**Controversial Curriculum: A Recipe for Disaster**

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In the past, multiple experiments were carried out by various regimes, including those of Ayub, Bhutto, Zia and Musharraf, to reform the poor education system of Pakistan. Deplorably, no earnest and pragmatic measures were taken to deliberate and detect the dominant pitfalls and hazards in this noble sector. The provision of quality education to the students has been the dream in this land of pure since its creation.

Following suit, Prime Minister Khan precipitously launched Single National Curriculum to ameliorate our rotten education system by diminishing existing curriculums’ incongruities between public and private schools. After the successful completion of its three years, to manifest its rapid performance and fulfil its covenants, the PTI government is now entirely focused on delivering in the remaining two years what it had vowed to garner immense public support for general election 2023. Therefore, analysts believe that the objectives behind the implementation of SNC are political, not reformatory concerning education. As a fact, when the important sector of education of any country falls prey to the evil machinations and indifference of its government, it leads to disastrous impacts in that society.

In the contemporary era, the socio-economic and political development of any country is directly linked to the propagation of education at a large scale. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, the government allocates only up to 2.5 per cent of the budget for education and is intransigently imposing the SNC while neglecting other important areas. New curriculum development is, indubitably, a lengthy process that requires services from experts. Imagine a curriculum designed by amateurs and then imposed hurriedly. How will it transform the existing education system?

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The federal government is of the view that the SNC will end “education apartheid.” To my great surprise, how can this government act this insanely; equating elimination in curriculum disparities to overall education uplift. Beyond SNC imposition, inequalities persist in many areas. How can the SNC bring public schools to the level of elitist private schools providing the best learning environment along with other educational facilities which public schools entirely lack? This wide gulf will continuously exist until the government takes some concrete measures to make structural changes in the existing systems and focuses on improving learning standards at public schools.

As per the latest authentic reports, 48 per cent of schools in Pakistan are deprived of basic facilities, including toilets, clean drinking water, electric lights, fans, whiteboards, and proper buildings. More than 50 per cent of public schools lack playgroups. How can students absorb and learn a newly imposed curriculum under these severe conditions? These are some highlighted issues at public schools, which indispensably look out for the government’s deep attention than SNC’s false ostentation.

Diversity of curriculum is the essence of learning at various education levels. It provides learners with an opportunity to acquire a variety of knowledge by not confining to a uniform syllabus. It also urges students to keep pace with the changing international educational trends by studying multiple curriculums as per their choice. Currently, several curriculums are being taught at private schools in Pakistan including Cambridge, Oxford, and Beaconhouse School System. How can the students from public schools be equal to the students who acquired their education by studying the aforementioned diverse syllabi?

Government must reform and revamp the education sector but by elevating all low-level public schools to the level of elite private schools by providing the best infrastructure, a conducive environment, provision of capacious playgrounds and all other important basic facilities instead of launching SNC. At present, 2.3 million children are reported to be out of schools and the government is dodgingly seeking an exit from such challenges under the garb of SNC.

Regrettably, the PTI government is bent on eroding the advanced learning standards of top parochial schools by forcing them to adopt and implement SNC. Aitchison and Beaconhouse Schools were even threatened by federal education minister Shafqat Mahmood for the non-implementation of SNC. Moreover, pressuring provinces to adopt SNC also contradicts the 18th amendment. How can education sector thrive under undemocratic behaviours is a big question mark on the mindset of the incumbent government.

Moreover, SNC badly discourages the English medium of learning. All textbooks at the primary level have been written in the Urdu language. Does this seem like a rational and sensible approach? How can a government be this antagonistic; repelling students from acquiring education in a language that is an international medium of communication? Thus, this flawed SNC is pushing us from globalism to regionalism.

In nutshell, SNC is certainly not a bad idea if it is designed cautiously by taking all parties on board. Beyond SNC, the government should supply heavy funds for the construction of new schools for out of school children. Government must hire well qualified and experienced teachers to enhance the education standards of all public schools. Specialists in Arabic and religion need to be appointed to deal with the subject of Islamiyat. Finally, students must be provided with a better environment for their better learning.

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