum to cater to the unique needs and learning styles of different students, a perspective supported by literature that posits that quality teacher training and development are crucial for the successful implementation of any curriculum (Yoon et al., 2007).

In sum, the research on the SNC provides a nuanced understanding of the myriad perspectives of stakeholders, each of whom holds a piece of the puzzle of educational reform in Pakistan. While optimism exists, legitimate concerns also need to be addressed to ensure the successful implementation of the SNC. Policymakers, educators, and all stakeholders involved in the education system must work together to bring about the desired change. By doing so, the nation can move closer to realizing the shared vision of a more equitable and inclusive education system, marking a significant stride towards better education for all in Pakistan.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion of the Study

This study sought to comprehend the implications of the Single National Curriculum (SNC) in Pakistan, exploring its potential indicative influence on education quality and academic achievement that is grounded in educational policy and practice; the study drew on diverse stakeholders' perceptions and experiences, encompassing educators, local communities, and education policymakers. The findings suggest that the introduction of the SNC has elicited both optimism and concerns among the stakeholders. While optimism stemmed from the potential of the SNC to promote social equality and national integration, concerns were rooted in the practicalities of implementing a uniform education policy. The challenges identified included language barriers, access to quality education, and adequate teacher training. The study's key strengths lie in its focus on a timely and vital topic in Pakistan's education sector and the inclusion of diverse stakeholder perspectives. However, it is essential to note the limitations - the research offers a snapshot of perceptions and experiences at a specific time. As the SNC implementation progresses, these experiences and perceptions could evolve.

5.2 Interpretation and Discussion

The inquiry into the Single National Curriculum implementation in Pakistan provided helpful information that satisfied the study's goals and answered the main research questions. This research enhanced awareness of this significant change in the educational landscape of Pakistan by examining the challenge, indicative positive outcomes, and indicative influence of the SNC on regional educational systems.

According to the study, stakeholders were both optimistic and concerned. The positive outcomes were mainly measured regarding the SNC's capacity to reduce educational inequalities and promote social cohesion, which was in line with research by Verger, Novelli, and Altinyelken (2012). The difficulties, however, were mostly related to linguistic obstacles, resource accessibility, affordability, and the requirement for teacher professional development. According to Rondinelli and Cheema's classification, it was discovered that the SNC's implementation signifies a drive toward administrative centralization (1983). It has established a consistent educational framework for the whole country, although worries were expressed about its probable incapacity to satisfy the particular requirements of many areas and communities, a risk related to administrative centralization (Khan, 2020).

As for the perception of local communities, stakeholders, and educators on the indicative influence of the Single National Curriculum on the standard of education and academic attainment in Pakistan, the stakeholders were upbeat about the SNC's potential to raise educational standards. Although they acknowledged these elements' crucial role in school reform, they also expressed concerns about language obstacles, access to high-quality education, and teacher preparation (Benson, 2002; Yoon et al., 2007). Thus, these results met the study's objectives and improved our knowledge of the theoretical foundations of centralization-decentralization in the educational system. By providing subtle insights into the promise and difficulties of implementing a standardized curriculum in a multicultural and complicated educational context like Pakistan, the research adds to the conversation.

The discussion emphasizes the significance of addressing linguistic diversity, access to education, and teacher development, as highlighted in prior research, for successful education reform (Benson, 2002; Yoon et al., 2007; Brock-Utne, 2007). The

results also support Apple's (1979) assertion that curriculum reflects societal power structures and ideologies and is not objective. The study also emphasizes the value of further investigation and discussion regarding the SNC's implementation in Pakistan. The necessity for more research into how the SNC may adjust to consider language variety and geographical disparities is made clear for the SNC to live up to its goal of offering equal and high-quality education to all.

5.3 Implications

The results of this study bear significant implications for the practice within the context of education policy and reform in Pakistan. These implications extend to educators, policymakers, and future researchers, who could leverage these findings to guide their actions and investigations.

Primarily, the study brings to the forefront essential issues that policymakers and educators need to address to implement the Single National Curriculum (SNC) effectively. The concerns about language barriers call for developing an inclusive language policy that respects the linguistic diversity of Pakistan (Benson, 2002). It could involve strategies such as multilingual education or incorporating local languages into teaching specific subjects to ensure all students can understand and engage with their lessons. Furthermore, the challenges concerning access to quality education and the affordability of resources point to the need for concerted efforts to ensure educational equity. It may involve strategies to make educational materials more affordable, improve the infrastructure of schools, especially in remote and underprivileged areas, and promote quality education across all schools, regardless of their socio-economic status (Brock-Utne, 2007). As highlighted by the respondents, the need for professional development for teachers points towards the requirement for robust training programs. It could involve pre-service and in-service training, focusing on the new curriculum and

inclusive teaching methodologies (Yoon et al., 2007). It would also equip teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver the SNC effectively.

5.4 Recommendations

This study suggests several directions for further investigation for future researchers. It would be fruitful to examine how the SNC has affected social equality and educational outcomes. Further investigation could focus on the SNC's ability to accept language variety and regional variances. It would entail investigating methods for incorporating context-sensitive content into the curriculum and local language instruction. These efforts would continue to improve our grasp of the difficulties associated with educational change, particularly in complex and varied contexts like Pakistan. Some recommendations are made in light of the study's findings and the larger goals and objectives of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC). These suggestions ought to improve the SNC's effectiveness and guarantee that its application advances the stated objectives of equal access to high-quality education, racial integration, and social harmony.

5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Create Inclusive Language Policies: To overcome the language barrier, creating an inclusive language policy that respects Pakistan's linguistic variety is essential. To guarantee that all children can comprehend and participate fully in their courses, this may entail incorporating local languages into the curriculum, especially in the early years of education (Benson, 2002).

Enhance Accessibility to Quality Education: Policymakers should spend money on initiatives that guarantee all students receive a high-quality education, regardless of their socioeconomic background. It includes actions like lowering the price of educational

supplies, enhancing school facilities, especially in rural and underserved areas, and guaranteeing the provision of excellent instruction in all schools (UNESCO, 2017).

Implement Strong Teacher Training Programs: There should be a strong emphasis on teacher growth. The government should create pre-service and on-the-job training programs that give educators the tools they need to deliver the SNC successfully. These training courses should stress inclusive teaching methods and account for the new curriculum (Yoon et al., 2007).

5.4.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should focus on longitudinal studies to follow the SNC's effects on academic performance and social equality over time. Following the SNC's implementation, this might entail systematically gathering and examining data on student performance, attendance in school, dropout rates, and other pertinent metrics.

Research on Linguistic Variety: Additional study is needed to determine how the SNC can better support linguistic diversity. It can entail looking into effective strategies from other multilingual nations and applying them to the Pakistani setting.

Impact on Regional Differences: More research is needed to determine how the SNC explains regional variations in Pakistan. Investigating methods for incorporating regional and context-specific content into the curriculum may fall under this category.

Through these suggestions, this study hopes to aid in the SNC's effective implementation and the accomplishment of its stated objectives, which include promoting social cohesion, national unity, and educational equality in Pakistan.

5.5 Reflection on the Research Process

Reflecting on the research process offers a chance to think about the journey made throughout this study, including discovering new information, the difficulties faced, and the methods used to overcome those difficulties. The research process was instructive

since it gave a thorough grasp of the effects of Pakistan's Single National Curriculum (SNC) on academic success and education quality. Rich insights into the possible advantages, difficulties, and ramifications of the SNC were provided by the experiences and perceptions of local communities, stakeholders, and educators.

The intricate interaction between policy, practice, and perception was one of the most essential lessons from this research. The SNC is a policy effort that seeks to advance social equity and national integration, but its execution and effects are closely related to socioeconomic realities, regional educational methods, and other stakeholder perceptions (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983; Khan, 2020). There were difficulties during the research procedure. There were logistical and methodological challenges in gathering and interpreting data from multiple stakeholder viewpoints throughout various regions of Pakistan. However, these difficulties were overcome by using adaptable data-gathering procedures and reliable qualitative analysis tools. Additionally, assuring the validity and dependability of the results was a significant problem handled by comparing the data frequently and triangulating the data sources.

It was also tricky and illuminating to interpret the results in light of the theoretical framework, in this case, Rondinelli and Cheema's classification of decentralization-centralization. It made it possible to comprehend the SNC's interactions with local and regional educational environments and the challenges of centralizing educational reform initiatives (Rondinelli and Cheema, 1983). Finally, this study reinforces the value of qualitative research in supplying in-depth, nuanced insights into intricate policy initiatives like the SNC through reflection on the research process. It emphasizes how crucial it is to consider various stakeholder viewpoints to comprehend the effects and potential of policy reforms. Future research projects, particularly those

involving educational reform and policy analysis, can be informed by this reflection and the knowledge obtained via this research method.

5.6 Conclusion

The study sought to comprehend the successes and difficulties underlying the Single National Curriculum (SNC) implementation in Pakistan, a significant step toward educational reform accompanied by promise and trepidation. This study has offered a detailed picture of the current state of the SNC, its perceived impacts, and potential future trajectories through an in-depth analysis of the experiences and perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including local communities, educators, and policymakers. While reviewing the original research goals, the study was successful in examining the difficulties and achievements related to the SNC's implementation in various Pakistani regions and schools, examining its impact on regional educational practices and systems, and examining the perceptions of essential stakeholders regarding its influence on educational quality and academic achievement. The study's conclusions provide a nuanced, comprehensive perspective on centralized educational reform and answer the original research objectives.

Similarly, the study contributes substantially to the scholarly conversation about educational reform, especially in the context of emerging nations like Pakistan. It supports current centralization and decentralization ideas, particularly Rondinelli and Cheema's categorization (1983) while highlighting the difficulties and potential pitfalls of centralizing reforms in a complex educational environment. The study also provides valuable information for policymakers and practitioners alike from a practical aspect. The results underline how crucial it is to consider local language circumstances, guarantee fair access to high-quality education, and offer effective teacher preparation programs when pursuing educational reform.

Likewise, the study opens up many directions for further investigation, such as integrating language variety into a uniform national curriculum and how the SNC has affected social equality and educational outcomes. This study serves as a testament to the SNC's potential as a catalyst for educational reform while shedding light on the difficulties and complications associated with such a large-scale undertaking. It is intended that the knowledge gained from this study would aid in the continued efforts to provide all Pakistanis with a balanced, egalitarian, and high-quality education.

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APPENDIX

Data Collection Instruments

Category 1.

Interview questions for school leaders: (Principal, Vice Principal, Headmaster, Head-Teacher).

1. Can you describe the implementation process of the Single National Curriculum in your school/region? To what extent has it been successful or challenging?
2. How have the students and teachers in your school/region responded to the new curriculum?
3. What kinds of support and resources have you received for implementing the Single National Curriculum?
4. What changes have you observed in teaching and learning practices since the implementation of the Single National Curriculum?
5. How have you adapted the curriculum to meet the needs of local students and communities?
6. In your view, what have been the biggest benefits and drawbacks of the Single National Curriculum for education in Pakistan?

(کیا آپ اپنے سکول / علاقے میں سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے نفاذ کے عمل کی

وضاحت کر سکتے ہیں؟ یہ کس حد تک کامیاب یا چیلنجنگ رہا ہے؟)

. آپ کے اسکول/علاقے کے طلباء اور اساتذہ نے نئے نصاب پر کیسا ردعمل ظاہر کیا ہے؟

سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے نفاذ کے لئے آپ کو کس قسم کی مدد اور وسائل ملے ہیں؟

کے عمل میں) تدریس اور سیکھنے کے طریقوں (سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے نفاذ کے بعد تعلیم و تعلم

آپ نے کیا تبدیلیاں محسوس کیں ہیں؟

آپ نے کریکلم کو مقامی طلباء اور کمیونٹیز کی ضروریات کے مطابق کس طرح موثر بنایا ہے؟

آپ کی نظر میں، سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے پاکستان کی تعلیم کے لئے سب سے بڑے فوائد اور نقصانات کیا ہیں؟

Category 2.

Interview questions for education policymakers and administrators: (EDO's EDI's)

1. To what extent has the Single National Curriculum influenced the local educational systems and practices in your region?
2. How has the new curriculum impacted the delivery of education in your region?
3. Have you observed any changes in student outcomes and achievement since the implementation of the Single National Curriculum?
4. What challenges have you encountered in implementing the new curriculum and how have you addressed them?
5. In your view, what are the biggest benefits and drawbacks of the Single National Curriculum for education in Pakistan?

سنگل نیشنل کریکلم نے آپ کے علاقے میں مقامی تعلیمی نظام و کارکردگی پر کتنا اثر ڈالا ہے؟

نئے کریکلم نے آپ کے علاقے میں تعلیم کے فروغ پر کس طرح کا اثر ڈالا ہے؟

کیا آپ نے سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے نفاذ کے بعد طلباء کے نتائج اور کامیابی میں کوئی تبدیلی دیکھی ہے؟

نئے کریکلم کے نفاذ میں آپ کو کن مشکلات کا سامنا کرنا پڑا ہے اور آپ نے ان کا حل کس طرح کیا ہے؟

آپ کی نظر میں، سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے پاکستان کی تعلیم کے لئے سب سے بڑے فوائد اور نقصانات کیا ہیں

Category 3.

Interview questions for parents:

1. How do you feel about the Single National Curriculum being taught in your child's school?

2. What changes have you observed in your child's learning since the implementation of the Single National Curriculum?
3. How well does the new curriculum fit with the needs of your child and your community?
4. How involved have you been in the implementation of the new curriculum in your child's school?
5. In your view, what have been the biggest benefits and drawbacks of the Single National Curriculum for education in Pakistan?

والدین کے لئے انٹرویو کے سوالات

- آپ کے بچے کے سکول میں سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کی تعلیم کے بارے میں آپ کیسے محسوس کرتے ہیں؟
- سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے نفاذ کے بعد آپ کے بچے کی تعلیم میں کیا تبدیلیاں دیکھی ہیں؟
- نئے کریکلم کا آپ کے بچے اور آپ کے کمیونٹی کی ضروریات کے ساتھ کتنا اچھا موازنہ ہے؟
- آپ کے بچے کے سکول میں نئے کریکلم کے نفاذ میں آپ کتنے شامل رہے ہیں؟
- آپ کی نظر میں، سنگل نیشنل کریکلم کے پاکستان کی تعلیم کے لئے سب سے بڑے فوائد اور نقصانات کیا ہیں؟